

The Architect's Newspaper

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Arata Isozaki is the 2019 Pritzker laureate



Japanese architect, planner, and theorist Arata Isozaki has been awarded the 2019 Pritzker Architecture Prize.

Isozaki, born in 1931, was deeply influenced by the destruction of his hometown of Ōita, Japan, and the aftermath of World War II, after which he became fascinated by the temporal nature of the built environment.

After founding his own practice in the 1960s, Isozaki left Japan to cultivate a broader knowledge of world architecture. In his 60 years of practice, Isozaki has built in a manner known more for its programmatic solutions and contextual nature than an adherence to a single style or typology. From the Ōita Prefectural Library, built in 1966, a stalwart example of Japanese Brutalism, to the 1986 Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Isozaki has never shied away from tailoring his approach to specific projects. During the reconstruction period **continue reading on page 15**

Hórama Rama

Pedro & Juana selected as 2019 MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program winners.



Mexico City-based architects Pedro & Juana have been selected as the winners of the Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1's 20th annual Young Architects Program (YAP). Pedro & Juana founders Ana Paula Ruiz Galindo and Mecky Reuss beat out four other finalists for the prize with their immersive junglescape titled *Hórama Rama*.

Designs for the installation include a space frame-supported stage set made up of jungle-themed prints as well as custom hammocks from Mexico's Yucatán region. The circular frame is raised above the height of the courtyard walls and is clad with projecting dimensional lumber "bristles" that will be reused after the installation run.

One end of *Hórama Rama* is anchored by a two-story waterfall that will act as a misting device during the hot summer months. Describing the waterfall, Ruiz Galindo said, **continue reading on page 15**

Green New Design?

Architects have many ideas for decarbonizing the economy.

As the scale of climate change has accelerated in recent years, upstart politicians like Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York have made addressing the issue central to their political platforms. As a result, talk of a Green New Deal (GND) has picked up since the November election, reflecting a major shift in how Americans discuss climate change. But what is the Green New Deal and how might it impact architects?

The impetus behind the GND is simple: Because the threat of anthropogenic climate change is so fundamental, only a government-led, all-out industrial and economic mass mobilization effort can potentially transform American society quickly and thoroughly enough to avoid global catastrophe.

Draft legislation unveiled by Representative Ocasio-Cortez and Massachusetts Democratic Senator Ed Markey in February focuses on "meeting 100 percent of the power demand in the United States through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources," as well as on decarbonizing the entirety of U.S. building stock. Full legislation has not been drafted, though elements of a supposed GND have been touted by progressive activists and politicians for years.

Generally speaking, GND proponents have three specific and wide-ranging goals: First, activists are calling for the wholesale decarbonization of the U.S. economy. That means eliminating all carbon emissions across every industry in the country, including in vital sectors like energy production, building design and construction, and transportation.

Second, activists want this green transition to include a federal jobs guarantee as well as new public works projects. A job guarantee would allow people currently working in carbon-intensive industries to leave their jobs for publicly funded green-collar work. The guarantee, supporters argue, would also create a vast, fairly paid workforce that could get to work transforming American society right away.

Third, GND proponents assert that the transition must incorporate a socially just framework that rectifies past practices that exploited certain communities. Such reforms include finding ways to house those displaced by climate change, countering the long-term effects of redlining and the racial wealth gap, and ensuring that, unlike in the case of the original New Deal, the benefits and jobs created by a GND are enjoyed by

people of color and other historically marginalized groups.

The initiative would go beyond simply greening the country's energy grid or incentivizing a shift to public transit and electric vehicles; the GND envisions a top-to-bottom reworking of the U.S. economy. Likely, the effort will involve densifying existing cities, building new ones from scratch, and perhaps most important, retrofitting and upgrading nearly all of America's existing building stock. Architects will be vital to the effort and are likely to benefit from a potential GND through new commissions and opportunities to provide input and expertise across a range of projects and scales.

In an effort to help spur discussion among architects on a potential plan, *The Architect's Newspaper* asked designers from around the country to share their wish lists for what a **continue reading on page 12**



Mapping Amazon

An inventory of the logistics giant's footprint in New York City and its urban implications.

See page 28.



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Editors' Note

Accolades

Why Arata Isozaki deserves the Pritzker.

The Architect's Newspaper is very happy that Arata Isozaki has won the 2019 Pritzker Prize, despite some grumbling to the contrary within online architectural circles.

The Pritzker is about lifetime achievement, so let's start at the beginning. Isozaki began his career studying architecture after a childhood in which he witnessed profound destruction. "[During WWII] I was constantly confronted with the destruction and elimination of the physical objects that surrounded me. Japanese cities went up in flames. Forms that had been there an instant earlier vanished in the next."

This darkness pervaded his work, especially the concept of impermanence and ruins. In his early career, he was involved with the Japanese theoretical group, the Metabolists, who were taking on the city as a large-scale biological process, producing some of the most visionary proposals of the post-war era. However, Isozaki believed that they were too naïve and positive, and that architecture needed to (paradoxically) build for death and destruction as well as life and progress. Isozaki became more aligned with what would come to be known as postmodernism in the Venturian or Jencksian sense when he broke from both hardcore modernists like the CIAM and the Metabolists. For Isozaki, the city was not a place of activism or functionalism, but rather a place of memory and poetic imagination.

He took the Metabolists' love for viewing the built environment as a living organism and imbued their rational, hardcore functionalism with a more artistic, human-scale, colorful approach. His Oita Prefecture Library and the Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art both took on the Brutalist concrete aesthetic, but treated the building as a body with connected parts, rather than an aggregation of cells or individual units as in Metabolism. In both the library and art museum, views are framed by cantilevered "eyes."

In addition to his bodily references in buildings, Isozaki was an early protagonist of experiments in the relationship between architecture and performance art. His Demonstration Robot, part of the extravagant Metabolist Osaka '70 expo, made an architectural-scale human that could host events on a stage while reconfiguring itself on an even larger stage. These performance architectures incorporated principles of the nascent performance art movement of the 1970s and foreshadowed projects like OMA's Transformer or the work of Andres Jaque or Diller Scofidio + Renfro. However, soon after the expo, he fell physically ill and ended up in the hospital because he felt guilty for promoting a technologically positivist viewpoint of modernism.

Rising from his profound experience in the hospital, Isozaki formulated a theory of architecture that would guide what would be his most significant work. The crux: "Space equals darkness, time equals termination (escatology), and matter, or architecture and cities, equals ruin and ashes." This represented his unique version of the post-modern linguistic turn, as he engaged with semiotics and form-giving through the lens of impermanence and ruin. He saw the void, negative space, and ruin as the rhetorical and cultural antithesis of architecture.

Isozaki had already been exploring these ideas in *Electric Labyrinth* for the 1968 Milan Triennale. He created an installation of large silk prints showing the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki alongside futurist visions of the Metabolists. This metaphorical evocation of these tragic

events juxtaposed with the architectural positivism illustrated Isozaki's cynicism about Metabolism, but also his reluctance to subscribe to any style in favor of his own underlying conceptual affinities, such as temporality, impermanence, irony, and collages of ideas and spaces.

This collage mentality was developed at the building scale in one of the most aggressive examples of historicism in the postmodern era and one of Isozaki's most influential projects. According to Emmanuel Petit in *Irony; or, The Self-critical Opacity of Post-modern Architecture*, the Tsukuba Civic Centre "emerged as an assemblage of fragments diachronically cut from diverse historical contexts. The building's composite anatomy of recognisable architectural fragments surfaces as a 'group portrait,' in Isozaki's own words, comprising materials taken from such diverse sources as Michelangelo, Ledoux, Giulio Romano, Otto Wagner, Michael Graves, Richard Meier, Charles Moore, Aldo Rossi, Hans Hollein, Peter Cook, Adalberto Libera, Philip Johnson, Leon Krier, Lawrence Halprin, and Ettore Sottsass." The project assembled these fragments into a sort of bodily composition meant to sit in contrast with the gridded rigidity of the rest of the town. The invented and somewhat arbitrary historical narrative paradoxically provided context for a town that had little real history.

Perhaps Isozaki's most important project was his design for the Palladium nightclub in New York, which opened in 1985 and closed in 1997. The lavish Beaux Arts interior of the former theater was augmented with a white grid and an orgy of light, sound, projection, and music that created what he saw as a technological environment. Like the Osaka robot, the relationship of architecture and bodies was in constant feedback, while Isozaki's critical ideas about the false utopias of modernism came through via his references to "ghost-figures" of the Edo period of Japanese history and the ruins of Hiroshima.

Later in his career, Isozaki was again able to adapt to the times, as his work became less critical and more elegant. Many architects enter what Jencks would call a "late-mellow" phase, and Isozaki's was not unexciting. Beautiful, competent buildings such as the Shanghai Symphony, Palm Springs Desert Shelters, and the slightly wacky Qatar Convention Center.

But the Pritzker (and architecture in general) is not just about finished projects. It is about ideas, drawings, and writing. Isozaki also had an influence on drawing with "120 Invisible Cities," a series of speculative projects made with a silkscreen technique. Precursors to Illustrator graphics and cartoonish renderings that pervade architecture's avant-garde today, Isozaki's flattened graphics were also used on the Los Angeles MOCA project. He also used the silkscreen method for his entry for the New Tokyo City Hall competition, which he lost to Kenzo Tange. Isozaki even made an early foray into the digital, producing some computer drawings for the City Hall project in 1986.

Let's face it—the Pritzker Prize is a relic from another era. But that doesn't mean that it can't serve as a useful tool for highlighting the great minds of the discipline and profession of architecture. Isozaki might not be the most avant-garde, politically correct pick at first Google, but for those who are paying attention, it is a great capstone on a truly incredible career.

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Another One Down

Johns Hopkins may tear down arts center by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects.



The building, pictured here in 2002, has served as the school's arts center for nearly 20 years.

Another Tod Williams Billie Tsien project appears to be headed for the wrecking ball. After years of planning and fundraising, Johns Hopkins University president Ronald J. Daniels announced that a new student center will be built for its Homewood campus at the intersection of Charles and 33rd Streets in Baltimore. The property chosen for the new building includes the current site of the Mattin Center, a 2001 arts complex designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects (TWTBA). Administrators indicate it will likely be demolished to make way for the student center.

Hopkins is one of the few major universities in the United States that doesn't have a full-fledged student center or student

union on its main campus, and Daniels has wanted to build one to keep Hopkins competitive with other colleges and universities.

On March 5, Daniels announced that the project is moving ahead with a target completion date of 2024. Without dwelling on demolition, his announcement was the most definitive statement he has made to date about securing funds and replacing the Mattin Center.

AN reached out to TWTBA, and the firm responded: "We are aware of Johns Hopkins's plan to build a new student center at the Mattin Center site; however, we do not know of any additional details regarding its development at this time."

Edward Gunts

Build de Blasio

After a comprehensive climate change study, Manhattan might extend its shoreline.



The study area is especially susceptible to flooding in the next 30 to 70 years.

New York City mayor Bill de Blasio took to the pages of *New York* magazine to lay out an ambitious \$10 billion plan to protect Lower Manhattan from the worst effects of climate change.

The city will be advancing \$500 million in capital projects to beef up the coast with grassy berms, esplanades, and sea gates, and by elevating existing infrastructure. The most surprising measure is an initiative to extend Manhattan another 500 feet into the East River.

After running through a gamut of flood mitigation approaches, the Lower Manhattan Climate Resilience Study advocated extending the shoreline to prevent flood waters from reaching critical buildings and

infrastructure.

"The new land will be higher than the current coast, protecting the neighborhoods from future storms and the higher tides that will threaten its survival in the decades to come," wrote de Blasio.

"When we complete the coastal extension... Lower Manhattan will be secure from rising seas through 2100."

As for funding such an ambitious project, the mayor admitted that the city wouldn't be able to go it alone, but also noted that President Trump was unlikely to contribute federal funds. He then called on Democrats to make the project part of their national agenda. **Jonathan Hilburg**



We corralled the top architecture and design stories buzzing about the internet this month.

Dubai's ruler will literally leave his fingerprint on the city with new supertall tower

State-owned Dubai Holding has revealed plans for the 1,804-foot-tall Burj Jumeira, a split-volume tower that will feature a large void between its two curvilinear masses. The project will erupt from a pond emblazoned with the fingerprint of Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum.

Nashville gets its first undergraduate architecture program

Nashville's Christian liberal arts institution, Belmont University, announced that it is creating a five-year Bachelor of Architecture program to increase the number of future architects in the city. It will be the first of its kind in Middle Tennessee and only the second in the state.

Thieves steal Frank Lloyd Wright and Schindler furniture pieces around Los Angeles

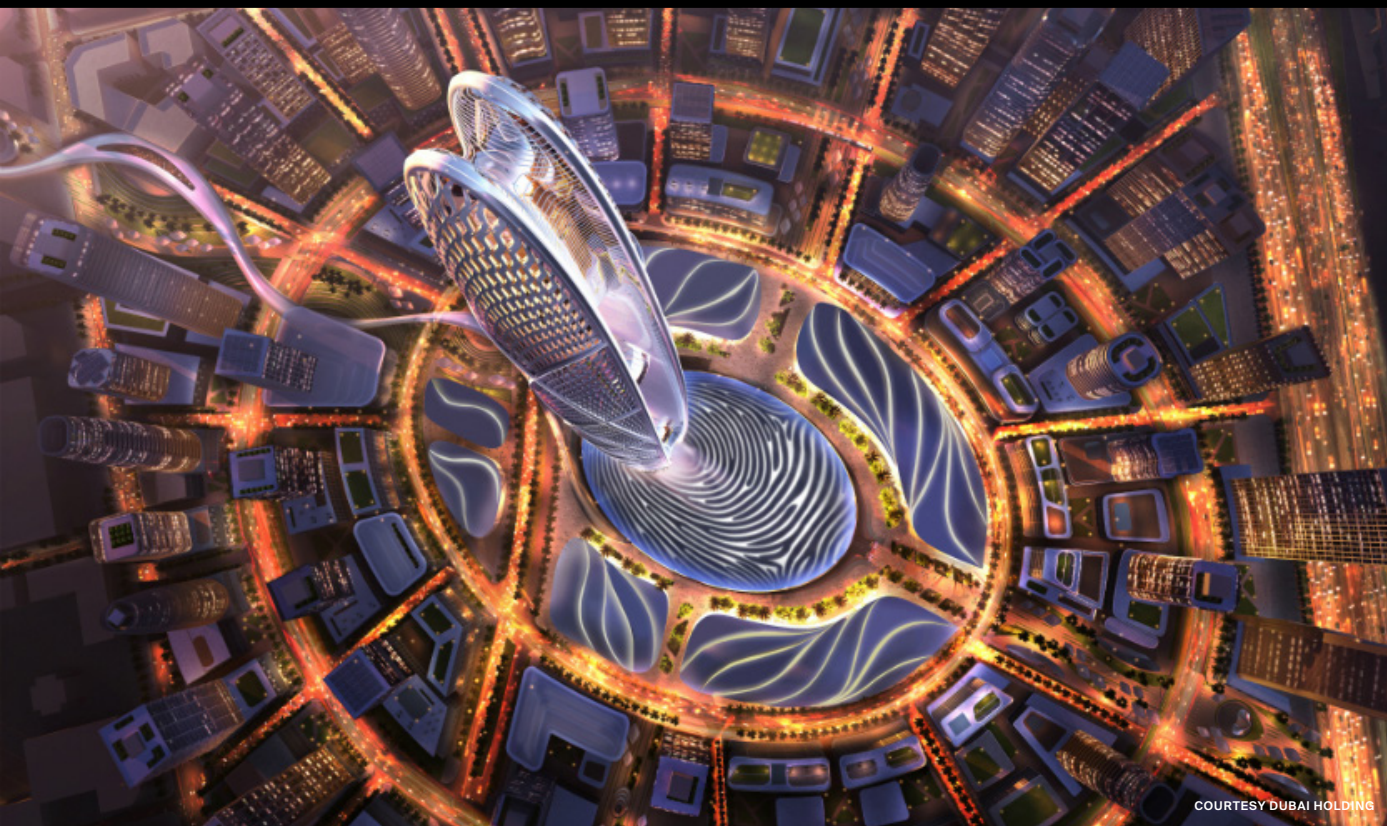
The *Los Angeles Times* reports that a pair of lamps designed by Wright and a cushioned chair by Schindler disappeared in 2012 from a storage warehouse owned by the University of Southern California. A reader recently sent an anonymous letter to the newspaper detailing the suspected theft.

Farshid Moussavi wins competition to design first Ismaili cultural center in the United States

London-based architect Farshid Moussavi has been selected by His Highness the Aga Khan to design an Ismaili cultural center on an 11-acre site in Houston, Texas. This will be the seventh such center in the world and the first in the United States.

James Corner Field Operations is bringing a public beach to Manhattan

The Hudson River Park Trust has announced Manhattan's first public beach. The nonprofit group has tapped James Corner Field Operations to transform the disused Gansevoort Peninsula (the site of the old salt shed) into a 5.5-acre park and beach on the Hudson River.



Ilias Papageorgiou steps away from SO-IL, starts own firm

After serving as a partner at SO-IL for eleven years, Ilias Papageorgiou has stepped away to start his own firm, PILA. Papageorgiou, an Athens-born architect, will split the practice between his native city and New York.

UCLA launches the country's first intensive affordable housing development course

UCLA's Ziman Center for Real Estate has launched an affordable housing development program geared toward sharing some of the most innovative approaches in the field with housing professionals. The intensive three-week program will ask students to develop conceptual proposals for projects in the city.

Judge rules that lawsuit against the Obama Presidential Center can proceed

A lawsuit against Chicago's proposed Obama Presidential Center will proceed, potentially delaying construction by months or even years. The lawsuit, filed by Protect Our Parks and three others, argues that the project's intrusion into the historic Jackson Park is illegal, partly because the center won't be a presidential library.

Luis Vidal and Gensler design new terminal for Pittsburgh International Airport

Spanish firm luis vidal + architects has partnered with Gensler to design an addition to the Pittsburgh International Airport in Western Pennsylvania, set to open in 2023. Initial renderings of the \$1.1 billion project show a new terminal featuring an undulating roof, a timber-clad interior, and a lush outdoor landscape.

The 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial announces curatorial focus

The third edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial is coming to the Midwest this fall with a curatorial vision by Artistic Director Yesomi Umolu and cocurators Sepake Angiama and Paulo Tavares. Under the theme, "...and other such stories," the Biennial will engage "multiple narratives from different geographies and histories."

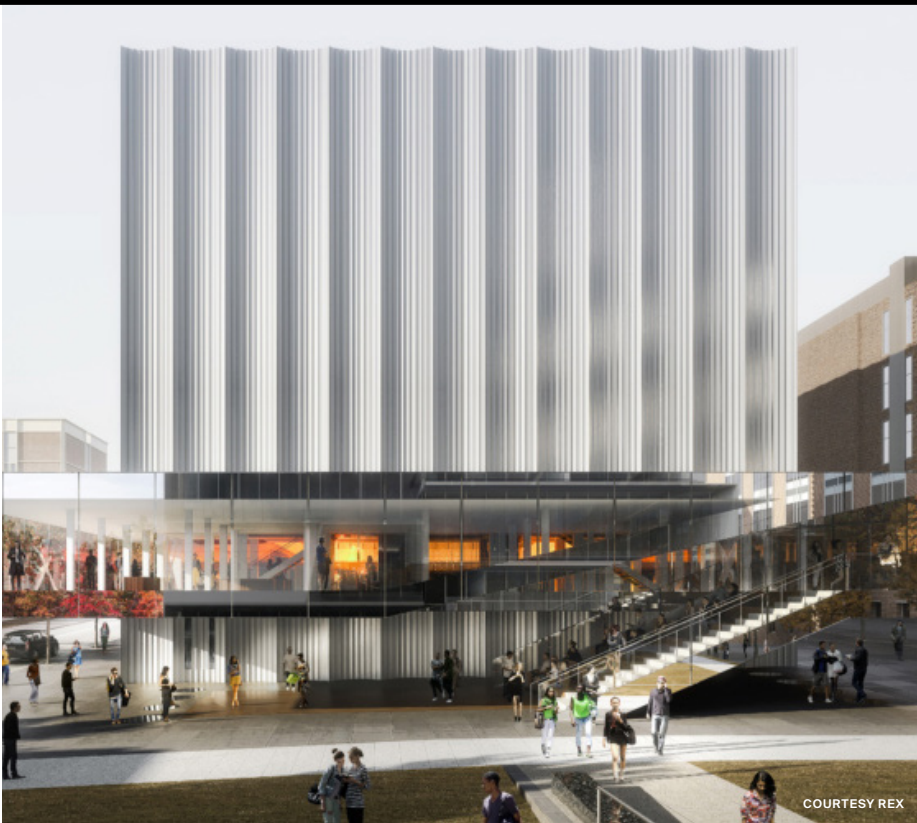


7 In Case You Missed It...

For more information and images for all of these stories, visit: archpaper.com/ICYMI

REX reveals new adaptable Performing Arts Center for Brown University

REX has released renderings of Brown University's new Performing Arts Center (PAC), a boxy, 94,500-square-foot building designed with a "radical vision" for the school that features a transformative performance space. The massive institutional project is slated to open in spring of 2022.



Junya Ishigami chosen to design the 2019 Serpentine Pavilion

Junya Ishigami, the Golden Lion winner at the 2010 Venice Architecture Biennale, was selected for a design that centers on a monolithic stone canopy. The installation will rise on the grounds of London's Serpentine Galleries on June 20.

Amazon claims it isn't building a new headquarters in New York City after all

In a statement, Amazon blames political opposition for the decision, contrasting the enthusiasm of Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio with the attitudes of "state and local politicians" who have vocally opposed the terms of the plan since its announcement in November 2018.

Italian architect and editor Alessandro Mendini passes away

Architect and two-time editor of *Domus*, Alessandro Mendini has passed away at the age of 87. Lauded for his playful use of color and sense of proportion, Mendini was a key figure in the resurgence of Italian design after World War II and cofounded Atelier Mendini in 1987.

OMA to expand Sotheby's New York headquarters

Sotheby's has announced an expansive OMA-led renovation of its Manhattan headquarters with a target opening date of May 3. The reorganization of the auction house's Upper East Side building will expand the amount of exhibition space from 67,000 square feet to 90,000 and add 40 new galleries.

David Adjaye to design Ghana's first Venice Art Biennale pavilion

The Adjaye-designed pavilion will be made up of overlapping concentric exhibition spaces clad in "locally sourced earth." These spaces will reference traditional Ghanaian structures and house installations that track the evolution of Ghana's freedom across three generations.

Amazon backs out of Seattle's Rainier Square after head tax debacle

The tech giant has announced it will be sub-leasing its space in the NBBJ-designed Rainier Square Tower and looking elsewhere to meet its permanent needs. This comes after Amazon threatened to withdraw its 722,000-square-foot lease last May over a possible \$500-per-employee "head tax."

Diller Scofidio + Renfro beat a crowded shortlist for the Hungarian Museum of Transport

DS+R's winning scheme heavily involves the idea of "ground transportation" and carving into the ground plane to afford visitors views from underneath the collection. Featuring a transparent facade, the elongated structure will project from an existing midcentury modern building on the 17-acre industrial site.

Sidewalk Labs reveals Snøhetta and Heatherwick designs for its Toronto development

Sidewalk Labs has released a batch of new renderings from Snøhetta and Heatherwick Studio, as well as documents detailing how the company plans to pay for the ground-up development. The company also announced it will build a tall-timber factory in Ontario to meet demands for the 12-acre project.



Snøhetta's revised AT&T Building scheme clears Landmarks Commission

In a public meeting, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) granted Snøhetta's previous changes to the Philip Johnson and John Burgee-designed office building with a Certificate of Appropriateness. Work can now begin on the project, but the design team will work with the LPC to address new issues.



East

Snark Park



With the first phase of Hudson Yards complete and open to the public, so too is Snarkitecture’s rotating gallery space on the second floor of the Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards along Tenth Avenue. The “Snark Park” was envisioned by developer Related Companies as a “museum quality” curated exhibition space with thrice-yearly shows from Snarkitecture and associated limited-edition “retail drops.”

The space’s inaugural show, *Lost and Found*, presents visitors with a forest of crumbling pillars that the design team has likened to wizened trees in an enchanted forest. The irregular size, shape, and placement of each colorless pillar encourages guests to explore, inhabit, touch, and in some cases, sit on, the total installation. Traveling deep enough through the maze of

columns, viewers can discover a one-way mirror wall that lets them spy on the progress of their friends.

Lost and Found is only the first of Snarkitecture’s ongoing series in the space, and as an expression at the intersection of art and retail, it appears to have landed in just the right place. Admission is ticketed and available for purchase on the Snark Park website. **Jonathan Hilburg**

The Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards
Second Floor
20 Hudson Yards
New York, NY

Designers: Snarkitecture

West

Beverly Center



The 886,000-square-foot Beverly Center first opened in 1982, in true Los Angeles fashion, on the site of a former children’s amusement park and next door to an active oil drilling site. Critic Aaron Betsky, appraising the structure ten years later in the *Los Angeles Times*, consecrated the blob-shaped mega-mall as “the Acropolis of shopping, dedicated to our national religion, consumption.” A new luxury-oriented \$500 million overhaul by Studio Fuksas has only made that description more apt.

The eight-story edifice has undergone a midlife facelift that includes the addition of an undulating aluminum mesh facade over the building’s five above-grade parking levels. The expanded metal veil billows around the hulking mass, disappearing to mark three monumental entrances and a pair of glass-wrapped escalator bays.

The mall itself is laid out along the building’s top three floors, where a new 25,000-square-foot skylight and other reconfigured vertical openings bring crisp, white sunlight into its gleaming halls.

Antonio Pacheco

8500 Beverly
Boulevard
Los Angeles

Designer: Studio Fuksas

East

NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center



The first new civic building built in Auburn, New York, in 40 years lets visitors explore the city’s place in the history of civil rights movements. The nARCHITECTS-designed Equal Rights Heritage Center frames views of surrounding landmarks to expand the reach of the center to the building’s historic context.

The 7,500-square-foot, \$10 million Heritage Center opened to the public on November 13, 2018. The single-story center sits smack-dab between several historic landmarks in the city’s South Street Area Historic District, directly across the street from the Memorial City Hall and next to the William H. Seward House Museum. A corbelled, pink brick facade was used to better blend the building into the mainly federal-style neighborhood.

Graphic design studio MTWTF worked

with nARCHITECTS to codesign the exhibition and wayfinding across the building’s figure-eight circulation path, and the nARCHITECTS-led team served double duty as the Heritage Center’s curator. Zones of the exhibition are organized by medium rather than topic, and the center uses posters, videos, recordings, and other materials to chart the history of equal rights in New York State. Construction took only nine months.

Admission is free, and the center is open from 10:00 am through 4:00 pm daily.

Jonathan Hilburg

25 South Street
Auburn, NY

Designer: nARCHITECTS

The stobs of Sea Ranch

In a recent lecture at the Canadian Center for Architecture in conjunction with her curated exhibit *Architecture Itself and Other Postmodernist Myths* (through April 7), West Coast historian Sylvia Lavin takes on the postmodernism myth-making machine of Sea Ranch, a development on the rugged Sonoma County coastline in northern California. Currently the subject of a much ballyhooed exhibit at SFMOMA, Sea Ranch is often claimed as the West Coast origin of pomo, Lavin says. Furthermore, she adds, “There are all kinds of stories that developed about Sea Ranch. One of the most famous was that it invented the idea of ‘living lightly on the land,’ that instead of radical transformation of the landscape and radical urban renewal, things would start to return to a state of nature, a kind of new authenticity would be produced, all of which was captured in the attention to the use of natural materials like wood.” But based on little evidence except for an image of a “funny-looking wooden stob,” or tree stump, she points out the land had to be cleared of old growth forest, some-



thing she smirks is “illegal today,” and the development was pasted over with super-graphic images of rams heads—an image of nature rather than the real thing.

Safdie sounds off: “We were promised infrastructure!”

During a keynote lecture for the 2019 Modernism Week extravaganza in Palm Springs, California, this February, architect Moshe Safdie became the latest high-profile designer to publicly critique America’s crumbling infrastructure. After presenting a dazzling array of new and forthcoming works, the architect produced a blunt assessment for a captive American audience when asked why so many of the featured projects were located outside the United States.

“The United States is falling behind,” Safdie said. “Around the world, the competition [for bold infrastructure] doesn’t stop—until you land at Kennedy or LAX.” As the mood sank, Safdie hammered at America’s lagging “lack of urban initiative” as a chief impediment to adventurous infrastructure projects in the country, while also lobbing direct criticism at President Trump by adding, “We were promised infrastructure!”

Who said it?

Mies van der Rohe claimed that “God is in the details.” Who said, “Details wag da dog?” (The answer will be in the next month’s Eavesdrop).



Send paparazzi shots and parametric curves to eavesdrop@archpaper.com.

Hudson Yards opens

Here are some of the strange spectacles and sights that unfolded on March 14 when New York’s Hudson Yards feted itself.



FREE OF
CRYSTALLINE
SILICA



Gravity Project Columbus, USA | Architectural Alliance Inc. and NBBJ | self-portrait of the iconic street artist Eduardo Kobra

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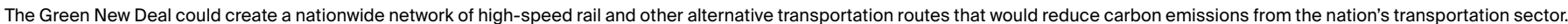
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As the potential changes begin to take form, inclusion will likely remain a top priority for designers. Dowdell explains: “In general, everyone needs to have a seat at the decision-making table as it relates to shaping our collective future on this planet. With such a high concentration of minorities in cities, it is absolutely critical that a truly diverse set of minds and voices are empowered to implement the best of the Green New Deal.” **Antonio Pacheco**

In Memoriam: Kevin Roche (1922–2019)



Kevin Roche in Birmingham, Michigan, during the early 1950s.

The death of architect Kevin Roche on March 1 at 96 marked the end of an era—the mid-century modern era that the work of his mentor, Eero Saarinen, came to symbolize. Roche and his late partner, John Dinkeloo, founded the successor firm that finished a number of the projects that remained incomplete when Saarinen died in 1961 at 51. Roche, Dinkeloo, and their partners then went on to build impressive high modern buildings of their own.

Roche, who was born in Dublin, Ireland, studied architecture at the National University there, and received his first commission even before he graduated. It was from his father, Eamonn Roche, for a piggery in County Cork that housed 1,000 animals. After completing his degree in 1945, he became an apprentice to Ireland’s most important modern architect, Michael Scott, and worked on the Busáras bus station, Dublin’s first significant modern building. Then he moved to London to work for Maxwell Fry, where he read an article in *The Architectural Review* about Mies van der Rohe, who “was not as well known as Le Corbusier at the time,” and decided to come to America to study with him at the Illinois Institute of Technology. That venture, in 1948, was short-lived, as Roche was short on funds and found the experience disappointing. So he moved to New York to join the officially international team designing the United Nations headquarters under Wallace Harrison, before moving to Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, to join an unintentionally international team in the office of Eero Saarinen.

It was the place to be at that moment in time, with people from all over the world in the office, including Chuck Bassett, Gunnar Birkerts, Edmund Bacon, Kent Cooper, Niels Diffrient, Ulrich Franzen, Olav Hammarström, Hugh Hardy, Nobuo Hozumi, Mark Jaroszewicz, Louis Kahn, Paul Kennon, Joe Lacy, Anthony Lumsden, Leonard Parker, Glen Paulsen, Cesar Pelli, David Powrie, Harold Roth, Robert Venturi, and Lebbeus Woods. “And everyone was designing,” as Venturi once told me. “It was not like today when half the people would be doing public relations or something.”

Roche, who arrived in the office as it was beginning to grow from 10 to over 100, soon became Saarinen’s right-hand man. “He liked the way I organized a job,” Roche told me. The way things were done there was that every day a number of the young architects would be asked to work on a building or a

part of a building, to sketch and develop ideas. Then Roche would collect the sketches and hang them up for Saarinen to examine. Eero would come in later and pick the most interesting ones and ask the person who had created it to develop it further. It was a devastating experience for some, like Venturi, whose sketches were never chosen, and a high for those, like Pelli, who were asked to develop designs further and put in charge of important projects.

After Saarinen died, the firm moved to New Haven as previously planned. Some then drifted off. Pelli, for example, left after completing the TWA Terminal (formally the TWA Flight Center) and the Morse and Stiles Colleges at Yale.

Roche remained in Connecticut and, along with technologically gifted John Dinkeloo and some other talented young architects, founded Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Partners. They completed Saarinen’s Corten-steel-faced John Deere & Company headquarters in Moline, Illinois (1964), the mirrored glass Bell Telephone Corporation Laboratories in Holmdel, New Jersey (1962), the iconic North Christian Church in Columbus, Indiana (1964), and the dignified Columbia Broadcasting System Headquarters in New York City (1965).

Roche Dinkeloo then went on to design numerous distinctive buildings, such as the dark metal and glass Ford Foundation headquarters in Manhattan with its central, enclosed garden (1967); the Oakland Museum of California (1969), with a 5-acre terraced roof (designed by Dan Kiley) that functions as a public park; and the rather funereal but original Center for the Arts at Wesleyan University in Connecticut (1973). There were corporate headquarters—a sprawling white-walled palazzo for General Foods in Rye Brook, New York (1982); a futuristic, low-lying structure for Union Carbide in Danbury, Connecticut, that houses cars as comfortably as workers (also 1982); and a columnar skyscraper on Wall Street for J. P. Morgan (1990)—among the practice’s 50 or more projects. Over the years, Roche Dinkeloo designed and renovated galleries at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, including the dramatic pavilion for the Temple of Dendur; the Jewish Museum on Fifth Avenue; and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park City. Although his firm did buildings all over the world, Roche’s last major one was a conference center in Dublin, where he had been born in 1922.

Roche’s close relationship with Saarinen defined much of his career, though. He met his wife, Jane Clair Tuohy, at Saarinen’s office. They were planning to marry a few weeks after Eero died but waited until 1963. His wife, five children and 15 grandchildren survive him.

Roche was a recipient of the Pritzker Prize in 1982 and the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects in 1993. He will be remembered as a major figure of his time. **Jayne Merkel**



Instant Replay

With four consecutive Stanley Cup victories in its history, the **Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum** is a beloved fixture of Long Island life. When the owner of the 1972 arena decided to reward fans with a renovation worthy of its storied past, it reimaged the venue with an overcladding that would bring new life to the facility. With a design by **SHoP Architects** and **Thornton Tomasetti**, the new folded-ribbon facade of composite aluminum fins connects to the original structure with a minimum of intervention, ensuring thoughtful reuse of a venue that still has a lot of wins in its future. Read more about it in **Metals in Construction** online.

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Live from the underground

Space p11 makes its home off the grid in Chicago’s Pedway.



ROBERT CHASE HEISHMAN/SPACE P11



ROBERT CHASE HEISHMAN/SPACE P11

Top: Space p11 is a new art and architecture exhibition space in Chicago’s underground Pedway. **Above:** *Phytovision*, an installation by artist Lindsey French, exhibited in Space p11.

“The Pedway is an exquisite corpse,” said Jonathan Solomon of the five-mile-long, roughly hewn assembly of underground pedestrian spaces that make up Chicago’s Pedway, which is now subterranean home of the new design and architecture-focused gallery he co-directs, Space p11 (‘p’ for Pedway, ‘space 11’ from the lease). Solomon, who is Director of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, directs the gallery alongside David L. Hays, associate professor of landscape architecture at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

Those looking for consistency in the architecture of the Pedway would be hard-pressed to do so. Its network of underground routes connects 40 city blocks and almost 50 buildings in Chicago’s Loop district, and includes the occasional building lobby and basement. Ownership is both public and private, and the system is therefore not tended evenly and signage is not consistent, confusing passerby and discouraging its use altogether. Portions of the system have as much personality as a jet bridge, or are redolent with urban odors. Like the city above it, the Pedway is not perfect.

All of these issues spur many Chicagoans to shame the area. But Space p11 looks upon these challenges as consequences of growth and time, and offers a buffer and

refuge in the formerly anonymous space of a renovated storefront. As Solomon told *AN*, “We are looking to encourage the many institutions above to take ownership and make the pedway a space for culture.”

The gallery’s commitment to a sense of shared agency brought additional programming to the Pedway that coincided with its opening. The Chicago Loop Alliance, a local nonprofit that works to encourage placemaking and foster economic development, partnered with artists to create a series of pop-up experiences, dubbed Short-Cuts, that activated elements like walls and abandoned phone booths with performances, drawing, and audio installations. Space p11 opened on December 3 with *Phytovision*, an exhibition of works by Lindsey french (who spells her last name with a lower case f), an experiment in the hierarchy of perception between humans and plants.

Space p11 is a project of Acute Angles, Inc., the publishers of the design journal *Forty-Five*. The gallery was designed by Chicago-based practice Future Firm, which subtly improved the space by borrowing the language of retail in the window framing and custom signage. “P11” is scripted in neon tube above a felted black letterboard announcing the bill of fare. **Elizabeth Blasius**

Rural Excellence

BVH Architecture’s Wisner-Pilger public school makes a statement in a rural Nebraska town disfigured by a tornado.



COURTESY BVH ARCHITECTURE

The addition to the Wisner-Pilger high school by BVH Architecture.

On June 16, 2014, a tornado tore through the small agricultural community of Pilger, Nebraska, causing catastrophic damage to the village, 85 miles northwest of Omaha. The tornado, one of two that hit Pilger on the same day, generated winds of up to 200 miles an hour, left two people dead and 16 critically injured, and caused the destruction of over half of the village’s buildings.

As it spiraled its way off center from Pilger’s Main Street, the storm also heavily damaged the Wisner-Pilger Middle School, the only school in Pilger. Built in 1909, the school served K-12 students from the village until 1969, when the Pilger School District consolidated with the neighboring community of Wisner. At the time the storm hit, the Wisner-Pilger Middle School served approximately 75 fifth and sixth grade students, with an elementary-through-fourth-grade school and a facility for high school students located ten miles east in Wisner.

The condition of the school left the Wisner-Pilger Board of Education with a contentious set of options—rebuild the destroyed middle school, bring all three schools to a new facility in Pilger, or combine all three schools on one campus in Wisner. “Educationally, a single-site school was the best solution,” said Darin Hanigan, project coordinator at BVH Architecture, based in Lincoln, Nebraska. Visiting Pilger within days of the tornado’s aftermath, BVH found that the damage was too extensive to repair. The decision was made to build an addition onto the high school in Wisner for pre-K through sixth grade.

The new school needed to be an object of pride for both Wisner and Pilger. “Rural communities get a new building once every five years—if they are lucky,” said Hanigan. “They want to make a statement.” For BVH Architecture, making a statement started from the inside out. This included omitting rooms that cater to only one use, and taking a look at opportunities for the structure to complement the school’s unique educational model. With all students learning

under the same roof, there was a need for spaces where grades could collaborate and students could learn at different levels. With this in mind, BVH designed an educational environment that reflected the ratio of time spent in their assigned classroom, 20 percent, versus the time they spent outside of it. The 80 percent would be spent in flexible, clustered areas, some of which doubled up on their use. The commons, located just inside the school’s entrance, serves as a gathering place but also as a lunchroom.

Moving through the building, students pass through a tactile environment with ample room to display their work, as well as laser cut metal panels with designs inspired by math, language, the solar system, and local topography. Surfaces are kickable, trackable, writable and often magnetic. Windows are carefully placed to support educational activities, with low windows located inside reading nooks, and high windows placed in resource spaces and hallways. High windows are kept away from teaching walls to minimize glare. Windows are arranged throughout the school to accommodate views at a range of heights, whether the students are walking through the school or seated at their desks. “Students spend their time inside versus outside, so that’s where the money should go,” Hanigan added. The space abounds with good, defused light, courtesy of a cost-effective metal screening system.

BVH Architecture remained ever mindful of the conditions that brought them to create the new school. The roof system of the band room has a hollow core, integrated into the precast wall, with the band room itself set inside the school’s center. No windows are used in the exterior facade and a blast-proof door was used for the exterior exit. The band room has the ability to shelter every student and educator on the K-12 campus if a tornado were to pass through again. **EB**

15 News



Pedro y Juana's winning YAP proposal will bring a jungle print-covered enclosure to MoMA PS1's courtyard.

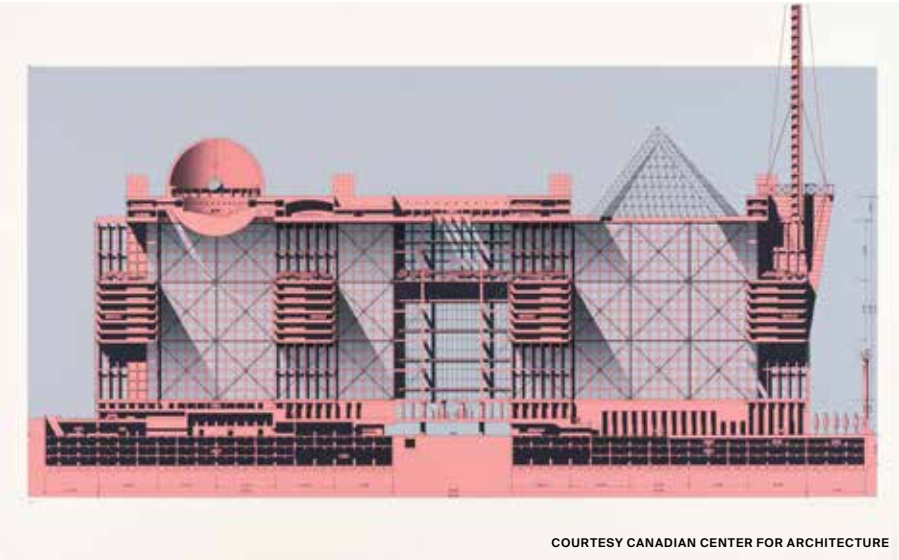
continued from front page “The project is jungle themed, so we couldn't resist adding a waterfall” to meet the competition brief's water feature requirement. Reuss added that the waterfall would also animate the space with the sound of falling water.

The drum-shaped installation is set to take over the MoMA PS1 courtyard for the museum's Warm-Up summer concert series from June to September later this year.

MoMA PS1 chief curator Peter Eleey added that “by juxtaposing two landscapes in transition—the jungle and the Long Island City skyline—[Pedro & Juana] draw

attention to the evolving conditions of our environment, both globally and locally, at a crucial moment.”

Other finalists for this year's MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program included Low Design Office (DK Osseo-Asare and Ryan Bollom); Oana Stănescu and Akane Moriyama; Matter Design (Brandon Clifford, Johanna Lobdell, and Wes McGee); and TO (José G. Amozurrutia and Carlos Facio). Proposals from all five teams will be exhibited at MoMA PS1 in summer 2019. **Antonio Pacheco**



Section, New Tokyo City Hall, 1986, by Arata Isozaki & Associates.

continued from front page after World War II, Isozaki made his name as one of the few Japanese architects building abroad—and in doing so, exported a truly international style to the West.

“When I was old enough to begin an understanding of the world,” writes Isozaki, “my hometown was burned down. Across the shore, the Atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, so I grew up on ground zero. It was in complete ruins, and there was no architecture, no buildings and not even a city. Only barracks and shelters surrounded me. So, my first experience of architecture was the void of architecture, and I began to consider how people might rebuild their homes and cities.”

The Pritzker Jury's citation makes Isozaki's importance in facilitating a global dialogue clear.

“Clearly, he is one of the most influential figures in contemporary world architecture on a constant search, not afraid to change

and try new ideas. His architecture rests on profound understanding, not only of architecture but also of philosophy, history, theory, and culture. He has brought together East and West, not through mimicry or as a collage, but through the forging of new paths.”

Isozaki is the eighth Japanese architect to be awarded the prize. The 2019 awards ceremony will be held in May at the Château de Versailles in Paris, followed by a lecture. **Jonathan Hilburg**



See more at
archpaper.com



Design Architect: Renzo Piano Building Workshop
Architect of Record: Davis Brody Bond LLP
Structural Engineer: WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff
Photograph: Frank Oudeman

Shaking Bad

In New York, passing subways can shake entire buildings, but that wasn't an option for Columbia University's new **Jerome L. Greene Science Center**. Home to sensitive laboratory and imaging equipment requiring exceptional stability, the design by **Renzo Piano Building Workshop** relies on a steel structure to reduce floor vibrations to a miniscule 2,000 mips. Even as the elevated No. 1 train roars past, this helps ensure that nothing distracts from the scientific advances being made within the center's unshakable walls. Read more about it in **Metals in Construction** online.

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More Than a Phase

Learning from McKinsey’s Design Study.

“I started as a commercial artist, and I want to finish as a business artist...During the hippie era, people put down the idea of business. They’d say, ‘Money is bad’ and ‘Working is bad.’ But making money is art, and working is art—and good business is the best art.”
—Andy Warhol

McKinsey & Company’s recent study on design confirms what designers have long known to be true. And it recommends all businesses do more of it. To McKinsey, design is the single most important factor for growth and should be an integral part of every organization. For it to have the greatest impact, McKinsey advises companies to make design a cyclical process instead of a single phase in a project, and dedicate the time needed to achieve good results. On the occasion of the McKinsey Design Index’s release, *AN* contributor Jeffrey Inaba talked with Ben Sheppard, one of the report’s authors.

Jeffrey Inaba: It’s fascinating that companies are interested in improving their quality of design, but they aren’t sure how to go about it. The Index says, “Less than 5 percent of the companies surveyed reported that their leaders could make objective design decisions, from developing a new product to entering a new sector.” That’s a surprising realization about the state of the business world.

Ben Sheppard: In the last five years we’ve received a critical mass of questions from business leaders about design, and so we thought we needed to do a global study on what the opportunity is. They’ve got the highest of aspirations—they want to make the next iPhone, the next Amazon Prime—but they don’t know what actions they should take to give their companies the best possible chance at designing the best products and services.

Jl: What correlations were found between design and business performance?

BS: There are two things. First is the business value of design, and second are the actions leaders should take to capture that value. On the first, there are three numbers to remember. One: Those people who are top performers in terms of design significantly outperform their industry peers—as much as 70 percent higher shareholder return gross than their industry peers.

Two: Across the board, whether you’re doing product, physical, or digital design, good design is good for business regardless of what type of design you are doing.

Three: The study showed that the companies who are best at design were disproportionately rewarded in a given industry. Users care about the very small number of companies in an industry that are consistently making the best products and services.

These are remarkable numbers. At McKinsey we do a lot of essential science research pieces. This is one of the most statistically significant correlations we’ve seen in years.

The second part: Because the study was done in such a rigorous and detailed way, not only can we say at the broad level that design is the most tremendous engine for business growth, we can point out the individual actions that show the best correlation with improved business performance. This is a world first, to tie individual leaders’ actions to performance.



Ben Sheppard leads McKinsey & Company’s Product Development and Design practices in the United Kingdom.

Jl: Good. Before we get into the actions, what is McKinsey’s definition of design?

BS: For our clients, design is understanding users’ needs and then creating fantastic products and services to meet those needs; put the prototype into users’ hands and listen to what they’re telling you.

Jl: It must be a sea change for many companies to go from seeing design as an added cost reserved for special projects to an essential part of what they do as a business. Let’s start with the section, “More than a Feeling,” since it touches upon this paradigm shift.

BS: What we’ve found is that those companies that have treated design with the same rigor as they treat discussions on revenue and cost significantly financially outperformed their peers. The companies who quantified design metrics in their discussions about design outperformed their peers.

Jl: Of the recommended actions, the section called “More Than a Phase” stands out as a key lesson for businesses. Design firms try to communicate to clients that paying for the hours to iterate are worth it since the added time will lead to a better, more desirable project outcome. McKinsey’s study argues precisely for this point.

BS: Yes. We have very clear evidence that those companies who just have one discrete design phase are outperformed by those companies who iterate with their end users from early strategy to postlaunch.

Jl: What does McKinsey say to companies who are hesitant to invest the time in undertaking an iterative process?

BS: It’s a case of investing to save. Take Disneyland, for example. The first prototype of the MagicBand [an all-in-one wristband device for Disneyland/World guests] cost 40 dollars and is made from parts from Home Depot. If you iterate early, you do so at lower cost. If you have a single design phase and decide to make all your investment at once, then if it turns out you were wrong, you’ve got a huge loss. When you talk about the risk associated with that, not just from a cost point of view, but also from a sales point of view, it’s easier to quantify why iteration is so important.

Jl: “More Than a Product” observes that just about any project involves the design of a digital as well as physical side. Whether it’s a building or a car, there needs to be a digital component to a product.

BS: Traditionally, many industries thought of themselves as only physical or only digital. Now everything has some combination of digital plus physical space. We found that all the companies that historically have been very good at just hardware or just software now find the very thing that gave them success in the past is something of a burden in the future. The automotive industry is a great example of this. For decades, it was all about hardware. Now suddenly their users are saying, “We expect a great experience, from the digital apps within the vehicles themselves to the way that software integrates with the rest of my life.” That’s a real challenge for car companies. But the rewards

are rich. Those companies that are able to break down the internal barriers between service design, experience design, front-end, back-end, user interface, and user experience and provide a great overall experience are outperforming their peers.

Jl: How can companies take advantage of the different speeds of digital and physical production? Execution is much faster on the digital side. How can that help the experience of the physical side?

BS: It’s so much easier to iterate in a software environment than it is in a physical one. What we have found, though, is even in industries where traditionally people have thought it’s impossible to iterate, you can iterate. One example is shipping. It could take as many as ten years for a ship to go from concept to launch. In the past, there was one design, which was locked in at the beginning, because they said you can’t iterate a whole ship. Now there are two different design specifications, one that is locked early on, and a second one for software—for control and operation systems. As technology evolves and its operators’ ways of working evolve, iterations can continue to be made to those systems. When it’s launched a decade later, the software is modern, intuitive, and easy to use.

Jl: A McKinsey retail banking study found that early technology adopters prefer their most important transactions to occur in physical spaces. In other words, people who are deeply interested in digital technology are deeply interested in physical environments. When making important decisions, they take cues from the person they interact with and the design of the space they’re in. Are companies thinking about the design of their physical environments given that physical space becomes more consequential as our lives become increasingly digital?

BS: I’m working with a car dealership, which has traditionally been a physical environment. We hear lots of pain points with that model: Often the centers are outside of towns; you need to travel to them; the salespeople are often commission-based and that can lead to a pressurized environment. Therefore, some people hypothesized that the future of automotive was basically an Amazon for cars. It would all be digital. Different companies piloted that, and they found it doesn’t work. People want a combination of physical and digital. While you can make things more efficient by moving to digital, often, particularly for large purchases, people still want a human connection. And as you say, the physical environment can have a big effect on that experience.

Jl: With the completion of the study, McKinsey has a good overview of the industries that can benefit from good design. What industries do you believe will have the greatest benefit?

BS: We’ve seen the power of design on everything from energy to consumer goods to hospitality.

We believe it’s a signal that design has come of age. Across industries, design is a priority for senior management. I don’t know a single company where creating fantastic products and services don’t matter. Frankly, if you’re not doing that, then why are you a company at all?



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OMA Heads West

With California on an urbanization spree, Jason Long and Shohei Shigematsu plot inventive works.



After several false starts and dead ends, OMA is finally building a critical mass of projects across the American West Coast. **Above:** OMA's First and Broadway Park, designed with Studio-MLA, in Los Angeles.

Although the Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) has been in business for decades and keeps a steadily growing constellation of offices around the globe, the firm has, until recently, had a relatively modest profile on the American West Coast.

But things are changing. As West Coast cities pursue new building efforts—including new neighborhoods, ecologically sensitive public parks, and experiments in multiuse complexes—OMA's brand of frank intellectualism has slowly found a preliminary foothold in California.

The firm's expanding Golden State presence includes a recently completed urban master plan for Facebook's Willowbrook campus in Menlo Park, a residential condominium tower in San Francisco, as well as a trio of inventive projects in Los Angeles. Over the next few years, these projects are poised to

join the Seattle Central Library and the Prada Epicenter Los Angeles, both from 2004, OMA's only completed West Coast projects to date.

The latest westward push represents an ascendant energy emanating from the firm's New York office, where OMA partners Jason Long and Shohei Shigematsu lead many dynamic projects taking shape across the continent and in Japan. When asked if a new California outpost was in the works for OMA, Shigematsu replied, "It's always been a dream of ours," before adding that current conditions were favorable but not exactly right for a potential OMA West branch. "Maybe if we get more projects out here." **AP**



The form of the firm’s first West Coast condo tower is vaguely inspired by historical skyscraper setbacks—à la Hugh Ferriss—geometries that are reflected right side up or upside down depending on the exposure.



Top: The trapezoidal Audrey Irmas Pavillion is designed to pivot away from its historic neighbor in an effort to create more pleasant spaces between the two buildings.
Above: The firm has designed Santa Monica’s tallest new building, a terraced mixed-use shopping complex that stacks quasi-public outdoor spaces across an urban site.

1 First and Broadway Park (FAB Park)

Also created in collaboration with Studio-MLA, the new First and Broadway Park in Los Angeles is set to contain a playful 100,000-square-foot retail, food, and cultural programming pavilion that anchors the ecologically sensitive park. The pavilion will be capped with an edible rooftop garden and a dining terrace that overlooks L.A.’s City Hall.

Along the ground, the park will be wrapped with ribbons of bench seating, elements fashioned to create interlocking outdoor rooms and plazas surrounded by native oak and sycamore trees. Water-absorbing landscapes around the seating areas are designed to harvest and retain rainwater while solar collection and a “Golden California” landscape lend the project its ecological bona fides.

2 The Avery (Transbay Block 8)

Related California’s crenelated 575-foot tower, known as The Avery, is part of a larger development created in conjunction with Fougerson Architecture for a blank site in downtown San Francisco’s bustling Transbay District.

For the project, the designers have carved a generous paseo through the buildable envelope for the site, creating a new retail and amenity plaza while also lending a tapered look to the 55-story tower. The gesture animates views for a collection of condominiums, market-rate apartments, and affordable housing units while also bringing sunlight down into the paseo and to the mid-rise block designed by Fougerson. Currently under construction, the tower is expected to open in 2019.

3 Audrey Irmas Pavilion

The Audrey Irmas Pavilion is the firm’s first cultural and religious project in the region. The trapezoidal building shares a site with the Wilshire Boulevard Temple and is made up of three interlocking volumes that connect to the outdoors via a sunken rooftop garden designed by landscape architecture firm Studio-MLA. An arched portal connects to a shared breezeway between the pavilion and the temple, which is framed by the leaning pavilion. The latter was designed with a pronounced slant both out of deference to historical structure and to illuminate the courtyard.

Referencing unbuilt proposals for Universal City and the L.A. County Museum of Art, Rem Koolhaas, OMA cofounder, said, “[The Pavilion] is part of a very consistent effort to do things here. It’s exciting if one thing happens to succeed, because architecture is a very complex profession where maybe a quarter of all attempts get anywhere.”

4 The Plaza at Santa Monica

Shigematsu explains that one concern driving the firm’s California projects involves delving into the region’s rich history of indoor-outdoor living. The approach is fully on display in The Plaza at Santa Monica, a 500,000-square-foot staggered mass of interlocking buildings intended to create a new mix of public outdoor spaces.

With a cultural venue embedded in the heart of the complex and ancillary indoor and outdoor public spaces laid out across building terraces, the complex aims for a unique take on the regional indoor-outdoor typology. The building is set to contain offices, a 225-suite hotel, as well as a market hall and public ice-skating rink.

Ford Foundation Landscaping

Raymond Jungles reshapes the garden at the Ford Foundation.

Ever since it was finished in 1967, the most notable feature of Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo's Ford Foundation Building has been what is not there. At the center of the building is a 12-story, 160-foot-high void occupied by a multitiered interior garden, dense with trees, flowering bushes, and lacy ferns. The original design of the garden—by the late master landscape architect Dan Kiley—frankly never flourished, but it is now in full bloom.

“For Dan, his garden was a big experiment,” said Raymond Jungles, the Coconut Grove, Florida-based landscape architect responsible for re-creating Kiley's vision while also planting his own professional roots in the redesign. When the building reopened in March after a major two-year interior restructuring and updating, Jungles's garden was ready for the building's occupants—as well as the public—to wander. “I'm a designer, I have an ego, but this project wasn't about what Raymond Jungles was doing for the space, but, rather, my desire to find Dan Kiley's original spirit for this space,” added Jungles. “I want people to enjoy the amazing garden Dan had designed for everybody—those who work in the building, and those who pass by and come inside.”

According to Guy Champin, Jungles's project manager for the new garden, “The architecture of the building is all about its two transparent facades,” referring to the walls of windows on both the 42nd and 43rd Street sides. To preserve and indeed enhance that visual effect, Champin and Jungles have established a tree canopy using some 35 Shady Lady black olives, Jacarandas, Ficus Amstel King, and other varieties that allow visitors to see through the space, while remaining aware of a beckoning urban forest unlike any other vista in Manhattan. Rectilinear brick pathways course across the space, half of which are wheel-chair-accessible.

While the hardscape remains largely untouched, given the landmark status of the building, Jungles's firm has made conspicuous visual and aural changes. In keeping with the Ford Foundation's new branding as a decidedly all-embracing forum for “social justice,” the firm was commissioned to establish a touch and smell garden where hearing and visually impaired visitors can experience the plantings.

Elsewhere, Kiley's extant rectangular pool has now been subtly fitted with a sound element. “Water, to me, is the heart and soul of any garden,” said Jungles, “and we've created the sound of moving water with pumps.” And in an effort to increase the reflective qualities of the shallow body, Jungles and Champin added black dye to the water. “Normally, dye is put in to reduce the growth of algae,” Jungles pointed out, “but here it was done to create a reflective mirror. The garden space is not just about that space, but also about the buildings across the street. One of the principals of landscape architecture is to see what you can borrow and introduce from the surrounding neighborhood.”

Although the 10,000 square feet of space devoted to greenery is now abloom with plant life, the process of making the landscape introduced other, subtler elements as well. All of the trees that are now taking root in soil and in planters were grown in Florida and shipped to New York. But according to Dinu Iovan, senior project manager for Henegan Construction, the contractors for the garden installation, those trees came with other forms of life, namely, anoles, small green lizards typical of subtropical regions. “They're everywhere in here now,” said Iovan, “which is a fun, accidental, extra ele-

ment. There's even a bat somewhere in one of these trees.”

By day or night, the garden beckons passersby. Grow lights illuminate the courtyard when it is dark outside and, month by month, new colorful blossoms are set to visually animate the space. Acknowledging the difficulties of sustaining a garden in a dry interior space with limited natural sunlight, Champin likened the newly grown—and still growing—space to a beacon. “It calls to you like it's a lighthouse in the middle of the city,” he said, “glowing with life.”

David Masello

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General Contractor:	Henegan Construction
MEP:	JB&B
Structural:	Thornton Tomasetti
Lighting:	FMS (Fisher Marantz Stone)
Irrigation:	Northern Designs
Soils:	James Urban
Landscape:	Siteworks
AV/IT/Security:	Cerami & Associates
Preservation Consultant:	Higgins Quasebarth & Partners LLC
Landscape Contractor:	Alpine Construction & Landscaping Corp.
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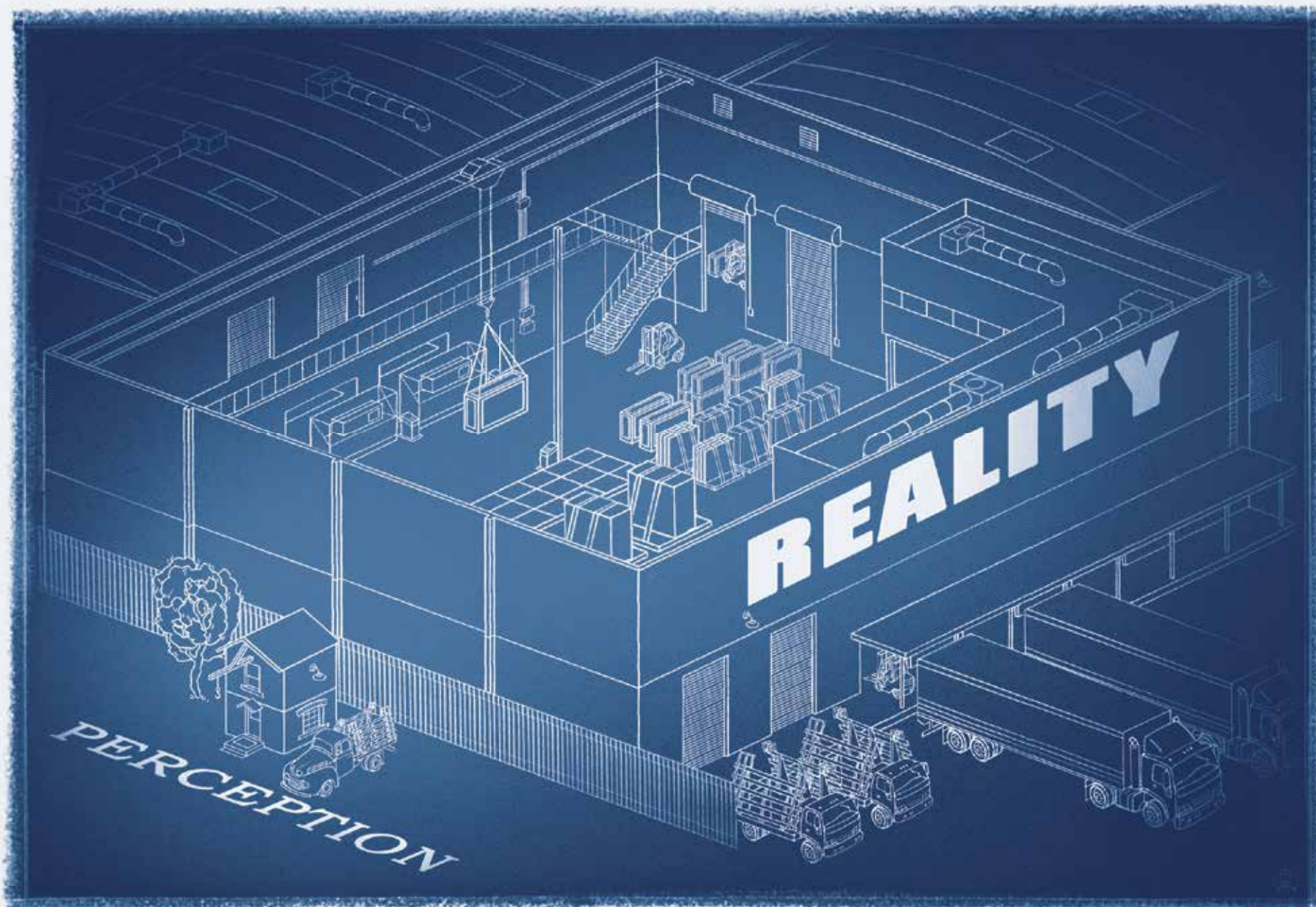


SIMON LUETHI



SIMON LUETHI

Top: The first garden in the Ford Foundation building was planted in 1967, but the new design, under the direction of Raymond Jungles, incorporates far different plant species; natural light flows in from the south and west. **Above:** The space, open to the public, features brick-lined walkways and a reflecting pool that is now equipped with an audible element that replicates the sound of flowing water.




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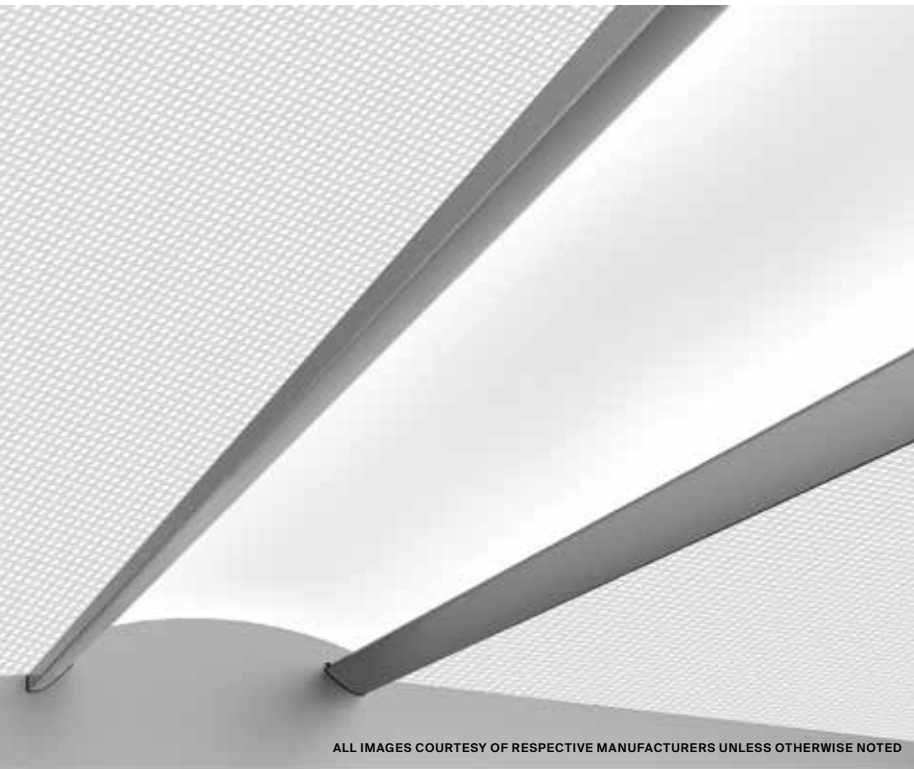
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Mapping t Amazon

Amazon may have canceled its NYC headquarters, but its footprint is everywhere. By Ingrid Burrington

For many of the people opposed to Amazon establishing a second headquarters (HQ2) in Queens, New York, casting the company into total exile was never the point. At its heart, opposition lay with the terms of the deal that wooed the company—its massive tax incentives, the process that had created the deal (without input or oversight from the New York City Council or local communities), and the dramatic impact such a real estate development project would have on the city's working class, especially by aggravating its gentrification and displacement crises.

Facing a groundswell of local opposition, Amazon announced that it had cancelled its plans for a new Queens campus on February 14, just three months after announcing its selection. While HQ2's optics and scale made it a legible enemy to rally against, Amazon's less splashy development projects have already become part of the fabric of many cities, including New York. Taking inventory of Amazon's existing physical footprint in the city, one begins to perceive a shadow infrastructure at work which reshapes urban environments more through privatized logistics and information systems than through campus construction.

In Manhattan, Amazon's physical presence might best be recognized in retail. It was at the company's 34th Street bookstore that protestors demonstrated on Cyber Monday following

the



Corporate



	AWS Loft	11,329 square feet
	Offices	962,000 square feet
	Williamsburg Photo Studio	40,000 square feet

Logistics

	Fulfillment Centers/Warehouses	1,052,250 square feet
	Amazon Lockers*	est. 3,500 square feet

*Due to volume of lockers, locations are not precisely mapped

Digital

	AWS DirectConnect sites	Unknown square feet
	Edge network data center locations*	Unknown square feet

*These locations are not precisely mapped

Retail

	Amazon stores	13,200 square feet
	Whole Foods	568,500 square feet



Top: Amazon has approximately 850 warehouses around the world according to logistics consultancy MVPWL International, which vary from fulfillment centers like this one in Chattanooga to sorting centers, food distribution hubs, and delivery stations. New York has a fulfillment center in Staten Island and two distribution hubs, one located in Manhattan and the other in Brooklyn.

Above: Amazon brick-and-mortar 4-Star stores only sell products that have received a rating of 4 or more stars on Amazon. New York's store is located in Soho.



Above: New York's AWS Loft is open to Amazon Web Services customers for meetings and work, with on-site technical assistance on AWS questions. The space is presumably designed to attract tech entrepreneurs with its coworking aesthetic and sits in ironic contrast to Amazon's own reputation as a fastidiously frugal company with far fewer of the typical Silicon Valley perks.

the HQ2 announcement. Indeed, like HQ2, the company's retail stores serve as useful rallying points. But inside the same Midtown Manhattan building that hosts the bookstore sits a more explicit locus of Amazon's presence: a 50,000-square-foot warehouse and distribution center for the company's Prime Now delivery service.

It might be helpful to state here what Amazon actually is: a logistics company misrepresented as a retail company misrepresented as a tech company. Over time, the types of products the company sells have expanded beyond books and bassinets into less obviously tangible commodities like data (via Amazon Web Services), labor (via Amazon Mechanical Turk), and "content" (via Twitch and Amazon Studios productions).

Ultimately the company's appeal isn't so much in the stuff it provides but the efficiency with which it provides stuff. Computation is obviously an important part of running a logistics operation, but Amazon's logistical ends are frequently obscured by the hype around its technical prowess. And while Amazon is increasingly in the game of making actual things, a lot of them are commodities that, in the long run, enable the movement of other commodities: Amazon Echos aren't just nice speakers, they're a means of streamlining the online shopping experience into verbal commands

and gathering hundreds of thousands of data points. Producing award-winning films and TV shows gives the company a patina of cultural respectability, but streaming them on Amazon Prime gets more people on Amazon and, in theory, buying things using Amazon Prime accounts.

Amazon's logistical foundation is most blatantly visible in the company's nearly 900 warehouses located around the world. Currently, the company has one fulfillment center (FC) in New York City. The 855,000-square-foot site in Staten Island opened in fall 2018 and had already earned Amazon \$18 million in tax credits from the state of New York before the HQ2 deal was announced. Additionally, a month before the HQ2 announcement, Amazon had also signed a ten-year lease for a new fulfillment center in Woodside, Queens.

The same day that Amazon vice president Brian Huseman testified before the New York City Council about HQ2, Staten Island warehouse employees and organizers from the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union (RWDSU) announced a plan to form a union at the Staten Island FC, citing exhausting and unsafe working conditions better optimized for warehouse robots than employees. These conditions are far from unique to Staten Island—stories about the grueling pace, unhealthy environment, and precarity of contract workers

at fulfillment centers have been reported regularly as far back as 2011.

And yet, when the Staten Island FC was first announced in 2017, a small handful of media outlets made note of this record. Unions and community leaders weren't galvanized against the Staten Island FC the way they were by HQ2 or the way they had been when Wal-Mart attempted to come to New York in 2011. In some ways, the HQ2 debacle gave new life and momentum to an organized labor challenge previously hidden in plain sight (or at least in the outer boroughs).

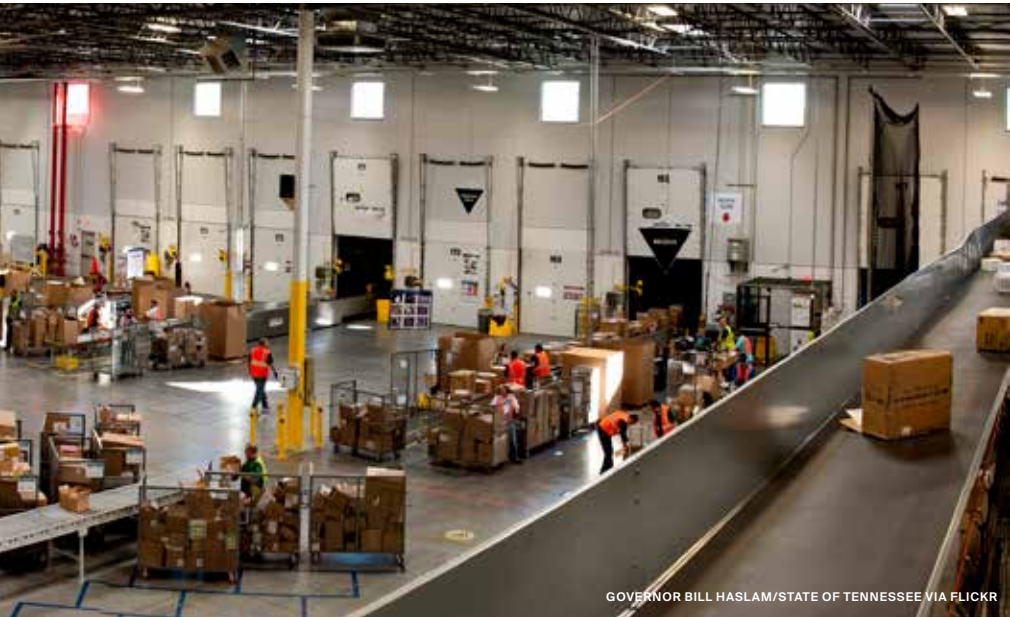
Of course, Amazon's logistics spaces aren't solely confined to far-flung corners of the New York metro area: There are two Prime Now distribution hubs in New York, one in Brooklyn and the other at the previously mentioned Midtown Manhattan location. Same-day delivery service Prime Now originated from that Midtown warehouse in 2014 and spawned Amazon Flex, an app-based platform for freelance delivery drivers to distribute Prime Now packages. (Ironically, one of the reasons Amazon has been able to become so effectively entrenched in the city is because of this kind of contingent labor force—any car in New York City can become an Amazon Flex delivery vehicle, any apartment a Mechanical Turker workplace.)

The art of logistics also depends in part on the art of marketing. To support that marketing

endeavor, Amazon has a 40,000-square-foot photo studio in a former glass manufacturing plant in Williamsburg that produces tens of thousands of images for Amazon Fashion, the company's online apparel venture. The company's forays into fashion, while less publicized, may also position it to become one of the largest retailers of clothing in the world.

New York is also home to 260 Amazon Lockers: pickup and package return sites for select products typically located in 7-Elevens and other bodega-like environments. Like Prime Now, the Lockers streamline and automate a process that would normally involve lines at the post office. First appearing in New York in 2011, the 6-foot-tall locker units can range between 6 and 15 feet wide, with the individual lockers in each unit capable of holding packages no larger than 19 x 12 x 14 inches (roughly larger than a shoebox).

While early reports indicated that store owners received a small monthly stipend for hosting the lockers, the main sell for store owners is the possibility of luring in more foot traffic. But a 2013 Bloomberg article noted that smaller businesses were frustrated by the limited returns from installing the lockers and increased power bills (lockers use a digital passcode system, requiring electricity and connectivity). There is an irony in the fact that for almost a decade before the HQ2 debacle, small businesses have been ceding



“In 2019, the premise that the digital and physical worlds are somehow mysteriously separate realms has been effectively killed by the tech industry’s measurable impact on urban life.”



Top: New York is home to 260 Amazon Lockers—pickup and package return sites for select products typically located in 7-Elevens and other bodega-like environments.
Above: Environmental groups cite data centers for Amazon Web Services, like this one in Ashburn, Virginia, as a major contributor to Virginia’s increased reliance on coal and natural gas for the state’s growing electricity needs.

physical space to Amazon only to be stuck with monolithic storage spaces serving little direct benefit.

Following its acquisition of Whole Foods in 2017, Amazon installed Lockers in all of the supermarket’s locations in the city. Whole Foods was already associated with gentrification and had an anti-union CEO before the Amazon acquisition; if anything, Amazon upped the ante by attempting to bring Whole Foods more in line with Amazon’s logistics-first approach.

Reports that Amazon has plans to open a new grocery chain suggest that early speculation about the Whole Foods acquisition was correct: Amazon wasn’t interested in Whole Foods in order to sell produce so much as to gain access to the grocery company’s rich trove of retail data, which Amazon could use to jump-start its own grocery operations. A data-driven approach has been at the core of Amazon’s logistics empire: The company was one of the first to use recommendation algorithms to show consumers other products they might also like, and Prime Now relies extensively on purchasing data to determine what items to stock in hub warehouses.

It’s unsurprising, then, that the most profitable wing of Amazon’s empire is Amazon Web Services (AWS), its cloud computing platform. AWS’s physical footprint in New York City is relatively small, with a handful of data centers

within city limits. Its most visible presence may be the AWS Loft in Soho, which opened in 2015, part of a small network of similar spots in San Francisco, Tokyo, Johannesburg, and Tel Aviv. Part coworking space for startups that use AWS and part training center for AWS products and services, the Loft inhabits a kind of in-between space between data services and marketing. The space is free for AWS users and is full of comfy seating and amenities like free coffee and snacks—ironic considering Amazon’s reputation for being absent of the kinds of perks expected at tech companies.

Belying its small spatial footprint, AWS is a major part of the city’s networked operations. The New York City Department of Transportation and the New York Public Library are both presented as model case studies of successful AWS customers, and AWS has signed contracts with multiple city agencies, including the Departments of Education and Sanitation and the City Council as far back as 2014. AWS is also a major vendor to municipal, state, and federal agencies—and, increasingly, has come under scrutiny for its multimillion dollar contracts with data mining company Palantir Technologies, which works with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to track and deport migrants, and for peddling its face recognition technology to police departments across the country.

Some of the criticism of Amazon’s campus deal with NYC came from New York City Council members, apparently unaware their office was paying Amazon for hosting web support. To be fair, New York City’s AWS contracts (including the City Council’s) are a fraction of the kind of revenue Amazon is vying for in federal defense contracting. And at this point, AWS is the industry standard upon which most of the internet runs. The situation reflects the depth to which Amazon has insinuated itself as a fundamental infrastructure provider.

New York may have dodged a gentrification bullet with HQ2, but as with so much of Big Tech, Amazon’s impact on cities might look more like death by a thousand paper cuts. A new campus might be more visible than the hidden machinery of a city increasingly reliant on delivery-based services, but both impact local economies, residents, and living conditions. Amazon’s long-standing logistics regime also inspires an infinitude of Amazon-inspired niche delivery startups familiar to New Yorkers as a pastel monospace of subway ads hawk-ing mattresses, house cleaning services, and roommates, to name just a few, along with the precarious jobs that are their defining characteristic.

There have been continued efforts in New York to challenge Amazon’s frictionless logistics regime since the HQ2 withdrawal. Pending City Council legislation banning cashless retail would affect far more businesses than just Amazon’s brick-and-mortar operations (which have automatic app-based checkout), but it would certainly stymie any expansion of its physical retail footprint. State Senator Jessica Ramos has joined labor leaders in calling for a fair union vote at the future Woodside fulfillment center. These sorts of initiatives are often more drawn out and less galvanizing than those to halt a major campus development. But they’re crucial to a larger strategy for making the tech-enabled systems of inequality in cities visible.

In 2019, the premise that the digital and physical worlds are mysteriously separate realms has been effectively killed by the tech industry’s measurable impact on urban life, from real estate prices to energy consumption. Comprehending the full impact of companies like Amazon on cities and seeing beyond their efforts to obscure or embellish their presence (glamour shots of data centers, anyone?) requires a full examination of these infrastructures outside of the companies’ preferred terms. By demanding public accountability, New York’s elected officials and community groups may have demonstrated the beginnings of just how to do that.



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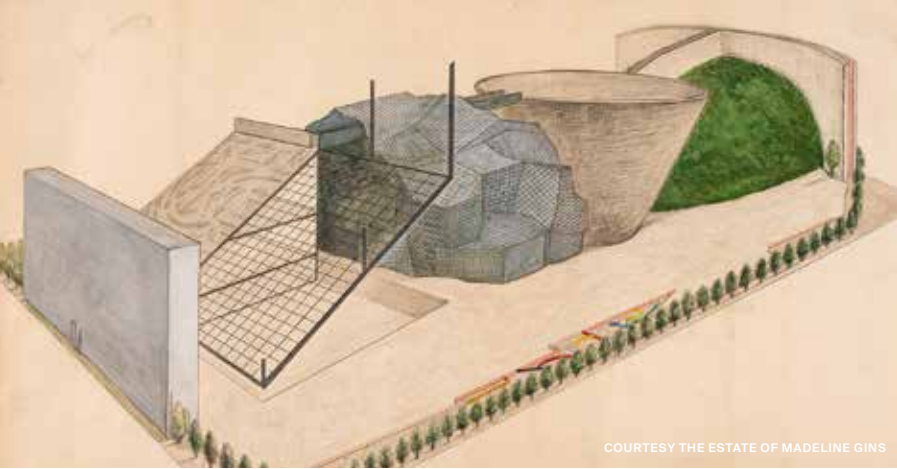
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Midwest

Arakawa and Madeline Gins:
Eternal Gradient

Graham Foundation Through May 4
Madlener House, 4 West Burton Place
Chicago



Over 40 drawings and decades of archival materials from the late artist-architects Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins have arrived in Chicago, documenting an early period in their practice that would later go on to influence their architectural projects—buildings designed to reverse aging. Geometric line art, cages, architectural models, and section drawings all break down the evolution of “Reversible Destiny,” the concept that the built environment is able to influence human physiology. Architecture was the starting point and inspiration for a body of work that

included traditional art as well as sculpture and poetry. The duo would later go on to form the Reversible Destiny Foundation, which partnered with the Estate of Madeline Gins to make the show possible. *Eternal Gradient* originally ran at Columbia University’s Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery in 2018 before moving to its current home at the Graham Foundation. Chicago and New Orleans-based practice Norman Kelley was responsible for the exhibition design.

East

The CryptoFuturist and
The New Tribal Labyrinth

Pioneer Works Through April 14
159 Pioneer Street
Brooklyn, NY



Atelier Van Lieshout’s (AVL) biomorphic, H. R. Giger-esque sculptures have descended on Pioneer Works in Red Hook, Brooklyn, for the studio’s first large-scale exhibition in the states. AVL is the one-man collective of sculptor Joep van Lieshout, and the Pioneer Works show is a conglomeration of two of Lieshout’s projects satirizing capitalism. In *New Tribal Labyrinth*, massive Industrial Revolution-era equipment creates a home for a tribe of workers who worship the origination of industry and the rise of the West as a capitalist superpower. Sculptures and furniture further blend

the workers with their tools to create reproducing robots. In the *CryptoFuturist* series, AVL looks to the Italian Futurists, who saw the rise of fascism embedded in the fascination with technology, to examine similarities between our investments in genetics and big data. “Functional” homemade sculptures used for everything from generating nuclear power to recycling food envision a more utopian, democratic future.

Midwest

Renegades: Bruce Goff and the American
School of Architecture at Bizzell

The University of Oklahoma Bizzell Memorial Library Through July 29
401 West Brooks Street
Norman, OK



American architect Bruce Goff demonstrated a singularly organic style of architecture unlike that of anyone else practicing in the mid-20th century. Once he joined the University of Oklahoma in 1947, his colleagues and students at the School of Architecture began designing similarly expressive forms under Goff’s influence. Aspiring architects flocked from Japan and South America to study under Goff and fellow professors Herb Greene and Mendel Glickman, thus building the university’s reputation for individual creativity and experimentation. Now on view at Bizzell

Memorial Library, *Renegades: Bruce Goff and The American School of Architecture at Bizzell* traces the pedagogical shift in OU’s architecture program through drawings, slides, and documents by former students and faculty. Straight from OU’s exclusive American School Archive, which also features items from Frank Lloyd Wright, Donald McDonald, and Jim Gardner, among others, viewers can see firsthand how the style developed and why Goff challenged students with the phrase “Do not try to remember,” as they embarked on creating an entirely new architecture.

West

Crumbling Empire: The Power
of Dissident Voices

The Wende Museum Through June 2
10808 Culver Boulevard
Culver City, CA



Crumbling Empire, an exhibition combining dozens of Soviet-era political posters with works by American street artist Shepard Fairey, is currently on view at the Cold War-centric Wende Museum in Los Angeles. The Soviet political paintings were recently acquired by the Wende from local collectors Tom and Jeri Ferris, two Americans who traveled regularly to the Soviet Union during the 1980s to collect works of contemporary art. The colorful and subversive works, produced during Mikhail Gorbachev’s outward-looking tenure, present

critical takes on the waning years of the Soviet empire. Fairey’s graphics and illustrations present contemporary foils to the posters while touching on similar themes. Also included in the exhibition is the central panel from Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid’s monumental 1993 work *Unity*, a portion of a large mural created by the Sots Art artists for the lobby of the U.S. Bank tower in Los Angeles. The exhibition also includes works from the American Institute of Graphic Arts, San Diego’s Ron Miriello Soviet Poster Show Collection.

Giedion and America: Repositioning the History of Modern Architecture

Reto Geiser | GTA Verlag | \$85.00

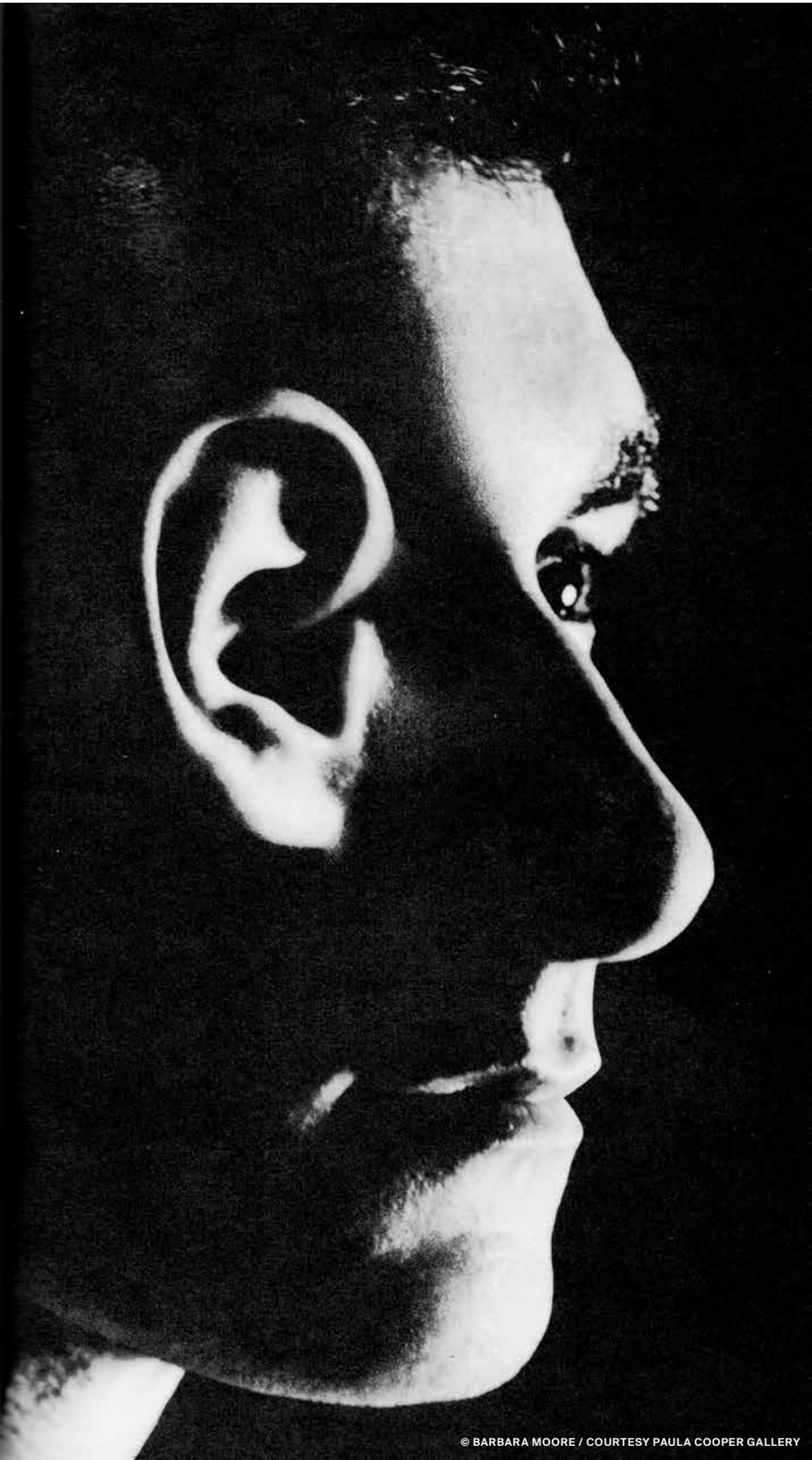
Was it an ironic coincidence or part of the modern movement’s DNA that the heroic architectural avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s was accompanied, promoted, and memorialized by historians even as protagonists like Walter Gropius vaunted breaking the shackles of history? Despite protests to the contrary, the key 19th-century concept of historicism—the idea of the spirit of the age as form-giver—was inherited by a generation of historians and polemicists. Gropius found the first of his genealogically inclined historian champions in the German art historian Nikolaus Pevsner, who published *Pioneers of the Modern Movement: From William Morris to Walter Gropius* in English in 1936 with the Museum of Modern Art.

By then, Le Corbusier had already found his James Boswell in art historian Sigfried Giedion, a fellow Swiss. Giedion collaged Le Corbusier’s work in the form of both images and paraphrased slogans into his first historical manifesto in 1928 with *Bauen in Frankreich, Bauen in Eisen, Bauen in Eisenbeton*. The book took the tradition of Wöfflinian art history into a millenarian manifesto mode with its use of startling transhistorical photographic juxtapositions.

For decades, Giedion would serve as secretary and scribe of CIAM, the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne, founded the same year that *Bauen in Frankreich* was published—even as he continued to lecture, publish, and compose novel illustrated volumes in which he inscribed the present in an ever lengthening historical trajectory that ultimately took him back to the prehistoric. It has always been held, however, that his most lasting and influential work, *Space, Time, and Architecture*, published in 1941, derived as the concrete result of the first of his many trips to the United States to give public lectures at Harvard between 1938 and 1939, the very years the Bauhaus masters were settling into teaching positions in Cambridge and Chicago. Like Pevsner’s *Pioneers*, Giedion’s book, which was also originally published in English, has remained continuously in print for over 75 years, exerting an enormous influence even as it has transitioned from being read as a source for the history of modern architecture to being analyzed over and over again as an artifact of the modern movement in the historiographic turn in architectural history of the last 20 years. But Reto Geiser’s book demands that we take a longer look at the historian himself.

Giedion has indeed now found his own historians. In 1989, soon after his papers were organized and opened to researchers in Zurich, a first intellectual biography—simply titled *Sigfried Giedion*—was published by the collection’s then-curator, Sokratis Georgiadis. Now Reto Geiser’s *Giedion in America* is both an homage to a fellow Swiss historian’s mastery of integrating images and text and a subtle reflection on the important role that America—as a place, idea, and culture—played in the formation of one of the most influential intellectual projects in 20th-century architectural history.

Geiser organizes his analysis less in a strict chronological fashion than as a se-



One of the most fascinating relationships that Geiser elaborates on is Sigfried Giedion’s friendship with philosopher Marshall McLuhan. **Above:** Peter Moore, photomontage from Marshall McLuhan’s *The Medium Is the Massage* (1967).

ries of four extended essays on different interpretations on the theme of Geidion as a figure “in between” countries and cultures. In the process, he weaves together cultural influences that go far beyond any previous analyses of Giedion’s involvement with American intellectual life, while also underscoring a number of paradoxes and ironies of his career. The first of these is language, since Giedion’s less than perfect

command of spoken English contributed to the innovations of his visual layouts, first in slide lectures and then in the meticulous care with which he worked on the mock-ups of his page layouts—many of which are illustrated in Geiser’s book—in collaboration with book designers like Herbert Bayer and Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, the handmaiden to the readability of his text.

No less does it set the stage for the

chapter “In Between Approaches,” which analyzes Giedion’s engagement with the published works of established figures of American thought such as philosopher Alfred North Whitehead and cultural historian Lewis Mumford. Indeed, the dialogue between Mumford and Giedion in establishing the American contribution to the development of modern architecture is the subject of some of the most consequential passages in a book that zigzags between a rich orchestration of information about this “art historian’s central role in a global network of modern architects” and astute analysis of his evolution as a historical thinker. This is one of the chief contributions of Geiser’s study.

On the Swiss side, the most interesting revelations concern Giedion’s frustration with failing to ever find a position in the academic establishment in Zurich, despite the prestige he held at Harvard. This plagued Giedion throughout his career.

Geiser is the first biographer of Giedion to give full attention to the genesis and impact of his fascination with the art and architectural expressions of prehistoric and pre-Hellenic cultures, from the cave paintings discovered at Lascaux in 1940 to Sumerian ziggurats and Egyptian pyramids. These fascinations were first honed and presented for the general audience attending his 1957 Mellon Lectures at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., and then expanded into *The Eternal Present: The Beginnings of Art*, a two-volume work. But Giedion scarcely lost himself in the dawn of time—even if his ever-patient art historian wife Carola Giedion-Welcker claimed that it took him for a time away from “all architectural problems.”

One of the most fascinating relationships that Geiser takes up is Giedion’s relationship to Marshall McLuhan, an earlier admirer of the historian, who understood from the outset the relationship of the medium of the book (or the slide lecture) to a message about the historical dimension of even the present moment. Appropriately enough, Giedion’s relationship to McLuhan, to György Kepes and the early years of the MIT Media Lab, and the creation of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard—for which Le Corbusier would supply his only building on American soil—come together in Geiser’s final chapter, “In Between Disciplines.” Not only does this expand our understanding of Giedion’s role into the postwar period, but equally of Giedion as a historian protagonist as important to the evolution of media studies as he was to modern architecture and its history. Despite the numerous chronological backtrackings and the repetition of salient quotes that mar the text, Geiser has shed light on facets of Giedion’s long trajectory that recast a figure whose books were perhaps too long ago moved to an upper shelf with other college texts.

Barry Bergdoll is professor of art history at Columbia University and recipient of the 2019 Cattedra Borromini professorship at the Accademia di Architettura in Mendrisio, Switzerland.

Electric Light: An Architectural History

Sandy Isenstadt | MIT Press | \$44.95

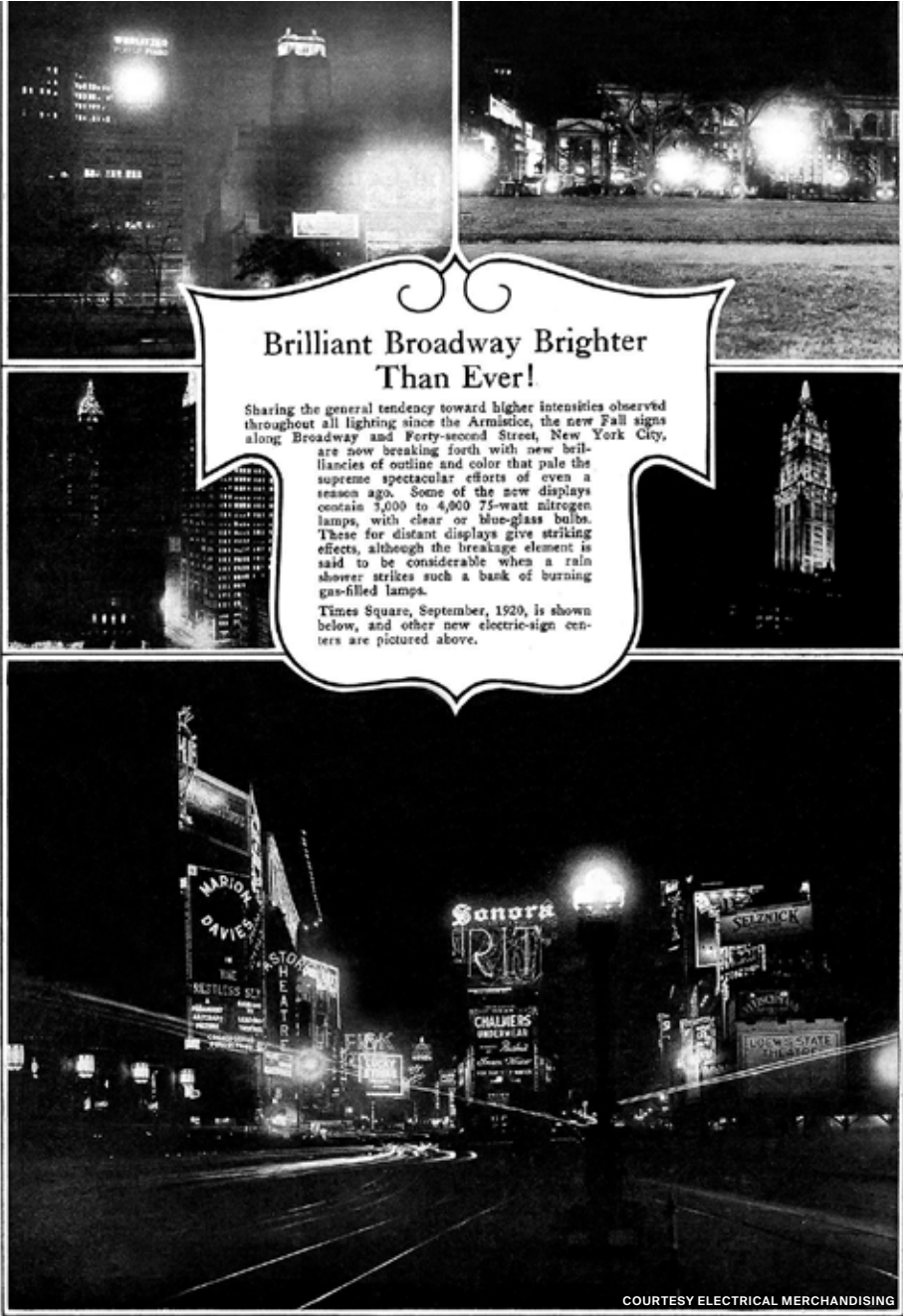
At the turn of the 20th century, the life-world in Europe and America was deeply transformed by the simultaneous appearance of the telephone, subways, elevators, skyscrapers, cinema, automobiles, and the incandescent lamp. As outlined by Sanford Kwinter in his 1986 article, “La Città Nuova: Modernity and Continuity,” a new order emerged, whose main manifestations also fueled a new aesthetic realm—exemplified by the theoretical program of Italian Futurism.

Electric Light: An Architectural History, written by Sandy Isenstadt and published in 2018 by MIT Press, depicts the same cultural milieu as Kwinter did: It’s an attempt to relate the rise of a novel spatial sensibility with the proliferation of technical innovations. More specifically, Isenstadt, professor in the art history department at the University of Delaware, focuses his attention on electric light as epiphenomenon of a broad paradigm shift: modernity.

The advent of electric light, in fact, not only allowed people to extend conventional daytime activities to nighttime, but also alter the conception of a day-night divide. Electric light introduced modern space through two fundamental concepts: instantaneity and action at a distance.

Despite similar premises and a shared chronological framework, Isenstadt’s work differs from Kwinter’s and many other contributions on the same theme in several significant aspects. First, Isenstadt doesn’t directly confront the avant-garde culture of the time. He doesn’t indulge in the typical topoi of movement and dynamism, nor does he introduce Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Umberto Boccioni, and Antonio Sant’Elia, all leading Futurist figures who envisioned a new material world made of speed, electricity, and intensity. On the contrary, Isenstadt is concerned with the impact of electricity on the everyday lives of millions of people. This is because, as he claims, electric light is itself a form of architecture. For this reason, Isenstadt also compiles an inventory of extraordinary objects enabled by electric light, such as cars, lamps, bulbs, animated advertisements, and lighted signs—all of which not only contained novel intrinsic properties, but also forged the emergence of a world that radically altered the perception of existing spaces and created new ones. By compiling these objects, Isenstadt traces a genealogy of modernity crystallized in the description of five different case studies all rooted in the American territory.

Whereas the first case study on the light switch depicts its technical and symbolic relevance—from its use in domestic spaces to the celebration of religious and political events—the second one looks into the experience of night driving; the car becomes a prosthesis of the human body, a projection of desires and curiosities, and the headlamps an instrument to explore unknown territories. The third case study analyses electric light in terms of efficiency and productivity in the workplace, including factories and schools, and the fourth is on Times Square in New York City: a landmark of modernity, a phantasmagoria of signs and billboards that constituted the first example of TEXT-scape, a homogenous field characterized by signs, signals, and advertisements. Lastly, Isenstadt explores the relationship



Top: According to a 1920 article in *Electrical Merchandising*, the "new Fall signs along Broadway" and Times Square featured elaborate designs and higher intensities compared to the prior year. **Above left:** A woman switches on the light before sitting down to her needlepoint work, 1923. **Above right:** A General Electrical advertising photograph showing a woman pulling the chain on an electric lamp, ca. 1908.

between wartime and lighting during World War II by describing the application in America of collective and individual forms of blackout, which stemmed from a paranoia about being bombed.

Regardless of its organization into five different parts, *Electric Light: An Architectural History* constitutes a narrative continuum on the idea of modernity. A further differentiation emerges. The case studies, in fact, suggest the simultaneous presence of two interpretative criteria. One is merely phenomenological: electric light has altered the perception of the space around us, our experiences, and our feelings. But at the same time, Isenstadt also points out how electricity has physically shaped a new world by inducing the rise of unprecedented spaces and typologies. This twofold perspective translates either into the intriguing description of certain perceptual conditions—such as the act of night driving or the urban reading of Times Square—or into the accurate classification of technical devices and methods of construction.

Whereas the whole narrative skeleton defined by Isenstadt makes his text undoubtedly fascinating, at first sight its subtitle—*An Architectural History*—can appear misleading. The book, in fact, is not a chronological excursus of architectural episodes, nor does it provide a methodological schema to understand what modernity in architecture is and what its features are. In varying the scope of his reflections—from the detail of the light switch to the suspended temporality of a city’s electrified streets—Isenstadt engages readers on a compelling journey at the intersection of society, culture, and technology. Rather than deploying aesthetic categories, Isenstadt focuses on new visual habits. Here again the convergence between material, constructive depictions, and phenomenological aspects allows us to look at the five selected cases with a revived interest that reaches beyond sterile disciplinary categorizations.

The end result is a history of electric modernism: in the author’s words, “If modernity itself can be characterized by rapid, incessant change and modernism as the creative and conscious response to such change, then electric light—instantaneous, malleable, evanescent—is modernity’s medium.”

Stefano Corbo is an Italian architect, researcher, and assistant professor at RISD.





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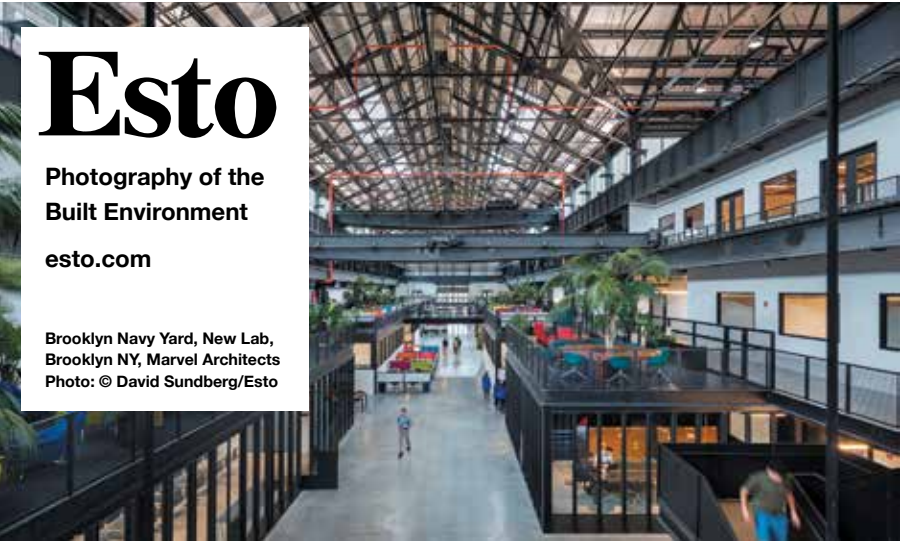
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Aba Shawl, Asmara

Who would have thought that Italian Fascist architecture in Africa had a more sinister side?
Text and photographs by Guglielmo Mattioli.

Walking the central streets of Asmara, Eritrea, for the first time can be quite a puzzling experience for a foreigner. The capital city is full of structures and modernist buildings that blend Art Deco and Futurist styles. Shops and bars have signage that could easily be found in Italy: Farmacia Centrale, Bar Crispi, Cinema Roma, mixed with many in the Tigrinya and Arabic languages.

In fact, the city was planned and built in its current form during the Italian colonization of Eritrea starting in the 1890s. When the Fascist Regime took over, Mussolini set out to build an overseas empire with Asmara as the model city of his colonial expansion.

Many recognize the effects of colonization on the architectural quality of the city. But few acknowledge one of its most controversial aspects: racial segregation.

Since the very beginning, the city's master plans aimed to separate Italians from Eritreans and enforced this when dividing the city into four separate sections: a European-only quarter in the south, an Eritrean quarter in the north, a mixed zone around the central market for both groups, and an industrial zone in the northeast.

Historically, Eritreans needed a special permit to cross into the European-only side of Asmara to go to work as housekeepers, artisans, and masons. Today, some of the local elderly still refer to the city's center as the "Fenced Field" because one of the original Italian outposts was called Campo Cinto—or "fenced field" in Italian.

The Eritrean quarter, known as Aba Shawl, was the most densely populated in the city and largely left unplanned. Ninety years later, the effects of this lack of planning are still visible today. The construction

quality of the buildings is not comparable to the rest of Asmara; some have neither running water nor bathrooms. When it rains, the streets get coated in mud because there is no stormwater drainage system. The people who live here are still poorer than inhabitants elsewhere in the city.

But despite all of this—or perhaps due to the lack of planning—Aba Shawl has become the Eritrean face of Asmara, which complements the Italian part of town.

Starting in the 1910s, Italian architects merged vernacular Eritrean elements into the architecture of the city—both in Italian and indigenous areas—and constructed a mosque, an Orthodox church, and movie theaters for the Eritrean population.

In 1938, the Fascists, intending to enforce newly drafted racial law, set forth a plan to bulldoze Aba Shawl and relocate its dwellers farther out from the city cen-

ter. However, the local governor—afraid of alienating the indigenous population—stopped the plan. A few years later, Mussolini lost control of the country to the British, and Eritrea began a decade-long struggle to achieve full independence. This didn't come until 1993, after a gruesome war with Ethiopia. Since then, the Eritrean capital has been in the process of reclamation and reappropriation of its colonial past and architectural legacy. In 2017, UNESCO declared the center of Asmara, including Aba Shawl, a world heritage site.

When asked why Asmarinos care so much about their city, a worker from its heritage office said: "These buildings might have been designed by the Italians, but it's our grandfathers who built them, it's us who preserved them and live in them. These buildings are our own buildings now."





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