The Architect's Newspaper

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Trump demos the White House, the new Oberlander Prize winner, and more page 6

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A HELLUVA TOWN!

Buoyed by Zohran Mamdani's mayoral momentum, New York flourishes despite pressure from Washington, D.C. See examples of innovative buildings and projects on page 25.

ISKANDER HUDAYNAZAROV/KAKAJAN OVEZOV/BEGENCH ARAZALYYEV

Meet the Project Brokers

Take a tour through the web of competition organizers and consultants who advise on how and which architects get big commissions.

Of the architectural commissions available today, few are as prestigious, or as high stakes, as those associated with a museum or cultural institution. While competitions are the norm for these commissions, the process has been challenging for reasons including nepotism, unclear briefs, uncompensated labor for participants who don't win, and entries that can't actually get built or don't fully address institutional need.

Within the last 30 years, a new field of consultants ranging from cultural strategists to competition organizers has emerged to make the process more fair and effective for all parties involved. These consultants have become substantial power brokers in the field of architecture and have remade commissions in the process, serving as hands-on shepherds of capital projects and, ultimately, curators of architects. Their ultimate goal is building more thrilling, ambitious buildings and discourse-defining architecture. Is it working?

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Time to Heal

The Texas Hill Country recovers from another devastating flood. **Read on page 16.**

LEONID FURMANSKY

The Joy of Section

The Anthony Timberlands Center in Arkansas by Grafton Architects with modus studio is a wooden masterpiece. **Read on page 50.**

TIMOTHY HURSLEY

Beyond Architecture

A conversation about speculative ecological design turns philosophical. **Read on page 64.**

Architecture is an attempt to shape everyday life…it must be multidisciplinary and encompass the entire range of purposes and communities, as there is no unique structure that suits everybody.

—**EMANUELE COCCIA**

I've always included non-Cartesian, mystical, and metaphysical approaches–emotional, sensorial failures–to reframe knowledge and power relations and to rethink the tension between fiction and nonfiction via synesthesia and apparatuses.

—**F.ROCHE_S/HE**

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Editor's Note

The office building at 25 Water Street was recently converted into apartments by CetraRuddy.

First Acts and Second Chances

"Things start by accident and continue by precedent." The line, which I think comes from Donald Judd, lives rent free in my head. It describes evolution, but also the entropic truth of life. Election Day in New York is November 4, and the leading mayoral candidate is Zohran Mamdani, a 34-year-old progressive Democrat who lives in a rent-controlled apartment in Astoria. After serving in the state legislature, he began his campaign with a shrug, only to see it snowball into a landslide primary victory. (On that day, model and author Emily Ratajkowski, wearing a "Hot Girls for Zohran" T-shirt, posted a video with him as an endorsement. Recently, someone called him a communist; "it's pronounced *cyclist*," he said as he sped off on a Citi Bike, which is also my preferred way of traversing the city.) It seems Mamdani will be the city's next mayor. If so, it is also likely that the attacks from Washington, D.C., against the city will intensify. Already during the government shutdown President Trump's administration has sought to hold up $18 billion in funding from New York's Second Avenue subway and Hudson River tunnel projects.

No matter. Maybe it's my FOMO going haywire during Archtober, but New York is riding high. With this feature section (page 25), we scramble to see some of the city's most notable buildings, from Boris Kuzinez's pencil tower on Fifth Avenue nearing completion (page 35) to the thoughtful facade restoration of the Woolworth Building above City Hall Park (page 30). These visits document first acts and second chances. For the issue, I visited the country's largest office-to-residential conversion, at the tip of Manhattan (page 26), where the brick chunker seen above in an Ezra Stoller photograph was reworked by CetraRuddy into over 1,300 apartments.

Plus we officially return to the sustainability beat, whose kick drum thuds ever louder. Beyond product tips, see pieces about the architects working on data centers and a roundtable about toxic building materials. And don't miss two case studies about new game-changing mass timber academic buildings.

Elsewhere, we continue to dig deep: Read Jessie Temple's moving piece about how Kerrville, Texas, is rebuilding after the latest flood (page 16), Diana Budds on the web of operators who advise on major building commissions (page 14), and news editor Dan Roche's review of the latest Chicago Architecture Biennale (page 20).

Our fall archi-events season continues in full sprint: See you at World Architecture Festival in Miami or online for our season of PORCH TV or at our Best of Design Awards party at HBF's New York showroom in December or at one of our remaining Facades+ conferences, which have been packed this year. I wish you good light and good luck.

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Masthead

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Corrections

The letters on the glass at the Judd Foundation's Architecture Office are hand-painted, not vinyl. Clarence, in addition to being Donald Judd's middle name, was also his grandfather.

The visible art storage room in the Museum of Nebraska Art was designed by Samuel Anderson Architects.

The Awty School merged with the French School of Houston to become The Awty International School in 1978, not 1984.

Reed Hilderbrand principal Eric Kramer teaches in the landscape program at Harvard GSD but not ETH Zurich.

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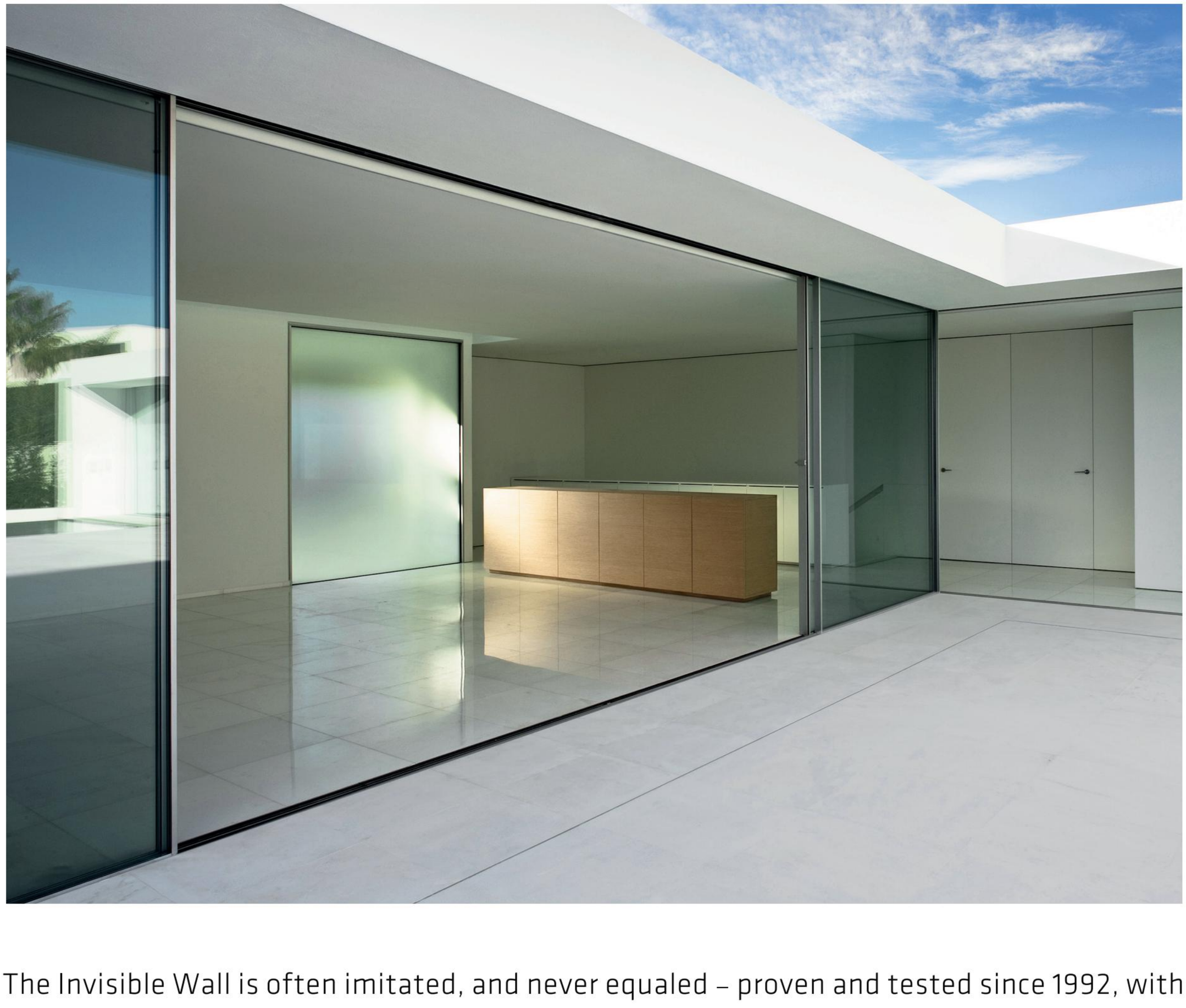

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Inequalities, the 24th International Exhibition at Triennale Milano, yearns for beauty in a divided world

The 24th International Exhibition at Triennale Milano, *Inequalities,* grapples with the structural challenges of our time through a range of thought-provoking exhibitions. A highlight is *Grenfell Tower: Total System Failure,* created by the Grenfell Next of Kin platform. In the installation, viewers sit to watch a film about the 2017 Grenfell fire in London. Above, memorial quilts and a placard that contains faces of the fire's victims are installed as a reminder of what tragedy can result from improper building construction. JM

Diane Keaton—actress, preservationist, and patron saint of Los Angeles architecture—dies at 79

The Oscar-winning actress who redefined onscreen neurosis in *Annie Hall* and off-screen devotion in her tireless campaign to save Los Angeles's architectural soul, died on October 11. In addition to acting, Keaton published a number of design books, including a photography book, *Reservations,* that collects imagery of historic hotels and *The House Pinterest Built,* based on her own interest in decorating her house. She also campaigned for the preservation of historic buildings in Los Angeles, serving for a number of years on the board of the Los Angeles Conservancy. ILANA AMSELEM

ZGF designs mass timber delivery station for Amazon in Elkhart, Indiana

On the edge of Elkhart, Indiana, a 171,341-square-foot Amazon delivery station isn't just a place for packages before they're sent off to homes across the country—it's an experiment in what a sustainable industrial building might look like. Named DII5, the warehouse was designed by ZGF, with Atlantic AE serving as the architect of record. Upon its completion this fall, Amazon touted it as "a new kind of delivery station." IA

Disability advocates win lawsuit against City of New York over Hunters Point Library, designed by Steven Holl Architects

A judge has granted final approval to a class action settlement regarding a Queens public library designed by Steven Holl Architects. Per the agreement, significant alterations to improve accessibility have been deemed necessary at Hunters Point Library, which opened in 2019. DANIEL JONAS ROCHE

SHoP Architects reintroduces density, commerce, and public life to site of former Detroit department store

SHoP Architects completed a 12-story office and retail building at 1240 Woodward Avenue in Detroit, where the J. L. Hudson Department Store previously stood. The glass tower reintroduces density, commerce, and public life to the site. An adjacent 45-story tower, also designed by SHoP and scheduled to open in 2027, will contain The Detroit EDITION hotel, 97 condos, and additional office and retail spaces. IA

Dallas City Council debates the fate of I. M. Pei's Dallas City Hall

This month, the Dallas City Council will begin debating whether to repair, sell, or demolish the I. M. Pei–designed Dallas City Hall building. Decades of deferred maintenance, ranging from water leaks to failing electrical systems, have left the Brutalist building in disrepair. Fixing it could cost as much as $100 million, while city budgets have allotted a fraction of that amount to municipal maintenance. IA

Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat rebrands as Council on Vertical Urbanism

The Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, the global authority on the world's tallest towers, has announced a new, much shorter name: the Council on Vertical Urbanism. The rebrand hints at a broader mission, shifting focus from who tops the height charts to how density can help cities become more sustainable and more livable. IA

Mónica Ponce de León to conclude Princeton School of Architecture deanship by end of 2025

After leading the Princeton School of Architecture (SoA) for the past decade, Mónica Ponce de León will conclude her deanship at the end of this year. Ponce de León will return to the SoA faculty and the practice of architecture at her eponymous firm, MPdL Studio.

A new Princeton SoA dean has not been identified. The provost will oversee a process to select the SoA's next dean, the school shared. DJR

What will happen to the Grand Ring's timber now that the Expo 2025 Osaka is closed?

Expo 2025 Osaka in Japan closed on October 13. Along with the pavilions and fixtures, Sou Fujimoto's Grand Ring, the centerpiece of the exhibition, will now be partially dismantled, with parts of it slated for reuse. A portion of the large timber structure will remain in situ for use as part of a planned park for the Expo site. Additionally, wood from the structure will be shipped to Suzu, where it will be repurposed for public housing construction following a strong earthquake there. DJR

LAURIAN GHINITOUIU

↑ **Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) and interior architect Rockwell Group recently completed the new Bloomberg Student Center at Johns Hopkins University. The 4-story building comprises 29 "pavilion"-like volumes that were located atop a hill along Charles Street, placing the facility in the center of campus action. The building replaces the Mattin Center, a 3-building complex designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects.** KK

AIA Philadelphia, Monument Lab, and other groups to rent space in former UArts campus buildings

AIA Philadelphia, BlackStar Projects, Community Design Collaborative, DesignPhiladelphia, Monument Lab, and the Stained Glass Project will begin moving into two buildings vacated by the University of the Arts when it closed down in 2024. Dorrance Hamilton Hall and Furness Residence Hall were purchased by developer Scout, which subsequently tapped DIGSAU and AOS to create a vision plan for the buildings' reuse. Scout also recently shared a new moniker for the 110,000-square foot, two-building ensemble: Village of Industry & Art. DJR

Onera Foundation puts architectural preservation on display in New Canaan, Connecticut

David Peterson started the Onera Foundation to promote the importance of historic architectural preservation. On October 1, the nonprofit opened a public gallery space in New Canaan, Connecticut, and it's only fitting that it's located inside a building that has survived because of like-minded stewards. In the 1836-built Greek Revival building, the foundation's public program of art exhibitions, lectures, and panel discussions will explore inventive approaches to architecture preservation, showcase preservation as a creative practice, and engage the public with America's significant architectural history. ELIZABETH FAZZARE

Formline Architecture + Urbanism and KPMB Architects to design new Vancouver Art Gallery

Last December, Vancouver Art Gallery cut ties with Herzog & de Meuron over budgetary issues. Vancouver Art Gallery subsequently set out to find a new architecture team for the gallery's new home. Almost a year later, the Vancouver office Formline Architecture + Urbanism and Toronto-based KPMB Architects were selected following a rigorous executive search. Formline and KPMB beat out proposals by 14 Canadian architecture firms invited to bid for the high-profile commission. DJR

Machado Silvetti celebrates 40 years of practice and announces retirement of cofounders Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti and new leadership

After 40 years at the helm of Machado Silvetti, cofounders Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti are retiring. The firm's leadership will be transferred to the hands of Stephanie Randazzo Dwyer and Jeffry Burchard, who have been there since 2000 and 2008, respectively. Machado Silvetti will keep its firm name intact and stay put in its current Boston location, on Harrison Avenue. KRISTINE KLEIN

Peterson Rich Office blends gallery and shop in Soho MoMA Design Store renovation

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) reopened its Soho Design Store on September 27 following a full renovation by Peterson Rich Office (PRO). Located at 81 Spring Street, the project restores the historic 19th-century cast-iron building while introducing new design features meant to reflect MoMA's mission to connect people with art and design.

FRANCISCO GOMEZ SOSA/ COURTESY GRUPO DE DISEÑO URBANO AND THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION

← **Mario Schjetnan and Grupo de Diseño Urbano won the 2025 Cornelia Hahn Oberlander International Landscape Architecture Prize. Schjetnan founded Grupo de Diseño Urbano, a Mexico City–based landscape architecture firm, in 1977. Both Schjetnan and the firm he leads were awarded the honor by the Cultural Landscape Foundation. He is the prize's third laureate.** DJR

PRO's design peeled back layers to reveal original masonry, arches, and columns. The architects also reinstated the building's original Spring Street entrance. IA

Rockwell Group, Mariana Doet Zepeda Orozco, and Pentagram transform a Frida Kahlo family home into a new museum in Mexico City

The new Museo Casa Kahlo in Coyoacán, Mexico City, was built inside a private residence where Frida Kahlo's sister Cristina Kahlo lived. The home was passed down through consecutive generations. The residence was recently converted into a museum focused on the artist's life and career. Mariana Doet Zepeda Orozco was Museo Casa Kahlo's architect of record. Experience and exhibition design was by Rockwell Group. Pentagram and Ileen Gallagher, Fundación Kahlo's creative director, helmed graphic design and creative direction, respectively. DJR

AIA names Carole Wedge its new executive vice president/CEO

In Washington, D.C., the AIA Board of Directors named Carole Wedge the next AIA executive vice president/chief executive officer. Wedge served for 17 years as CEO of Shepley Bulfinch, a national architecture firm. Executive search firm Heidrick & Struggles led the hunt for the new director, chaired by AIA 2024 president Kimberly Dowdell. DJR

Trump announces tariffs on imported kitchen cabinets, bathroom vanities, and upholstered furniture

On October 1 the Trump administration imposed a 50 percent tariff on imported kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities and a a 30 percent tariff on imported upholstered furniture.

"The reason for this is the large scale 'FLOODING' of these products into the United States by other outside Countries," Trump wrote on Truth Social. "It is a very unfair practice, but we must protect, for National Security and other reasons, our Manufacturing process. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" DJR

Buc-ee's founder funds mass timber Aplin Center at Texas A&M designed by DLR Group and Pickard Chilton

In 2028, Texas A&M will open the Aplin Center, named for Buc-ee's founder Arch "Beaver" Aplin III, who majored in construction science and graduated from the school in 1980. The building will be designed for students pursuing coursework in hospitality, retail, food, and nutrition sciences. According to the university it will be seen as "Aggieland's new front door."

DLR Group and Pickard Chilton designed the 3-story, 200,346-square-foot facility, which will house lounges, lecture halls, event space, and study areas within a hybrid structural system of concrete and mass timber. KK

Chinese landscape architect Kongjian Yu dies in plane crash in Brazil

Beijing-based landscape architect, urbanist, and professor Kongjian Yu died on September 23 in a plane crash. Yu was flying over Brazil's Pantanal wetlands, near the town of Aquidauana, when he, the pilot, and two filmmakers were killed. In 1998, Yu founded the firm Turenscape. He is best known for his Sponge City concept. DJR

The casino bids in BIG's and CetraRuddy's Manhattan proposals are scrapped—who will get the gaming licenses?

The casino proposal for Freedom Plaza, a mixed-use complex slated for an open tract adjacent to the UN designed by BIG and OJB Landscape Architecture, was shot down in September. Previously, casino bids for Hudson Yards West and Saks Fifth Avenue in Midtown were also scrapped. Other casino proposals for sites in Hell's Kitchen and Times Square, both designed by CetraRuddy and Steelman Partners, were voted down too. The remaining sites vying for a gaming license include a Bally's proposed for the Bronx, a casino near Citi Field, and a Resorts World facility in Jamaica, Queens. DJR

Michael Bennett uses timber to reimagine sacred architecture with *Night Chapel*

The White House started construction on President Donald Trump's $250 million White House ballroom without going through the legally required review process. On October 20, excavators took to the building's East Wing facade to make room for the President's 90,000-square-foot pet project. The structure is privately funded; major corporations such as Google, Lockheed Martin, Palantir, and NextEra Energy have pledged millions. Isabel Ling

$250,000,000

Where traditional chapels have often served as immovable markers of faith, *Night Chapel*, an installation by Michael Bennett, responds to a different theology of space, one rooted in motion, in resilience, and in the traditions of the African diaspora.

Designed by Bennett—a spatial designer, activist, and former NFL player—through his practice Studio Kër, in collaboration with Seattle's Northwest African American Museum, *Night Chapel* is constructed entirely from cross-laminated timber (CLT) and is not bound to a permanent foundation. It will be assembled, disassembled, and reassembled across sites in Seattle through October. IA

David Lynch's compound, up for sale in Los Angeles, includes a Lloyd Wright–designed residence and a Brutalist house nonzero\ architecture remodeled into a studio

Filmmaker David Lynch, who passed away in January, spent years amassing buildings for his 2.3-acre property on a sloping site in Los Angeles's Hollywood Hills. Now, the compound on Senalda Road and the various structures Lynch lived in and worked out of are up for sale. Among the listings: a house with "asymmetrical" forms that Lynch used as one of his workspaces. KK

Austin's new $1.1 million logo redesign debuts to mixed reviews

Austin unveiled its first-ever unified city logo—a stylized "A" with a blue wave and two green lines meant to represent springs, hills, and the city's tree canopy. The design, created by Pentagram's Austin office in collaboration with local agency TKO, is intended as a love letter to the city's natural landscape and a symbol of civic unity. Instead, it immediately united residents in something else: criticism. IA

Lake Flato opens office in Portland, Oregon, its third location and first outside Texas

Lake Flato set up shop in 1984, in San Antonio, Texas, when David Lake and Ted Flato founded the practice. Since then, the firm has expanded its portfolio, from designing ranch homes to working on university and hospitality projects, among other typologies. Lake Flato opened a second office in Austin in 2016, further cementing its footprint in Texas. In September the firm opened its third office in Portland, Oregon, where it has been steadily working for several years now. KK

Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Hood Design Studio, and Hannah-Neumann/Smith team up to deliver new Kresge Foundation HQ in Detroit

The Marygrove College campus in Detroit was completed almost a century ago. Now, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Hood Design Studio, and Hannah-Neumann/Smith are designing a new state-of-the-art facility at the 53-acre site for the Kresge Foundation. The new building will include offices, community spaces, and meeting areas for partners and collaborators. Hood Design Studio will develop a campus plan that emphasizes pedestrian circulation among the students, families, educators, and nonprofit tenants who share the Marygrove Conservancy campus. DJR

↑ **Höweler+Yoon breaks ground on Maple Grove Elementary School in Columbus, Indiana. The 2-story building was designed in a "petal" schema, with classrooms, an administrative wing, and a gym springing from a central communal learning area for students. The new campus will have capacity for 650 students and is projected to be completed before the start of the 2027–2028 school year.** IL

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A Sense of Quiet Beauty

Centerbrook Architects & Planners reworks a nursing home into a new art museum in Rhode Island.

The exterior of the Westerly Museum of American Impressionism is clad in a new composite wood sheathing whose blue color is designed to make the meadow pop.

The Westerly Museum of American Impressionism is nestled in a meadow along the Rhode Island shore of the Pawcatuck River. Like the collection of paintings displayed within, it is pastoral, intimate, and part of the New England landscape. The museum's modest 20,000-square-foot footprint features a dozen small galleries and offers a refreshing antidote to the current crop of over-the-top, status-conscious new museums and mega-million-dollar expansions. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes of an abandoned nursing home, the Westerly Museum is a smart example of recycling. Yankee thrift spun into a work of art.

Apple Rehab, situated halfway between the mill town of Westerly and its tony seaside neighbor, Watch Hill, was shuttered during COVID and became an abandoned eyesore. Westerly natives Dr. Thomas Sculco, an orthopedic surgeon, and his wife, Cynthia, a professor of nursing, bought the 1-story, 1950s motel look-alike to preserve the land from development. At the same time, the Sculcos were looking for a suitable home for their collection of 250 American impressionist paintings. When renovating a 19th-century house in downtown Westerly proved unworkable, the clients and their architect, Justin Hedde of Centerbrook Architects & Planners, explored the idea of not just repurposing the riverside site but rehabilitating the nursing home itself.

As the Yale-trained Hedde notes, we wanted to "keep everything as simple as possible." Maintaining Apple Rehab's Y-shaped footprint proved surprisingly easy, and employing the existing foundations and roof made the museum project more cost-effective than new construction. The nursing home's three wings, built over the years, lent themselves to a sensible parti. The nexus of the wings became the lobby, and the smallest became an administrative wing with offices, a shop, and restrooms. Half a dozen cabinet galleries arranged along a wall and a larger library-cum-studio form another section. The largest group of galleries, storage, catering, and a large exhibition hall terminate in an outdoor terrace that overlooks the river and the Connecticut shore opposite.

The most important planning decision was reorienting the museum's entrance toward the water rather than the roadside. Where acres of asphalt once surrounded the nursing home, 40 parking spaces have been discreetly placed closer to the shore. Landscape architects Catherine Weaver and Chris Manchester of Tupelo Design Studio have shaped the site into a meadow of indigenous flora. The architects asked Tupelo for a design "reminiscent of impressionist painting: soft colors and blurred edges." This was achieved by the judicious employment of native plants, pollinator habitats, and environmentally responsible infrastructure.

The landscape and structure form a single integrated design. The building's public facade offers the unassuming abstraction of a barn, and there is not even a sign to announce the building. The museum is sheathed in a striking nautical blue composite wood, which lends the building its modern agrarian look, and offset by a gray metal roof. There are no gutters, so as to achieve the architect's vision for a sharp edge. The blue, as Hedde declares, "will make the meadow pop."

Visitors skirt the meadow to park and then take a diagonal path across natural plantings sheltered by two wings of the former nursing home. After entering the lobby, visitors are able to explore four smaller galleries that surround the museum's special exhibit gallery—the 875-square-foot space was once the dining room of the nursing home—and move on to the events area, with its water view. Formerly flat ceilings were selectively hollowed out, forming new skylights featuring controlled natural illumination. All exhibits will be based on such themes as the evolution of a single artist, women painters, or a New England arts colony, such as Old Lyme or Gloucester. The smaller wing's half dozen display rooms of various sizes are placed around the museum's perimeter. Lit by hidden light sources, these windowless showcases recall John Soane's Dulwich Museum or Louis Kahn's Yale Center for British Art. Deep niches between the display rooms offer transepts of light that frame meadow and river views, echoing the regional canvases displayed on the nearby walls.

The Westerly Museum's "architecture reflects the essence of American impressionism," says the museum's director, Catherine Shotick. Beyond framing the Pawcatuck, the program required that the museum "not only house great art but also embody it." "We strove," Shotick noted, "for a sense of quiet beauty that resonates with the collection."

From the ugly duckling nursing home, Centerbrook has conjured up the elegant swan that is the Westerly Museum of American Impressionism. Noted for its renovations as much as its new construction, the project continues to build Centerbrook's reputation as a firm with an informed respect for the past. Its thoughtful, often regional, approach is a welcome change from flashy egotectural display. People will come here to see the soft-focus depictions of the fields and harbors of the American Northeast in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Yet, in demonstrating what can be done with a limited budget and a sensitive eye, the most significant work of art is the museum.

William Morgan is a Providence-based writer. His latest book is *The Cape Cod Cottage*.

Eavesdrop

Sour Grapes

If it ain't woke, he won't diss it: Patrik Schumacher lectures virtually in Waco.

"Harvard has been taken over by the whole Me Too thing. The George Floyd thing was massive," Patrik Schumacher recently told a room of noticeably bored Baylor University students in a class for something called the Free Enterprise Forum. "Woke concerns affected the architecture discipline quite a lot," he said over Zoom. "We get work these days in Eastern Europe. They're hungry. But not in the Western heartland. We're not brought in there anymore. … Thank god India eventually opened up."

India has "opened up" indeed, with a cash injection dedicated to infrastructure projects like the new Navi Mumbai International Airport, designed by Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA), where Schumacher is a principal. India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, said he wants his country to be self-reliant by 2047. But this "opening up"—as Mr. Schumacher so casually calls it—has also happened under a government Arundhati Roy and other scholars have characterized as "Hindutva fascism," where "political thinkers in Modi's party openly worshipped Hitler and Mussolini," Roy said in a 2023 interview with *Le Monde*. Sound familiar?

Earlier this year, similar to screeds he posts on his Facebook account, Schumacher published "The End of Architecture" in the academic journal *Khōrein*. It began with more whining: "Academic institutions, biennals [sic], and professional critiques have abandoned their roles as incubators of architectural thought, instead engaging with tangential sociopolitical issues that stray from architecture's core competency." Since then, Schumacher has been invited to lecture at all sorts of places outside of the academic circuit he decries as "woke" and "elite," similar in tone to the populist demagogues who occupy the White House today. One night during the Venice vernissage, he presided over a conclave of "grumpy old white men" who "all complained they were never invited to curate major architecture events anymore," per *Architectural Record*.

How did Schumacher land in Texas? Peter Klein, a Baylor University professor, said he met Schumacher at a conference last year and read his essay about how architecture "as an autonomous, theory-led discipline, has ceased to exist" and invited him to present as a part of the John F. Baugh Center for Entrepreneurship and Free Enterprise programming. Schumacher's lecture was in step with the center's libertarian mission: "When I once questioned subsidizing social housing in London, there were demonstrations outside my office," Schumacher giddily told the Baylor students, anticipating rounds of applause that never came. "They made posters of me with a Hitler mustache."

On screen, Schumacher, a self-described former Marxist, detailed his Dionysian rebirth as an "anarcho-capitalist" after the 2008 financial crash, when he began crusades against horrors like political correctness, planners, the Venice Biennale, you name it. He embarked on an unfinished, unintelligible tangent about his "trickle-down theory" of urbanism, the virtues of what he called "total freedom," and how "zoning is an infringement of creativity for developers and entrepreneurs." The whole thing seemed less like a lecture and more like an hour-long ploy to attract Peter Thiel's attention.

The big question: Is this all a bit to get work? Did Patrik seemingly dress like a ketamine-dosed tech bro in a 2023 lecture at the AA to impress potential clients in Silicon Valley? Or does he actually believe this stuff? One Redditor asked: "A fascist approach to architecture brewing? Or just marketing?"

So: Is it working as a business strategy? Last winter, *Architects' Journal* reported that profits were slightly up at ZHA in 2023, largely due to steep increases in Middle East billings, but turnover rates are double what they were in 2013, three years before Zaha Hadid's untimely death. Hadid's own human rights track record was bad: Hundreds of Indian and Nepalese construction workers reportedly died in Qatar building her World Cup stadium, a fact that she described as "a serious problem," but one for the Qatari government: "I have nothing to do with the workers," she told *The Guardian* in 2014.

Beyond employee satisfaction and business development, ZHA has other limitations. Today, it pays 6 percent of its annual income to the Zaha Hadid Foundation to use the trademark name "Zaha Hadid." Only time will tell how much longer Patrik continues to navigate under Hadid's memorable flag before he unfurls his own and sets sail to Liberland.

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All Dressed Up

As fashion brands continue to revamp brick-and-mortar shopping, architects and designers continue to create unique ways to design immersive displays, as the following projects demonstrate.


DEVON BANKS

45R by New Material Research Laboratory and YUN Architecture

169 Mercer Street, New York, New York 10012

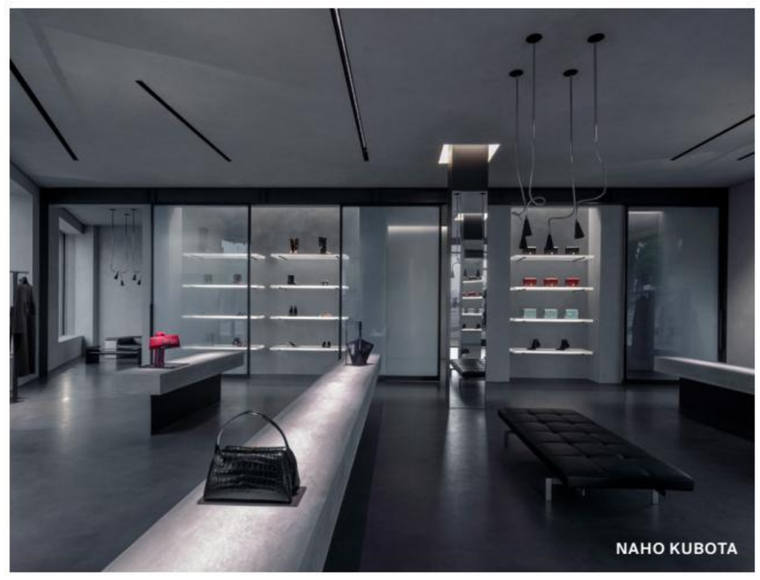
Craft is at the forefront of 45R's latest store. New Material Research Lab collaborated with YUN Architecture to translate the Japanese clothing brand's selective use of materials and pigments in its garments into a space powered by conscious materiality and Japanese aesthetics. Recycled Japanese stone pavers ground the store in a sense of nature and warmth. The style continues with shoji screens, cedarwood, reclaimed wood ship planks, and *shikkui,* a traditional Japanese lime plaster, finished with traditional cloth. An old tin roof from Japan was installed inside the store, portioning the space and the checkout counter. Not only does the space reuse material craftily, it also emphasizes craftsmanship. The front of the store greets guests with a hand-scooped chestnut wood sculpture, while the rear holds a raised niche, or tokonoma, with mud-finished walls. In effect, the store's design brings a small slice of Japan to New York's Soho.

JUSTIN CHUNG

VEJA by OWIU Design

1108C Abbot Kinney Boulevard, Venice, California 90291

The third outpost for footwear atelier VEJA has landed in Los Angeles. Local firm OWIU Design took on the project, located in a 1923 building in the city's Venice neighborhood. The architects used the structure's industrial elements to its advantage. OWIU preserved the original wooden beams, exposed brick, and even unfinished walls. To add to the minimalist style, the architects treated walls with a sand plaster to create a subtle texture. Wooden and concealed shelving lines the walls for product display, leaving the main floor as the central activation. Here OWIU used its in-house fabrication branch, called Inflexion Builds, to create sculptural seating and display plinths. The team hand-poured and mixed concrete to achieve pieces that recall California's topography, rocks, and sand. The bespoke and preserved elements tie the store to its new site, while the color palette and cobbler station cohere the outpost to VEJA's overall identity and other retail locations.


NAHO KUBOTA

Khaite Flagship by Griffin Frazen

8409 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90069

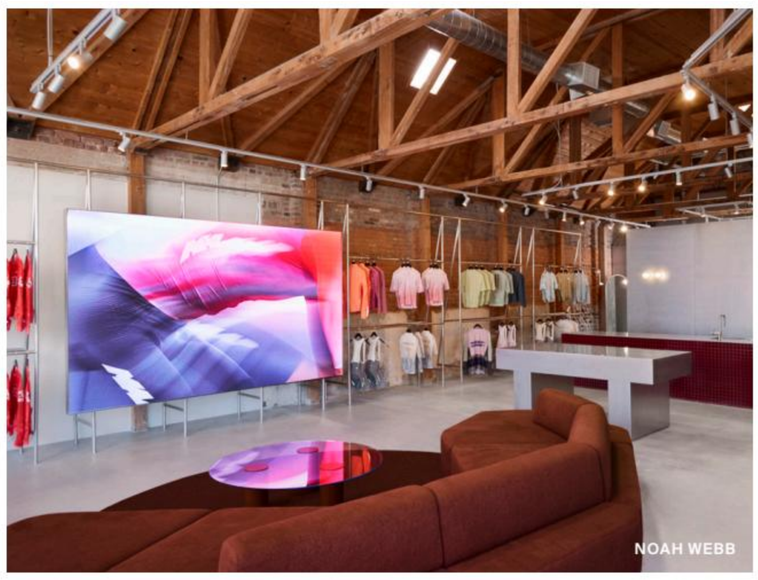
An ivy-covered facade on a triangular corner in West Hollywood marks a new flagship for Khaite, a high-end clothing line by Catherine Holstein. But the exterior biophilia belies the severe and seductive interior lying within. Designed by Holstein's husband, actor and architect Griffin Frazen, the brick-and-mortar opens with a portal of extruded steel frames. Cement, concrete, and plaster make up the walls and floors, bright‡ened by an interplay of glass and light that achieves a sense of mystery. Sliding glass doors are ceramic, printed with a gradient to reveal or conceal merchandise. Columns are finished with mirrors and continue into a narrow ceiling slot, which glows with precisely cut beams of light through custom-engineered fixtures. Meanwhile, light boxes above fitting rooms diffuse light like a James Turrell artwork. Cast-in-place concrete that rests upon thin steel beams and leather seating are the finishing touches to the flagship's dark and atmospheric scene.


MATTHEW GORDON

Áwet New York by Max ID NY

463 Broadway, New York, New York 10013

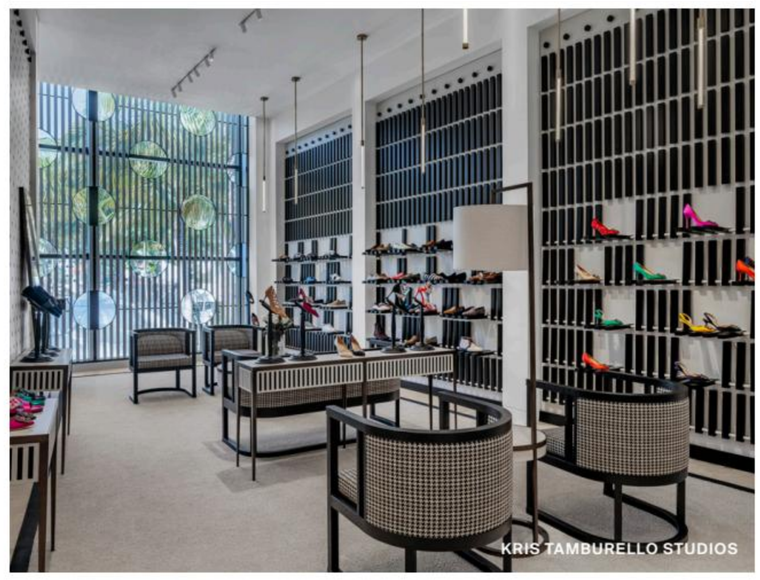
Jean Nouvel's 40 Mercer building sets the stage for the new flagship of Áwet New York. The building's tall ceilings and steel and glass facade illuminate the store's offerings, including Áwet's silk-infused clothing line as well as Max ID NY's furniture and lighting. The design takes an unconventional approach to retail, resembling more of a salon than a store. Sculptural seating from Max ID's Soft Collection includes a curving chair opposite a rectilinear seat, whose blue frames complement the window frames. The lounge is finished with archival photography from Asmara, Eritrea (where the founder of Áwet has roots), curated by experiential designer My Nguyen. The store's approach to displaying goods is an extension of the brand's experimentality: Max ID's seesaw-like bookshelf acts as a quirky companion to a mannequin. Other display vignettes are backdropped by a rust red, another allusion to the brand's Eritrean roots and unique approach.


NOAH WEBB

MAAP LaB Los Angeles by Clare Cousins Architects

910 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, Venice, California 90291

Clare Cousins Architects has delivered a concept store for Australian cycling apparel brand MAAP. The new store—what the brand calls a LaB—continues the design language of previous iterations while tying the new outpost to Los Angeles. Located on the ground floor of a 1912 building, LaB honors the original structure. The architects maintained the preexisting textural heritage, namely exposed brick walls and wood rafters, but complemented the old with the new in LaB's kit of parts: steel, colorful textiles, and resin artwork. Steel makes up the display rack, connected to shiny concrete floors. The racks run the length of the store atop brick walls, while the other half of the store is clad in metal for a contemporary contrast. A red-tiled counter, offering coffee and checkout services, breaks up the color palette. Behind it, a metallic wall that continues into the fitting room brings the steel-forward design full circle.


KRIS TAMBURELLO STUDIOS

Manolo Blahnik by Nick Leith-Smith Architecture + Design

140 Northeast 39th Street, Suite 111, Miami, Florida 33137

Polka dots make up the new store for luxury footwear brand Manolo Blahnik. London-based firm Nick Leith-Smith Architecture + Design dotted the facade with perforated tiles, arranged at a 45-degree angle, each finished with a custom polka dot design printed on top. The geometry aligns with the brand's art deco roots as well as the store's home in Miami's Design District. The monochrome and circular motif continues inside. Dots line the top of display cases, counters, and built-in bookshelves. The architects paired the circles with houndstooth textiles, vertical ribbing, and a striped shelving system of individually rotating wall slats—the more patterns, the merrier. Upstairs, the design is elevated a step further with an interior wall perforated with circular apertures. The portholes allow views onto the streets and nearby greenery thanks to the large window on the facade. Playful and site-specific, the design riffs on a theme without making it feel stale. **Kelly Pau**

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At Peace

A Zen Toronto Passive House by EDGZ Architecture & Design transcends building constraints.


DOUBLESPACE PHOTOGRAPHY

Eric Tse's house in Toronto brings together sustainability and sanctuary. The 2,400-square-foot duplex meets the Passive House standard, achieving robust insulation and clean interior air. Yet Tse's design also pushes back against the discipline's boxy orthodoxy.

Located in Toronto's Riverside neighborhood, two miles from downtown, the house combines a rental suite with a bespoke home for Tse, his wife, and their two children. The secondary unit, entered from a back door, occupies part of the main floor and basement.

To meet the Passive House standard, Tse had to sacrifice some personal space. Each of the house's side walls is approximately 2 feet thick, so the building consumes a significant part of the lot—which is only 25 feet wide.

"There is a strong idea of sanctuary in the house," said Tse. "When you walk in, it's completely a break from the world. It feels very grounded and a bit dark. And then as you walk through the house, you ascend towards the light."

The architecture compensates for this tightness with a clever sequence of spaces that become brighter and more generous as you ascend. The front facade is windowless on the first floor; as you pass through the door, you enter a foyer and compact home office where Tse runs his practice, EDGZ Architecture & Design. This area introduces the house's vocabulary of whitewashed white oak millwork and walls finished in a lustrous gray microcement.

A stair ascends to a second-floor lobby surrounded by a bath and three bedrooms, one of them now repurposed as a playroom. In the middle, a black-olive tree reaches up toward distant sunlight. The source of that illumination, upstairs on the third floor, is a grand window that tilts upward along the side of the house. This is angled at 60 degrees, so that it is technically a skylight. "There were some wildly complicated zoning and code decisions that shaped the space we had to work with," Tse noted. More importantly, that slanted pane floods the top floor with north light. It is joined by strip windows that connect the kitchen, at the east end of the space, to the living room at the west.

Tse acknowledged that the upside-down plan is unusual, but "it gives light and graciousness on a narrow urban lot," he said. This top-floor living space is in fact uncommonly generous: Three exposures link it visually to the thick tree canopy that lines the street and dots the area's backyards. Tse's interior design deploys extensive cabinetry (fabricated by local shop BL Woodworking) in the same creamy hue of white oak.

The cladding subtly expresses the volumes of the two units. White brick is laid in a horizontal bond across the first floor, while wood covers the second and third floors. The wood, a heat-treated bamboo, is served two ways: Protruding 1½-inch slats on the front nod to Aalto; on the side wall, flush siding sits back modestly. The slatted front facade is in fact a screen that stretches away from the house itself, concealing a rectilinear building form. "When you design with Passive House, you usually end up with a box," Tse noted. "Here the forms on the outside look complicated, but they are superficial to the building."

The building is now Passive House certified, a process that Tse called "very rigorous"—it demands third-party review of drawing sets and energy models. Tse is now working on houses for clients who have not decided to seek certification because of the extra hurdles; all the same, he suggested, it was worth learning. "For me, the house is a showcase," Tse said. "I can tell clients, 'I can make your house much tighter than a normal building.'" What's more, the house shows that sustainability doesn't have to mean sacrifice.

Alex Bozikovic is the architecture critic for *The Globe and Mail* and the author of three books including T*oronto Architecture: A City Guide*. He teaches in the Master of Urban Design program at the University of Toronto, John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design.

Top: Eric Tse's Riverside duplex blends Passive House efficiency with a warm, family-focused design.

Below Left: A stair ascends to a second-floor landing surrounded by a bath and three bedrooms.

Below: The source of that illumination, upstairs on the third floor, is a grand window that tilts upward along the side of the house.

Below Right: The building is now Passive House certified, a process that Tse called "very rigorous"—it demands third-party review of drawing sets and energy models.


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The Competition Consultants Shaping Architecture

A look at how behind-the-scenes power brokers are helping museums and cultural institutions approach their capital projects.

continued from cover What consultants bring to the competition sphere depends on their specific services—strategic planning, architect selection, competition administration—but revolve around a core theme: Completing a capital project is an extremely intensive undertaking that benefits from someone with architecture expertise. An institution's leadership might only commission one building during its tenure, and likely has little experience doing so, so bringing in an outside expert to lay the groundwork before any sort of design happens can help smooth the process. Contrary to a common assumption of people outside the field of architecture, choosing an architect isn't the key first step to a commission—it starts with developing a robust brief. "Architects are not there to be diagnosticians, like a doctor," said Susanna Sirefman, who in 2008 founded Dovetail Design Strategists, a consultancy that has worked with Storm King, Jacob's Pillow, and the New York Public Library. "They're there to solve the problem." And that problem needs to be well articulated and clearly defined in ways that architects can understand. "The narrative of the project is absolutely fundamental," said Malcolm Reading, whose eponymous firm has run more than 200 competitions worldwide since opening in the mid-1990s.

The rise of museum consultants is a result of cultural institution projects becoming more nuanced, argues András Szántó, author of the 2023 book *Imagining the Future Museum: 21 Dialogues with Architects* and a cultural strategist who has consulted for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York. While museums were once places to view art and store collections, they are now more audience-focused, with amenities like fine dining, cafes, shops, education centers, performance spaces, and lecture halls. "The whole puzzle of what a museum is has become much more complex," Szántó said. There are more expectations about how a museum relates to its surroundings, presents itself to the public, addresses sustainability, and integrates accessibility and DEI. Because of this, "not every architect, frankly, is ready for a museum project," he added. Szántó (whose academic training is in sociology and art, not architecture) describes his work as figuring out the "software" of a building—e.g., the vision, the objectives, the operating principles—before architects come in to design the "hardware." To him, the sequence is essential. "I feel that too often these projects, especially [those that are] international, start directly with an architectural competition," he said.

Shaping a Cultural Competition

Before the Kansas City art museum Nelson-Atkins embarked on a recent expansion, Szántó and his team held workshops, retreats, and listening sessions with the museum's board, spoke with employees, and conducted community outreach with the museum's audience. Through this rigorous process they were able to explore an array of growth scenarios for the institution to understand if a capital project was needed.

After determining that an expansion was necessary and a competition would be beneficial, the consultants worked with the architecture firm Cooper Robertson—which often consults ahead of competitions—on spatial planning for the project. This work clarified the project's program and brought it into sync with anticipated capital funding. "We're seeking to, in spatial terms, define a project that meets an institution's ambitions and goals," said Bruce Davis, a partner at Cooper Robertson. "The space-planning process is very helpful at the beginning because the project scope could be much larger than what can be supported. Doing this type of study early on, before a competition, is really a great strategy to ensure that the project scope and budget are in alignment and achievable."

With the groundwork established, Malcolm Reading then designed the competition parameters, which included an open call through a website portal with materials "aimed at the right architectural responder," Reading said. In this case, it was architect-led teams. "That's a really important change to what happened 30 years ago, when everybody picked the architect, then assembled a team around that," Reading said. "The structural and MEP services are more demanding, so when we go out for a call, it's for an integrated team led by an architect. It addresses the client's needs much better." Additionally, Reading has noticed that adaptive reuse is becoming more common than ground-up new construction for cultural institutions, which also requires the addition of more design specialists to these teams.

Based on the submissions, Reading and the museum then selected a shortlist of six finalists, which were invited to prepare concept proposals in an intensive phase that included site visits, meetings with the board, workshops, the presentations of initial concepts to the museums' advisers, and feedback, then the development of presentations and deliverables. From their proposals, the museum selected the winning entry, which was from a team Weiss/Manfredi led.

Playing Matchmaker

If the process sounds time-consuming, that's because it is designed to be that way. "It's extremely demanding on the teams that we ask to enter these projects, but also it's demanding on the client," Reading said. These high-pressure intensives are also tests of a firm's culture, which can be just as important to the success of a project as an architect's design chops. "Every organization is completely different on many different levels, so we want to get to know how specific individuals work," Sirefman said about the firms she shortlists for her clients. "We think about three main things: experience, vision, and chemistry.... Personalities really play a huge role in the success of an architectural project." To understand this element, consultants spend ample time getting to know firms.

COURTESY NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART

IWAN BAAN

COURTESY JKMM ARCHITECTS

Top: Weiss/Manfredi was selected to design a new addition at Kansas City's Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in a competition organized by Malcolm Reading Consultants.

Middle: Jacob's Pillow, a school and performance center in the Berkshires, worked with Susanna Sirefman of Dovetail Design Strategists to develop an RFP and design team shortlist.

Bottom: The competition to design the new Museum of Architecture and Design in Helsinki received 624 proposals that were whittled down to a shortlist of five. Ultimately, a design by Finland-based JKMM Architects was awarded the commission.

To Pamela Tatge, the executive and artistic director of Jacob's Pillow, a school and performance center in the Berkshires, Massachusetts, good chemistry was paramount in the construction of a new theater. She worked with Sirefman to develop an RFP and design team shortlist. Tatge was able to customize the brief to the institution's needs, requesting that design teams include a specialty theater consultant and Indigenous artist. She was pleased later to have many viable options to choose from—a marked difference from when the organization managed a competition internally for a 2018 renovation of another building on its campus. "We didn't think to visit an architect's office as a part of the review process, and we learned so much [this time] about the team of people we'd be working with by seeing them in their own habitat," Tatge said.

A Question of Equity

The curated shortlist is intended to be fairer to architects. Instead of competing against, say, 1,700 firms—which is how many firms submitted to the Guggenheim Helsinki competition in 2014—they are put up against six or seven. The odds of winning are simply better, and there's more intentionality across the board. "Design projects take years, and it's often some sort of a forced marriage. You want to be sure it doesn't feel forced but actually becomes a really pleasant relationship over the years," said David van der Leer, a cultural consultant who is currently working with the Brooklyn Museum and the Nieuwe Instituut and convened a conference on the ethics of competitions when he directed the Van Alen Institute. "Only selecting based on the design, I think, is incredibly dangerous. That's why I don't love anonymous selections."

Architects, however, are ambivalent. There's still the challenge of resources and spending more time and money than the stipend they receive for participation. Firms whisper among themselves about the demanding nature of these shortlisted competitions and will or won't consider participating depending on who is running it. The client matters, too. Florian Idenburg of SO – IL, who is currently working with Malcolm Reading, said that while the process is "relatively intense," it's very fair and equal. "You know what you're getting yourself into, and I think it's a very level playing field." Where it tends to get murkier, in his opinion, is when firms are asked to participate in something that's more like an RFP and RFQ. "It is very unclear what the process is," he said.

SO – IL is selective about which competitions it participates in and only goes for opportunities where it feels it has a strong chance of winning. This could mean a very close alignment of the project goals and the client's point of view, or having a connection to an institution. He thinks that institutions have a sense of the architects they like, and even if they do create a longer shortlist with more names, the darlings have a better shot. "If you're not in that initial list and you don't have a few advocates for you within an organization, it tends to not make sense [to enter]," Idenburg says.

Thomas Robinson, a cofounder of LEVER Architecture, which is part of the winning team that will design the Portland Museum of Art's expansion, is also highly selective about what the firm goes after. He tends to look for competitions organized by people who have a track record of realizing buildings and for projects that can demonstrate what the firm is capable of. And an invitation to participate is also a vote of confidence. Even if the firm loses, the design exercise helps with publicity, and ideas can leapfrog to the next commission. "Every marketing pursuit is a risk," Robinson said. "But every time you pursue a goal or a particular design, there's value in that pursuit."

The Consultant-Curator

While the invited competition was a move to more fairly compensate architects for their work, the stipends rarely match the level of resources a firm invests in them. Uncompensated labor remains a challenge. And for small firms that don't have extra staff to spare, this is a nonstarter. "Architects can't help themselves," said Jhaelen Hernandez-Eli, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's former vice president of capital projects, who recently opened his own consultancy. "If you give them a problem to solve, they will throw everything and anything at it." He would know: For ten years, he worked on competition entries for Diller Scofidio + Renfro and estimates that he submitted over 300 entries during his tenure. As a result, for the Met, he designed a procurement process that dispensed with competition. Instead, he developed a workshop-based system that was directed at getting to know the firms he was interested in collaborating with.

"When you're at a museum, commissioning an architect is an acquisition. It is a curatorial act," Hernandez-Eli said. "The overarching agenda when you see this as a curatorial act is to bring new voices to the table because you believe that their perspective is really important for this moment. But how can you do that when your entire value system is based around risk mitigation? Then you end up with voices that have been doing this for 30 to 40 years." The workshops included sessions where the architects gave lectures about their work and studio-like assignments. Ultimately, these were avenues to see if the firm's values aligned with the Met's and resulted in commissions from Frida Escobedo, WHY, Nader Tehrani, and Peterson Rich Office—practices that are younger and smaller in scale than an institution the size of the Met would typically commission. "It was really important to me that we treated our artists and our architects with severe respect and not treating architecture as a commodity or a service alone," Hernandez-Eli said.

On the other side, firms appreciate how this approach helps them build good rapport with the potential client and better understand its goals. "This kind of access, to the museum, to existing and archival drawings, and to the Met stakeholders who would form our collective client group, is highly unique," said Miriam Peterson, a partner at Peterson Rich Office, which was commissioned by the Met to design dining and retail spaces as well as a special exhibition gallery for the museum. The process didn't begin with solving a problem but framed how an architectural project could help the museum better serve the public. "It allowed us to form a careful thesis about the institution and the potential impact of the proposed project at multiple scales."

More of the Same?

Some architects, however, see the invited competitions and curated shortlists as another form of gatekeeping that comes down to the biases of personal preference. "What's crucial is that they truly are anonymous and they truly are open for everyone," says Samuli Miettinen, a founding partner of the Finnish firm JKMM. (Incidentally, the firm caught its big break by winning an open competition to design a library in Turku nearly 30 years ago; it designed its entry after-hours while team members were still employed at other firms.) He notices that international competitions still tend to attract the same names and that there is a wide disparity between how different countries run competitions because of differing regulations. "There should be wilder cards, and more dark horses should be appreciated, because things won't evolve without that kind of courage," Miettinen argued.

Within the shifts happening with architecture competitions is a question about the nature of competition itself. What is it for? Procurement is not the only goal. "There needs to be a kind of energetic, dynamic discussion in architecture about the way the world is changing, what's relevant, and what people are thinking about," says Claire Weisz, a founding partner of WXY, which was part of the winning team for Storm King Art Center's new visitor entry sequence and the Africatown International Design Idea Competition. "The issue is that there are few competitions that actually are meant to do that."

COURTESY PORTLAND MUSEUM OF ART, MAINE; LEVER ARCHITECTURE; DOVETAIL DESIGN STRATEGISTS

FILIPPO BOLOGNESE IMAGES/ COURTESY FRIDA ESCOBEDO STUDIO

RICHARD BARNES

Top: Dovetail Design Strategists worked with the Portland Museum of Art to launch an RFQ that garnered international talent from over 250 firms. LEVER Architecture was shortlisted and then selected as the winner.

Middle: Frida Escobedo is the first woman to design a wing at The Met in its 154-year history.

Bottom: A historic capital project at Storm King built a new welcome center and expanded the landscape of the outdoor museum.

Diana Budds is a design journalist based in Brooklyn, New York.

LEONID FURMANSKY

Facing the River

Residents of Kerrville, Texas, discuss rebuilding in an environmentally sound way after a devastating flood in July killed at least 119 people in Kerr County.

In 1868, when Christian Dietert built his fourth mill in the Texas Hill Country, he built it with flooding in mind. Dietert's first three mills, including one called Perseverance, had all been washed away in floods. This fourth mill, on the Guadalupe River, was ready for rising waters. Designed with a differential flywheel, the mill sat on the bluff, while the wheel sat in the river below. When floodwaters came, the wheel might break away and get carried downriver, but the mill, on high ground, would remain intact.

The mill stood for the better part of a century, providing flour and lumber to the growing town of Kerrville before eventually succumbing to a combination of floods and changing times. The remains of the mill are still visible from Water Street in Kerrville's downtown. Also visible is the aftermath of the catastrophic flash floods that swept through the area earlier this summer: At Louise Hays Park, the giant trees downed by floodwaters have been hauled away for mulch, and the riverbanks have been scraped down to dirt by heavy machinery.

This flood was horrific. In the early hours of July 4, when the riverbanks were crowded with vacationers and campers, a stalled tropical storm system dumped months' worth of rain on Central Texas in a few short hours. The Guadalupe River's levels rose 26 feet within 45 minutes near Kerrville. Witnesses described a wall of water that tore houses from their foundations, swept RVs and Ford F-250 trucks far downstream, and left survivors clinging to trees. At least 137 people across Central Texas were killed, including many children at Camp Mystic, a summer camp upriver in Hunt. Months later, two people are still missing.

The first responders—the search and rescue teams, the mobile kitchens, the volunteer crews scraping mud off walls and tenderly washing waterlogged stuffed animals—are mostly gone now. On Water Street, posters advertise a "Rise and Rebuild" concert series in the town's historic theater. But the work of recovery is only just starting.

In the aftermath of the floods, area residents and government officials are talking about what needs to change: flood warning systems, flood maps, and flood insurance. Meanwhile, cuts to federal agencies, including FEMA, the National Weather Service, and the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), raise concerns about the future of preparation and response for disasters of this scale. Along the river, contractors from the Texas Department of Emergency Management are still hard at work removing traces of the flood; thousands of cubic yards of debris, most of it organic material, has been trucked off to commercial compost facilities in San Antonio and Austin.

In Kerrville and the surrounding towns, there's also another conversation underway. Some community members are suggesting that the most impactful change might be a slow one; not federal or state funded, not the kind of large-scale infrastructure projects that reshaped Central Texas a hundred years ago, not 21st-century technology, but rather, the steady work of learning how to live with the river all over again.

LEONID FURMANSKY

More Resilient Riverbanks

When Dietert's mill went up, Kerrville was not yet a town. It was a shingle-makers camp, populated, in the words of Joe Herring Jr., Kerrville's longtime historian and current mayor, by "some of the German immigrants, eager for a sight of crystal waters and fertile valleys, a few Tennesseans in search of adventure, and some businessmen of San Antonio." These men looked at the giant cypresses flanking the river and saw roofing materials for a booming population of new Texans.

Over the years, the town grew slowly, adding a library, a mercantile store, and eventually a college. By the 1990s, *The Wall Street Journal* was calling Kerrville "one of the wealthiest small towns in America." The river was an asset. It was also a threat, rising to destructive levels at least every few decades. The river's volatility was met with a fraught ambivalence, one that was reflected in the town's built environment.

Jeremy Walther, a Kerrville native and business owner, describes this as a missed opportunity. "The pattern language of Kerrville has not recognized the value of the river, even from an economic perspective," he said, with a nod to Christopher Alexander's classic work. "All of the buildings along the Highway 27 corridor, the road that follows the river across Kerr County, all of those buildings have their backs to the river, even the restaurants." Accordingly, said Walther, business leaders tend to view that part of the river as an industrial zone: a place for gravel pits, steel tank manufacturing, and the regional airport, along with smaller businesses like oil-change shops and mattress stores.

But Walther, who has opened two venues in Kerrville—Pint & Plow Brewing Company and Trailhead Beer Garden—sees in the aftermath of the flood an opportunity to do something different. "We need to recognize that we're here because of the river," he said. "We can design spaces that allow us to connect directly to the land and the river in an ordinary, daily way."

What Walther envisions, first, is a trail system. "Trails have this extraordinary ability to drive conservation efforts and economic development," said Walther. "If we can figure out how to fund and build a trail, basically extending the river trail into this industrial corridor, we can change the narrative. We can do some creative housing or mixed-use [along the river], we can expand the parks system, we can partner with developers where they set some land aside in a

Top: Kerrville's history of disastrous flooding extends beyond the late 19th century, before the town was established.

Bottom: Jeremy Walther, a business owner and Kerrville native, is advocating for the establishment of a trail system along the riverbank.

Opposite Top: According to the State Flood Plan 2024, almost a quarter of Texas's land area is in the 100-year floodplain.

Opposite Bottom: Kerrville residents are advocating for downed trees and woody debris to be left in place to prevent further riverbank erosion.

permanent conservation easement and they build out along the frontage road."

This isn't hypothetical talk. Walther has already been instrumental in extending the Kerrville River Trail, a 6-mile hike and bike path along the Guadalupe that was first proposed back in the 1970s. It hasn't been easy. "Kerrville is a staunchly conservative place," said Stephen Brady Dietert, a Kerrville native and the great-great-nephew of Christian Dietert. "The fact that we got the river trail built, that's a huge thing. People want this place to be nice, to be a place for families to enjoy. People want to be down by the river."

But for a riverside trail to exist, there has to be a riverside. These days, Walther and fellow community members are focused on keeping the riverbanks from being stripped bare in the name of recovery. All that woody debris that's getting hauled away would, if left in place, prevent erosion and give new growth a chance to get started. "We've pulled all the contracts, sneaked mulch samples to a lab to prove it's not contaminated, talked at council and commissioner meetings, and called every TDEM, TCEQ, and contractor we can find numbers for. It looks like a $50 million job to strip the river of the most important thing it needs to recover."

An Absorption Problem

Dietert, who is an architect and rancher, understands the necessity for a regional approach to land management. And land management, of course, also means water management. Periodic flooding, while often devastating for human inhabitants, is a necessary part of the hydrological cycle in a karstic landscape with aquifers that get emptied by faucets and refilled by rainwater. For that recharge to happen, though, the water needs a chance to soak in. As Bryan Hummel, an aquifer recharge specialist presenting at the U.S. Green Building Council's Flooding and Resilience Symposium last month, put it, "We don't have a flooding problem. We have an absorption problem."

Under current land-management strategies, there are only two kinds of water in Texas: too little and too much. In 1927, a state meteorologist described the state as "a land of perennial drought, broken by the occasional devastating flood." A look at Central Texas's flood history proves this to be true. Austin suffered through several floods between 1869 and 1938, when construction started on the dam system that has—so far—protected the city from severe flooding. A devastating flood in San Antonio in 1921 spurred the development of the San Antonio Riverwalk. More recently, 13 people died in a flash flood there just weeks before the Kerrville floods. The Guadalupe has flooded many times, including an instance in 1987 that drowned ten teenagers at a church camp near Comfort. The list of tragedies goes on. These patterns will continue to be exacerbated as climate change brings more deadly storms and extreme temperatures and as population growth and data centers pull more water out of the aquifers.

Jameson Courtney, certified floodplain manager and environmental program coordinator for the City of Austin, a few hours from Kerrville, noted that while emergency management (flood warning systems, for example) is important, floodplain management is also essential. As we think about the way the state is growing and changing, the floodplain management needs to be considered in all future plans for development. "Emergency management is about how to respond: How do you help the people who are in harm's way? And floodplain management is about keeping people out of harm's way," said Courtney. He cautions that designers need to take the time to incorporate more flood protection measures and infrastructures into their plans. "There's always such a big push after a disaster to build back right away. And part of that is practical: Where do people live in the meantime? But at the same time, there's this question of what are they returning to, what's going to be their risk going forward?"

According to the State Flood Plan 2024, almost a quarter of Texas's land area is in the 100-year floodplain. Approximately one in every six people in Texas lives or works in known flood hazard areas. There are some 878,100 buildings within the 100-year floodplain and another 786,100 buildings within the 500-year floodplain. And there are 9,322 low water crossings within flood hazard areas, which might not sound like a big deal until the bridge to your neighborhood is washed out. NOAA is set to release new rainfall data; this will inform new floodplain maps, which are likely to designate even more area as floodplain.

Those numbers—100 years, 500 years—can be misleading. As Dietert noted, "It's not about people being stupid. Here's how it happens: You have riverfront property, and it flooded in 1987, and it hasn't flooded since, and there's a drought." The risk is hard to imagine. "If we call it a 100-year flood," said Courtney, "people think that must be a really big flood but it only happens once every hundred years." He prefers a different way of describing the risk: "If there's a 1 percent chance every year, that means there's a 26 percent chance of a flood occurring over 30 years. That's a typical mortgage period. So in the length of time it's going to take you to pay for this house, there is essentially a one-in-four odds of this size flood occurring. Suddenly it seems more likely."


LEONID FURMANSKY

Materials and design choices matter, too. "All the trash and building supplies and septic systems that [we are seeing] come washing down are a reminder to the psyche that what we build doesn't last," said Dietert. In flood-prone areas of Austin, like Shoal Creek, Courtney counsels business owners to lift their HVAC units above the projected flood line and to consider using materials like cement board wall cladding that can be hosed off in case of flooding. He's also working on public education efforts, including art installations that keep the flood line in the public consciousness.

Of all the strategies for prevention and mitigation, absorption still tops the list. When heavy rains come, that water is going to go somewhere: downhill, through houses, and into creeks and rivers. Green infrastructure systems, which can be as complex as a constructed wetlands or as simple as leaving downed trees and woody debris in place after a flood to prevent further erosion, give that water a chance to get absorbed before it becomes destructive.

Embracing the Slow Build

Five weeks after the floods, a group of landowners gathered on the tree-shaded patio of the Trailhead Beer Garden to discuss riparian restoration. It was a hot afternoon. Neighbors nodded to each other from under hats, and the mood was calm and even cheerful, a more relaxed counterpoint to the desperate action of the previous month. These people owned summer houses, full-time residences, or ranchland along the river, and they were beginning the long, arduous process of clearing flood debris—downed trees, mattresses, mud-logged cars—from their land.

Daniel Oppenheimer, Land Program director at the Hill Country Alliance (HCA), started out with some advice: "Slow down." He showed images from the Blanco River flood, which killed 13 people in 2015 and destroyed 400 homes, to illustrate his argument. Photos from after the flood showed scoured banks and uprooted cypress trees. Ten years later, native bunch grasses ("riparian rebar") had grown back along the shore and leaves were emerging on young cypresses. "Slow down," Oppenheimer repeated. "Use what you have." Specifically, he suggested designating an area to clear for access to the river while allowing the plants to come back untouched everywhere else. Leave woody debris in place to shelter new growth. Downriver and upstream, organizations such as the HCA, the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, and the San Antonio Botanical Garden are working to grow and share seeds and plugs for new trees and grasses to be planted along the riverbank, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is working with Walther and his colleagues to design and build riparian management demonstration sites.

For architects and others asking how to rebuild after this and other disasters, "slow down" might feel counterintuitive. Alternatively, we might think of it as working toward future rebuilding well before a disaster strikes. "Creating positive change is a long-term project," said Dietert. "Directly after a disaster, we don't need drawings; we need first responders. And then we need a regional master plan."

"Slow down," Oppenheimer said again as the sun began to set over the Guadalupe. "The river needs time to heal, and so do we."

Jessie Temple is an architect and writer based in Austin, Texas.


LEONID FURMANSKY

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Out of the Weeds

Herzog & de Meuron and Piet Oudolf explore the meaning of a garden with Calder Gardens in Philadelphia.

Left: Herzog & de Meuron's low-slung design was intended to blend in with the site, a contrast with the other institutional monuments that line Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

Top Right: The entryway is marked by a porch building which features a metal awning.

Bottom Right: Mirrored metal clads the building's facade, reflecting the surrounding flora while also serving as a buffer between the site and the adjacent highway.

Philadelphia has gained a new cultural landmark. Calder Gardens joins a network of institutions that includes the Barnes Foundation, the Rodin Museum, and the Franklin Institute within walking distance of the city's main cultural corridor, Benjamin Franklin Parkway. For the project, Herzog & de Meuron transformed the site with an 18,000-square-foot pavilion and landscaping, which was helmed by Piet Oudolf, who planted over 250 varieties of plants across the 1.8-acre expanse as "more of a tribute than a museum," he told *AN*. The nexus of the $90 million endeavor is a rotating display of Alexander Calder's work, featuring sculpture, drawings, and paintings set within largely subterranean galleries.

Calder is synonymous with his 3D mobiles, whose suspended sheet metal forms, often rendered in bold colors, invoke a captivating kineticism. The inaugural show features around 30 of the Philadelphia native's artworks as well as sculptures and paintings by his artist father, mother, and grandfather, who were influential figures in the city's art community.

Herzog & de Meuron attempted to minimize the presence of its architecture, a camouflaging act that begins at ground level, clearly emphasizing the landscape over any heavy-handed gesture. A large metal sheet conceals most of the building's single-level facade and reflects the surrounding fauna like a mirror. Demure and even fleeting, the polished exterior almost vanishes into the garden, which hugs and softly overwhelms the visitors en route to the building entrance. This predilection for camouflage was influenced by internal parameters that informed the design team's approach. "We set two goals from the beginning," Jason Frantzen, senior partner at Herzog & de Meuron, said. "The first was the decision not to build another monument on the parkway. The second was to create a form of architecture in which visitors would discover Calder's work without us replicating any of his forms."

As a result, Oudolf's signature dense landscaping, in which wild plants and painterly blossoms coalesce, takes center stage, doing justice to the project's titular emphasis on greenery. "The garden is a birth of something new, a promise for the future," the Dutch landscape designer remarked. Oudolf, who most recently partnered with Herzog & de Meuron on landscaping for HORTUS, a modular timber building project in Basel, created seven different planting concepts for the project designed to reflect the site's varying terrain.

On my most recent visit, native perennials swept across the terrain, immersing visitors in a waved ocean of blue cohosh, hairy beardtongue, and bottle gentian. Though still earthy and growing in, the garden promises a cyclical transformation over the coming months and seasons.

With the building's low-slung design, most of the museum is located underground. While the architects had initially intended the building to be *entirely* underground, the current building's interplay between different floor scales came out as a precaution after Hurricane Ida hit Philadelphia and flooded the adjacent Interstate 676 in 2021. "We had to lift the whole building up in the middle of the planning," explained Frantzen. Flood barriers and wall reinforcement were put in place to enhance the walls.

To match the varying scales of Calder's work, the building oscillates between the monumental and the intimate, creating a puzzle of various circular and sharp forms to carve pockets of interaction with the sculptor's output. Although the sculptures were occasionally mounted surprisingly close to one another, the space still manages to reflect the rhythmic nature of Calder's work, offering much room to roam.

Tall Gallery and Open Plan Gallery sit central to the overall structure and house

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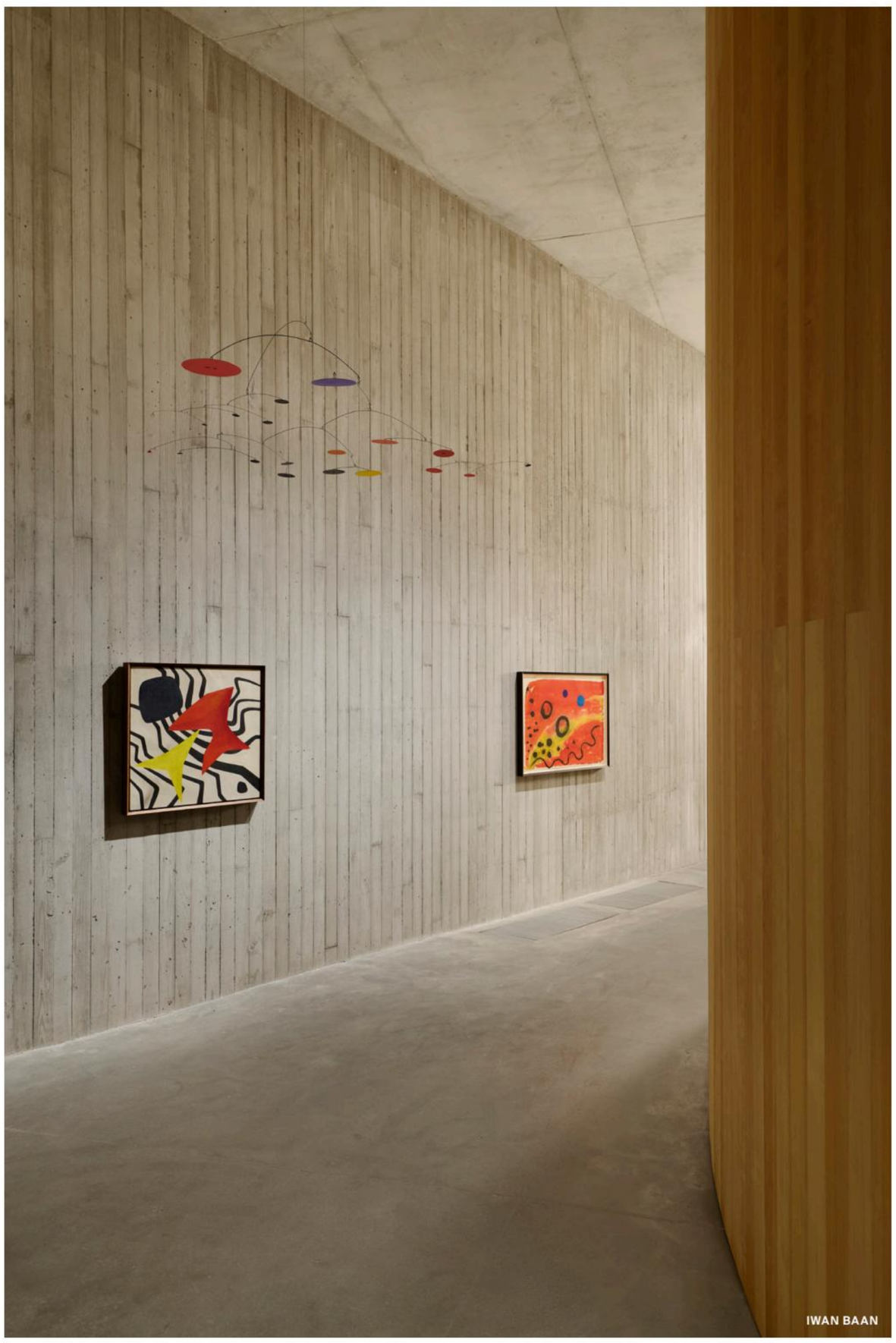

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Top Left: Double-height galleries hold Calder's large scale sculptural works.

Top Right: Large windows offer generous washes of natural light, blurring the line between outside and inside.

Bottom Left: Calder's oeuvre is framed by a playful selection of materials that include four different types of concrete in addition to wood and drywall.

Bottom Right: The majority of the museum is located in a network of subterranean galleries; some are outside.

large-scale sculptures, such as 1943's gothic arachnidlike work *Black Widow,* which hovers ominously above viewers, and the red-hued dwarfing statement *Jerusalem Stabile II* (1976). The exhibition spaces are separated with help from the project's material play, which features swaths of four different types of concrete plus wood and drywall. Generous washes of natural light from soaring windows placed on both sides of the building visually connect the space to the sunken gardens outside, offering a breezy spatiality that avoids any sense of claustrophobia. Outside, in the Vestige Garden, the whimsical *Tripes* (1974) rises as a massive burgeoning silhouette in black metal toward the billowy meadow on the ground floor.

A large staircase, which also moonlights as an auditorium with its tall steps and a projection-friendly wall, leads to the Highway Gallery. Here, a long stretch of window overlooks the bustling and noisy highway. With the roadway being such a defining feature of the project's site, the decision to embrace a view most other architects might choose to obfuscate reflects Herzog & de Meuron's tendency toward rawness. It also alludes to many archival images the team discovered of Calder's mobiles hung with busy New York traffic in the background. In lieu of echoing Calder's organic floating shapes or distinctive color palette in their design of the space, the architects played homage to the artist and his legacy in these more subtle ways. Another example lies in the foyer's outer wall, which is dressed in an unassuming black wood, an homage to Calder's own Connecticut barn, which connects the building's highway-facing side to the gardens.

Beyond various materials and forms, the design seeks to remain loyal to an idea of a garden that Frantzen sees in multitudes in his projects. "There are multiple meanings to a garden here," he explained. Besides Oudolf's landscape on and below ground level, the architect hopes the visitors will approach the sunken spaces underground as places of cultivation in a metaphorical sense. He also sees a parallel between a garden's life cycle and the building's programming. "Gardens change over time with light, and similarly, people can come back here to rediscover something that they might have missed in a different light in another season."

Osman Can Yerebakan is a freelance art and culture writer based in New York.

Society and Spectacle

The sixth Chicago Architecture Biennial, *Shift: Architecture in Times of Radical Change*, is a mixed bag.

ROBERT HEISHMAN/
COURTESY CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

Two strapping young lads stood on the roof of a black Mercedes hawking espressos, IPAs, and $42 sunscreen. Their ad hoc storefront is an elevated metal stand mounted atop the car, shaded by a blue and white beach umbrella—this scene was one of the most memetic images I encountered at the sixth Chicago Architecture Biennial (CAB6), which opened to the public on September 19. The Pavlovian dog in me took out my phone, snapped a photograph, and posted it on social media, like many other passersby outside the Graham Foundation.

Sam Chermayeff's *slacker-chic* cafe was indeed a hit on Instagram, but to my dismay, I quickly learned the goofy provocation was effectively a billboard for Hard Sun, a boutique sunscreen brand. The piece was uncritically applauded by MOS cofounder Michael Meredith at a Graham Foundation panel as one of his favorite exhibitions. Sure, it's cute, but what does it have to do with the CAB6 theme, *Shift: Architecture in Times of Radical Change*?

"We are in a moment without canons, without a center," said artistic director Florencia Rodriguez, describing the curatorial intent behind the theme she chose for journalists at the Graham. "How do we make meaning out of this?"

As in past years, CAB6's installations are spread across the Chicago Cultural Center, Graham Foundation, and other venues, like Stony Island Arts Bank. During my visit, I found a discrepancy between the gravity of the political moment CAB6 sought to address and the aloof joviality of some exhibitions. While ICE and DHS are swarming the streets of Chicago, CAB6's architects are making what appears to be large balloon animals, metal benches with seats that say "this is a joke" and "how antisocial," and tongue-in-cheek advertisements for luxury skin-care products.

Propositions, Critiques, and Interpretive Reconstructions

Thankfully, there are ample exceptions. Rodriguez, who hails from Argentina and teaches at University of Illinois Chicago, assembled an impressive roster of North and South American architects. Some participants rose to the occasion and issued apt responses to Rodriguez's curatorial brief of making architecture in "times of radical change"—which I interpret as fascism and global warming. Others withdrew their works in the weeks leading up to the opening to protest Crown Family Philanthropies, which supports CAB6's educational programming. (Crown Family Philanthropies has a major stake in General Dynamics, a weapons manufacturer that profits from Israel's military campaign in Gaza.) In the former camp, at Stony Island Arts Bank, WAI Think Tank's Nathalie Frankowski and Cruz García staged *A Loudreading Tribune,* an immersive installation that emphasizes justice and collective learning.

A Loudreading Tribune features an interpretive reconstruction of El Lissitzky's *Lenin Tribune,* an anticolonial library, and other ephemera, including photography of Frantz Fanon swaddled by houseplants. We see a keffiyeh and a copy of *Palante,* the Young Lords Party newspaper. WAI displayed an original tenebrist painting—my personal favorite work on view at CAB6—featuring a small, painterly montage of El Lissitzky's *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge* (1919) with a hammer and sickle and Caribbean fruits in the foreground, almost like an avant-garde Caravaggio inspired by the poetry of Puerto Rican anarchist Luisa Capetillo.

The show echoes an exhibition by Theaster Gates now at the University of Chicago's Smart Museum of Art. *Unto Thee* isn't part of CAB6, but the partner exhibition by Gates is stocked with Marxist literature that thematically ties into similar realms. There, Gates placed an original Josef Albers from his personal collection next to a book of Malcolm X's writings translated into Japanese by Yuri Kochiyama, in what Gates calls a mantle for the Japanese civil rights activist. Taking these Chicago-based shows together, Gates and WAI Think Tank delve into internationalist, anti-imperialist, revolutionary artistic practices that defy borders and time.

Iman Fayyad's *In the Round* is the most formally compelling piece at CAB6, architecturally speaking. Installed at the Chicago Cultural Center, Fayyad's 1:1 scale project conjures Félix Candela's poetic, hyperbolic concrete forms. Fayyad, founding director of project:if, achieves a sculptural complexity similar to Candela's with quotidian plywood veneers. Fayyad told journalists that the whole object weighed under 300 pounds and that she envisioned its material assembly system getting deployed for disaster relief housing or any other scenario that might demand quick, dignified shelter.

Like *In the Round,* Oscar Zamora and Michael Koliner's *Air Vapor Barrier* explores material innovation. However their intervention is more critique than proposition. Zamora and Koliner built a pitched roof, leaving 3M insulation membranes exposed, supported by rudimentary wood rods. For Zamora, the installation addresses how architects in the Global North are looking toward "tropical architecture" in the Global South to make ecologically sound buildings. In reality, the asymmetrical flows of neocolonialism dictate an opposite effect, where the Caribbean is inundated by mass-produced goods from the U.S. *Air Vapor Barrier* recalls a recent text in the *Brooklyn Rail* by Orlando Bentancor I came across describing "the uneven geographies of the Global South, where technology arrives not as seamless innovation but as salvage, residue, bricolage. In Montevideo, the future doesn't gleam, it rusts. And it is precisely this rust [through which] another vision becomes possible. The paradox of our time is stark."

Questions of domesticity, comfort, and repose reappear cyclically throughout CAB6, prompting Zach Mortice to call it "a soft Chicago architecture biennial for hard times" in his *Bloomberg* write-up. Not unlike *Air Vapor Barrier, The Global Home,* a film by Space Popular's Lara Lesmes and

ROBERT HEISHMAN/
COURTESY CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

Top: As in past years, the sixth Chicago Architecture Biennial installations are spread across the Chicago Cultural Center, Graham Foundation, Stony Island Arts Bank, and other venues.

Bottom Left: Sam Chermayeff and Hard Sun, a boutique sun screen company, had an installation outside the Graham Foundation.

ROBERT HEISHMAN/
COURTESY CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

Bottom Right: The curatorial vision for *Shift: Architecture in Times of Radical Change* was led by Florencia Rodriguez, CAB's first Latina artistic director.

Fredrik Hellberg, examines how logistical infrastructures inform movement, behavior, and social patterns. *The Linen Closet* by Jason Campbell and ellProjects features 50 blankets that friends and family gifted the Chicago-born artist, each imbued with its own memories and associations with home. Iker Gil's MAS Context Reading Room spotlights local talent with *Common Chicago,* showcasing emerging artists and designers to watch out for.

Inhabit, Outhabit, a group show, assembles 29 impressive multifamily housing projects from around the world by French 2D, SO – IL, Centro Cooperativo Uruguayo, HHF Architects, Kashef Chowdhury/URBANA, adamo-faiden, Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects, MASS Design Group, Oshinowo Studio, PRODUCTORA, Michael Maltzan, URBANUS, Mariano Clusellas, Jose Cubilla, APPARATA, and other architects. Scale models, drawings, and other modes of representation offer a compendium of innovative solutions to the global housing crisis. At Graham Foundation, Stan Allen's expansive portfolio, with an emphasis on his residential work, is also on view through line drawings and text, curated by Michael Meredith, with graphic design by Studio Lin.

Memory, Maintenance, and Refusal

Circularity, material upcycling and innovation, maintenance, and adaptive reuse are other recurring themes at CAB6, and rightfully so. *Shifting Reuse and Repair* by La Dallman at the Chicago Cultural Center certainly fits this bill. The tallest of the CAB6 installations, it features a fragment of a shuttered granary built in 1901 in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. La Dallman essentially took a utilitarian structure slated for demolition and gave it new life. *Some Repairs* by Davidson Rafailidis, *Minor Tectonics* by BURR, and Tamara Kostianovsky's *Nature Made Flesh* likewise focus on adaptive reuse through model-making and storytelling. *Fragments of Disability Fictions* by Ignacio G. Galán, David Gissen, and Architensions takes up the vital, immensely pressing task of centering issues related to architecture and accessibility, through the prism of the New York City subway system and other alienating spaces for those living with disabilities.

Outside the Museum of Science and Industry, where the 1893 Chicago World's Fair was staged, Balsa Crosetto Piazzi and Giorgis Ortiz ideated *Traces,* which features 10,000 dry-set bricks that hearken to the fair's temporary "Great Buildings." After the biennial ends, the architects will reuse the bricks at a future undetermined site. Akin to *Traces, The Crystal Forest* by Sayler/Morris simultaneously examines the relationship between industrialization, degradation, glass, and world fairs, namely the 1851 Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, London.

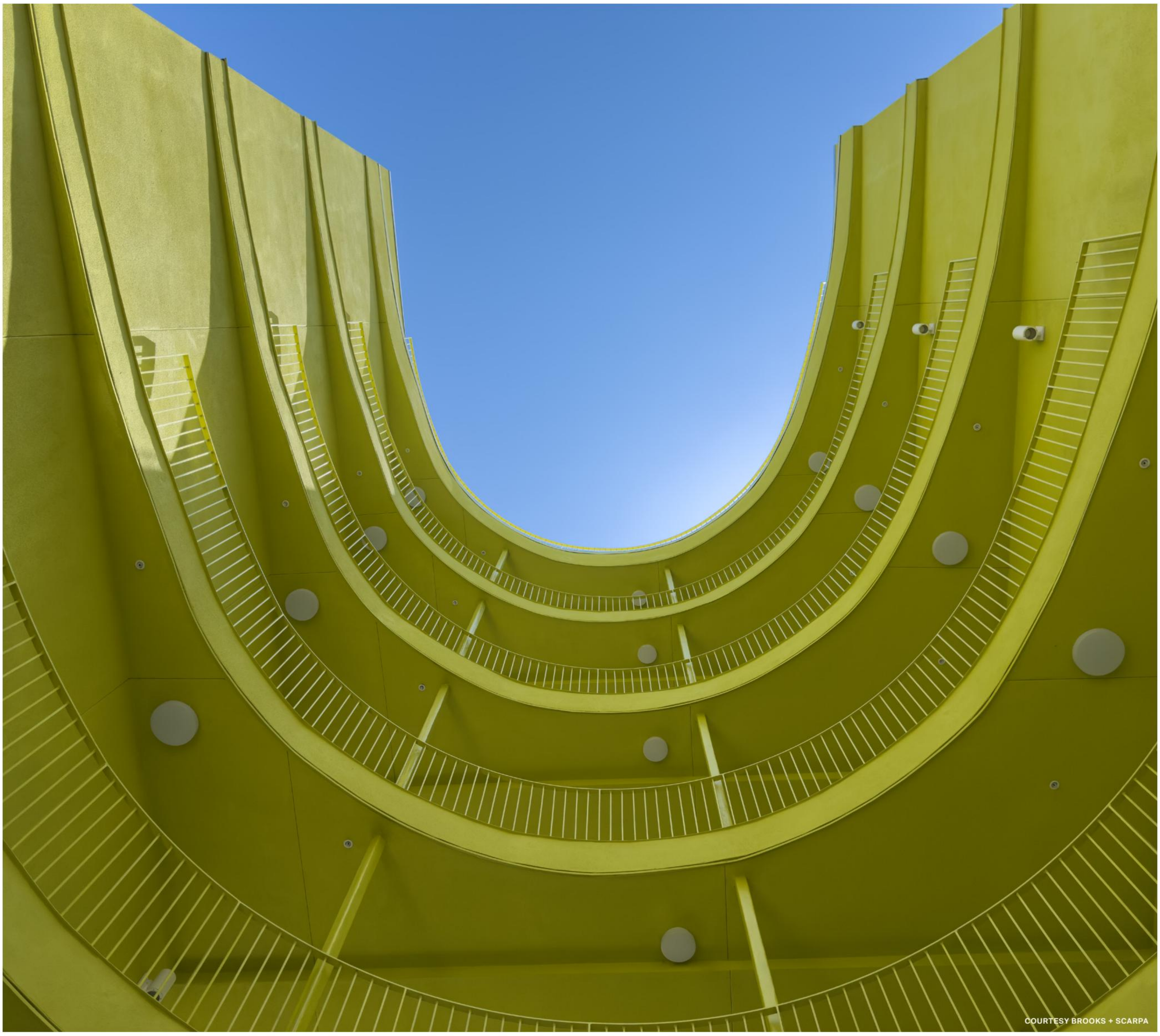
Our Second Skin, the Skin of the City by RADDAR likewise prodded glass's dazzling potential. RADDAR assembled 2,500 glass pieces shaped like fish scales; this is meant to emphasize the notion that "glass has turned into a kind of skin, carrying our hopes, politics, and ideals," RADDAR founder Sol Camacho said in an artist statement. Camacho's words paradoxically evoke that old Walter Benjamin adage "Glass has no history." At Stony Island Arts Bank, Abigail Chang had similar aspirations for *Liquid Glass*. Later this fall, an installation about raving by TAKK and Ivan Munuera will take place inside the Hancock Building, along with more than 20 other new installations as part of CAB6.

Nevertheless, making my way through CAB6, it was hard not to think about the elephant in the room. The CAB6 participants who withdrew before the September 19 debut to protest Crown Family Philanthropies were Ethel Baraona Pohl, Anna Puigjaner, and Pol Esteve Castelló of ETH Zurich; María Buey González, C+ arquitectas; Lacol Arquitectura Cooperativa; MAIO; and Amaia Sánchez-Velasco, Gonzalo Valiente-Oriol, Jorge Valiente-Oriol of Grandeza Studio. Others made their position known through their work: Cosigners of the letter Lesmes and Hellberg of Space Popular, for instance, inserted a disclaimer into their video piece to declare their opposition to the funding and in support of their colleagues who exited the biennial. Perhaps these acts of refusal were the most potent, admirable demonstrations of "architecture in times of radical change." **DJR**

Above: Inflatable red brick walls in *Variations in Mass Nos. 5, 6, 7* (2024) by Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork. These rise and deflate to give the visitor a changing sense of place.

Below Left: Stan Allen's *Building With Writing* (2025) documents 40 years of the architect's writing and drawing practice.

Below RIght: BURR's *Minor Tectonics* (2025) and *Beauty for All* (2025) by R&R Studios at the Chicago Cultural Center.



COURTESY BROOKS + SCARPA

Art as Housing

Brooks + Scarpa is bringing good design to the people who really need it.

Over the past three decades, Larry Scarpa and Angela Brooks have established themselves as pioneers in affordable-housing design. Brooks + Scarpa, their Los Angeles–based firm, has worked on projects that span urban planning, high-density housing projects, and single-family homes. Their practice has also evolved to include projects in the landscape and public art worlds. "We'll gladly do a doghouse if you'll let us do it well," said Scarpa about their prolific output in a recent interview with *AN*.

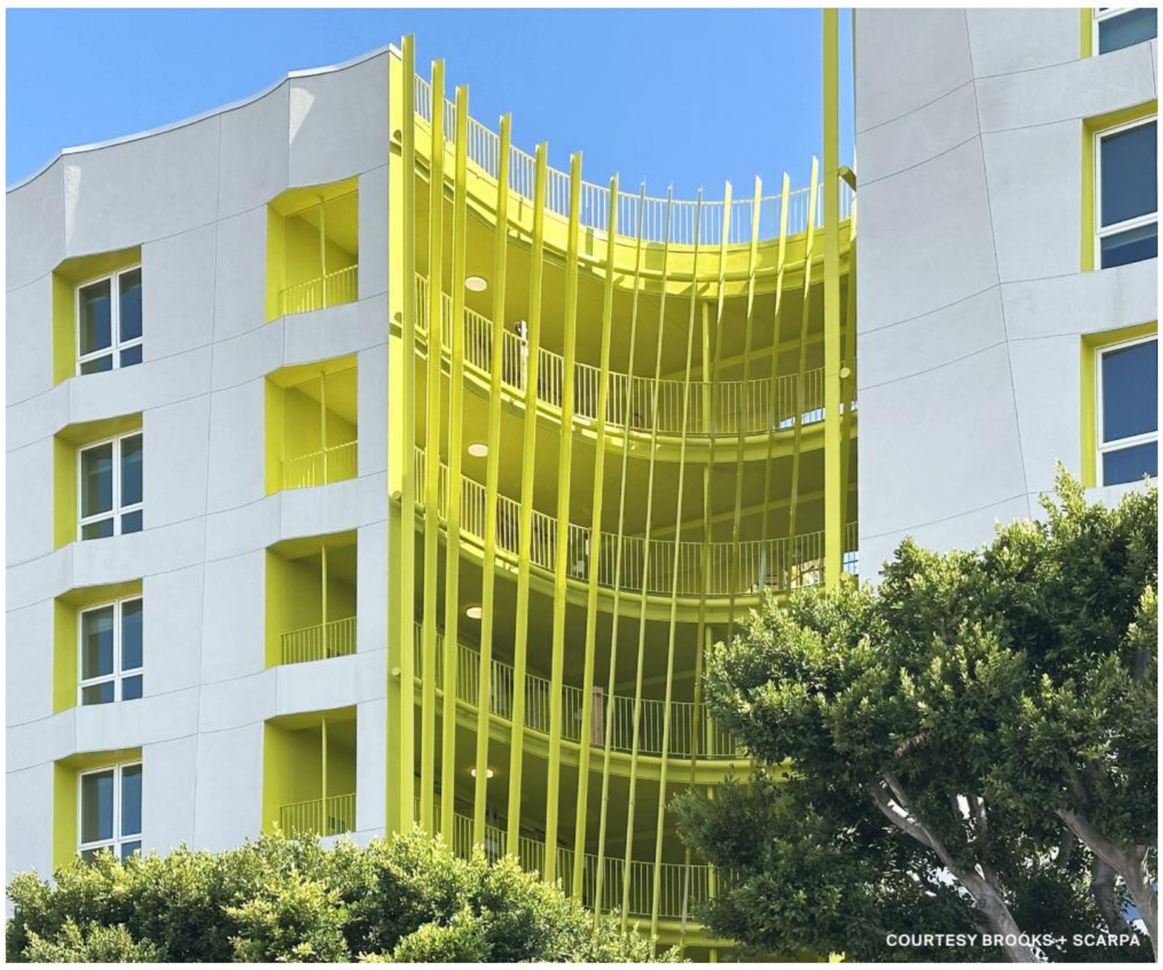
From their first affordable-housing project, housing has remained a critical pillar of their firm, "bringing design to a population sector that really needs it and deserves it." They believe good design can combat NIMBY-ism and have a positive impact on getting their projects approved. Scarpa maintained that good design is not only for the wealthy: "You can provide it for those [who are] in need too." The firm has previously worked with the Marciano Art Foundation to include a rotating art exhibit in an affordable-housing project in Los Angeles's MacArthur Park neighborhood. With the NEST Toolkit, the affordable-housing system it is developing, Brooks + Scarpa will provide the tools for faster, cheaper, higher-quality construction, "We're working with a church in Santa Monica to do affordable housing on their parking lot for homeless students attending Santa Monica College," he added.

With its core mission of providing affordable housing, Brooks + Scarpa continues to innovate, whether it is finding zoning workarounds or creating a prefab system that meets the demands of the current housing crisis. It is not about finding places where the city will let you build affordable housing; it's about finding places that *need* affordable housing and then finding ways to build it there.

Andrew Ghusn is a Beirut-born writer based in Los Angeles.

Miramar, 2025

A bright-yellow, off-center beacon welcomes you to this 7-story housing project. The architects were able to double the number of units on this site through a lot split, providing 134 units of much-needed affordable housing to their local Koreatown community in Los Angeles. The original site featured a senior living project, which Brooks + Scarpa also retrofitted and upgraded. The two sections are visually connected, and maintaining the sequence on the site that predates the addition was crucial in designing the new build. The narrow project is defined by an undulating facade to provide shade and also serve as an auditory barrier from the busy nearby thoroughfare.



COURTESY BROOKS + SCARPA

Luna Vista, 2025

For this 100-percent affordable-housing building, the architects crafted their design from the inside out. Centered around a community room and courtyard, the design fans out in a vertically stacked composition that plays with angles, adding interest to the material plane. With 4 stories and 74 units, the building focuses on creating a quiet oasis for the target demographic, which includes recently homeless people and low-income individuals. Located in North Hills, California, Luna Vista is marked by a welcoming archway that wraps around a central opening, connecting the building to the surrounding community and making it an extension of the existing urban fabric.

COURTESY BROOKS + SCARPA

Northview, 2025

This building was designed to extend like a porch toward the surrounding streetscape. The architects invite the outdoors in with a white trellis, two outdoor plazas, and a glass-encased community space. The outdoor spaces can remain separate or connect into one larger space. The low-density, 2-story building consists of 67 low-income units and emphasizes visually accessible circulation through its inclusion of breezeways and upper-story decks as well as perforated materials and fencing. The open-air nature of the project works in contrast to the more fortified, closed-off narrative of the existing stucco apartment buildings in its Sacramento suburban neighborhood.

COURTESY BROOKS + SCARPA

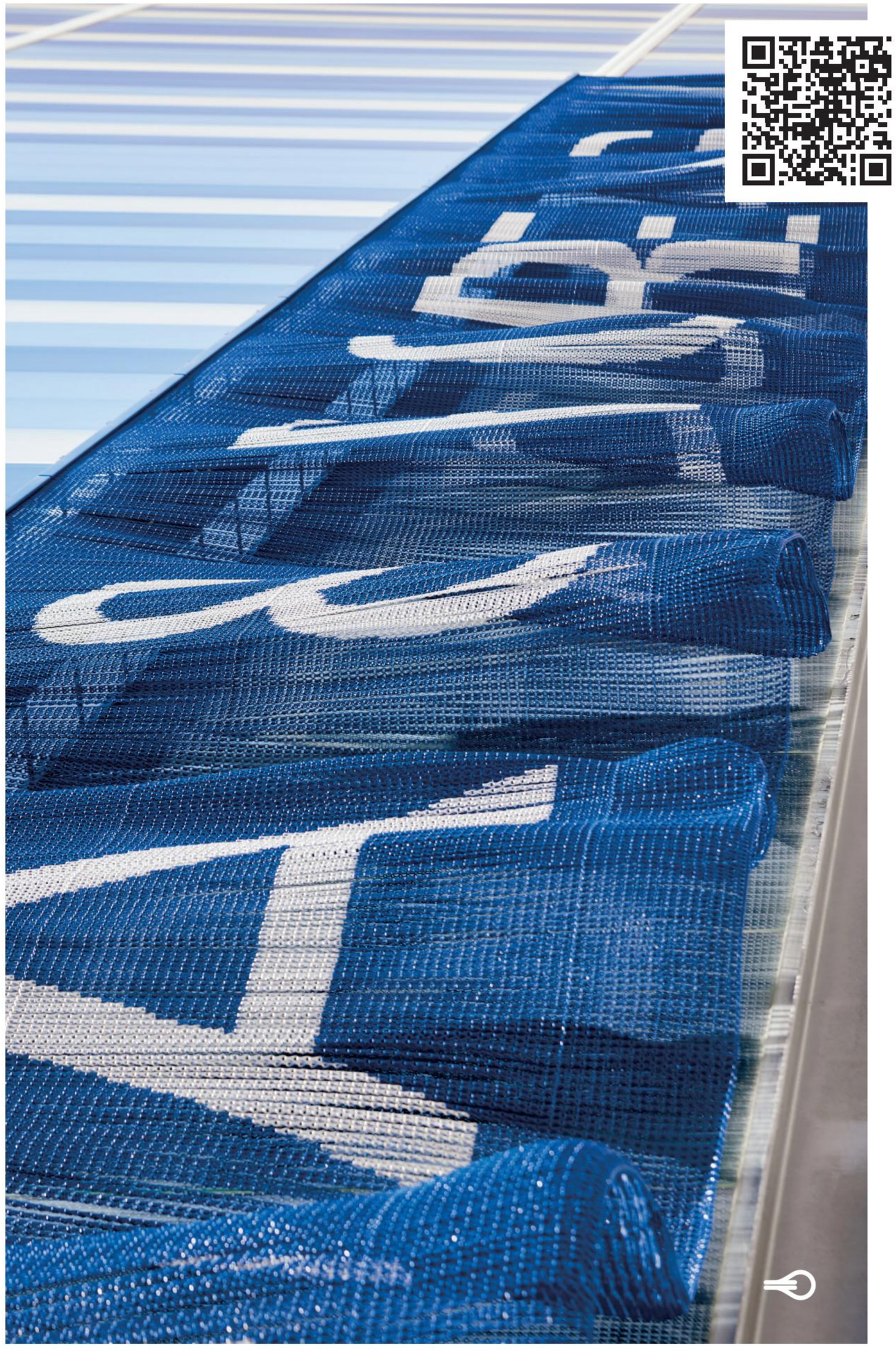
Berkeley Station, Under Construction

This is the first project to be built using the NEST Toolkit, a scalable housing concept designed in collaboration with PlantPrefab to provide quality housing for at-risk populations on lots 80 percent of the size of an average lot in the greater Los Angeles area. Located on a roughly 8,000-square-foot lot in the heart of Santa Monica, the project uses a modular design system to construct an ultradense, single-loaded apartment building. The design for the 13-unit building brings together housing, landscaping, and even an open-air deck on the long, narrow plot. With the completion of this project and a couple of others underway, Brooks + Scarpa hopes to expand the Toolkit so that, eventually, developers will be able to order customized buildings through an online order form.

COURTESY BROOKS + SCARPA

Aerodynamics Laboratory of Oritia & Boreas, Granada, Spain
Architecture: Water Scales Arquitectos | Photos: Ángel Segura

kriskadecoroutdoor.com



View
project video

A new kinetic system that uses aluminum chains
to respond dynamically to wind flow

INTERIORS
FROM SPAIN

From Tottenville to 242nd Street and from Hudson Yards to Jamaica, New York bustles with constructive activity, fueled by real estate speculation and government dollars. Big lives and deals happen here: As of summer 2024, the city's population of 8.5 million would make it the 13th largest state in the U.S. should it decide to go it alone. And its 2023 GDP, about $1.3 trillion, would make it the fifth largest state economy. Not bad! Buoyed by Zohran Mamdani's mayoral momentum—and seen against a presidential administration that is increasingly hostile to cities—New York continues to ride high. On the following pages, *AN* gives glimpses into some of the game-changing projects reshaping this city.

NEW YORK IS NOW!

BARRETT DOHERTY

DOWNTOWN LIVING

With SoMA at 25 Water Street, CetraRuddy delivers the country's largest office-to-residential conversion.

In 1957, Mies van der Rohe worked on a proposal for a series of towers adjacent to Battery Park at the tip of Manhattan. It was scrapped, and a decade later, Carson, Lundin & Shaw designed an imposing brick-clad fortress for Manufacturers Hanover Trust. The bank's punch card–like facade indexed the owners' cheapness: Glazing was only allocated where needed to reduce the need for air-conditioning, so a second-floor office had more windows, while floors where business machines processed checks and paperwork had few, and leasable upper floors had the most. Brick was selected to be contextual to nearby historic blocks, but also because it had the lowest price point. The tower was soon joined by a flanking one designed by Kahn & Jacobs that faced out toward the harbor. Time wore on. After the tower was sold a handful of times, had its basement inundated by Superstorm Sandy, and saw office demand decimated by the pandemic, a change was needed.

In 2022, the property was sold to GFP Real Estate and MetroLoft with Rockwood Capital for $251 million. These new owners commissioned CetraRuddy, led by work and life partners John Cetra and Nancy V. Ruddy, to convert the project into apartments. The duo specializes in this type of work and had often worked with MetroLoft in the past on the real estate developer's office-to-residential (O2R) glow-ups, but this was the biggest one yet. Located in the now rebranded neighborhood of SoMA, or "South Manhattan", 25 Water Street numbers 1,320 units, which makes it the largest O2R project in the United States to date.

In its renovation, CetraRuddy retained the brick facade, but made surgical cuts to create more openings, transforming SoMA's midriff into banded horizontal windows that maintain the stepping of the original facade and slabs. The red brick was then painted white to increase light reflectivity on the street.

The floor plates, about 40,000 square feet in size, are cavernous. To make them work for housing, the architects cut two light wells through the building's bulk. The subtracted area was then added to the top of the building in the form of two amenity floors plus another six floors of units with a smaller, T-shaped plan.

The two voids result in two rings of units that only look out into this enclosed space, which makes for dim interiors. During a tour of the project with Cetra and Ruddy on a recent September morning, overhead lights had to be turned on for visibility when we visited one of the corner apartments located midway down one light well. Perhaps these options will work for residents who aren't fond of natural light or are on a budget: They rent for hundreds of dollars less than comparable units along the outer perimeter. As of this writing, a light well studio advertised a net effective monthly rent of $3,716, while a studio with a view was going for $4,369. There are 330 affordable units, roughly a quarter of the overall count, scattered throughout the project. They were open via housing lottery, with studios beginning at $932.

The conversion's plan, which prioritizes optimization, is its secret sauce. It carves out 52 units per floor and replicates the configuration across its 21 residential levels. The layout compresses units in width, with jogging walls that allow for home offices or rooms set back from the facade. Some of the building's apartments are more spacious, like larger units on the southwest and southeast corners that take over what were stairwells. New punched openings now open to the water.

What will seal the deal for renters are the building's impressive 100,000 square feet of amenity suites. (CetraRuddy provided both the architecture and interior design for the full building.) Up top, there is a coworking zone, an outdoor pool with a killer view, a reservable dining room, and more. Below, the lobby opens down to the basement, which holds two floors of amenities: There is another pool, a gym, salt room, tennis and basketball courts, two-lane bowling alley, golf simulators, and more. The double-height area, ringed with seating for meetups or remote work, is something of a town square. Residents can gather to watch a movie or sports event on the big screen, Ruddy shared.

The architects clearly took care with each piece of the puzzle, but still SoMA's density and level of finish reflect the economics required to make large-scale O2R projects turn a profit. It is also the first project to take advantage of New York state's 467-m tax exemption for O2R projects. The all-electric building opened to residents earlier this year while construction was wrapping up on shared spaces and the streetscape. When fully occupied, it will support about 2,000 people, a population larger than those of many small towns.

Cetra believes we will see more office-to-residence projects in New York. Meanwhile, he also said he has toured potential conversion opportunities in California and Texas with interested owners. Larger O2R projects are already underway. MetroLoft is now converting the old Pfizer headquarters on 42nd Street to apartments with Gensler. The project will number some 1,600 units and stands to take the title of the country's largest O2R from SoMA when it opens in 2027. Healthy competition sometimes yields useful results. **JM**

Left: CetraRuddy retained the brick facade of 25 Water Street, but made surgical cuts to create more openings.

IVANE KATAMASHVILI

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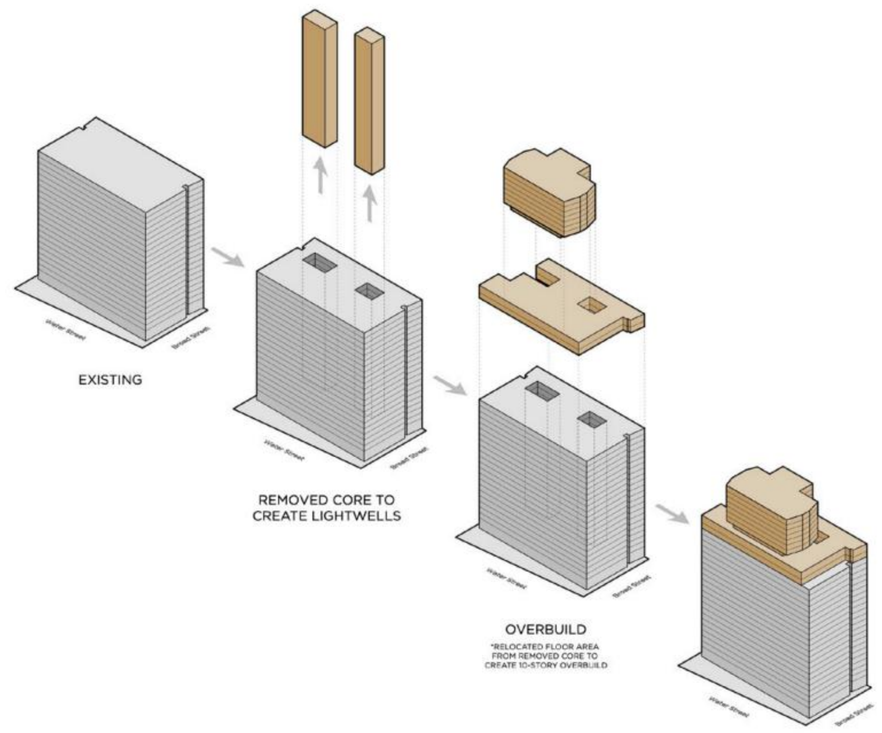


COURTESY CETRARUDDY

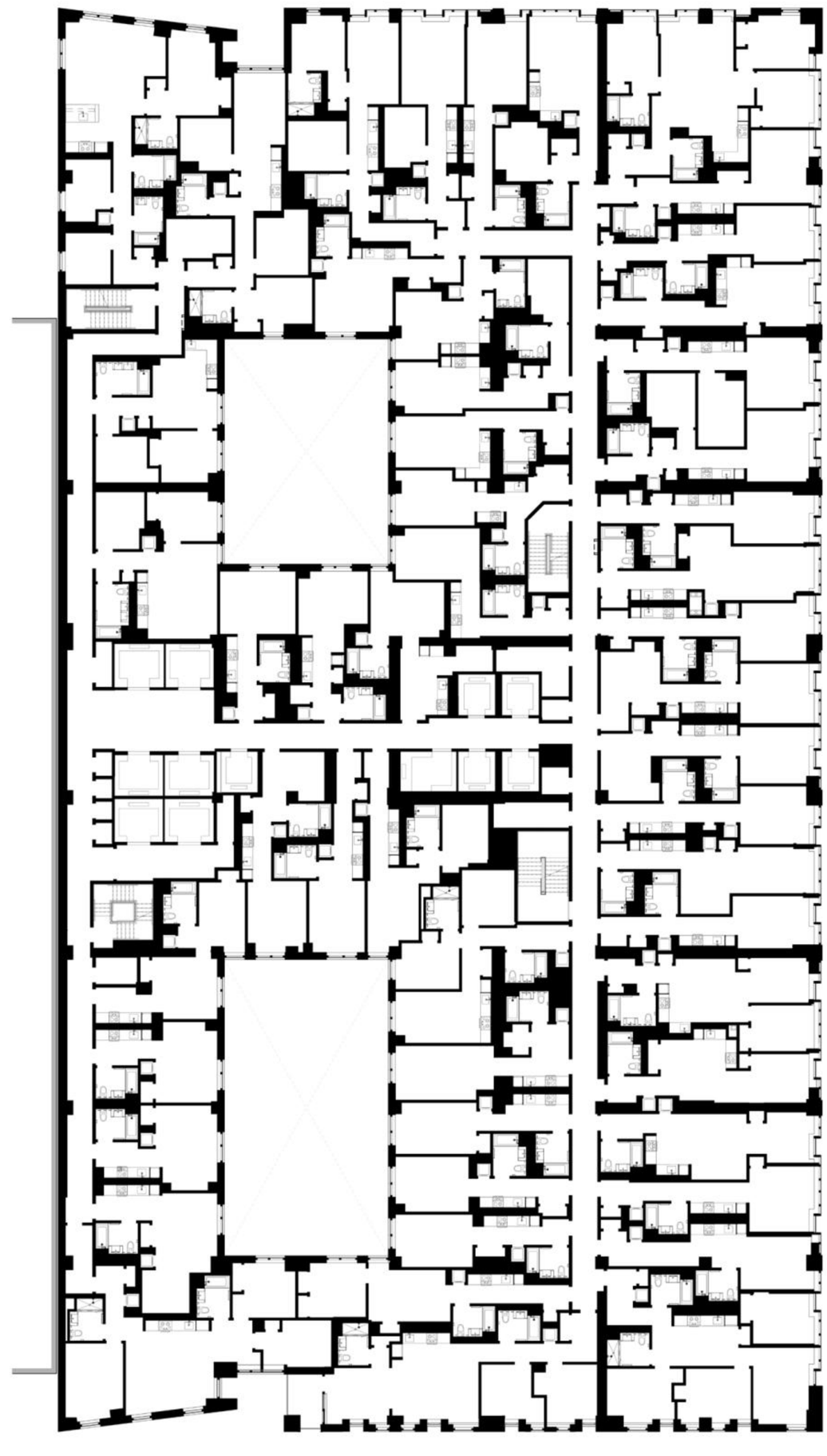
Top Left: Each of the 21 floors in the existing building holds 52 residential units.

Middle Left: The building has 100,000 square feet of amenity suites, including a double-height central space ringed with seating for meetups or remote work.

Bottom Left: New windows were added to the lower section of the building. The exterior was painted white to bounce light.

Top Right: A massing diagram shows the modifications CetraRuddy made to the former office building. The architects cut two light wells through the building's bulk. The subtracted area was then added to the top of the building.

Bottom Right: A residential floorplan shows how the existing building was partitioned into units.



COURTESY CETRARUDDY

SEPARATE BUT TOGETHER

The Bridge Rockaway by Think! Architecture & Design is New York's first hybrid industrial–residential project.

After eight years of planning and development, Bridge Rockaway opened last fall in Brooklyn at the corner of Newport and Thatford avenues. The development is a new hybrid project that includes light manufacturing in its podium and supportive housing for low-income residents in the building above. The project was spearheaded by social service organization The Bridge, along with the Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center (GMDC). Think! Architecture & Design designed the 180,000-square-foot complex, which represents the first newly built configuration of its kind in New York City. "While the project is complex and layered, it demonstrates the potential for collaborations between multiple organizations, agencies, and architects to realize our client's unprecedented vision," said Think! Architecture principal Jack Esterson. Hopefully Bridge Rockaway serves as a model for future projects like this.

The project follows a concept, the hybrid urban factory, that I have been promoting through the exhibition (2011) turned book *Vertical Urban Factory* (2015), conferences at both Polytechnic University of Turin (2020) and Yale School of Architecture (2023), and the book *Hybrid Factory/Hybrid City* (2023). While Bridge Rockaway is still a one-off for the city, it shows a new openness to mixed-use buildings that incorporate light industry. In doing so, it aligns with the Department of City Planning's support for making lighter, cleaner, and quieter industries integral to the new urban fabrication economy. This building initiative was approved last June in synergy with and complementary to the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, an amendment to the city code aimed at revising zoning regulations to assist businesses.

After testifying at a city council land-use public hearing in 2016 on the potential to mix nonpolluting light industry with residential uses, and encouraged by Mayor Bill de Blasio's idea of mandatory inclusionary housing, I developed the concept of mandatory inclusionary manufacturing, which requires affordable production spaces. The idea of a new type of mixed-use industrial building was not under consideration until 2018, when the TF Cornerstone teamed with GMDC to develop a market-rate site in Long Island City. The project was never built.

Other cities are pursuing this mix, as seen in Vancouver's 2018 Strathcona village project, designed by GBL Architects, and initiatives throughout the city of Brussels, which is now an international model for vibrant new spaces for living and working. Affordability becomes the crucial issue for both housing and manufacturing space, which makes Bridge Rockaway stand out for this achievement.

The project was a gigantic undertaking that neither the nonprofits, the city, nor the developers could have imagined would take over two years of land-use changes and financing, plus an additional six years to complete construction. It is a miracle that it even happened.

The building's configuration has separate programs and volumes but is united under one roof, so to speak. The nonprofits, which each own a section in a condo organization, include The Bridge, a 70-year-old supportive housing organization that owns and operates 27 buildings in the city, which house over 1,600 people with mental and/or substance-abuse issues; GMDC, a local manufacturing developer that owns and manages six multitenant buildings, primarily in Brooklyn and Queens, for a total 700,000 square feet; and space for a still-to-be-determined community use. Mega Development, which has extensive experience in housing, was the codeveloper and contractor.

The building itself is an essay in simplicity, with massing that follows the programmatic separations. Two parallel vertical volumes, each with a slight kink, include the housing units and are reached by a double-height, light-filled entrance from which stairs lead up to the second floor. There, a glass-clad space faces the courtyard garden above the podium; The Bridge's offices and a generous lobby filled with seating are here. Further common spaces and activity rooms, which offer shared computers, laundry, and classrooms, surround the lobby.

Between the two vertical residential volumes, a 14,000-square-foot landscaped courtyard creates a common outdoor space above the light industrial space at ground level. The arrangement is similar to ideas explored by NYU student researchers for my 2014 project on this same topic of mixed-use urban buildings.

GMDC operates the 39,000-square-foot rental industrial space with 12 workshops between 1,200 and 6,000 square feet in size, reserved for local start-ups, including furniture, cabinet, and plaster companies that could employ local residents. The facade of each unit joins up to make a long ribbon with a street-facing entrance and a band of clerestory windows that allow light without direct views. These are not operable, which is the first time GMDC tenants cannot open windows and must instead rely on air-conditioning, for better or worse. The exterior brickwork is a variegated orange/yellow at the base, and a large loading dock provides easy access to the industrial spaces.

The residential blocks feature punched-window openings and are clad in charcoal and beige brick. They hold 174 apartments for low-income residents and homeless veterans, including 87 affordable units, some large enough for families, and offer supportive social services from The Bridge. The team worked with the adjacent community garden to place windows on the normally blank party wall to enliven the facade. The roof has a 120 kilowatt solar array installed that will power part of the building. Both the light-industrial spaces and the residential units are fully occupied.

The building and environmental code hurdles were multifold, as the site required a major zoning change and the project presented an unusual occupancy mix for New York. There were delays due to COVID-19 and numerous public meetings, including scrutiny by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection. Due to the zoning change, the project went through a Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process for a text amendment that changed the zoning from R-6 (residential up to 6 stories) to M1-4 (R6A and R7A) and is also a new special mixed-use district (MX-19) in a mandatory inclusionary housing area. The team highlighted the new potential for the coexistence of living and working given the lack of toxic output in today's clean and lean production lines, especially in small workshop spaces. To appease the community and regulators, the programs were physically separated from one another by using insulation to limit noise and vibration from the ground-level shops that could reach the residences. Additionally, vapor barriers form a protective membrane between the offices and the second-floor apartments to safeguard the tenants from any chemical processes.

While the people who live in the apartments above won't necessarily roll out of bed to work in the spaces below, the idea of a vibrant mixed-use space that is affordable for both residents and entrepreneurs is a hopeful sign for future urbanism. Living above the store, so to speak, has once again become a way to support a dynamic neighborhood. I hope Jane Jacobs would approve.

Nina Rappaport is an urbanist, architectural critic, and educator at Kean University's School of Public Architecture and is publications director at the Yale School of Architecture. She is also director of the think tank/consultancy Vertical Urban Factory.

Above: The residential blocks feature punched-window openings and are clad in charcoal and beige brick.

Below: Bridge Rockaway is a new hybrid project in Brooklyn that includes light manufacturing in its podium and supportive housing for low-income residents in the building above.

COURTESY WALDORF ASTORIA NEW YORK

STRUTTING DOWN PEACOCK ALLEY

SOM transforms the Waldorf Astoria through preservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse.

The Waldorf Astoria is not your everyday hotel. Guests have ranged from Winston Churchill to Marilyn Monroe to Lucky Luciano. There's a salad named after it, and a Cole Porter song referencing that salad. And then there's the cantankerous namesake Muppet, who might confine his jibes to the salad dressing upon seeing the excellent revamp by SOM, completed this July after ten years of design and construction.

The Waldorf Astoria's origins can be traced to the 1890s, when competing neighboring hotels, the Waldorf Hotel and the Astoria Hotel, merged. But it wasn't until the hotel's 1931 relocation that it took on the 51-story skyscraper form that New Yorkers know and love. This building was designed by Schultze & Weaver, which also brought us grand hotels like The Pierre and The Sherry-Netherland in New York, The Breakers in Palm Beach, and The Biltmore in Los Angeles. Lloyd Morgan led the original design on what would become an art deco icon.

Hotels must revamp to survive, but in the hasty process of redecorating to keep up with the times there is a tendency to lose what's actually distinctive. By the 1960s, the aging hotel had lost much of its grandeur. Successive owners made a variety of changes, adding at points a 1-ton chandelier, stodgy Edwardian furniture, and palm-like column capitals that generally obscured the subtle original light-deco-design spirit.

When Anbang Insurance bought the hotel in 2014 (the company has since been seized by the Chinese government for fraud and was reconsolidated as Dajia Insurance Group), SOM was enlisted to set things right. The 1.6-million-square-foot project was much more than a preservation job—only 4 percent, or 62,000 square feet, of the interior is landmarked, mostly lobbies, corridors, the ballroom, and event spaces. Frank Mahan, an associate director at SOM who worked on the project, explained, "[For architects] it's fairly easy to imagine a preservation project where we keep what's there; or a restoration project, we rebuild something that's gone; or adaptive reuse, we take a building and turn it into something else. This project was so large and complex that we had to create a recipe mixing all three."

The facade has been comprehensively restored. Decorative spandrel panels that had previously been cruelly ruptured for air-conditioning units were recreated by artisans in the renovation. Restoring the hotel's 5,600 windows to their original, sleeker dimensions helps shed some bulk. About 800 upper-floor windows were heightened to allow larger pathways for daylight on the residential levels. Base limestone was polished up, as were bricks. Those were re-created where needed in their original color: Waldorf Grey.

The structure was generally in good shape, but the steel supporting the building's copper pinnacles had corroded and had to be repaired and partially replaced, with the pinnacles themselves finding new life as duplex penthouses.

The hotel has also pared its occupancy down from its original 1,400 rooms. Now it has 375 guest suites. The building has also followed the path of many luxury hotels in dedicating about half of its space—372 units—to condos. Given the number of very long-term guests, a list that has included Herbert Hoover and Frank Sinatra, this change seems more of an effort to clarify intentions from the outset rather than a shift in use.

The main floor is one level up. Its landmarked Peacock Alley, a historical runway for some of New York's most influential crowds, looks excellent after being restored to its original form by SOM. Previously, it had been diminished by obtrusive practical uses—a restaurant and the main check-in desks had overstuffed the bird. These are gone. The new reception area to the south has also restored its role as a crossroads, with added stairways increasing circulation.

For the project, SOM played hotel detective, burrowing into the Schultze & Weaver archives and finding features long gone or, in at least one case, never realized. Mahan explained: "The specifications book described a backlit, luminous marble lighting fixture in the Park Avenue lobby ceiling." After decades, the marble panel is finally fully restored and visible to the public.

Mahan also noted that in studying original drawings, the team discovered that the hotel's original proportions had been abandoned. "[According to drawings], as you move through the enfilade the rooms expand and compress in a perfectly alternating rhythm. The symmetry and sense of procession had been completely lost over time. Not only have we restored materials, we restored the volumes and the sense of drama."

The building's Park Avenue lobby looks better than ever, with Louis Rigal's *Wheel of Life* mosaic and 13 murals shining anew in space that's 29 feet high. The syncopation of the remainder of the main axis has been deftly restored. Moving east, there's a white-columned and pilastered space with a silver-leaf lighting recess, then a transverse corridor of Languedoc-rouge Ionic pilasters and walnut wood as well as black-and-white marble. According to the SOM team's intentions, the spaces constrict and expand, inviting both intimacy and grandeur at once.

A blunt fact of a building that's 400 feet wide is just how deep some of its interior spaces are and how dark they can be. SOM lets in the light through design interventions like doubling the height of the Lexington Avenue entrance and carving out a new reception area to the south of Peacock Alley from the back-of-house space.

Landmarked spaces on the two floors above have also been thoroughly restored. The Silver Gallery, inspired somewhat by the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, has been scrubbed, with metalwork and Harewood paneling replaced. It features 16 Edward Emerson Simmons ceiling murals depicting the months and seasons, which were relocated from the prior hotel building. During the restoration, specialists at ArtCare Conservation discovered that these murals included additions that matched previously darkened originals. They restored the entire mural to its original coloring.

SOM's countless improvements are greatly assisted by interior design updates from Pierre-Yves Rochon, who designed the new reception area, hotel rooms, and furnishings for landmarked portions. In a conversation with *AN* he remarked, "About 40 years ago I stayed in the Waldorf Astoria with my wife, and I said to her, 'I would love to one day redesign this hotel.'"

His wish came true, as did ours, in effect. Rochon recalled being dismayed upon finding the hotel stocked with only British and American classical furniture; "There was nothing from the '30s." His aim was to "bring back the pure beauty of the 1930s, because it was a perfect time between the classical and the modern, a bridge from the past to the future."

The additions are contemporary, but the aim is harmony. "We found new pieces—the '30s are inspirational, but it is 2025," said Rochon. "It is not the same hotel. It is a responsibility to have a balance." Curving furniture forms shake up rectilinearity in deco spirit; materials are also often cleverly reflective, another attempt to lighten the dark interiors. These additions mesh well with historic elements. Rochon explained: "My dream was to make it more like a living room than a reception hall."

The effect is all very gracious, a sum greater than its parts as well as a revelation thanks both to all-new and long-submerged historic elements. "Paradoxically, through renovation we are creating something new in this space," Mahan said.

Henry James visited the prior iteration of the Waldorf Astoria and was so struck by the experience that he dedicated several pages to it in his travel narrative *The American Scene*, writing that he was "verily tempted to ask if the hotel-spirit may not just *be* the American spirit most seeking and most finding itself." It still may be so.

Anthony Paletta is a writer living in Brooklyn.

UNDER MAINTENANCE

FacadeMD's Jeremy Edwards leads the latest round of preservation of the Woolworth Building's facade.

When architect Cass Gilbert designed the Woolworth Building, his aim was to show off the building's 792-foot steel structure. The innovative steel-cage construction, a major engineering feat at the time, would secure the building's status as the world's tallest building for over a decade after its 1913 opening. So as not to detract from this technology, he clad the building in limestone and glazed terra-cotta so that no one would think the skyscraper was, as Gilbert said, "pretending to be a masonry building."

The tower's light cream facade, enlivened with intricate, neo-Gothic ornamentation, definitively sets it apart from the dull gray of the masonry buildings that Gilbert rejected. However, the Woolworth's coloration as well as the fragility of porous terra-cotta has meant that the facade has required near constant maintenance during its 112 years of existence. Almost immediately after its completion, workers had to scramble up scaffolding—or be lowered down on cleaning rigs—to scrub layers of city grime off the building's facade and make cosmetic repairs. Today, restoration efforts continue, but now a new generation is stewarding the landmarked building's future.

SUCH GREAT HEIGHTS

Jeremy Edwards is the 29-year-old project manager tasked with leading the latest round of facade restoration on the tower. When we met, he was wearing a corduroy blazer over his work clothes, a hard hat stowed in the crook of his elbow. Often the youngest person on site, Edwards moves with the quiet assurance of someone who holds all the keys to the building. The Woolworth's security guards, notoriously strict on interlopers hoping for a peek of the lobby's iconic, landmarked ceilings, waved us through. One added: "If you're with him, you can go anywhere."

Soon after, we were standing outside on a terrace on the 28th floor peering over a ledge at the stomach-dropping view toward Park Place far below. "It doesn't feel like you're that high up," Edwards observed. He spends his days scaling the building's street-facing walls in a harness on a suspended rig, inspecting every single terra-cotta facade component. Once he identifies a repair or replacement that must be made, he draws up the construction documents that initiate the process of restoration carried out by a wider team of terra-cotta fabricators, masonry-restoration firms, scaffold contractors, and other specialists.

In conversation, Edwards compared the composition of Woolworth's facade to that of a painted balloon. Once the balloon starts to expand and contract, as any building's steel skeleton inevitably does, cracks can quickly appear on its outer layers. "Sometimes the terra-cotta can't withstand the compressive forces," Edwards explained.

He noted that having a holistic approach to restoration is key for buildings like this one: "It might be cracking in one area, but that force is so high that once you touch one part, another piece might break somewhere far above it."

Edwards's documentation process is split into 57 vertical sections of the building facade, or "drops," and can take more than six months. The current cycle is slated to be completed in November. In Edwards's field office, on

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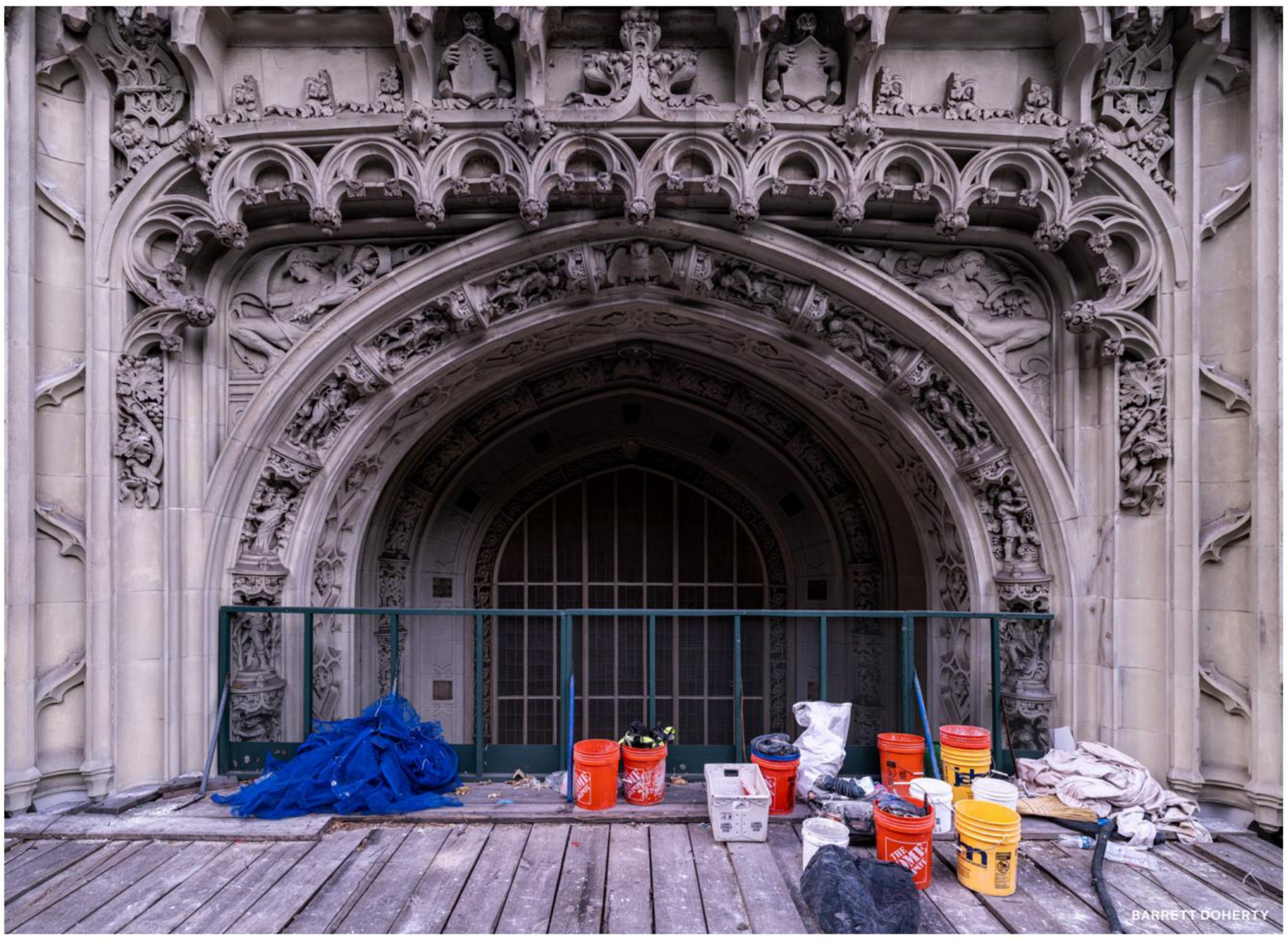

BARRETT DOHERTY

an unleased floor of the building, drawings are pinned up to review progress, post-shift equipment is stacked in piles, and terra-cotta pieces sit idly, until Edwards grabs one to illustrate a point. Elsewhere on the floor, safety lines are tied off around drywalled columns before shooting out open windows.

Facade Maintenance Design (or FacadeMD), the company Edwards works for, has held the contract for the building's facade inspection since 1987. The inspection takes place every five years to align with the required timing through New York City's Facade Inspection and Safety Program (FISP).

For FacadeMD president Rick Lefever, the Woolworth Building has always been a matter of pride and, as a result, legacy. "It is highly gratifying to be entrusted with the care of this iconic structure, and we have adapted our design approach as restoration technology has evolved," he told *AN*. "I was delighted when I placed the souvenir gift from the building's 100th anniversary gala on my desk, next to the souvenir gift from the 75th anniversary."

Perhaps that's why he recognized a successor in Edwards. "One day, after touring the building, my boss [Lefever] asked me how much I knew about terra-cotta," Edwards recalled. At that time, Edwards was 27 and had been an employee at the firm for three years, some of those while working toward completing a master's degree in sustainability at the City College of New York. (At FacadeMD, Edwards's title is also chief sustainability officer.) "I told him that I knew a bit, and Rick said, 'I'm going to give you this building.'"

PRESERVATION'S CLIMATE FUTURE

In spite of preservation's preoccupation with the past, Edwards is interested in the possibilities that facade restoration holds for the future, specifically in reshaping how we think about the built environment. In his role, Edwards is responsible for the building's compliance with FISP. But beyond the important task of inspection, he sees a new opportunity to bring facade maintenance into a broader climate conversation, especially in light of Local Law 97—this sets carbon caps for buildings over 25,000 square feet to achieve the City's net-zero goals; the first round of reports are due by the end of this year.

"There's a sort of synergy happening between this restoration and this new climate law," he explained. "For every repair, there's an embodied carbon value attached to the repair."

Most of the original 7,500 tons of terra-cotta used to construct the Woolworth Building were manufactured in New Jersey and Staten Island by Atlantic Terra Cotta Company. "All the units were hand-pressed and then fired in a kiln. That burning process caused a lot of emissions, so there's a lot of baked-in energy used to create this building that gets extinguished every time you take out a piece," Edwards said. His aim is to reduce the amount of new carbon emissions by emphasizing repair over replacement, which also preserves the authenticity of the original facade fabric. Since he's taken over the process this year, the team has yet to make a replacement.

A closer look at the Woolworth's facade reveals a patchwork of material. The building's upper 30 floors received a $22 million facade restoration in 2021, including the recasting of original decorative tiles, when Alchemy Properties renovated them into luxury condos. Elsewhere, parts of the building are slightly darker, a result of the cast-concrete replacements made by other facade professionals to original terra-cotta elements. More updates are likely to come with the renovation of the building's 5-floor penthouse, which was purchased by art collector and entrepreneur Scott Lynn for $30 million in 2023.

Edwards often reflects on his unexpected stewardship of the Woolworth Building's facade, and he regularly takes to LinkedIn to share his thoughts, sketches, and findings. The facade's patchwork state is emblematic of the building's rich material memory; Edwards's work reflects the ongoing legacy of maintenance that he is now carrying forward high above Broadway, one drop at a time. **IL**

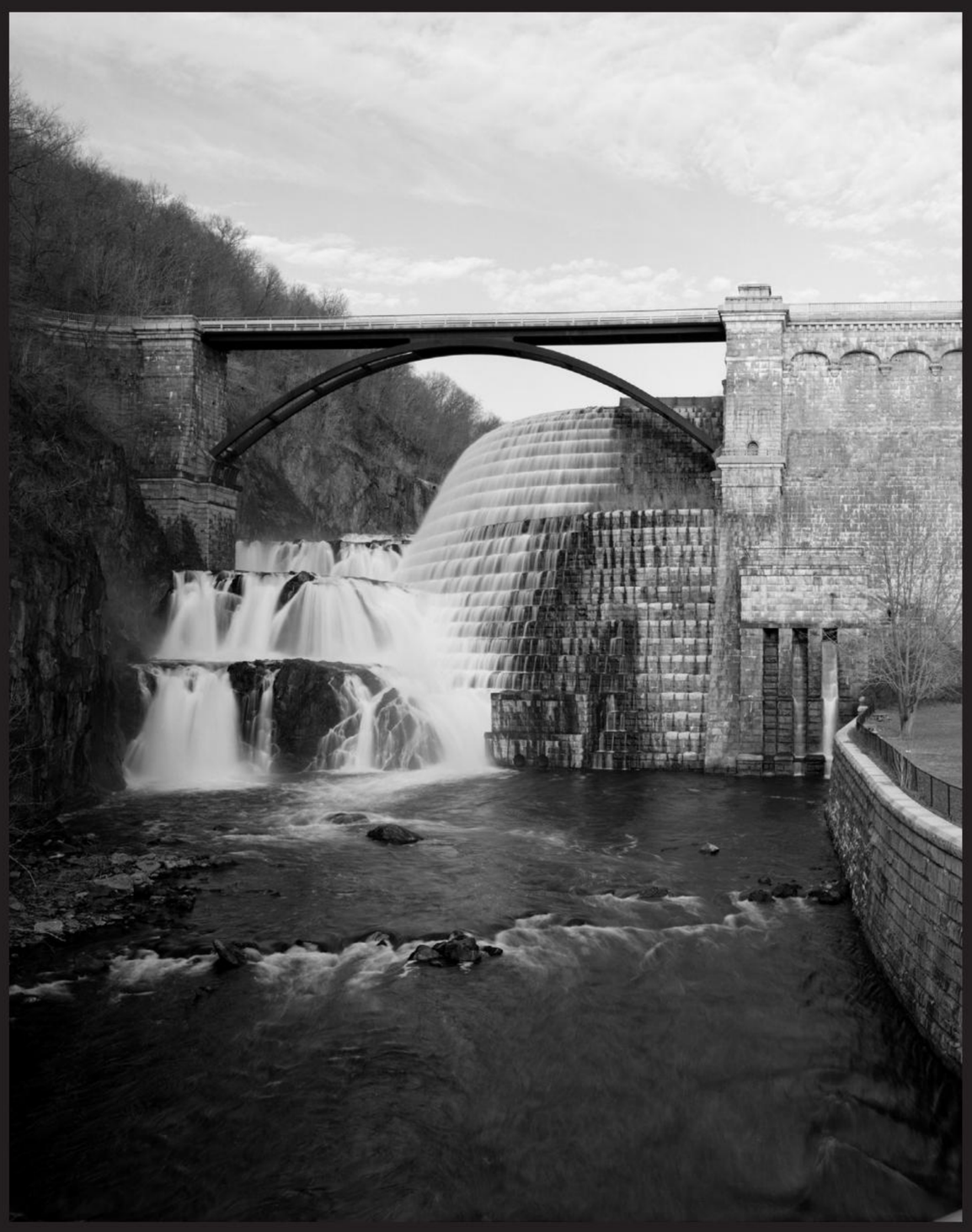
Opposite: The Woolworth Building features a polychromatic facade consisting of limestone and glazed terracotta.

Above Left: Jeremy Edwards, the facade restoration's 29-year-old project manager, is interested in the relationship between preservation and climate action.

Above Right: The restoration process is divided into 57 vertical sections of the building, and takes over 6 months to complete.

Below: Replacements to the facade are made in cast concrete and glazed terracotta.


BARRETT DOHERTY



WATERSHED DOWN

Stanley Greenberg's *Waterworks* documents the web of infrastructure that keeps New Yorkers hydrated.

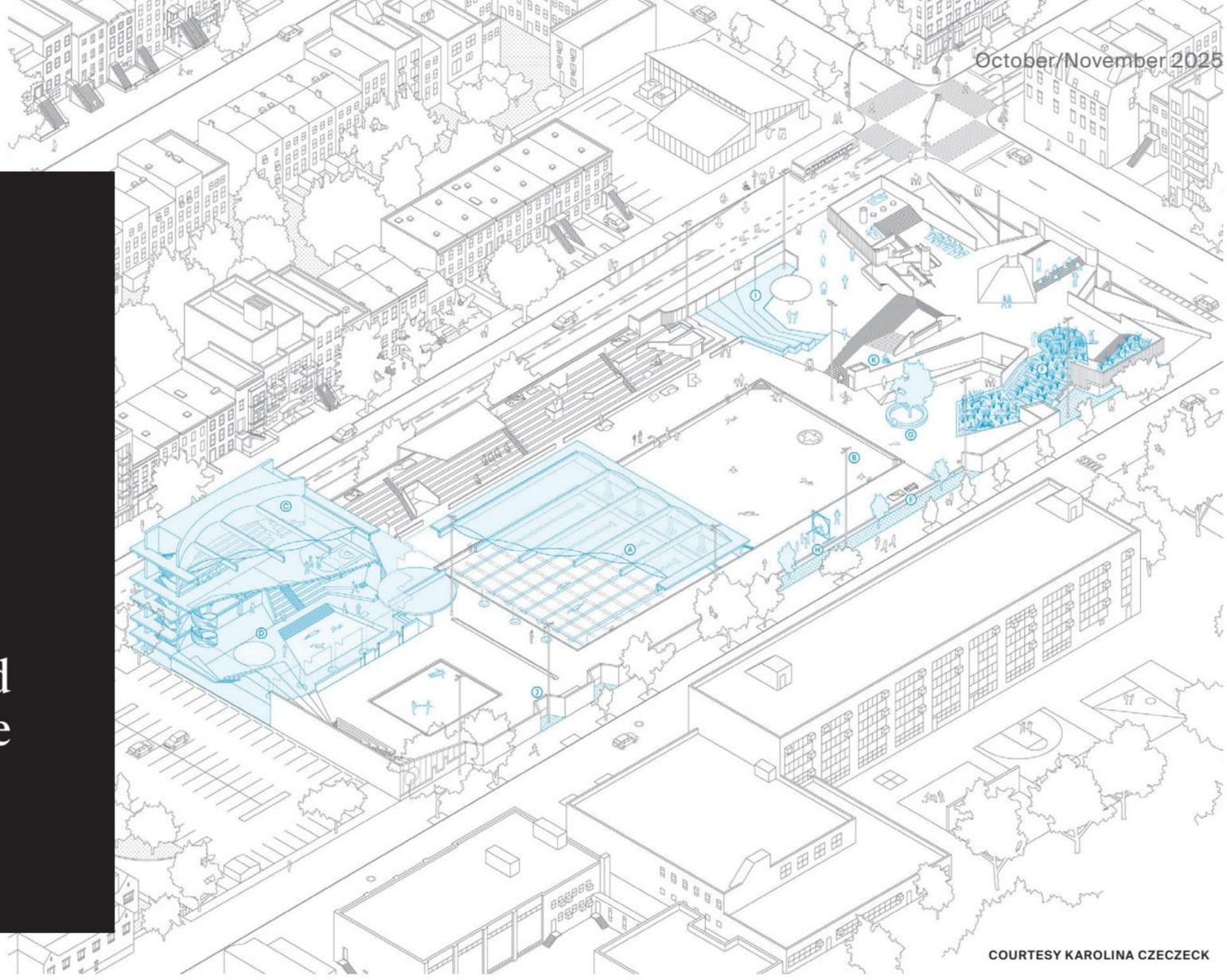
New York's water collects in 18 reservoirs upstate before being conveyed into our kitchens and bathrooms. Since the early 1990s, photographer Stanley Greenberg has documented the city's vast water infrastructure network; it helped that he was a former employee of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection. After decades of work, the result is *Waterworks,* his latest book, published by KGP MONOLITH earlier this year.

Greenberg was invited to photograph many of New York's tunnels and facilities in the late 1990s, but this access ended after 9/11. Since then, he has focused his camera on the traces of the water system that are visible throughout the city. The resulting portfolio sequences dramatic shots of machines and tunnels with gridded collections of ventilator shafts, pumping stations, and manhole covers. Some of the facilities are abandoned or overgrown, which, when combined with the brooding black and white treatment, establishes an elegiac sentiment. Greenberg's book is a powerful and beautiful reminder of a public utility that is essential—and largely invisible. JM

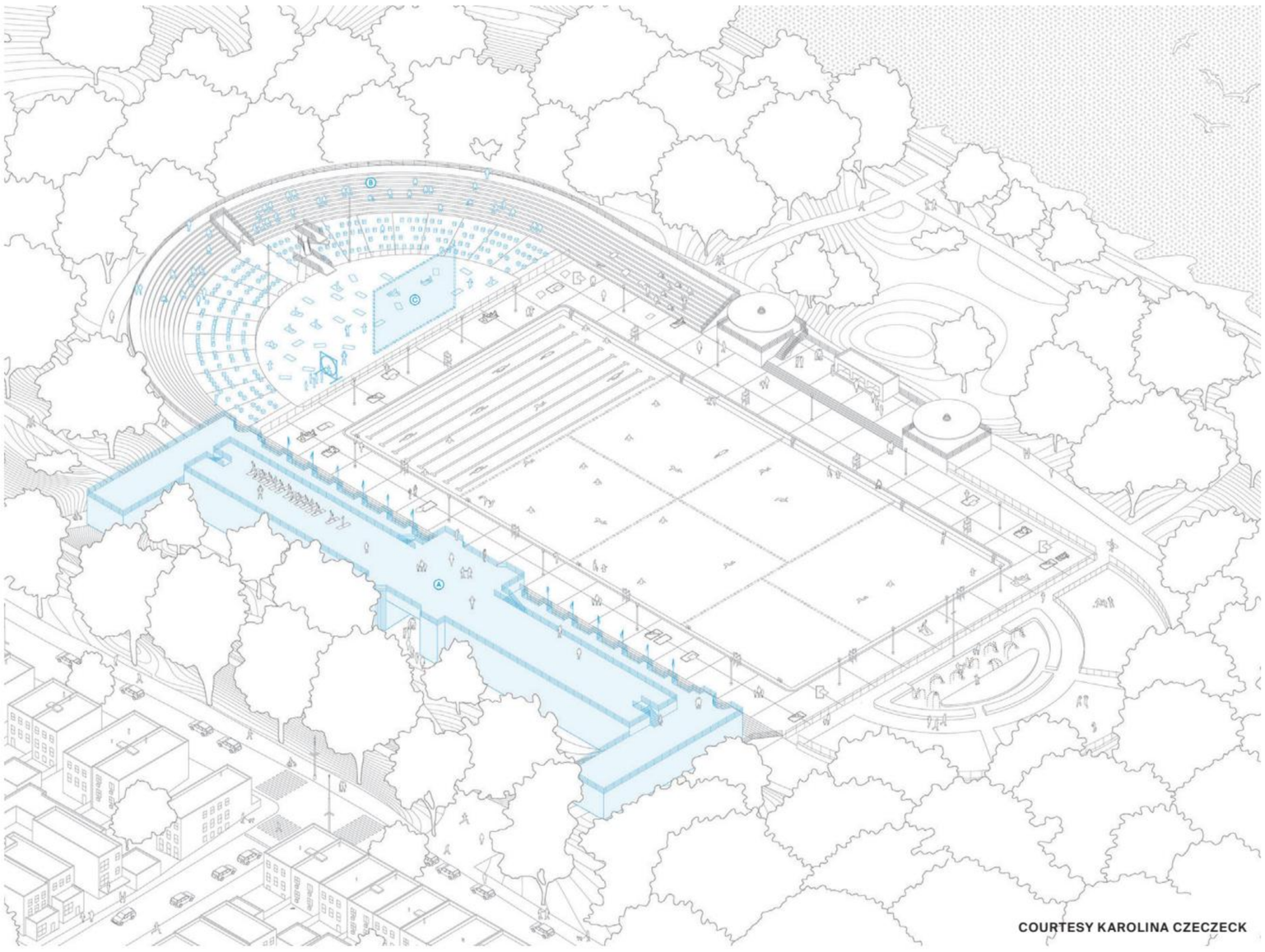
Clockwise from top left: Interior New Croton Dam, Westchester County, 1999; Dewatering Apparatus, Shaft 21, City Tunnel No. 1, Manhattan, 2000; High Bridge Tower, Manhattan, 1995; New Croton Dam, Westchester County, 1999.

BETTER BATHING CULTURE

The latest iteration of Public Pools by Karolina Czeczek and Anna Morgowicz evidences the lack of support for New York's current aquatic facilities.



COURTESY KAROLINA CZECZECK



COURTESY KAROLINA CZECZECK

Top: Karolina Czeczeck and Anna Morgowicz put forth design interventions, like this plan to weatherize Kosciuszko Pool, in efforts to extend the swimming season at New York City public pools.

Bottom: A reimagining of Astoria Pool, the largest of the city's 11 WPA pools, proposes the adaptation of a portion of the space for a year-round performance venue.

For a certain sect of swimming enthusiasts in New York City, the start of September brings the yearly lament: Why should our outdoor public pools close while it's still so hot outside? In Public Pools, a long-running research project by architect Karolina Czeczek and photographer Anna Morgowicz that was recently on view at Citygroup, the duo took the question one step further. They asked: Why should the pools close at all?

There are 52 public outdoor pools in New York City, each open from the end of June to the start of September, in accordance with the closing and reopening of the city's public schools. Beyond the documentation of existing pools through drawings and Morgowicz's photographs, Czeczek imagined various uses for New York's various pool typologies that might extend their use beyond this summer season.

One of the more practical proposals repurposes smaller "vest pocket pools" by simply covering them with an inflatable roof. Built during Mayor John Lindsay's administration to serve dense communities, these uniformly sized and shaped pools were meant to be arranged in different ways, depending on the area in which they were placed. Many have since been modernized as "Cool Pools," a 2017 initiative that brought in bright colors, fun seating, and tropical plants, creating a resort-like feel. It's an atmosphere one could easily see a neighborhood running to in the cold days of January, should an inflatable heat structure come into play.

Concepts like a public laundromat in the Metropolitan Pool recreation center in Brooklyn, which is already indoors and open year-round, feel less likely to be realized. The idea is meant to recall New York's public pools' original use—public bathing. Perhaps the heat produced by the laundromats might make more sense in conjunction with the exhibition's plan for the uniformly 40-foot-by-20-foot-by-3-foot pool volume established by Lindsay, so-called minipools, which the designers reimagine as saunas in the winter months.

For the famed Works Progress Administration (WPA) pools, Czeczek envisions the stadium seating surrounding the pools as the perfect setting for events. The idea recalls McCarren Park Pool: Built in 1936, the monumental art moderne–style pool closed in 1984 and was held in limbo until two decades later, when events company JellyNYC saw an opportunity to transform the emptied pool into a music venue for hipsters. But residents of the quickly gentrifying Williamsburg seemed to realize that its original recreational use was far more valuable, so the pool was restored and reopened in 2012.

One only has to look through photographs from McCarren Pool's time as a free-to-the-public music venue to see the fatal flaw of such repurposing: These massive pools require constant upkeep and maintenance, acts of repair that necessitate an offseason. Each year, the parks department spends weeks revitalizing pools to prepare for reopening. This consists of annual repainting and repairs in addition to any larger jobs. Even during our shortened season these larger pools suffer from lifeguard shortages and struggle to open in their entirety. Pools of any size can be shut down for days to weeks by any number of mishaps.

Still, the question persists: Why *are* pools only open ten weeks a year? The city's answer is simple: Our pools are most populated by children, who go back to school after Labor Day. Parents adjust their own schedules and often replace lazy afternoons with extracurricular activities. During these shoulder seasons, the pools would be too empty to justify the extra cost. Without children, adults simply don't go enough.

New York needs a deeper cultural shift for there to be enough demand for a longer pool season. To put it bluntly: We need more disgruntled swimmers clamoring for aquatic improvements. Czeczek and Morgowicz's deft speculative interventions propose how design can help facilitate new cultural attitudes around how we think about and use public pools, but in advance of real implementation, there are steps that the New York parks department can take toward making these spaces not only more useful but welcoming and delightful as well.

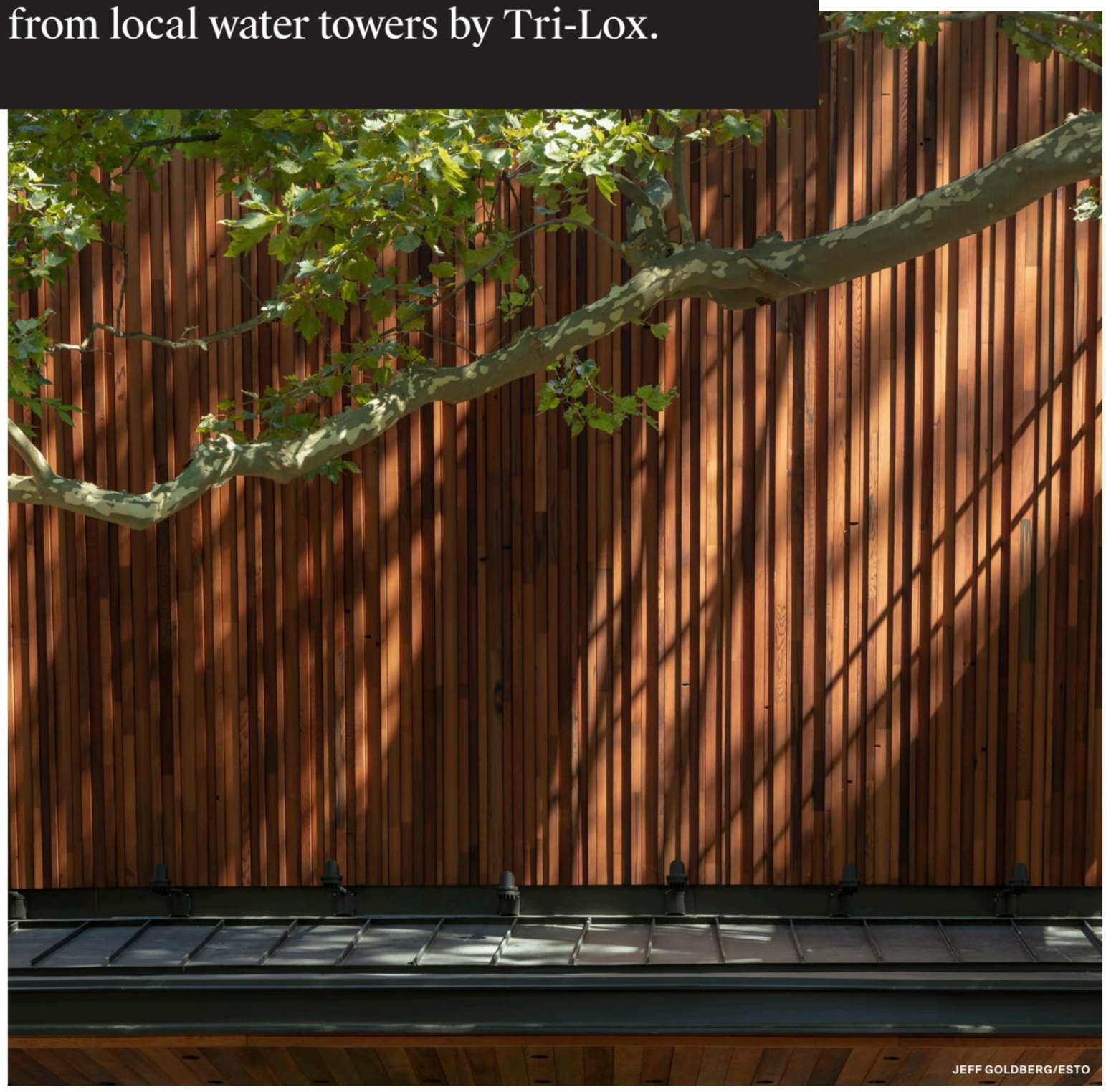
Throughout their history, New York City's public pools have often served a backdrop for the city's politics. Take, for example, the WPA pools in the 1930s, which Robert Moses wielded as an instrument to reinforce urban segregation. Today, this racist legacy continues in contemporary forms such as the parks department's strict pool policies—which are notorious for unfair regulations and surveillance, particularly among Black swimmers.

One way to induce demand for pools to remain open longer is to create spaces that are *beloved* rather than just a means of beating the heat. A public pool ought to welcome a wider range of natators, like parents with kids burdened by after-school gear or childless young adults on a budget eager to find a free fun activity. It will likely take years of joyful, diverse, good experiences to replace the decades of closures and disrepair that have plagued our public pools. Czeczek and Morgowicz's research highlights a need that goes well sated in other world-class cities: public swimming facilities that are popular destinations, not last resorts.

Lily Puckett is a writer based in New York City.

AS YOU LIKE IT

Ennead Architects clads Central Park's Delacorte Theater with redwood reclaimed from local water towers by Tri-Lox.



JEFF GOLDBERG/ESTO

JEFF GOLDBERG/ESTO

In the middle of Central Park, an old theater has taken on a new look that might feel familiar to many New Yorkers. The Delacorte Theater—home to the Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park—is now wrapped in vertical wooden slats reclaimed from New York City water towers. After two years of construction, the 1,872-seat open-air theater reopened this summer.

Since 1962, Delacorte has been one of New York's leading cultural stages, where actors like James Earl Jones, Meryl Streep, and Anne Hathaway have performed for free before audiences of locals and visitors alike. Over time, however, its somewhat improvised original construction began to show its age. By 2010, there were complaints of overcrowding, rainwater leaking through bleachers, limited accessibility, a raccoon infestation, and a backstage enclosed only by tarps.

In 2018, The Public announced plans for a new theater on the site, to be designed by BIG Architects, but the project was abruptly canceled in the early months of COVID-19. Since Ennead Architects had an existing working relationship with The Public, it was later tasked with developing a more restrained design that left some of the existing structure intact.

In renovating the theater, Ennead had to coordinate with a number of stakeholders in addition to The Public, which included the Central Park Conservancy, NYC Parks, and the Department of Cultural Affairs. To complicate things further, while the existing theater itself was not landmarked, its setting within landmarked Central Park required that the building's footprint remain unchanged.

Tasked with making the new theater both accessible and resilient, the design team responded by canting the exterior wall outward as it rises, forming a conical perimeter that lends a subtle sense of expansion while opening additional space for circulation. New ramps and cross aisles reconfigure movement and update the venue for accessibility, supporting 28 new seats for wheelchair users. In addition, a cinder-block "raccoon wall" encloses the open area around the stage, restrooms under the bleachers are now fully sealed, and an elevator connects the ground level to the stage manager's booth above.

But the most visible change is the cladding of redwood planks, sourced from 25 decommissioned New York City water towers. In selecting the material, Ennead faced a challenge: The Public requested a visually engaging, durable wood facade, while NYC Parks called for local materials. To meet both goals, Ennead collaborated with Tri-Lox—a Greenpoint-based wood fabricator specializing in sustainable practices and circular sourcing.

"We wanted to use materials from the surrounding city so that the renovation would feel integral to its place while also being resourceful," Stephen Chu, principal at Ennead Architects, told *AN*. "Reclaimed redwood was a fitting choice, since it also blends into the setting through its varied texture."

Early in the design process, Ennead and Tri-Lox developed a series of mock-ups. They began with small-scale samples to narrow the field and clarify their goals. From there, they refined finishes and tones, as well as patterns and profiles, before moving up to larger-scale studies.

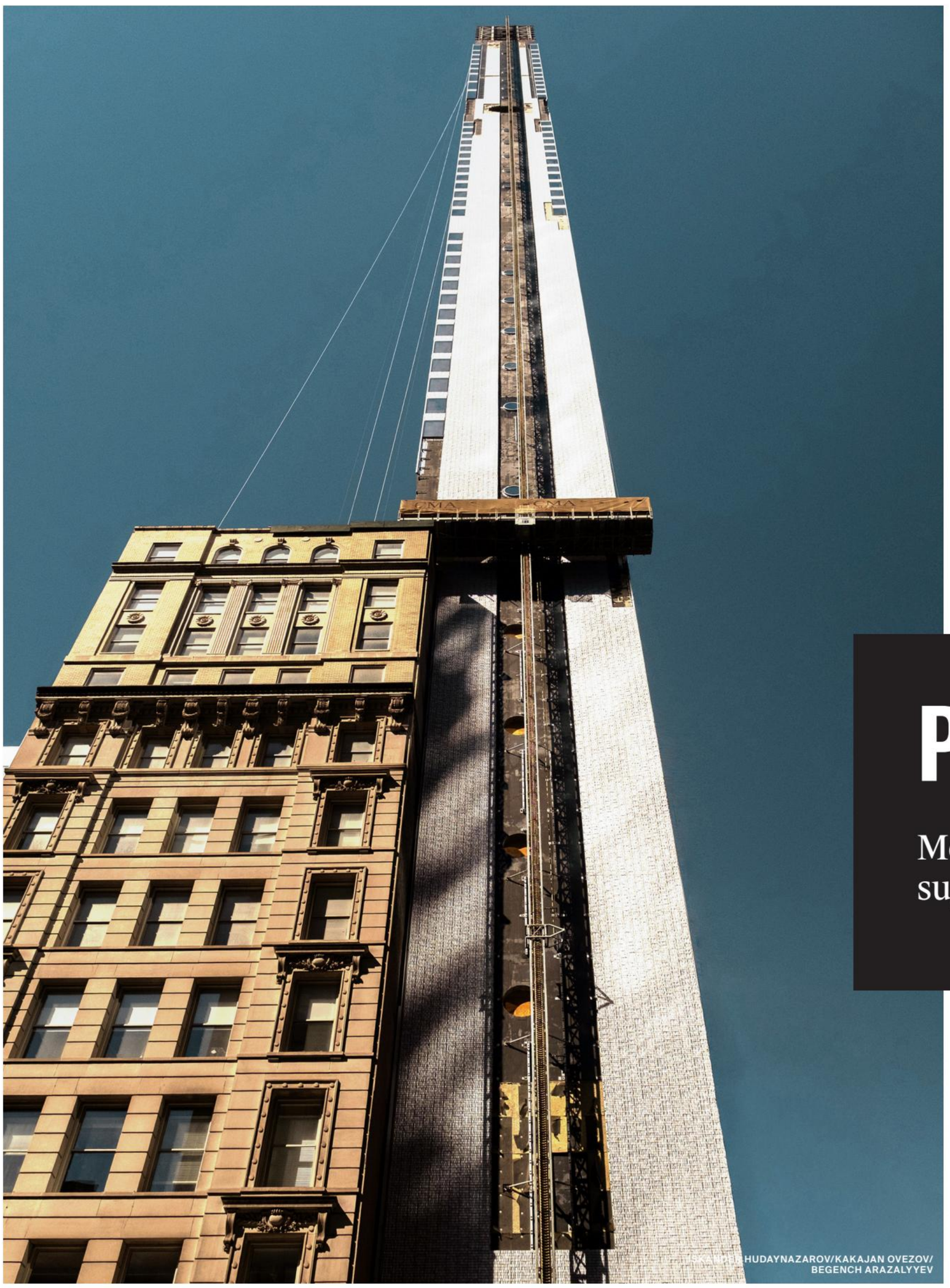
Once a pattern was selected, the final material was sorted and graded, de-nailed, trimmed, and dried in preparation for shop work. Tri-Lox then milled the pieces down to specific thicknesses to achieve a freshly sawn surface. Due to the wood's natural longevity, chemical treatments weren't necessary, only a clear zero-VOC finish to help preserve its appearance.

Each piece of the assembly was cut on-site, tapered by millimeters to follow the theater's perimeter form, and installed in sections with a tongue-and-groove system. While some areas of the facade rose to 18 feet, the water tower slats were only about 8 feet long. In response, the team designed a method for interlocking the pieces to look seamless.

Hovering above the entry, a thin crescent-shaped canopy—also added by Ennead—traces the newly canted facade. Lined in redwood and fitted with inset signage to deter nesting birds, it offers shelter from the elements through a subtly iconic form. As an eager audience lines up below, spotlights wash the facade, its textured redwood tone echoing the surrounding tree bark and foliage. Above, bold lettering by Pentagram—Shakespeare in the Park and Delacorte Theater—adds a touch of theatrical contrast that draws the eye from afar. **Steven Sculco**

Top: Delacorte's new facade of reclaimed redwood from New York City water towers ties the renovation to both the surrounding parkscape and the broader metropolis.

Bottom: Below wooden facade, an awning with a wood soffit supports signage set out at its perimeter.



Top: Structurally, 262 Fifth Avenue stands out from other Manhattan supertalls, in part because of its concrete-reinforced structure's core which uses 97 KSI high-yield rebar.

Bottom: The concrete exoskeleton allows for columnless, flexible spaces. Peric hopes residents will actually live in the building.

When you stand atop 262 Fifth Avenue in NoMad, Daniel Burnham's Flatiron Building looks minuscule. It's quiet this high up, peaceful even. Taxicabs dawdle down below like Hot Wheels in a toddler's bedroom that, if you're not careful, you might step on. The new tower designed by Meganom rises 860 feet and, astoundingly, has a 2,211-square-foot base. In comparison, the Empire State Building stands 1,250 feet tall and its base measures over 79,000 square feet at grade. Whereas the Empire State Building has setbacks, thanks to the 1916 Zoning Resolution, 262 Fifth Avenue is a near-perfect extrusion from top to bottom. So, how does it stand up?

The supertall underway at 262 Fifth Avenue hits bedrock—Manhattan schist, to be exact. From there, it has three subterranean stories. The building tapers, thinning to allow for more internal living space on the upper levels. The concrete-reinforced structure's core—backed by 97 KSI high-yield rebar—is strategically located outside the main volume of the building, behind a shear wall. Structurally, this makes the tower stand out from other Manhattan supertalls, for which building cores (elevator shafts, egress stairs, and mechanical, electrical, plumbing) are typically positioned in the center of floor plates, eating up invaluable square footage. This approach makes living spaces at 262 Fifth Avenue more comfortable and less noisy, according to Five Points Development's chief architect, Bogdan Peric, who worked closely with Meganom founder Yury Grigoryan and Five Points founder Boris Kuzinez on the project.

PENCILED IN

Meganom's 262 Fifth Avenue supertall nears completion.

"In New York, residential buildings compete with one another over amenities, but this one doesn't have restaurants, cigar rooms, or wine rooms," Peric told *AN*. Other pencil towers, Peric continued, are "typically just shells for people to invest money. But we're trying to make a building where people will actually live."

The concrete exoskeleton employed at 262 Fifth Avenue allows for columnless, flexible spaces. A cantilever at the 9th floor cascades out over the base, adding additional square footage to the upper levels. The six mechanical floors serve as outriggers that provide lateral rigidity by connecting to the building core. For the building's 26 units, Meganom ideated eight layouts. The 41st floor is left open to the elements, a structural decision that not only allows wind to pass through the building but also creates a terrace for residents. A mass damper that weighs roughly 300 tons is located on the top floor, which stabilizes the building by preventing it from swaying in the wind. The wind mitigation strategies were informed by aeroelastic models and studies.

Each unit has 20-foot-tall glass window panes, weighing three tons each. "The triple plate glass has double UV coating," Peric elaborated, "protecting interiors from direct sunlight and sound. It's very high performing, which means you can display art here without risking damage from exposure to natural light."

Louvers are located above the glass windows, as required by code. Radiant coils are tucked underneath the floor surfaces; aluminum plates distribute heat to keep toes warm in the cold months. Every hour, 100 percent new air cycles into the units, thanks to a sophisticated HVAC system manufactured in Germany. This technical ingenuity will make for calm, sophisticated living environs in the heart of New York City, replete with fresh air and zero urban din, which keeps so many of us up at night. Photovoltaic panels hug the building core. The shear wall facing Fifth Avenue is clad entirely in anodized aluminum meant to emulate brick. Upon completion, this facade will shimmer in the sun, while the PV panels will provide copious amounts of electricity. "[The building] is essentially an extrusion of the plan," said Peric, "creating a kind of utopian, perfect ideal for living, comfortable environments." **DJR**

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October/November 2025

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Sustainability

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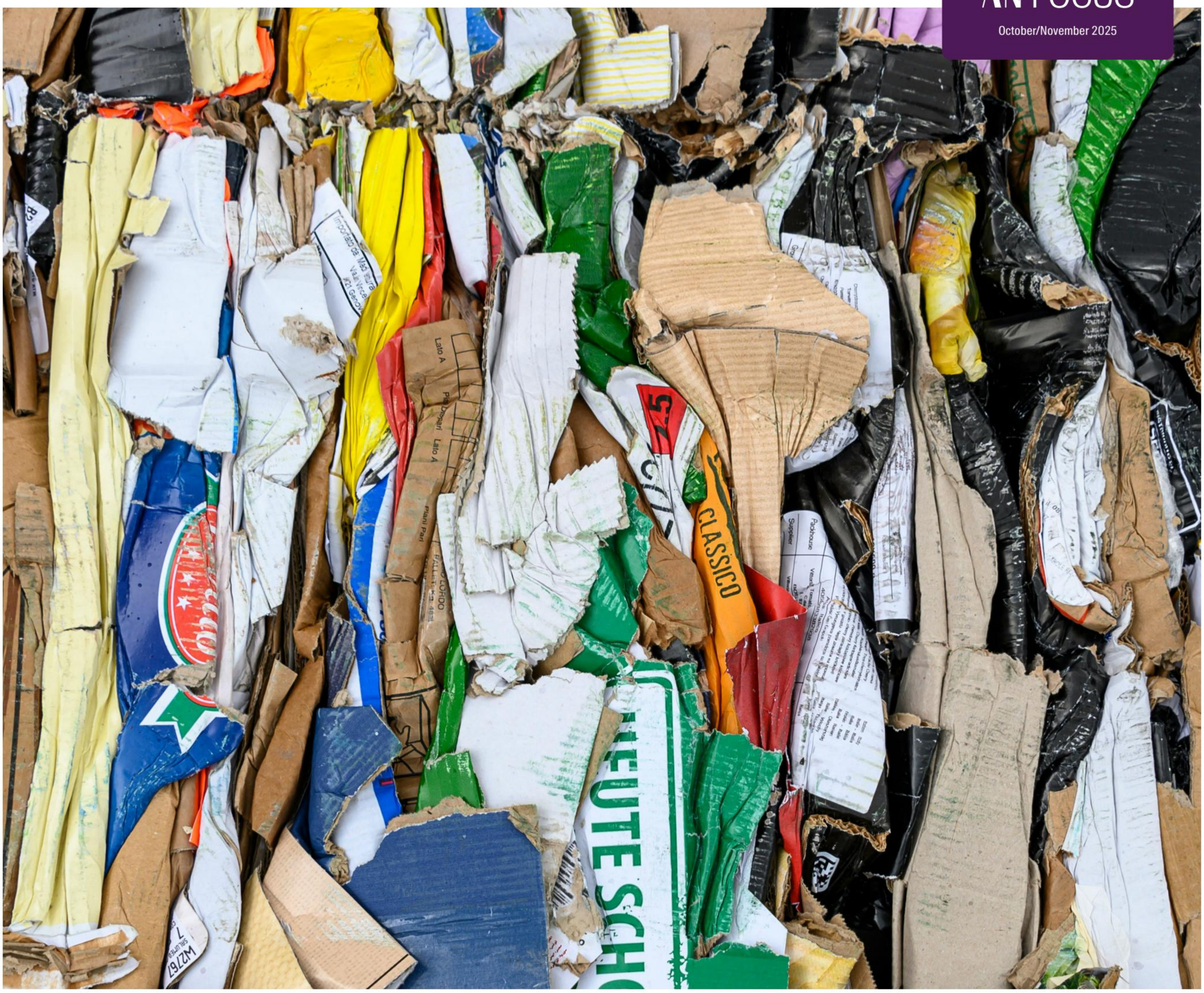

The Weight of the World

Ecological efforts across the country face serious headwinds, but there are glimmers of hope.

I learned a new word recently: anthropomass. Short for "anthropogenic mass," it is the mass embedded in inanimate solid objects made by humans. And according to an article in *Nature,* the year 2020—that same year we arrived at a collective societal inflection point—was when our planet's anthropomass surpassed its living biomass, weighing in at approximately 1.1 teratonnes, or 2,425,084,884,033,653.5 pounds. Meaning: There is now more human-made junk than all other living matter on Earth.

The thought experiment of imagining the celestial scale tipping in favor of anthropomass and outweighing all trees, plants, and animals is enough to induce some serious reflection. If only that was what it took to change hearts and minds about the reality of climate change. For decades, it has seemed as if we were drowning in data about the science behind the accelerating pace of climate change, lending climate action a sense of breakneck urgency. However, any progress that has been made has seen major roadblocks in recent months. Since President Trump took office, the Natural Resources Defense Council has estimated that his administration "has taken or proposed at least 350 actions that directly threaten the environment, climate, and human health." Some of these are related to buildings, and of those, many are related to the U.S. Department of Energy's rollbacks on energy and water conservation standards for building products.

Energy production is a key part of the issue. But even with the pro–fossil fuel leanings of our current executive branch, the demand for renewable energy continues to grow. According to recent reporting in *The New York Times,* there seems to be a rush to initiate projects ahead of the looming disappearance of federal support: "Wind and solar projects must be under construction by July to be eligible for federal tax credits that Congress voted this summer to eliminate, years earlier than previously required." Renewables may continue to boom for two years before the slowdown prompted by funding changes. Solar and battery implementation is also cheaper and faster, and this year renewable energy and batteries will make up around 93 percent of the capacity added to U.S. grids, according to the federal Energy Information Administration.

We'll need all these extra watts to keep up with the AI-fueled growth of data centers. As mentioned in a special series by *MIT Technology Review* about data centers, energy usage by this sector could nearly triple from 2023 to 2028; by then, "AI alone could consume as much electricity annually as 22 percent of all US households." Sounds great, right? Read Trevor Schillaci's piece about the architects designing these data centers on page 40.

Materials play a role, too. In a roundtable discussion, architects discuss the movement to remove plastics from our buildings (page 44) and the importance of making decisions that consider the full life cycles of materials, from extraction to landfill. Throughout this section, study roundups of worthwhile products from *AN* design editor Kelly Pau that gather manufacturers working to lighten construction's carbon footprints.

And though we are not running a special section on mass timber this year, the material remains near and dear to our wooden hearts. In this section, *AN* editors file case studies on two major mass timber projects in North America: Grafton Architects' Anthony Timberlands Center for the University of Arkansas (page 50) and Limberlost Place in Toronto by Moriyama Teshima Architects (page 54) for George Brown College.

By now, the topic of sustainability is central enough to architectural discourse that it feels like the animating force of our time. Across this section—and in other parts of this issue and our online coverage, too—read up on what's happening now. **JM**

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Gold Rush

As AI creates demand for new data center facilities across the U.S., large architecture firms respond, despite sustainability concerns.

COURTESY CORGAN

The demand for data centers has drastically increased over the past five years with the proliferation of artificial intelligence. As technology companies compete for the future of AI, they are also investing heavily in the construction of new facilities that will power the notoriously computation- and resource-intensive technology.

According to *MIT Technology Review,* there are currently over 3,000 confirmed data centers across the U.S. that hold the servers and accessory cooling systems run by cloud computing companies and technology companies. A report from McKinsey forecasts a $5.2 trillion investment in AI infrastructure by 2030, with 15 percent of that flowing to builders for land, materials, and site development.

Unsurprisingly, large architecture firms have rapidly developed sector-specific expertise in data center construction. Though many practices have long maintained devoted data center divisions, these teams have ballooned in profitability as technology and real estate interests coalesce to build bigger.

The recent rise in AI usage has made data centers a profitable enterprise for architects. In 2020, Corgan and HDR topped *Building Design + Construction*'s annual list of architecture firms in the data center sector, respectively earning approximately $61 million and $34 million from their data center projects. In 2024, the same list reported that Corgan had more than doubled its profits, reaching roughly $135 million, while HDR quadrupled its, with $130 million in earnings.

AI's Manifest Destiny

Tom Widawsky, a data center designer and technical principal at HDR, explained to *AN* that the impetus behind market growth lies with hyperscalers, or companies like Google, Meta, Microsoft, and Amazon, which provide cloud computing and data management for clients that require immensely powerful operations. As its name suggests, hyperscalers provides cloud infrastructure that allows software to scale and grow according to demand, a process that requires data centers that span at least 10,000 square feet, with the capacity to hold more than 5,000 individual servers. "AI is still in what they call the inference gathering stage," Widawsky said. These companies are "competing to launch into the next phases of what it will do and how it will actually get into application mode."

Because of their energy and connectivity demands, data centers have typically been built in places with extensive fiberoptic networks and reliable energy sources, like the suburbs of Northern Virginia, which to this day maintain the highest density of data centers in the world. However, shrinking land availability has diminished owners' ability to upgrade the computational power of their existing facilities, prompting developers to look to more unconventional sites, which often lack the robust electrical infrastructure needed to support the operation.

Traditionally, data centers have maintained a low profile as largely unremarkable, windowless warehouses. But the push to alternative sites is reshaping how architects are approaching design. "The demand that they're having to serve is changing so quickly that we do have to reevaluate almost the entire building as part of each delivery," said Dan Drennan, managing principal and data center leader at Corgan, where 300 of its 1,200 employees work on this project type. "Whether that's the way the envelope responds to a different location or it's the way the structure needs to respond to a different configuration based on the availability of land or the piece of land we're working on. So it's not as cut-and-paste or repetitive as I think folks might wish." He also shared that Corgan is doing more multistory configurations than in past years.

As data centers remain sites of increasing contention, their design has shifted toward making the buildings more palatable to their local communities. "One of the big things that we're seeing is that a higher level of design is being required on the exterior of these projects so that they blend in as much as possible with their surroundings," reflected Joy Hughes, global accounts director at Gensler, in a recent conversation about data centers with Ryan Cook, Gensler's critical facilities leader for the Southwest region. "We try to work with the jurisdictions and have some dialogue with the community about how these facilities are designed and built to ensure that we are sensitive to their concerns."

Offsetting Environmental Impacts

It is estimated that a user's prompt to OpenAI's ChatGPT consumes ten times as much energy as a Google search. Technology's appetite for electric power is projected to skyrocket as artificial generative intelligence becomes further integrated into our day-to-day lives. Recent reports already confirm that 4.4 percent of all energy in the U.S. goes toward data centers, and that number could nearly triple to 12 percent by 2028.

In some cases, corporations are so desperate to open a facility that they temporarily power the building using fossil-fuel generators as they await permitted utility access or infrastructure upgrades. These generators are also employed as a redundancy in case of an outage. Many data centers, particularly those hosting cloud storage, operate 24/7 and demand constant power.

The strain on the power grid from data centers can be significant and elevate prices for nearby residents. Though many utility companies are actively working to upgrade their service to support the energy consumption of data centers, reporting from *The New York Times* suggests providers will also pass many of these costs on to everyday consumers through hiked energy bills. Though renewable energy is growing quickly, the power grid in the U.S. is still largely powered by fossil-fuel generation, which can pollute local communities close to power plants or chemical production facilities.

Largely unable to address the energy supply issues the data center sector is facing in the era of AI, climate-sensitive architects have instead focused their efforts on aspects of projects that they can control, such as reducing emissions through materials sourcing and the specification of efficient mechanical systems. Drennan shared that as processing power has increased, the requirement for cooling, whether through air or liquid systems, has increased, which is one of the limiting factors in upgrading existing data centers. While water usage remains a concern for some facilities, many systems are going to closed-loop liquid cooling, which reduces water needs.

"The good news is that a lot of the times the things that make projects more efficient also align with sustainability aspirations," said Drennan. "Whether you're using local resources to meet a sustainability requirement or just because it can get to the site faster, it helps [the client] either way."

One example is the use of mass timber in data center construction. In Northern Virginia, Gensler and Thornton Tomasetti have designed the first hyperscale facilities in the country to feature a hybrid timber and steel structure. Other firms hope to quickly follow suit.

"We think that data centers actually have a natural ability to use mass timber," Widawsky offered. "Unfortunately, clients are more interested in mass timber for their administrative buildings and not so much for data centers. We also try to push improvements in low-carbon concrete," he added.

Unfortunately, mass timber's carbon sequestration properties will have diminishing returns as the energy consumption of data centers increases. It is predicted that soon some of the largest facilities will surpass the energy consumption of small cities. A 2024 report from Morgan Stanley forecasts that the sector's emissions will reach 2.5 billion metric tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2030. One solution that seems to have some promise is the arrival of small modular reactor technology—basically, tiny nuclear power plants.

Until our energy grids run on renewable energy, the proliferation of data centers across the country portends a worrisome rise in carbon emissions. Because a majority of data centers' emissions are created through operation and not construction—the inverse of a typical building project—design professionals are limited in their ability to control the typology's performance, which is currently subject to the whims of consumer demand.

Trevor Schillaci, formerly *AN*'s senior programming associate, is a master of architecture student at Rice University.

Above: The Vantage datacenter designed by Corgan in Goodyear, Arizona.

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Biomaterials

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ACRE V-Groove Siding | Modern Mill
modern-mill.com

An editors' pick in *AN*'s Best of Products Awards this year, Modern Mill's upcycled rice hulls are turned into fully recyclable siding in a zero-waste facility in Mississippi and thermoformed to fit a wide range of applications.

ARCHISONIC Mycelium Wall Tile | Impact Acoustic
impactacoustic.com

Mycelium is transformed into acoustic wall tiles that not only add elegant texture to a project but also help sequester carbon.

Floor Tiles | mogu
mogu.bio

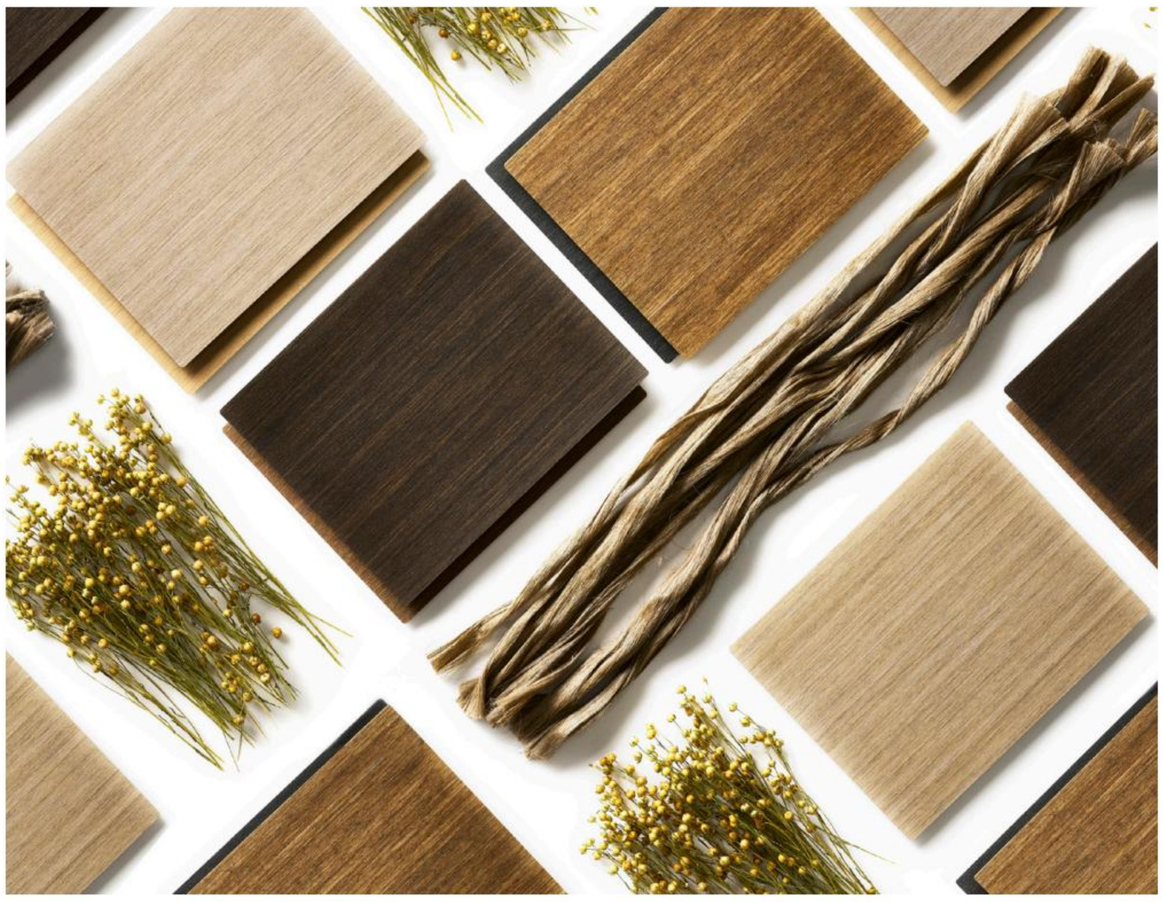
A mycelium-based core is coated in bio-based resin sourced from coffee grounds, corn, and clamshells to create soft yet sturdy flooring.

Straw Structural Insulated Panel | New Frameworks
newframeworks.com

Made with regenerative by-product, these panels are locally sourced and store 5 kilograms of carbon for every square foot.

PRO OCX Spray Foam | Carlisle
carlislesfi.com

OCX is a one-to-one-by-volume spray-applied polyurethane foam that contains biomaterials as well as recycled content.



ekoa | Lingrove
ekoa.design

Made from rapidly renewable flax, this wallcovering, which won an *AN*'s Best of Products Award this year, offers style, sustainability, and strength to healthcare, workplace, multifamily, and higher education spaces.

Interpon D2525 | AkzoNobel
akzonobel.com

As seen in the aluminum curtain wall of The Shard in London, Interpon D2525 is a high-performing powder coating made with biomaterials to reduce its carbon footprint.

Muratto Collection | Momentum
momentumtextilesandwalls.com

Momentum partnered with cork purveyor Muratto to design a line of all-natural acoustic wallcoverings that are renewable, biodegradable, and made with zero waste.

Modulina Straw Panels | Modulina
modulina.eu

These straw panels are prefabricated for quicker construction then integrated into timber frames to trap carbon and improve thermal insulation.

Profib Mat | Nature Fibres
naturefibres.com

Profib Mat is a flexible friction-fit batt insulation made from hemp fibers and designed to be inserted between the wooden or steel frames of a construction.

AN FOCUS
October/November 2025

Talking Toxicity

A roundtable discusses the links between plastics manufacturing, fossil fuels, and public health.

While the pursuit of low-carbon construction continues to redefine architectural practice, growing attention is now focused on the health impacts of toxic, petrochemical-based building materials.

One informal working group consisting of researchers and public health experts is making connections between architecture, manufacturing, and public health. They are rallying around Informed, Habitable's product guidance, which helps the design and construction industry make healthier material choices, and have created a four-step call to action: Commit to eliminating toxic materials from buildings; advocate for policies eliminating toxic materials in buildings; support fence-line communities through resilience planning and design; and advocate for policies supporting fence-line communities' health security.

The group previously presented its work in May at the USGBC California Green Building Conference. Its members will lead a panel at Greenbuild in Los Angeles on Friday, November 7.

Several experts from the group recently spoke with AN*'s executive editor, Jack Murphy.*

***AN*: Habitable released a report about plastics in September. What were some of the findings?**

Priya Premchandran (PP): The report exposes the stunning volumes of plastics used in the building sector, its significant growth projections, and the harms it is causing to people and the planet. While the building industry has been focused on carbon, health impacts from pollution and toxic chemicals, particularly from plastics, have fallen to the wayside.

The report unlocked a few things for us. First, almost all plastics are petrochemical-based, meaning they come from fossil fuels and harm people and the planet throughout their life cycle. When we think about decarbonizing the built environment but ignore these impacts of plastic-based building materials, we're choosing to continue to drive demand for oil, gas, and coal, leaving a big opportunity on the table to truly achieve a decarbonized built environment in the future.

Another important realization was that the extensive presence of plastics in building materials isn't widely understood. The public believes that plastic pollution comes primarily from single-use packaging. But as the report highlights, from flooring and siding to insulation and paint, building materials represent 17 percent of global plastic production, second only to packaging.

Even within the building industry, where there's a growing focus on health, the extent of harm caused by plastic products at every stage of its life cycle has been overlooked, especially impacting the most vulnerable population, such as the communities living near extraction and manufacturing plants, who are exposed to plastic pollution in the air and water; building construction workers exposed to dust and microplastics generated by products like foam insulation; and firefighters combating fires in buildings with plastic products that are faster-burning and release [the] highest amount of toxic chemicals. Until we take that full life cycle into account, we can't meaningfully address plastic's impact.

While the report focused on plastics to bring attention to the issue, it also highlights the solutions that are available today for every project team to use and be leaders in protecting the health of the people and planet. Using Informed product guidance, project teams can significantly reduce plastics or avoid the worst plastic products.

***AN*: Teresa and Aaron, as practicing architects, how do you see a report like this being used to inform or influence specifications?**

Teresa Jan (TJ): Plastics are part of the fossil-fuel economy, so the conversation about plastics inevitably circles back to decarbonization. When I was director of Climate Positive Design at Multistudio, we used Informed product guidance as a key educational tool. We asked designers to start with simple steps, such as not specifying PVC flooring, window shades, fabric, and flooring base. The goal has always been encouraging designers to look beyond aesthetics and basic functionality by introducing cost-competitive, less toxic alternatives and sharing those options with clients.

Aaron Vaden-Youmans (AVY): At Grimshaw, the scale and complexity of our projects demand rigorous guidance on material health. We've collaborated with the Habitable team on an update to our Healthy Materials insight paper, and we've integrated this into our design process from the start. Since every team member makes material choices, we ensure everyone is familiar with this resource and understands their role in specifying healthier materials. We also partner with specialists like Kathleen Hetrick at Buro Happold to implement best practices. Currently we're piloting Habitable's Informed product guidance on several large-scale infrastructure projects.

The big shift with Informed is that it doesn't ask teams to spend hours researching which products perform better than others. The guidance is simpler and based on independent and credible science: Just don't use red-ranked product types and prefer yellow- and green-ranked product types within the product categories you are selecting from.

We emphasize using a lot less material overall, which can reduce cost and complexity. Where avoidance isn't possible, like for a particular type of insulation at a foundation wall, we document it. My team feels frustrated when a material can't be replaced with nontoxic alternatives, so we record it and seek Habitable's expertise.

Kathleen Hetrick (KH): The overall point is that there needs to be a change in how we approach architecture, engineering, and construction. The built environment accounts for 40 percent of global carbon emissions, and a significant portion of that material is contributing to exposure to carcinogens.

For my master's in public health at Johns Hopkins University, I looked at some of these issues firsthand; my research focused on tracing where these hazardous materials come from, how they affect people, and which policies are, or aren't, protecting us. During the wildfires in Los Angeles last January, for example, third-party research on ambient air-quality testing detected huge spikes of chlorine gas and lead in the air. Chlorine gas isn't present when rural wildfires occur; it was released because of burning wiring, electronics, vinyl flooring, installation, and PVC pipes. These halogenated materials pose significant risks as we continue building in wildfire-prone areas.

This all underscores a bigger point: Health challenges like fertility decline and rising cancer rates, especially among young people, and environmental issues like carbon emissions and chemical pollution are interconnected. We need to address both the personal health side—epigenetics, how our DNA is changing across generations—and the planetary impact, including the introduction of novel chemicals we can't take back, like PFAs and other halogenated compounds.

***AN*: You're also making the case for considering health at the site of manufacturing, like in Louisiana and Texas, where fence-line communities are exposed to pollution from petrochemical production. How do you build the case to think about health at the start of a material's life, not just when it's installed in a building?**

KH: I was fortunate enough to connect with someone who had worked in Louisiana around Cancer Alley. They invited Professor Seydina Fall and me down in April to a meeting of the Catholic Climate Covenant, which highlighted how severe the situation is for industry-adjacent communities.

Louisiana has some of the worst maternal and child mortality rates in the country. Communities along the petrochemical corridor are disproportionately impacted. For example, a very small community produces 95 percent of the country's chloroprene, or neoprene, [which is] so hazardous that a school just a few miles away had to be shut down.

Building trust and making connections with these communities takes time, but it's critical. It's a slow process, but if the industry focuses on this, we can make meaningful change. We've seen huge progress in areas like embodied carbon over the last decade. Now, we need the same level of attention on environmental justice and the material supply chain.

***AN*: There was momentum with the Inflation Reduction Act under President Biden, but now it seems that federal climate and sustainability efforts have stalled or even been reversed. How are you responding to these shifts?**

PP: Our work has always been market driven, not policy driven. We partner [with] and advise organizations working on policy, often guiding based on what we have seen from our own research or from working with partners in the industry who are leading the movement. Historically, real change in the built environment has happened when the market acted, not the government.

Government mandates and incentives do matter, particularly in sectors like affordable housing, where much of the funding comes from public sources. But at the same time, clear market signals, especially from the demand side, can fundamentally shift the supply chain and drive the change we want to see, rather than waiting for government action. One immediate example is two bills, AB 823 and SB 682, which aimed to address microplastics and PFAs. They were both recently vetoed by the California governor.

AVY: It also depends on which government you're talking about. California, for example, acts differently than the federal government. But it's worth noting some stark changes. The EPA has eliminated its scientific research arm, removing many chemists, biologists, and toxicologists there who were doing first-rate research. Some were even collaborating with Habitable. The Toxic Substances Control Act, which was designed to protect fence-line communities, is being dramatically weakened. I don't think we have a strong enough voice to rely on market change alone. State-level action is key.

TJ: California should lead the way. I recommend using climate resiliency as an entry point, because its impacts are highly visible, and the resulting health and economic burdens on communities are tangible. Wildfire risk is becoming increasingly pronounced not only in California but also in different regions across the nation. This was also highlighted in the recent report by Plastic Pollution Coalition (PPC), in collaboration with Habitable, that shows how the production and use of plastics in our built environment both fuels wildfires and exacerbates wildfires' harms to human health and the environment.

Prioritizing fire-hardening and healthy materials at the same time helps tackle multiple problems at once. For affected communities, the issue extends far beyond property insurance; it also carries lasting impacts and costs on public health and the environment due to the toxic debris released into the air and landfills. To build community resilience, building materials with less toxicity is another tool.

AVY: As fossil fuel demand declines, the petrochemical industry has flooded the market with cheaper synthetic materials, many of which carry hidden health costs. As architects, we can demonstrate alternatives—materials that cost only marginally more but deliver significant value. That value is project specific, but it always includes eliminating toxic substances from our built environment. Look at asbestos specifications from the mid-20th century: The health hazards were scientifically documented decades before regulations finally caught up. By proving these approaches work at scale, we create the evidence base that drives policy change.

Connect with this group through the contact link on Habitable's website, and note in your message that you would like to learn more about supporting its expanded call-to-action.

Teresa Jan is an architect and planner committed to regenerative design—pursuing climate-positive outcomes that balance economic, social, and environmental equity. She also serves on the USGBC-CA Bay Area Regional Leadership Advisory Board.

Kathleen Hetrick is a sustainability engineer, environmental justice advocate, Bloomberg Public Health Fellow at Johns Hopkins University, and sustainability integration lead for the Buro Happold U.S. region.

Priya Premchandran is the vice president of market transformation at Habitable, where she leads the Informed platform to advance science-based solutions that reduce pollution, mitigate climate change, and promote environmental justice.

Aaron Vaden-Youmans is the North American sustainability lead at Grimshaw, where he advances regenerative design and climate action and serves on the National Steering Committee of US Architects Declare Climate, Justice, and Biodiversity Emergency.

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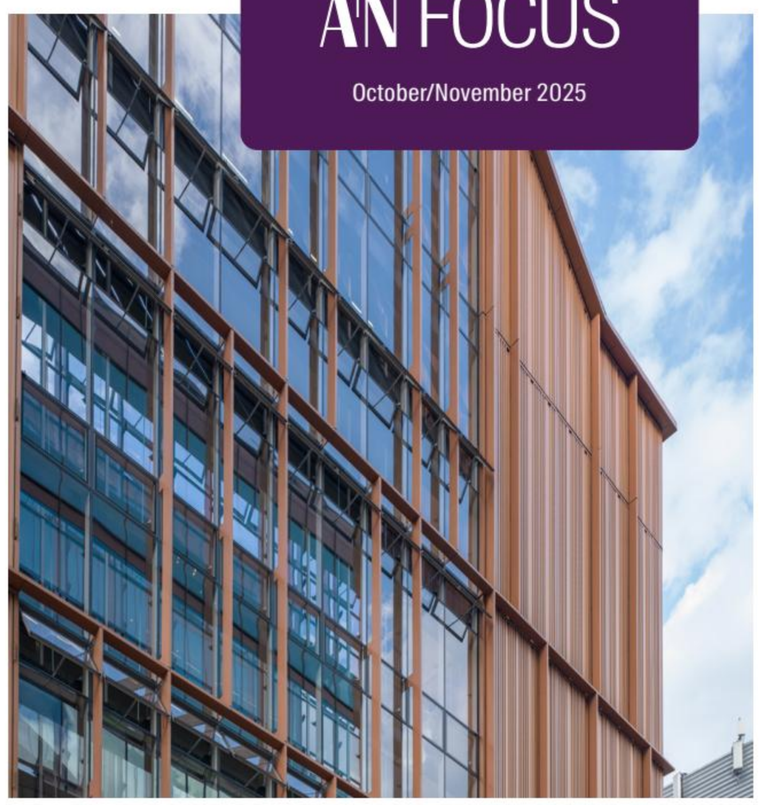
Recycled

From steel to polyester and wood, recycled materials have never been so accessible. Here are the latest resourceful products across typologies. KP

Step | Turf
turf.design

Made with 60-percent preconsumer recycled polyester felt, Step is an architectural acoustic cladding that integrates lighting fixtures for increased functionality.

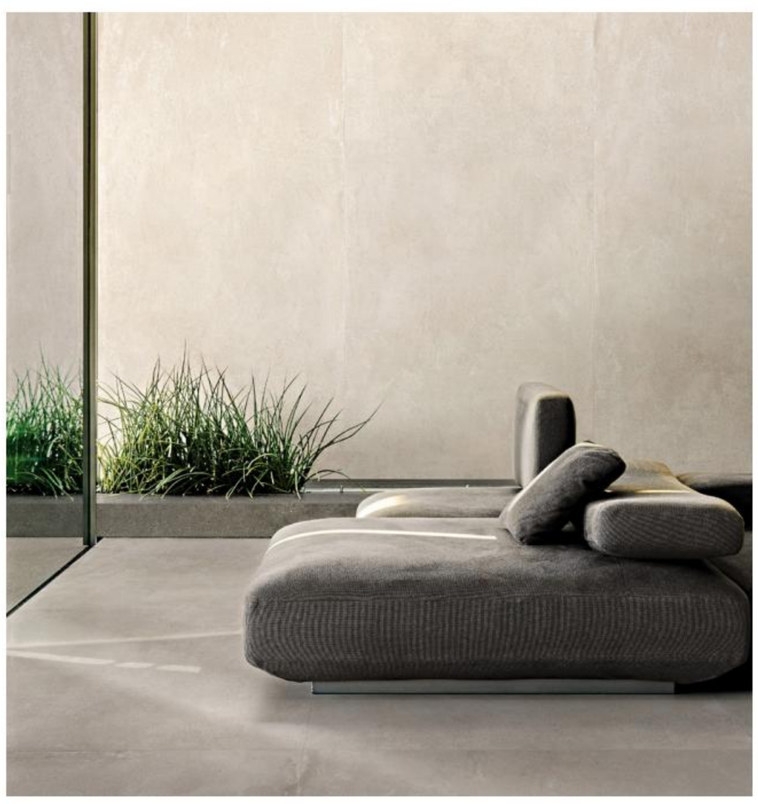


Morin Matrix | Morin
morincorp.com

Morin Matrix boasts 40-percent recycled content while retaining full performance, as reflected in its use of Moriyama Teshima Architects' Limberlost Place project, pictured here.

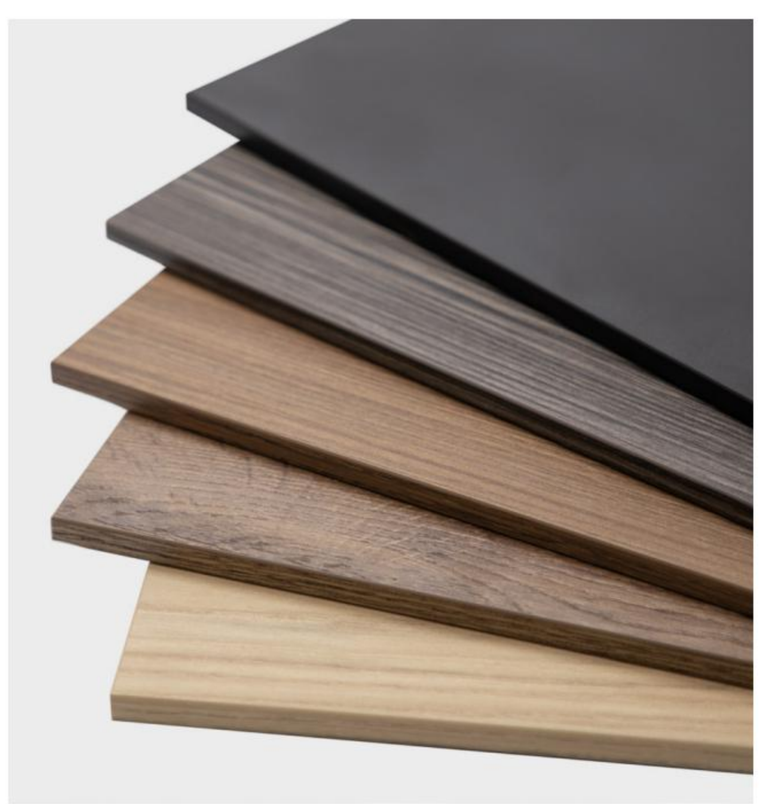
Rainier Fins | Cambio by Windfall Architectural Products
windfall.design

Awarded an editors' pick in *AN*'s Best of Products Awards, Rainier Fins is made using reclaimed oak remnants to create a magnetic wall system.



Formatech by Gensler | Florim
florim.com

This collection is designed by Gensler and reinterprets concrete, plaster, and metal. It contains up to 60-percent recycled content, and it is part of Florim's CarbonZero project.



Thermally Fused Laminate | EGGER
egger.com

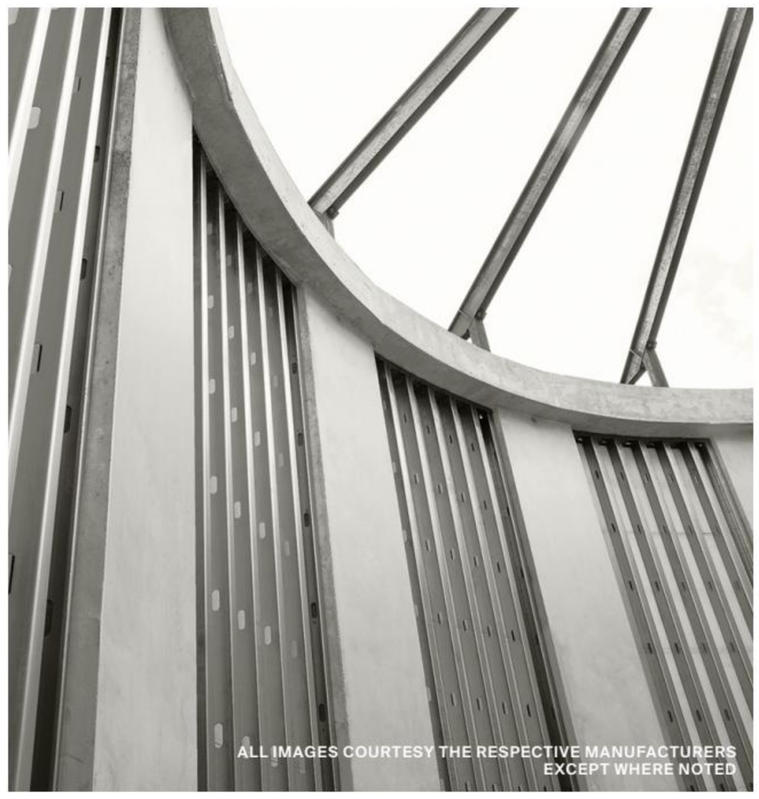
EGGER's off-site recycling plant, Timberpak, uses wood waste to support the production of Thermally Fused Laminate, equipping the versatile board with a sustainable touch.

YES 60 TU Front Set Storefront | YKK AP
ykkap.com

This storefront system achieves a curtain wall aesthetic using YKK's BetterBillet, which consists of an average of 40-percent recycled aluminum paired with low-carbon primary aluminum.

ECOCELL Batt & Blanket | Nu-Wool
nuwool.com

Made of 70-percent recycled content, Batt & Blanket can be used where traditional loose fill or sprayed-in cellulose insulation is not practical.



Low-Embodied Carbon | ClarkDietrich
clarkdietrich.com

This steel features 30.3 percent less embodied carbon than standard offerings and uses 45- to 90-percent recycled content, depending on the mill it comes from.

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Kawneer's new Storefront Subframe for Trifab® 451 is the first and only commercial storefront solution that enables phased door installation and use of temporary doors or coverings. Its patent-pending two-piece male/female jamb design allows storefront subframing, sidelites and transoms to be installed independently of the final entrance and hardware. This innovative solution is redefining adaptable storefront design.

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KAWNEER

Building Legacies

A'N FOCUS
October/November 2025

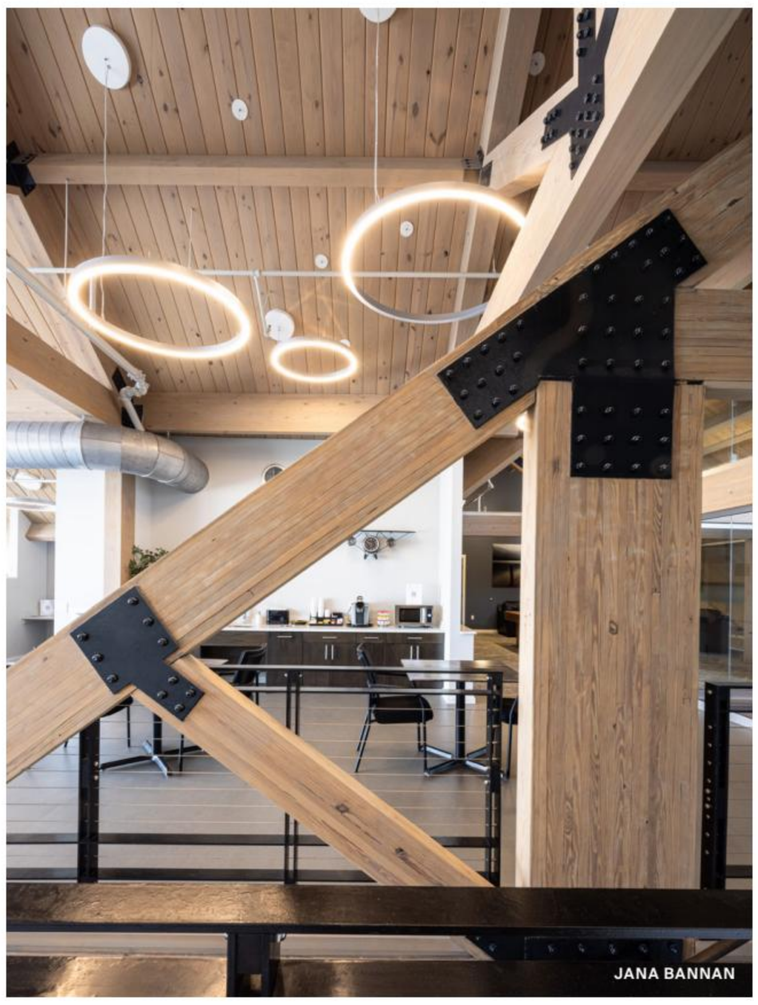
Mass Timber & Wood

As mass timber continues to grow in popularity in the U.S., manufacturers are evolving the scale and sourcing of wood production to meet rising demand. KP

TIIMOTHY HURSLEY

Southern Yellow Pine Cross-Laminated Timber |
Mercer Mass Timber
mercermasstimber.com

Mercer Mass Timber recently helped complete the pictured Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation, which uses Southern Yellow Pine CLT at its core.



JANA BANNAN

Southern Yellow Pine Laminated Decking |
Mid-Atlantic Timberframes
matfllc.com

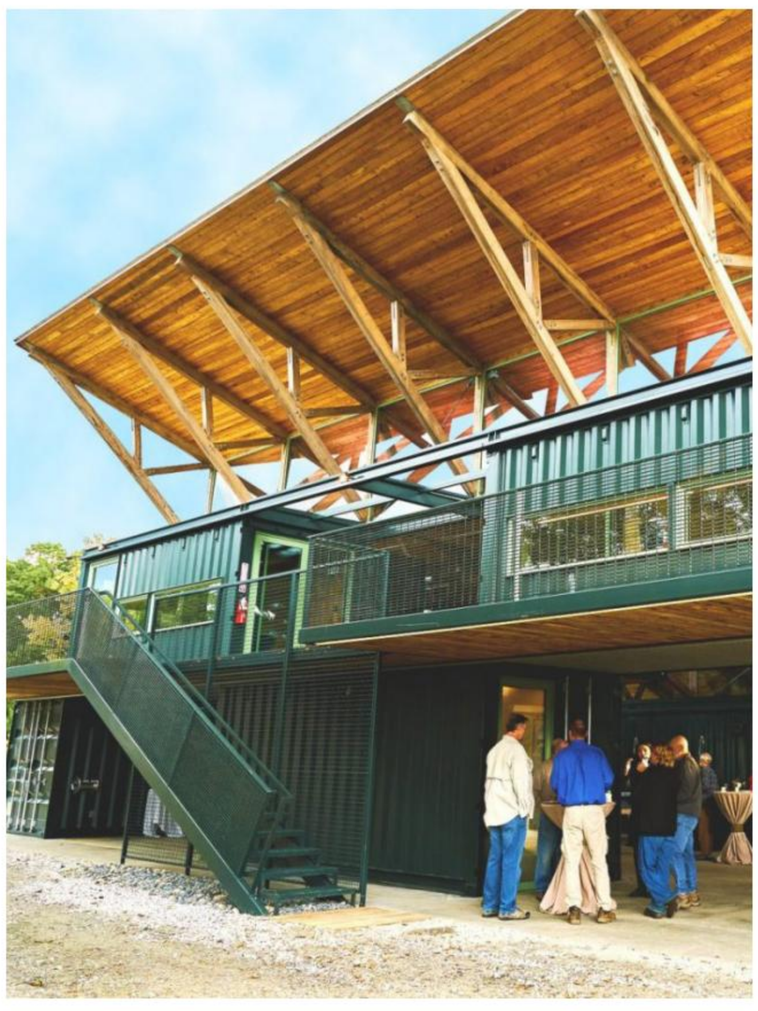
For an addition to Pennsylvania's Lancaster Airport, Mid-Atlantic Timberframes used Southern Yellow Pine Laminated Decking to merge the new construction with glulam structures from the 1980s.

Sylva Thermally Modified Red Oak | reSAWN TIMBER
resawntimberco.com

This thermally modified wood cladding is sourced from abundant and sustainably grown U.S. forests, which helped make it a winner in the *AN* 2025 Best of Products Awards.

Mass Timber Modules | Kalesnikoff
kalesnikoff.com

Kalesnikoff designed cross-laminated-timber modules to build Integrated Design Cubed's Knight Building, a 95-bedroom employee housing complex in Montana, which was constructed in 11 months thanks to this smart-timber design.



Sawn Heavy Timber | WholeTrees
wholetrees.com

Sourced from forests managed to maximize carbon sequestration, Sawn Heavy Timber is a carbon-smart and supportive choice.

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Sunset Collection | Pioneer Millworks
pioneermillworks.com

Using oak sourced from rail fences throughout America's pasturelands, this flooring, an *AN* Best of Products winner, repurposes wood to relieve the pressure on threatened trees.

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A/N FOCUS
October/November 2025

The Miracle in Fayetteville

Grafton Architects completes the Anthony Timberlands Center, the firm's first building in the U.S., with modus studio.

If you want to look into the heart of contemporary architecture today, you are going to need a REAL ID. You will have to pack your bags and find your way to Northwest Arkansas, a wrinkled, rugged stretch of land. The trip is not convenient, but you will have a good time. This is Razorback country, a region that has exploded with growth thanks to the success of its hometown corporation, which keeps the rest of the country running: 90 percent of Americans live within 10 miles of a Walmart. History here is still being written, with an expanding art museum and a new medical school, plus new highways under construction, open gashes where rusty soil shouts against emerald fields.

It's here, in Fayetteville, along a busy arterial street opposite a Walmart, where the Anthony Timberlands Center (ATC), a new building for the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design at the University of Arkansas designed by Grafton Architects with modus studio, has risen like a roadside attraction or a wayside shrine. Those who visit and look closely may come away with a sense of a powerful—and benevolent—contemporary sensibility for how to make architecture.

From the start, the directive for the building was that the ATC ought to be a "storybook of timber" to celebrate Arkansas's forests and forest products. A prominent competition led to the selection of the Dublin, Ireland–based Grafton Architects, headed by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara, in February 2020. A week later, they won the Pritzker Prize. The next month, the COVID-19 pandemic landed. The project proceeded, with some shrinkage: Originally proposed to be 6 stories, it is 4 stories tall but retains the spiky sectional play that is the core of its formal thesis. After interviewing the architects in 2022, I followed its progress with anticipation. When I visited for the opening at the end of August, the semester was already underway, with sketches on chalkboards and lumber piling up.

TIMOTHY HURSLEY

Timber on Top

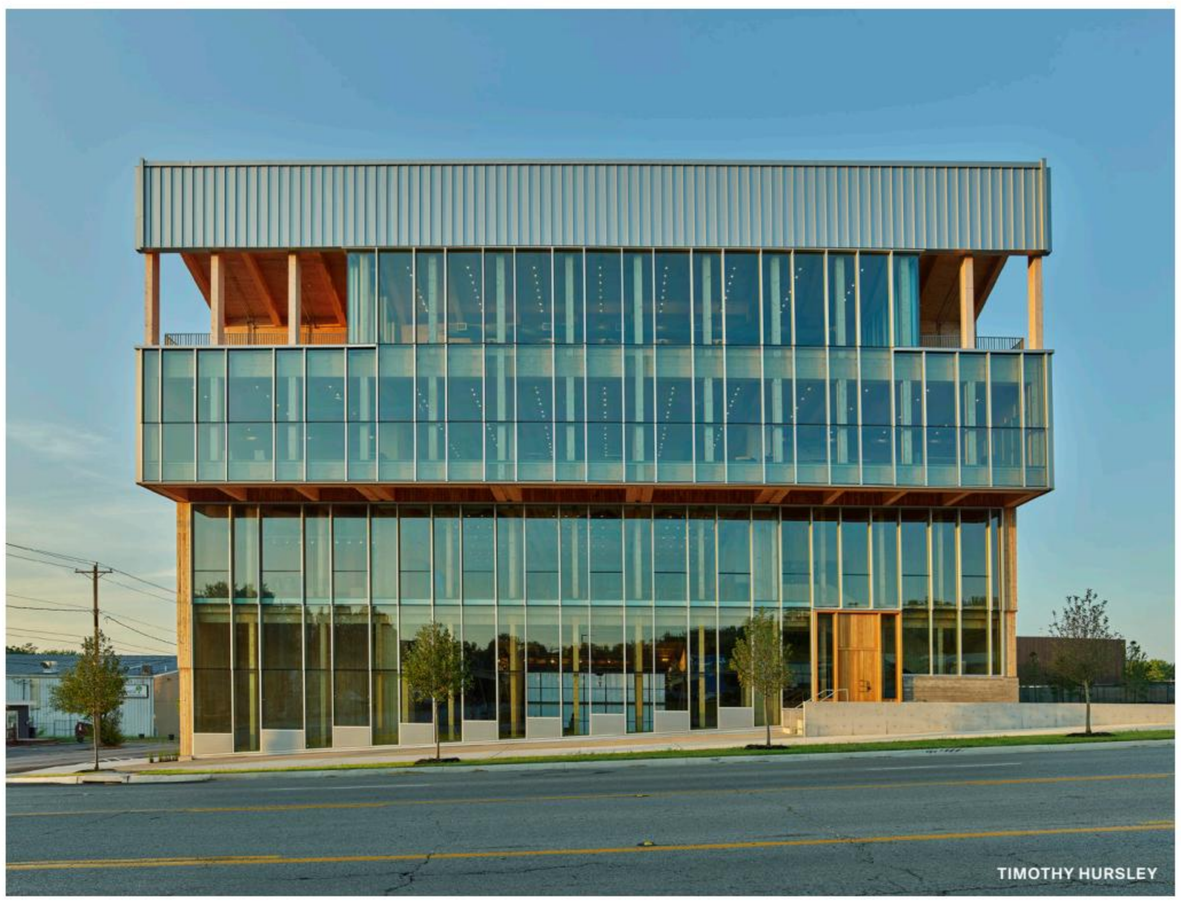
The building's sawtooth profile tops two programmatic zones: A stack of classrooms, studios, and seminar and conference spaces sit atop a double-height, 11,000-square-foot floor that houses a fabrication and design-build shop. The upper studio floors have windows that overlook the shop, and passersby on the street can peer down into it, a move that centralizes 1:1 construction as a key part of the school's pedagogy.

The ATC, funded by a naming gift from the state's largest privately owned timberlands and wood products company, is part of the growth of the University of Arkansas. When Dean Peter MacKeith arrived in 2014 and embarked on this building project in 2016, the Fay Jones School had 425 students. Today, enrollment numbers around 1,100. The main university campus is largely built out, which spurred the creation of the Windgate Art and Design District, a satellite campus that houses the art and design programs. The ATC is one of three buildings on campus that will support art and design: HGA's Windgate Studio + Design Center is on the other end of the block, and in between, a university art gallery designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects is under construction. Anthony's Way, a parklet designed by Ground Control, offers a landscaped buffer between the ATC and its neighbor. While these are only a 20-minute walk from the main university campus, they are also adjacent to Fayetteville's Cultural Arts Corridor, bridging the university with the burgeoning local art scene.

The ATC is more intimate in person than you might expect from the photographs. At 42,000 square feet, it's smaller than some of the country's largest homes. Its flattened north elevation holds the street edge along a sloping site: One enters on the second floor, with the shop largely below grade, but on the opposite side of the shop level, a second entrance opens up with a large hangar door for easy load-in and access. The main entry is custom fabricated by local artisan Rachel McClintock, with a cast-metal door handle from Juhani Pallasmaa. Farrell is pleased with the frontage's presence; she told me she thinks it "sits proudly, and not in an arrogant way. It says, 'We're a university timber building: Come all ye and have a look.'"

As foretold, the ATC is an advertisement for the possibilities of timber construction. Its massive structure—made from spruce, pine, and fir fabricated by Binderholz in Austria—is unavoidably present, and satisfyingly stocky. The eight columns that hold everything up are about 4 feet square and solid. The frames are pleasingly dotted with wooden plugs that conceal the bolted connections between pieces. The experience peaks when one is looking across through the upper areas, where the members of the queen post truss branch out to grab the roof. Above, the building is enclosed with domestic CLT panels from Mercer Mass Timber in Conway, Arkansas. The wood idea continues in the wall finishes and stairwells; even the glass guardrails are topped with cherry caps.

Outside, the taller zone is lined in a thermally treated southern yellow pine, in part as a response to a building-code requirement for noncombustible cladding above 40 feet, modus studio's Jason Wright explained. A lattice of western red cedar lines the longer, lower elevations, spanning over windows, and a silver metal panel similar to the roof is used above. The top floor has covered porches on both ends, which open to views of the Ouachita Mountains, and the east elevation has the nicest exterior fire stair I've seen in years. The adventurous expression refutes the typical norms of wood construction; McNamara said she didn't think they could construct a building like this in Ireland, the U.K., or France because of the exterior cladding.


TIMOTHY HURSLEY


TIMOTHY HURSLEY


TIMOTHY HURSLEY

Opposite: Although the 4-story building is two stories less than its proposed design, the ATC retains the spiky sectional play that is the core of its formal thesis.

Top Left: The 42,000-square-feet building's flattened north elevation holds the street edge along a sloping site. The mullions change in depth to add additional relief to the facade.

Bottom Left: The interior's timber frames are pleasingly dotted with wooden plugs that conceal the bolted connections between pieces.

Right: Intentionally exposed mechanical and electrical systems lend the building with an unfinished feel, encouraging the school's emerging designers to make the space their own. The entrance area contains an entrance and a stair.

The Miracle in Fayetteville continued

A Place in the Making

The didactic structure is a fusion of the school's messaging—both for its philosophy of hands-on making and the public university's goal of supporting Arkansas's economy—and the interests of Grafton Architects. In this, the architects' first built work in the United States and the first to use mass timber, visitors can see a clear dedication to structural expression, as well as an appreciation of light and rhythm, which is nestled throughout the spaces within. Across their career together, McNamara said, the duo has been "combating the effect of mass production, because it very often takes the life out of the material." Here, she's delighted that the finished building feels like a "big chunk of timber."

This formal interest is balanced by the firm's empathetic, relational approach. For being world-class architects, McNamara and Farrell, along with their directors and project architects, are remarkably personable. They keep their atelier small—38 people, with 37 architects, McNamara told me—so that they can maintain personal connections to each project. And they have a keen interest in a wide range of cultural topics. They began their opening lecture with mention of the first architecture competition—in Greece in 448 BC, for a monument to commemorate a war victory—and continued on to discuss the Ogham stones, ancient rocks inscribed with the earliest forms of the Irish language.

As the school settles in over the semester, Farrell said, "we hope the students love it and make interesting things here." The interior has exposed (but expertly coordinated) mechanical and electrical systems, which help it feel like an unfinished warehouse where emerging designers can make a mess in an unselfconscious manner, particularly in the shop, which is well equipped and spanned by a linear gantry crane.

Upstairs after the building's dedication, I spoke with Trey Melton, a fifth-year undergraduate architecture major who had landed a corner desk. He praised the lighting before directing my attention to the tables, which were designed and made by the students. Despite the day's festivities, he was already at work on an assignment in John Folan's studio, which is researching the use of WLT, or wave-layered timber, a Finnish product that combines ruffled wood pieces without using glue. (Folan's work through the Urban Design Build Studio with the technology is its first licensed use in the U.S.)

TIMOTHY HURSLEY

A Cornucopia of References

If Frank Gehry's work owes a debt to fish, then Grafton's nods to dinosaurs, though more to the creatures' reassembled skeletons than their CGI-animated reproductions. The ATC is rich enough in form and idea to handle any referential projection. It has a Roman quality, as Oliver Wainwright noted. Early inspiration also came in part from the framing of historic Ozark barns. Robert McCarter, in an essay prepared for the opening, compared its two-part arrangement to a train hall paired with a train shed.

After a previous interview with the firm, I wrote that it looked like Giovanni Michelucci's San Giovanni Battista or Theo Jansen's *strandbeests*, but in person it is something like a billboard building. Wright said the profile was an "Ozark cross section" endemic of the Ozark Plateau, a region where, as historian Brooks Blevins describes it, "our hills aren't high, but our hollers sure are deep." Farrell also alluded to Fay Jones's own work with wood like at Thorncrown Chapel, but perhaps the Arkansas architect's own home, located near the campus, is a better analogy. It was built in 1956 with the idea of "the cave and the tree house," as faculty member Gregory Herman explained during a tour of the residence, which the university now owns and maintains. At the ATC, the shop is the cave, and the studios are the tree house.

How sustainable is the ATC really? While the classroom floors are conditioned, the shop is heated but not cooled. Instead, the tall, enclosed area is topped with equipment to pull air up and out of the building. Plus the canoe-like beams shed water into bioswales for reuse. While there was carbon modeling, Wright said that in the end the math "doesn't matter" because the building speaks for itself. (The project is targeting LEED Gold certification.) The more enduring point is the political message about the state economy, which overshadows metrics. ATC summons a lesson played out everywhere: The most sustainable building is the one that is beloved by its community.

Shaping the Future of Architecture Education

The ATC is cause for collective pride. Here is a building that you should go see on your own dime. Here is a building that demonstrates what is possible with timber construction. Here is a building that stands to make an impact on generations of students. Here is a building that will turn drivers' eyes as they careen down MLK Jr. Boulevard and distract Great Value–laden shoppers exiting Walmart.

In a town whose name was lifted from Fayetteville, Tennessee, and for an institution whose first building was copied from the University of Illinois, Grafton Architects has delivered a remarkably original masterpiece, heroic and ordinary at once. Still, the founding spirit remains similar. Like the ATC, Old Main, the university's oldest building, was built of local materials, including "wood milled from Ozark forests." Both were dedicated on hot days in August, though with Old Main it was in 1875, 150 years ago. None of us will be here 150 years from now, but the ATC will be. Who knows what activities it will host then. *Vita brevis, architectura longa*.

Given its elephantine nature, architecture as a discipline is profoundly mismatched with the unhealthy speed of today's brain-rotted cultural discourse. This slowness gives it the ability to resist and serve as a refuge. "Architecture is a silent language that speaks," Farrell intoned during her opening lecture with McNamara. Also: "Architecture is an act of hope and belief." This aligns with the optimism embedded in higher education, despite current attacks, as a venue where the wisdom of experience transfers to ambitious youth who will make tomorrow better than today. That's the goal, at least. As Farrell said, "Education is the biggest gift you can give to the future." **JM**

ARCHITECT: Grafton Architects
ARCHITECT OF RECORD: modus studio
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Ground Control
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Nabholz Construction
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Tatum Smith Welcher Structural Engineers
MASS TIMBER ENGINEER: Robbins Engineering Consultants
MEP ENGINEER: Affiliated Engineers
CIVIL ENGINEER: DCI Engineers
MASS TIMBER SPECIALIST STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Whitby Wood
SPECIALIST LIGHTING CONSULTANT: TM Light
SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTANT: Atelier Ten
CODE CONSULTING: WB Engineers
GRAPHICS AND WAYFINDING: Doxa/Vantage
GLULAM: Binderholz Holzpak
CLT PANELS: Mercer Mass Timber
METAL PANELS: Pac-Clad Metal Roof + Wall Panels
METAL/GLASS CURTAIN WALL: Kawner Curtainwall
WOOD RAINSCREEN: Arbor Wood Co.
MOISTURE BARRIER: VaproShield
RUBBERIZED ASPHALT: Hydrotech Monolithic Membrane
GLASS AND GLAZING: TriStar Glass Products
ENTRANCES: Kawneer
METAL DOORS: Assa Abloy
WOOD DOORS: VT Industries
FRONT DOOR: Rachel McClintock
HARDWARE: Corbin Russwin/Assa Abloy, Norton Rixson/Assa Abloy
CUSTOM HARDWARE: Juhani Pallasmaa, Eugene Sargent, Modus Shop
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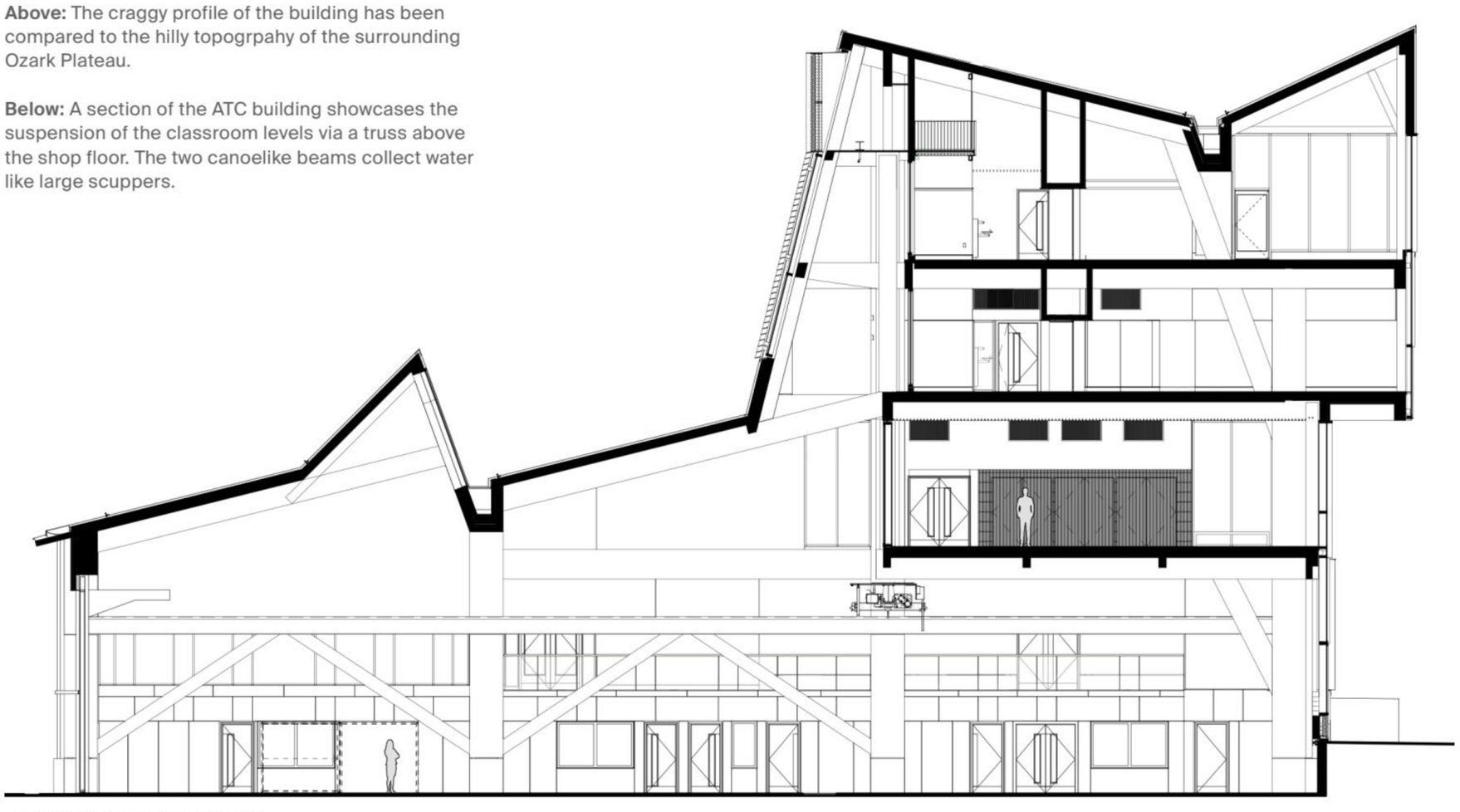
ELEVATORS: Otis

This text contains homages to Herbert Muschamp's review of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao which was published in The New York Times *on September 7, 1997.*

Above: The craggy profile of the building has been compared to the hilly topogrpahy of the surrounding Ozark Plateau.

Below: A section of the ATC building showcases the suspension of the classroom levels via a truss above the shop floor. The two canoelike beams collect water like large scuppers.



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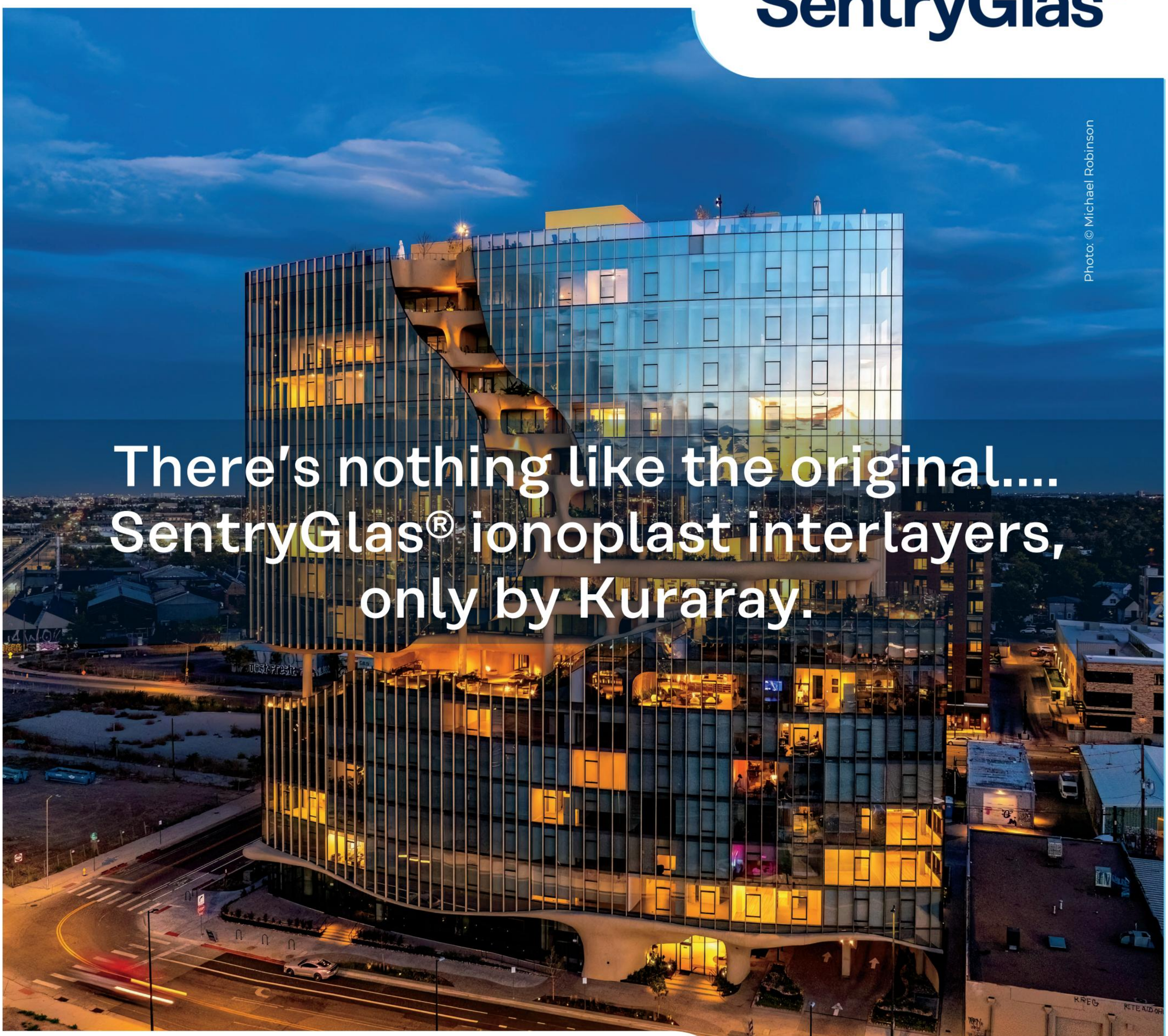


trosifol.com

AN FOCUS
October/November 2025

Set the Tone

Limberlost Place by Moriyama Teshima Architects raises the bar for mass timber construction in Toronto.

DOUBLESPACE PHOTOGRAPHY

It wasn't so long ago that Ontario's building codes placed tight restrictions on mass timber construction. Before 2022, mass timber buildings in Toronto could only rise 6 stories. Limberlost Place, a new 10-story, net-zero building at Toronto's George Brown College—designed by Moriyama Teshima Architects and Acton Ostry Architects—sets a precedent in the field of mass timber construction. The innovative building opened its doors to students and faculty this fall semester. It activates what was once a derelict brownfield site outside of the city center, not far from the site of the now defunct Google Quayside project, on the man-made shores of Lake Ontario.

How much embodied carbon did mass timber construction capture at Limberlost Place? Phil Silverstein, a partner at Moriyama Teshima Architects, told *AN* the "mass timber structure achieved a 30 percent reduction in embodied carbon compared to concrete." Silverstein also noted: "One of the most significant findings was that the below-grade concrete work accounted for 40 percent of the building's total embodied carbon. . . .This result highlights that below-grade construction is by far the most carbon-intensive aspect of a building and should be minimized wherever possible."

Moriyama Teshima Architects partner Carol Phillips reflected: "The slab-band system allows for long-spanning, column-free spaces outside of classrooms as well, like [in] the Learning Landscape and Breathing rooms." Phillips elaborated: "As this was such a new project for Toronto and the world, code changes and updates were happening live, so verification was required at every step. We also feel that in a student environment, where there is pressure and anxiety on individuals about 'perfection' and appearances, that this honesty of material expression and celebration of unaltered beauty could positively impact their mental health."

Limberlost Place is organized around a vast atrium. A grand stair offers space for leisure and lectures, while also connecting users to classrooms on upper levels. Timber columns and walls aren't glossed over with plaster or any other finishes, so as to make an aesthetic point. "We wanted the building to be a didactic living lab that teaches through its materials," Silverstein said. "Leaving the knots, seams, and structural details visible helps students see how the building is put together, while also celebrating the natural warmth and honesty of wood."

"At the outset of the project," Silverstein added, "the timber supply was unknown, which meant we didn't know if we would end up with the red tones of Douglas fir from the West or a more blond black spruce from the East. Early onboarding of the mass timber design assist supplier, Nordic Structures, allowed us to confirm the timber species and firm up our interiors color palette. Nordic harvest their lumber from northern Quebec, which is primarily black spruce. These trees are thinner, with more knots, giving them a distinct characteristic from other regions'. They grow slow, are more dense and stronger in the north than the same species further south."

Today, Canada allows construction of mass timber buildings up to 18 stories, like Brock Commons Tallwood House, an encapsulated mass timber tower in British Columbia by Acton Ostry Architects. Legislation passed this year updated the building code to allow for the construction of these taller timber buildings, thereby boosting Canada's housing supply and national forestry industry. Moreover, with the advent, under Canada's prime minister Mark Carney, of an affordable housing authority—Build Canada Homes, which requires 100-percent Canadian-made goods in response to President Trump's tariff wars—Canada's mass timber industry is ripe for growth. We can expect many more mass timber buildings in the years ahead. And there's no doubt that Limberlost Place will serve as a fine precedent for architects to emulate. **DJR**

ARCHITECTURE: Moriyama Teshima Architects, Acton Ostry Architects Ltd.
INTERIOR DESIGN: Moriyama Teshima Architects
STRUCTURAL: Fast + Epp
MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL/LEED: Introba
AUDIO VISUAL: The Hidi Group
LANDSCAPING: STUDIO TLA
FIRE ENGINEER : CHM Fire Consultants
CODE CONSULTANT: GHL Consultants
SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTANT: Transsolar Klima Engineering
ENGINEERING ENVELOPE CONSULTANT: Stantec (Morrison Hershfield)
MASS TIMBER: Nordic Structures

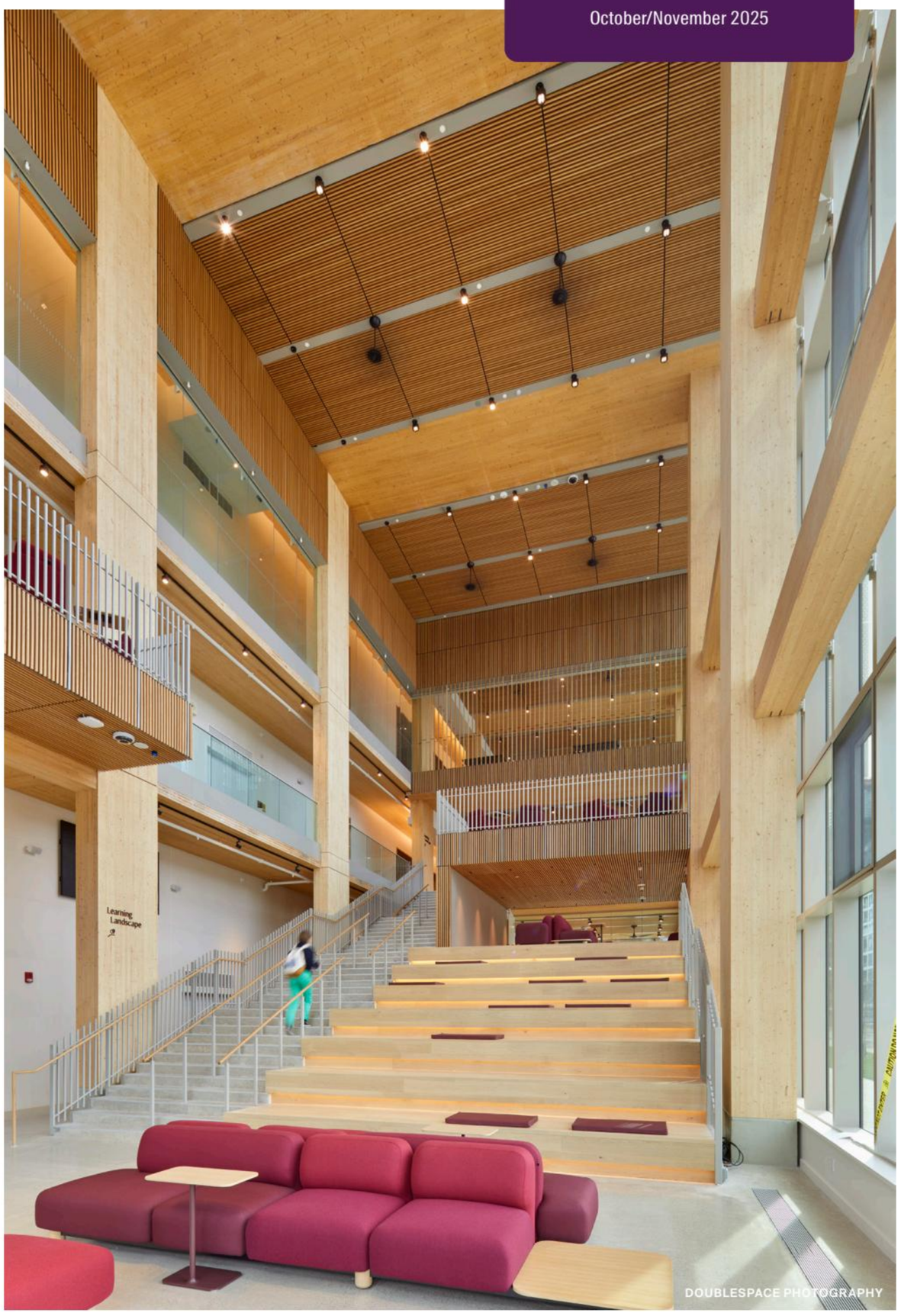
Opposite page: Limberlost Place, a 10-story net-zero academic building at Toronto's George Brown College, sets a new benchmark for mass timber construction in Ontario.

Right: Limberlost Place is organized around a vast atrium. A grand stair offers space for leisure and lectures, while also connecting users to classrooms on upper levels.

Below: Moriyama Teshima Architects partner Carol Phillips reflected, "The slab-band system allows for long-spanning, column-free spaces out- side of classrooms as well, like [in] the Learning Landscape and Breathing Rooms."

Below right: The mass timber structure achieved a 30 percent reduction in embodied carbon compared to concrete.

Below left: "We wanted the building to be a didactic living lab that teaches through its materials," Phil Silverstein, a partner at Moriyama Teshima Architects, told *AN*.



DOUBLESPACE PHOTOGRAPHY


DOUBLESPACE PHOTOGRAPHY

DOUBLESPACE PHOTOGRAPHY


DOUBLESPACE PHOTOGRAPHY

Reading List

Going for Zero

by Carl Elefante

The planet is burning, and our buildings aren't helping. In *Going for Zero,* Carl Elefante maps out how architects, engineers, and urban designers can flip the script, turning the built environment from climate culprit to climate ally. Drawing on decades of conservation work, Elefante argues for a mindset shift starting with less endless expansion and more reintegration and repair. He tackles the climate, justice, and urban imperatives with clarity, showing that reusing resources and revitalizing existing communities is necessary. Urgent, practical, and quietly hopeful, this book makes decarbonizing cities feel not just possible but inevitable—if we get to work.

Start in Your Own Backyard

by Steve Nygren

"If it's not working, change it...one backyard at a time." In *Start in Your Own Backyard*, Serenbe founder Steve Nygren makes the case that America's malaise—our stress, sickness, and sprawl—can be traced to how we've built our communities. His antidote? Biophilic living, blueberry bushes at crosswalks, and front porches that actually get used. Part memoir, part manifesto, Nygren's vision of clustered connected neighborhoods challenges the cul-de-sac status quo with idealism and pragmatism. Forget the paralyzing doomscroll; this is an actionable call to redesign not just our towns but our habits, to make meaningful change, starting at home.

The Unfinished Metropolis

by Benjamin Schneider

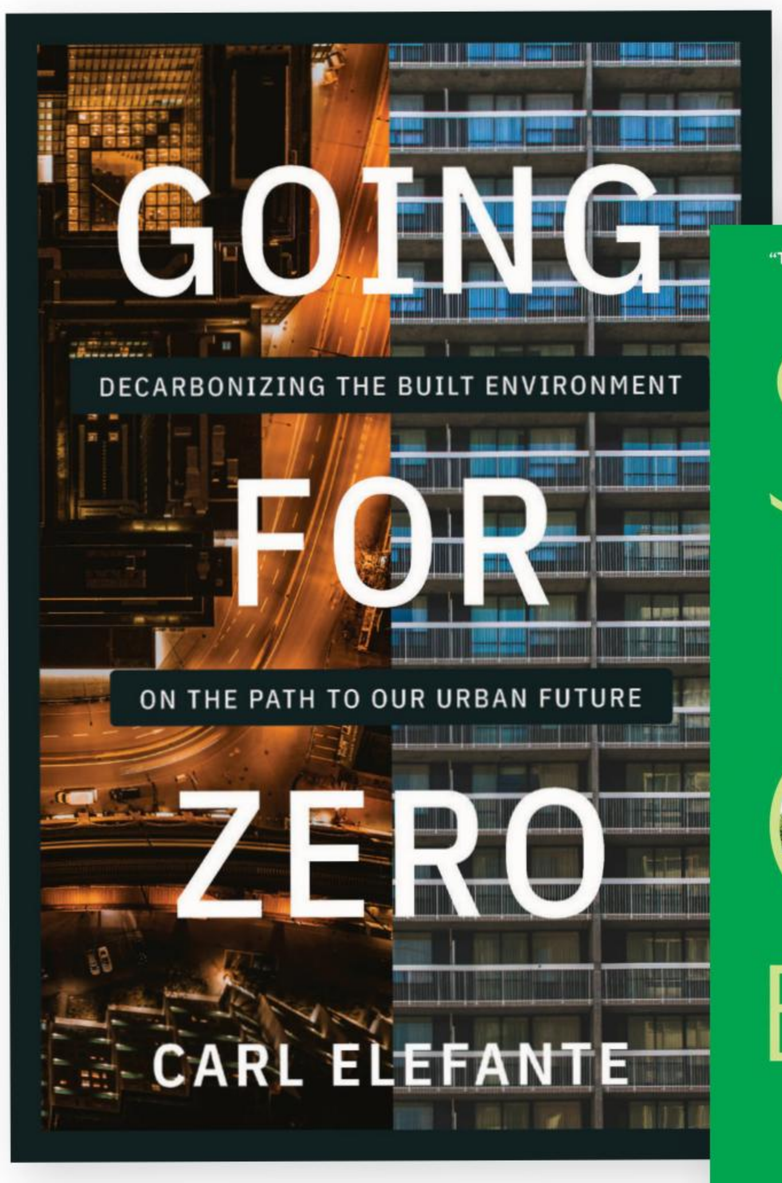
Why do American cities still look like they're frozen in 1975, as if the Cold War never ended and disco still ruled? In *The Unfinished Metropolis,* Benjamin Schneider tears into our 20th-century hangover of freeways, office parks, and suburban sprawl, arguing that city building has lost its nerve and its imagination. With humor, he calls for a reinvention rooted in sustainability—streets for people, not parking; density that's livable, not dreary; and infrastructure that actually serves the climate we are living in. It's a reminder that the metropolis isn't broken, it's just unfinished, and it's on us to finish it better.

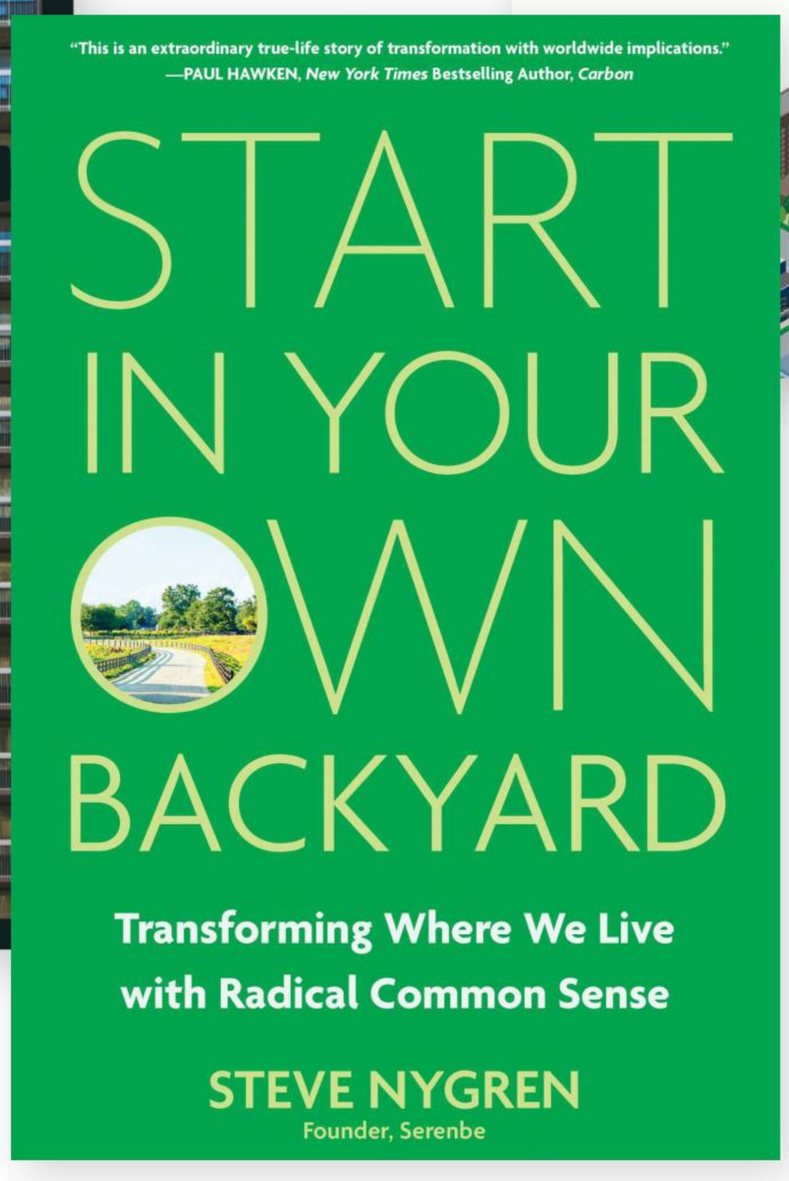
Architecture and Social Change

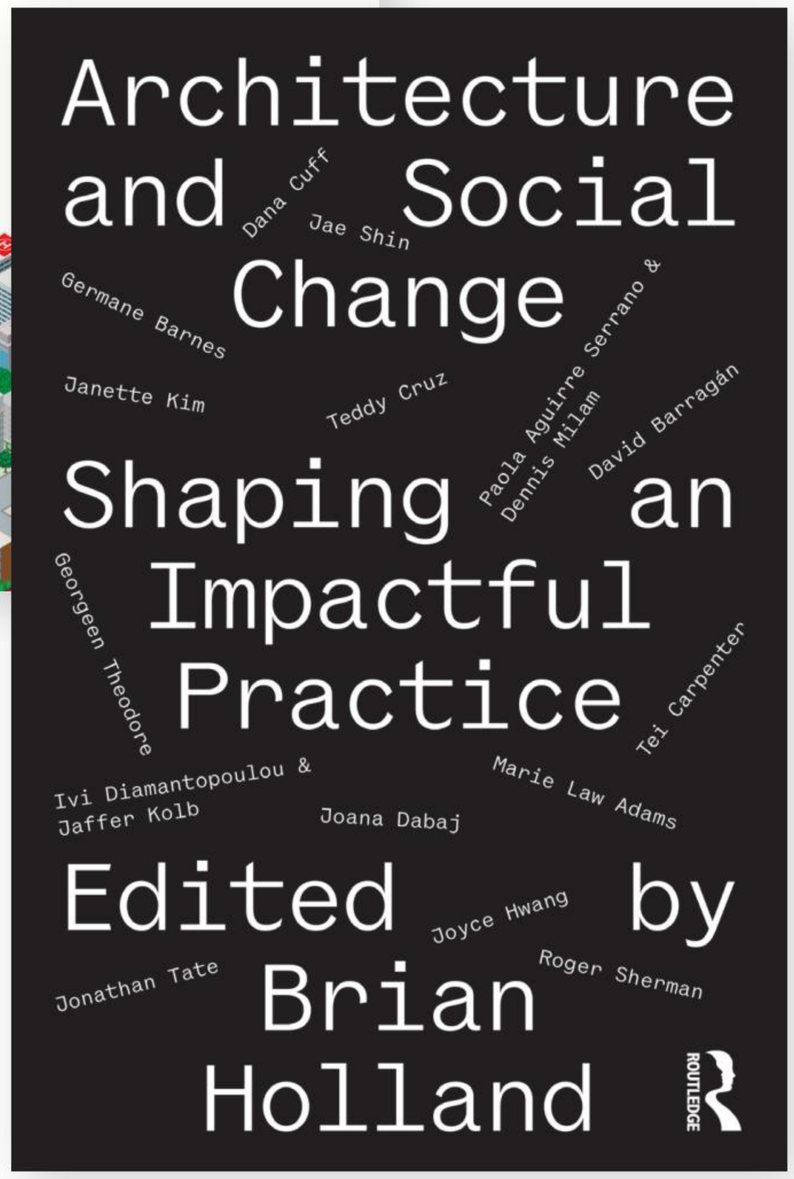
by Brian Holland

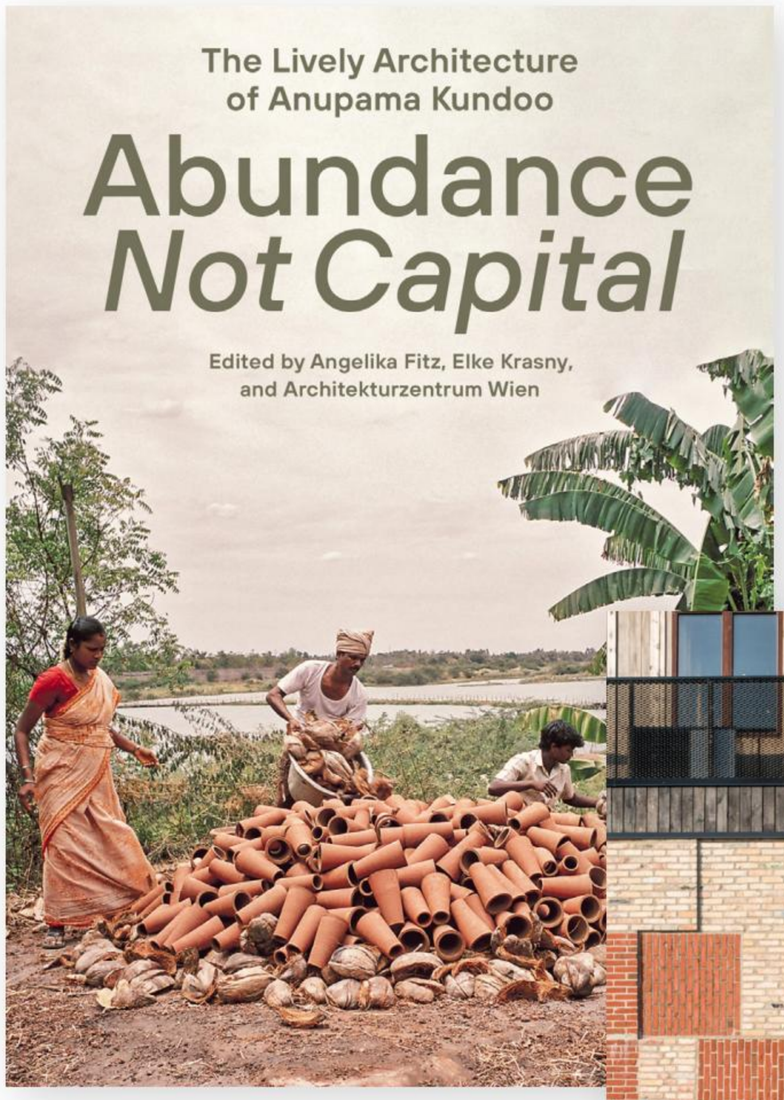
Architecture and Social Change takes the profession's current identity crisis and turns it into a syllabus for doing better. Through student-led interviews with 15 architects and designers, from Dana Cuff's housing activism to New Affiliates' creative reuse of museum castoffs, the book spotlights those refusing to treat *impact* as a buzzword. It's meant to be a snapshot of architecture mid-reckoning—less starchitect posturing, more rolling up sleeves and confronting housing, climate, and equity head-on. It's a group therapy session for a field learning how to care about people, the planet, and what we build next.

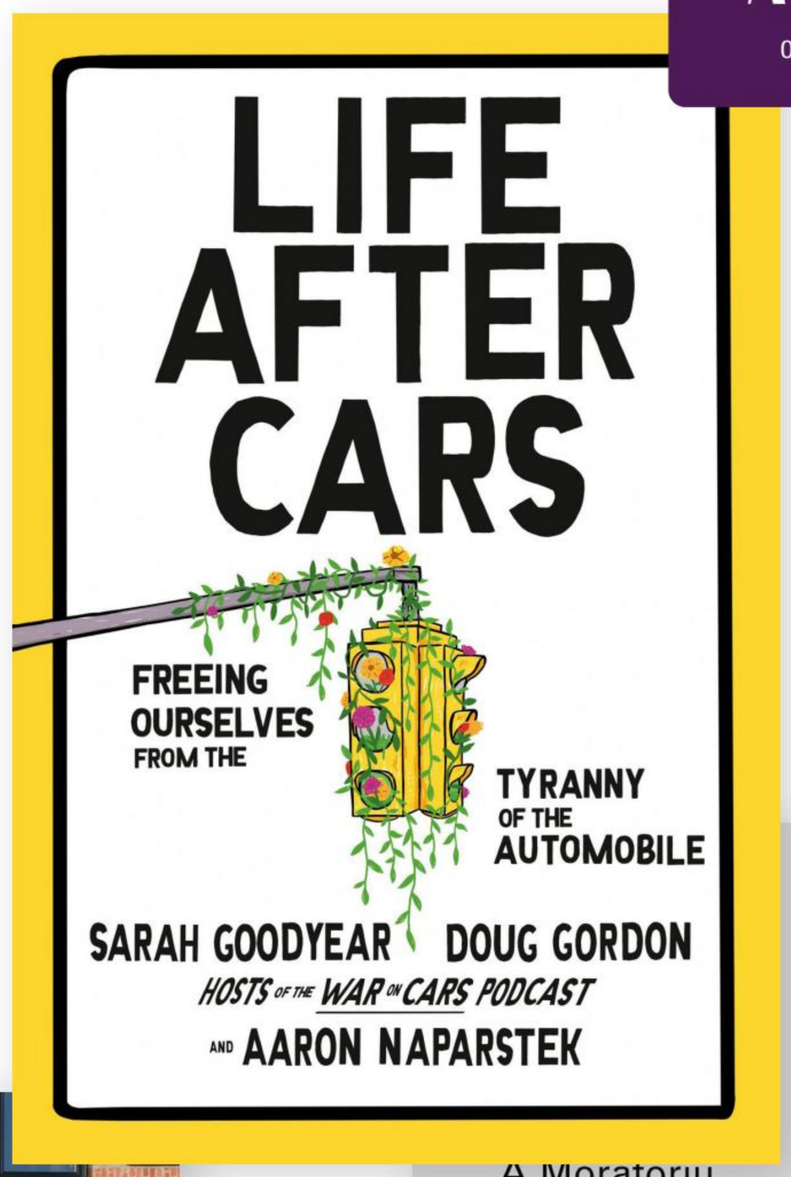
We've picked our favorite new reads that prove sustainability can be bold, smart, and even a little rebellious. From rethinking car-dependent streets to reusing materials and reimagining urban life, these titles explore practical, urgent, and hopeful approaches to building, and living, more sustainably. Practical, and packed with ideas that spark action, they make building green feel excitingly possible. IA











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Critical Spatial Practice 14
Charlotte Malterre-Barthes

The Lively Architecture of Anupama Kundoo: Abundance Not Capital

edited by Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny
co-published with Architekturzentrum Wien

Architecture has a capitalism problem, and *Abundance Not Capital* isn't afraid to say it out loud. Edited by Angelika Fitz and Elke Krasny, the book orbits the work of Anupama Kundoo, whose buildings trade spectacle for soul and capital for care. Essays by Peggy Deamer, Shannon Mattern, Rupali Gupte, and others unravel what happens when architecture stops extracting and starts listening to materials, to makers, and to the planet itself. This is a book about rebuilding our relationship to abundance, not accumulation, and imagining architecture that feels less like a conquest and more like a conversation.

Reuse of Architectural Components

by Bailey Bestul

Reuse of Architectural Components treats salvaged materials not as scraps but as storytellers. Bailey Bestul dives into the messy, poetic world of architectural reuse. Where cracked tiles, warped beams, and abandoned facades become building blocks for new ideas. Less about greenwashing and more about grit, the book attempts to bridge theory and practice, art history and hands-on craft to show how "waste" can anchor real beauty. With chapters on everything from *kintsugi* to the aesthetics of grime, Bestul argues for a future where design is about persistence, not perfection.

Life After Cars

by Sarah Goodyear, Doug Gordon, and Aaron Naparstek

Cars promised us freedom and delivered traffic, asphalt, and existential dread. In *Life After Cars*, Sarah Goodyear, Doug Gordon, and Aaron Naparstek—hosts of the *War on Cars* podcast—lay out just how deeply the automobiles warped our cities, our climates, and our sense of community. The book acts as an exposé of bad urban planning and corporate greed. The authors mix history, outrage, and optimism to show that ditching car dependency isn't anti-progress; it's survival. The book asks the reader to forget the open road fantasy and instead imagine a future that is walkable, breathable, and maybe just a little more inconvenient in all the right ways.

A Moratorium on New Construction

by Charlotte Malterre-Barthes

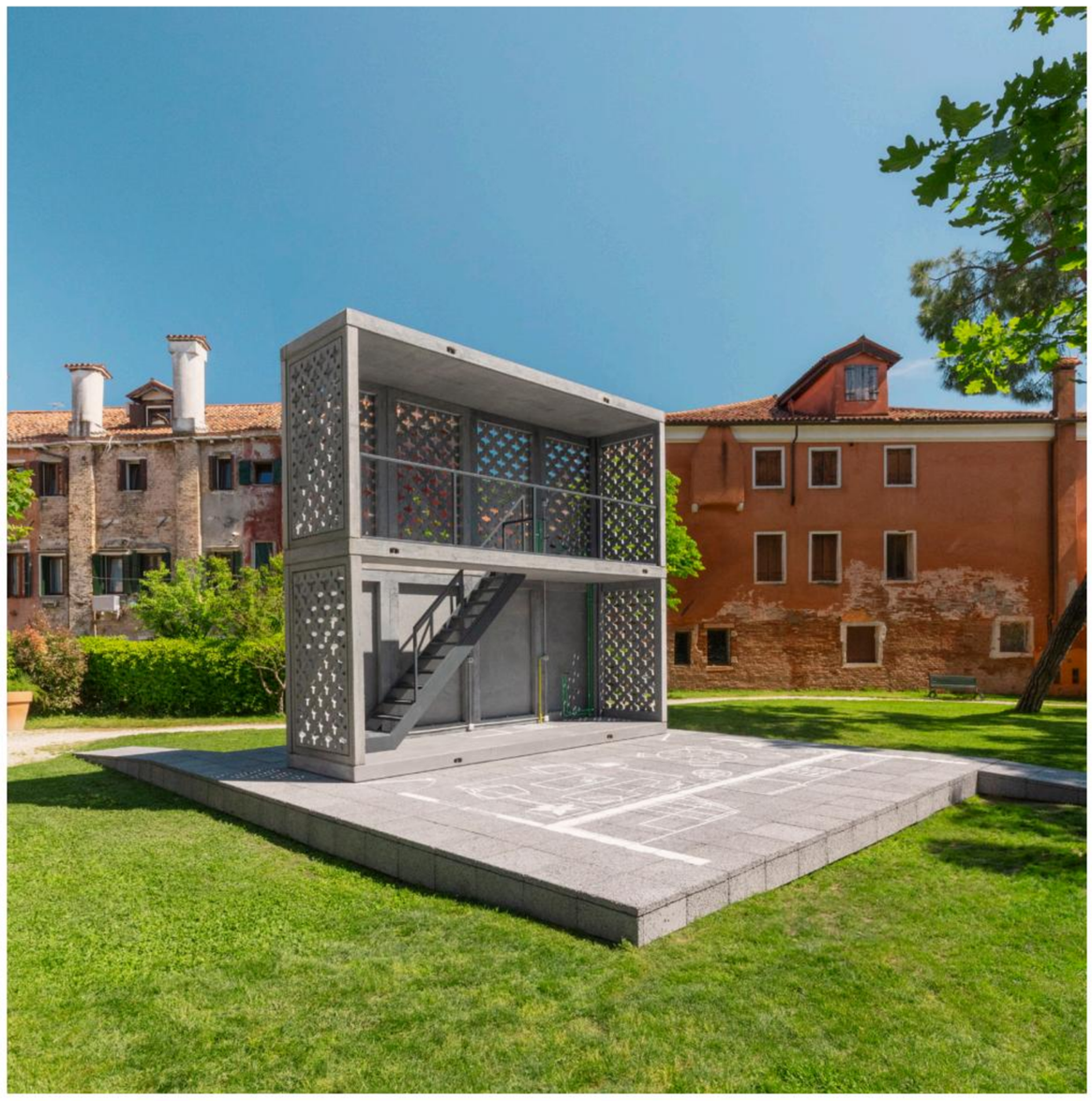
Charlotte Malterre-Barthes has a simple proposal: Stop building. In *A Moratorium on New Construction*, she argues that every shiny new structure comes at a planetary cost we can no longer afford. Instead of chasing growth, she argues, there must be a radical reevaluation of what already exists, including our buildings, our materials, our labor, and even our land. The book is a thought experiment and a manifesto, equaling a bold statement for an industry obsessed with what's new. Malterre-Barthes dares architects to imagine repair over replacement, care over concrete. Bold, bracing, and modestly priced, the slim volume aims to be a subversive design tool.

Green Concrete

Cement is responsible for 8 percent of the world's CO_2 emissions. The following innovations rethink how this building block can be redesigned for a healthier world. KP

EcoBlox | Nova Terra
novaterrausa.com

Produced using by-products of excavation—sand and clay fines—these blocks offer an alternative to concrete and are manufactured locally in Colorado.

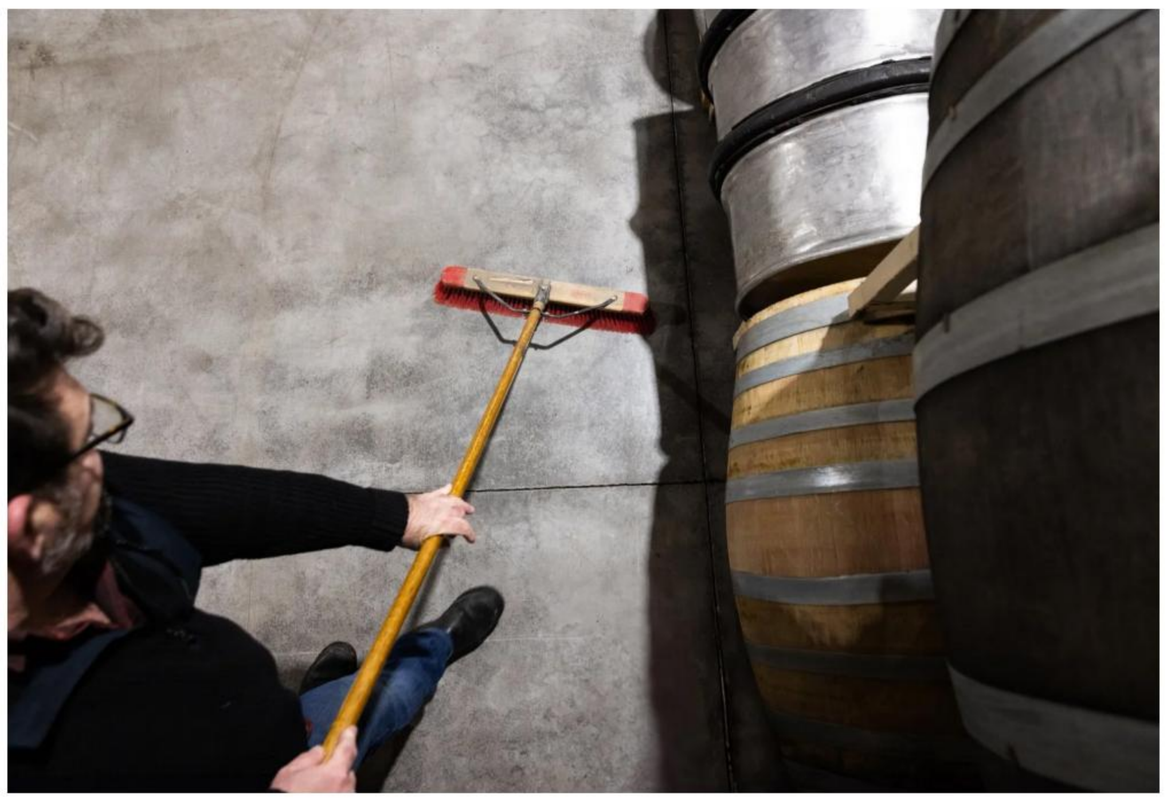


Biochar concrete | Holcim
holcim.com

Holcim developed a new circular, carbon-negative concrete formulation that uses biochar, a process that involves heating organic waste in the absence of oxygen to lock in carbon permanently.

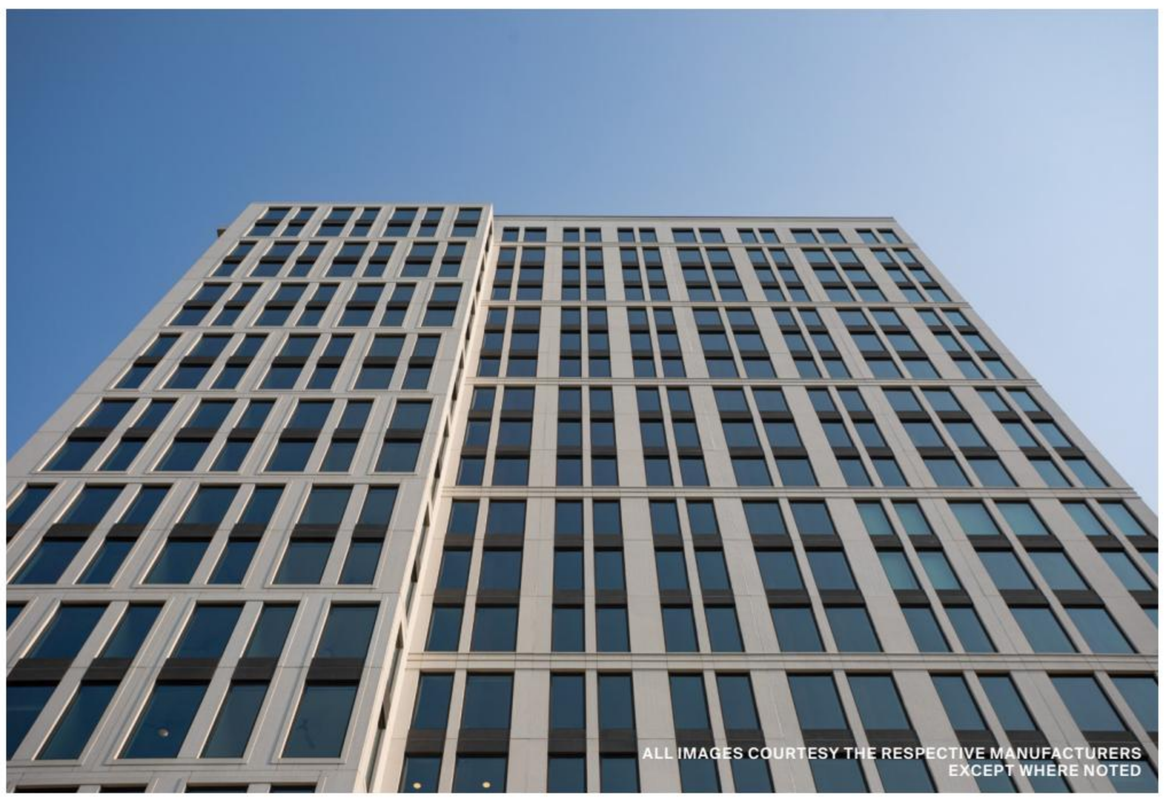
Coastalock | ECOncrete
econcretetech.com

Designed to bolster marine biodiversity, this concrete uses a bio-enhancing concrete composition alongside science-based molds and textures to support the ecological uplift of infrastructure.



BioPOZZ | Solid Carbon
solid-carbon.com

BioPOZZ uses biochar technology to create an alternative supplementary cementitious material that sequesters carbon and replaces some of the cement in a concrete mix.



GateLite | Wells
wellsconcrete.com

GateLite is a lightweight, resilient facade system that reduces cement content by 40 percent in comparison with the standard counterpart.

Resources

This listing combines companies specified in case studies, product highlights from our Design Editor Kelly Pau, and additional recommendations, all in one place.

BIOMATERIALS

AkzoNobel
akzonobel.com

BamCore
bamcore.com

Carlisle
carlislesfi.com

Hempitecture
hempitecture.com

Impact Acoustic
impactacoustic.com

Lingrove
ekoa.design

Matter Surfaces
mattersurfaces.com

Modern Mill
modern-mill.com

Modulina
modulina.eu

mogu
mogu.bio

Momentum
momentumtextilesandwalls.com

Nature Fibres
naturefibres.com

New Frameworks
newframeworks.com

Rockwool
rockwool.com

Taktl
taktl-llc.com

Terrapin Bright Green
terrapinbrightgreen.com

TimberHP
timberhp.com

CARBON CONSCIOUS

Armadillo
armadillo-co.com

Armstrong
armstrongceilings.com

Franken Schotter
franken-schotter.com

Kawneer
kawneer.us

Keilhauer
keilhauer.com

LiLi Tile
lilitile.com

LP Smart Side
lpcorp.com

Stick Bulb
stickbulb.com

GREEN CONCRETE

ECOncrete
econcretetech.com

Holcim
holcim.com

Nova Terra
novaterrausa.com

Solid Carbon
solid-carbon.com

Wells
wellsconcrete.com

MASS TIMBER & WOOD

9Wood
9wood.com

Arbor Wood
arborwoodco.com

Binderholz Holzpak
holzpak.com

Bjelin
bjelin.com

Cabbonet
cabbonet.com

Calvert
calvert.com

Coeur D'Aelen
cdawood.com

Delta Millworks
deltamillworks.com

Elk Creek Forest Products
elkcreekforest.com

Frank Lumber
franklumber.com

Freres Wood
frereswood.com

Herbert Lumber
herbertlumber.com

International Timberframes
itimberf.com

Kalesnikoff
kalesnikoff.com

Kasters Kustom Cutting
kasterskustomcutting.com

Kebony
kebony.com

Mankel Lumber
mankelumber.com

Mercer Mass Timber
mercermasstimber.com

Mid-Atlantic Timberframes
matfllc.com

Nordic Structures
nordic.ca

Pioneer Millworks
pioneermillworks.com

Piper Carpentry
pipercarpentry.com

reSAWN TIMBER
resawntimberco.com

Sansin
sansin.com

Smartlam
smartlam.com

Sustainable Northwest Wood
snwwood.com

The Wood Veneer Hub
thewoodveneerhub.com

Timber Pro
timberpro.com

Timberlab
timberlab.com

WholeTrees
wholetrees.com

Zip-O-Laminators
zipolaminators.com

Zip-O-Log Mills
zipolog.com

RECYCLED

AHF
ahfproducts.com

Cambio by Windfall Architectural Products
windfall.design

Centria
centria.com

ClarkDietrich
clarkdietrich.com

Cosentino
cosentino.com

Daltile
daltile.com

EGGER
egger.com

Fiberon
fiberondecking.com

Florim
florim.com

Homasote
homasote.com

Hydro
hydro.com

Morin
morincorp.com

Neolith
neolith.com

Nobilia
nobilia.de

Nu-Wool
nuwool.com

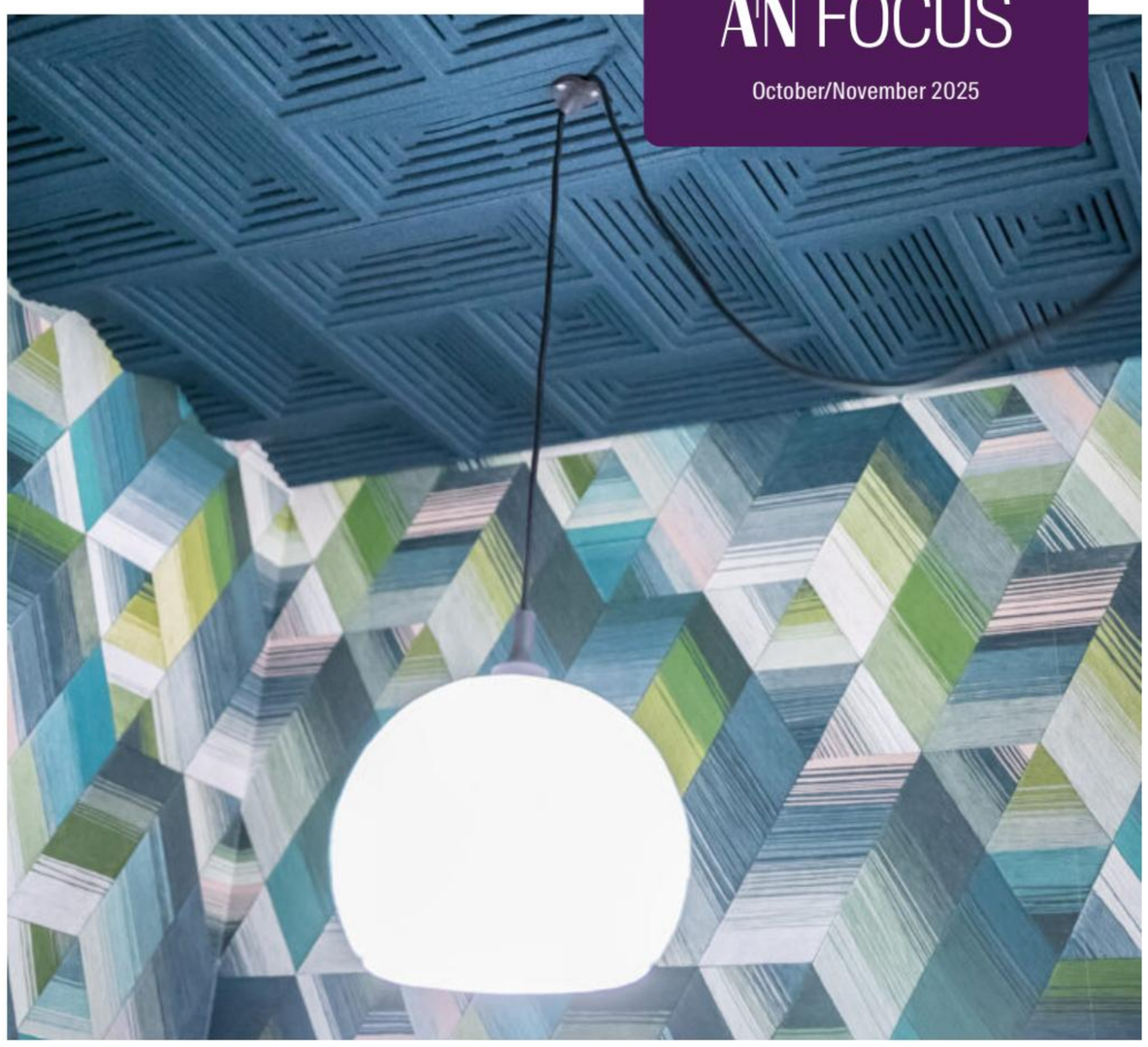
Oldcastle BuildingEnvelope
obe.com

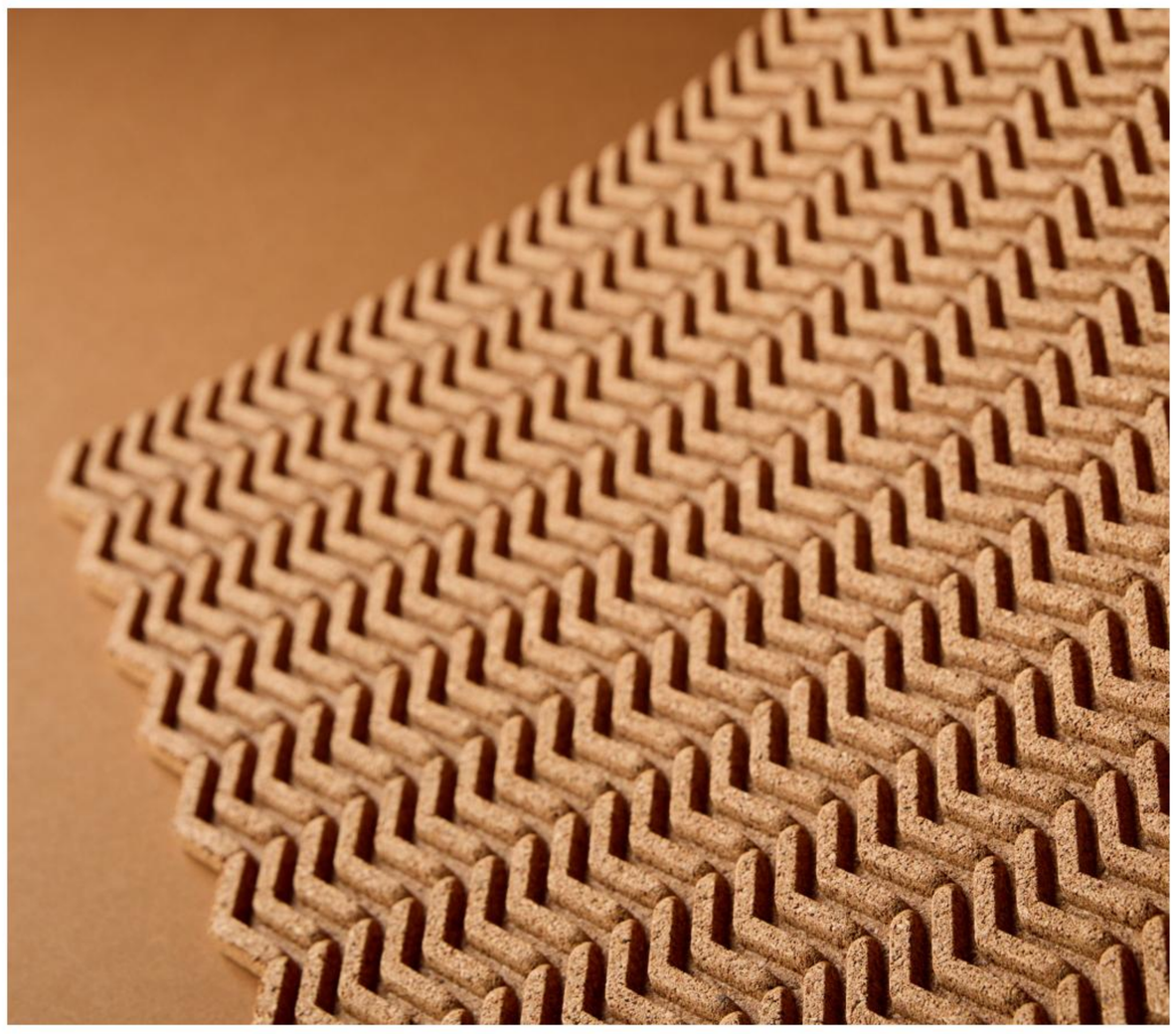
PAC-CLAD
pac-clad.com

Regupol
regupol.us

Turf
turf.design

YKK AP
ykkap.com





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library.archpaper.com

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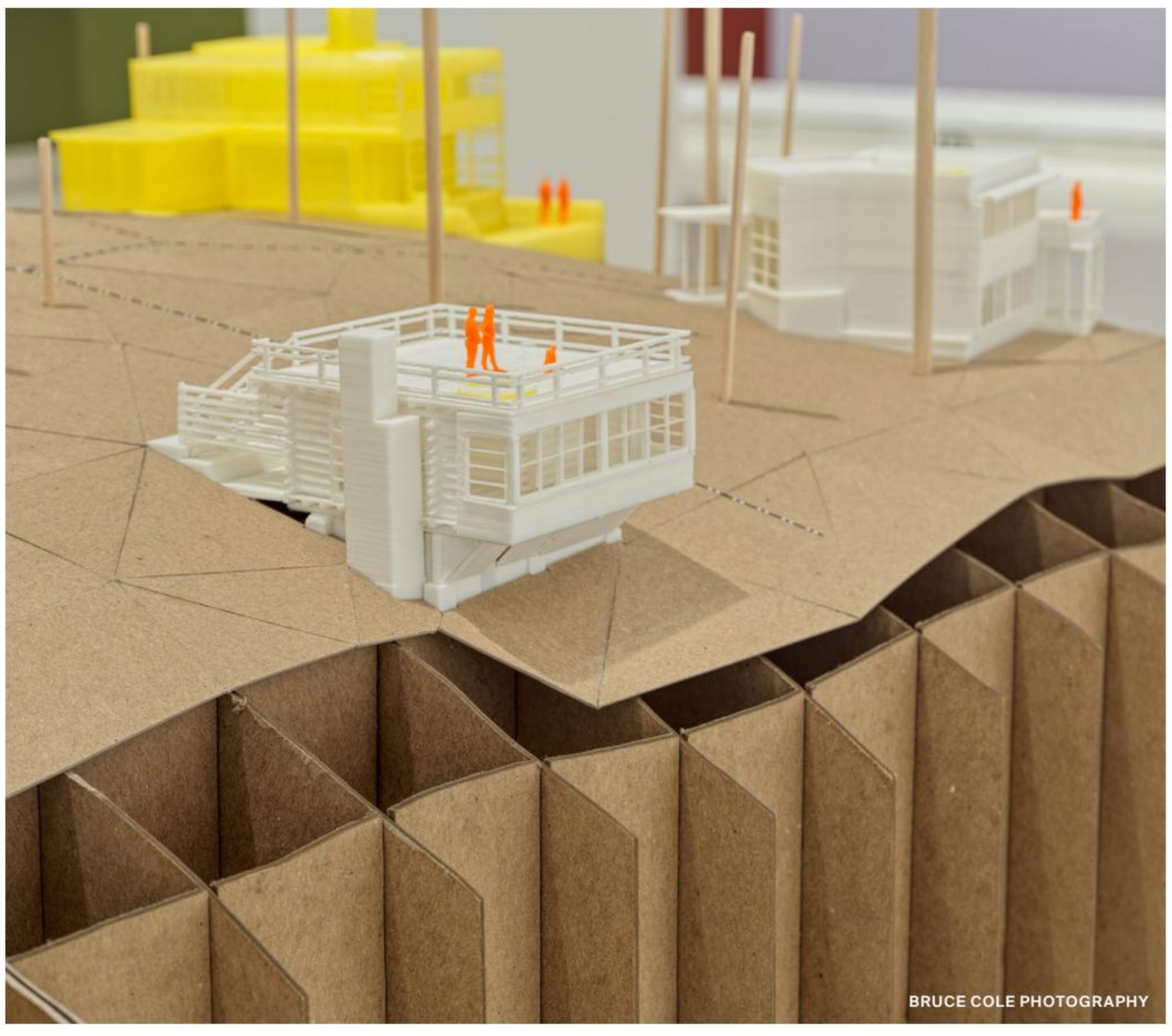
Exhibitions

By Ilana Amselem



Seeds of Regionalism, initiated by John Sanders of Sanders Pace Architecture, is on view in Knoxville.

Adam Pendleton: Who Owns Geometry Anyway? at Friedman Benda

Adam Pendleton transforms simple shapes like circles, squares, and triangles into striking, intellectually playful works. Moving fluidly across painting, sculpture, and furniture, he blends minimalism, conceptual rigor, and expressionistic flair. Influenced by the avant-garde and designers like Noguchi, his pieces balance materiality and poetic openness, reshaping contemporary American art.

515 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001
friedmanbenda.com

November 7–December 19

Seeds of Regionalism The Clauss Legacy: Early Modernism in the South at the Knoxville Museum of Art

Seeds of Regionalism highlights the overlooked legacy of Alfred and Jane West Clauss, whose 1939 Knoxville subdivision helped pioneer regional modernism. Through photographs, drawings, furniture, and home videos, the exhibition shows how the Clausses fused modernist design with East Tennessee's landscape, traditions, and community values.

1050 World's Fair Park Drive,
Knoxville, Tennessee 37916
knoxart.org

Through November 9

Trade Safe Chastity Box at Materials and Applications

Trade Safe Chastity Box flips surveillance logic upside down. Instead of being used to record and police, cameras reflect and bodies interact, flickering and glitching in plain view. Strat Coffman and Adam Miller explore public space, queer histories, and intimacy through a playful, performative architectural installation.

1313 West Sunset Boulevard,
Los Angeles, California 90026
materialsandapplications.org

Through November 13

Made in America: The Industrial Photography of Christopher Payne at Cooper Hewitt

Featuring over 70 large-format photographs, the exhibition reveals the inner worlds of American factories and workshops, from Steinway pianos to quantum computers. Trained as an architect, Payne captures the structure, artistry, and teamwork that define contemporary manufacturing.

2 East 91st Street, New York, New York 10128
cooperhewitt.org

Opening November 21

INHABIT at the Edith Farnsworth House

INHABIT repositions the Farnsworth House within its natural 60-acre Fox River setting, using time-lapse photography, video, and sound to capture the changing seasons. Architect-turned-photographer Tom Rossiter places the iconic glass pavilion in dialogue with its landscape, revealing the interplay between architecture, nature, and human experience.

14520 River Road, Plano, Illinois 60545
edithfarnsworthhouse.org

Through November 23

Paparazza Moderna: Lovers & Frenemies at the Yale Architecture Gallery

Lake Verea presents photographic encounters with modernist houses, exploring both rivalries among iconic male architects and overlooked contributions of female architects and designers across Europe. Blending personal and fragmented imagery, the exhibition reinterprets architectural history, uncovering tensions, relationships, and hidden narratives behind modern architecture's facades.

190 York Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511
architecture.yale.edu

Through November 29

Coming Together: Reimagining America's Downtowns at the National Building Museum

This exhibition transforms cold vacancy statistics into a meditation on what makes cities tick—their rhythms, frictions, and unexpected beauty. Designed by Reddymade and curated by Uwe S. Brandes, *Coming Together* reimagines post-pandemic urban life through 6-foot circles that recall social distancing, Jane Jacobs–inspired streetscapes, and immersive installations that invite visitors to imagine more equitable, joyful, and connected downtowns.

401 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20001
nbm.org

Through December 31

Lower East Side Yearbook: A Living Archive at Abrons Arts Center

Lower East Side Yearbook presents photographer Destiny Mata's ongoing project documenting Manhattan's Lower East Side public housing residents in an effort to preserve community memory. Curated by Ali Rosa-Salas and hosted at the Abrons Arts Center, recently renovated by Li/Saltzman Architects, the exhibition weaves Mata's images with residents' personal archives, in an effort to celebrate collective storytelling and the neighborhood's ever-changing cultural identity.

466 Grand Street, New York, New York 10002
abronsartscenter.org

Through January 4

Modern Women: The Influencers Who Shaped Palm Springs at the Palm Springs Art Museum

Modern Women: The Influencers Who Shaped Palm Springs celebrates the vital roles women have played in Palm Springs's modern architecture, highlighting architects, patrons, designers, and conservationists through portraits, archival materials, oral histories, and a comprehensive timeline from 1908 to today.

Architecture and Design Center, 300 South Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California 92262
psmuseum.org

Through January 5

The House Transformed at the Princeton School of Architecture

Curated by Mónica Ponce de León, *The House Transformed* explores domestic architecture beyond the nuclear family, imagining homes for diverse households, from single parents to polyamorous groups. The exhibition challenges conventional typologies while highlighting culturally marginalized domestic ideas and emphasizing daily life's varied realities.

S-110 Architecture Building, Princeton, New Jersey 08544
soa.princeton.edu

Through January 9

Whose America? at the National Academy of Design

Whose America? examines the United States through plural perspectives, highlighting Indigenous histories, diaspora experiences, and Latin American influences. The exhibition features multidisciplinary works that challenge who defines, belongs to, and writes America's story.
519 West 26th Street, Floor 2, New York, New York 10001
nationalacademy.org

Through January 10

Check archpaper.com/calendar for updated listings and other exhibitions and events.

Events

Greenbuild International Conference and Expo

The 2025 Greenbuild International Conference + Expo works to unite global leaders in sustainable design, construction, and policy. Presented with the U.S. Green Building Council, the event explores LEEDv5, Passive House, ESG, resilience, and wellness through keynotes, workshops, and tours—hoping to advance the next generation of green building standards and equitable, low-carbon communities.

Los Angeles Convention Center, 1201 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015
informaconnect.com/greenbuild

November 4–7

BDNY 2025

Boutique Design New York is an annual trade fair and conference focused on boutique and lifestyle hospitality design. The event brings together designers, architects, hoteliers, developers, and manufacturers. It features more than 600 exhibitors presenting new furniture, lighting, and materials, alongside educational sessions, networking events, and full-scale hospitality installations exploring current and emerging trends in the industry.

Javits Center, 429 11th Avenue,
New York, New York 10001
bdny.com

November 9–10

Making Space L.A.: *The House I Grew Up In*

Making Space L.A. kicks off its 2025–26 series, *The House I Grew Up In*, with an evening of reflection on what makes a home. Hosted by Henry-built, the event gathers designers, artists, and architects, including Frances Anderton, Kenturah Davis, and Annie Chu, to share how their childhood spaces continue to shape their creative lives.

806 Mateo Street, Los Angeles, California 90021
untappedjournal.com

November 12, from 6:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

World Architecture Festival 2025

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A conversation with Emanuele Coccia and f.Roche_S/he

*In 2023, architect f.Roche_S/he and philosopher Emanuele Coccia initiated a speculative dialogue that extends beyond architectural investigation and subverts any established design and ecological approaches. Their typologically uncharacterizable collaborative works—*The Chamber of the Past-Future *(2023) and* [n]Permanencies Tractatus *(19 Mostra Internazionale di Architettura, la Biennale di Venezia 2025)—along with their continuous discussions are acts of sabotage within the intersection of architecture and other disciplines. They are constantly setting evolving boundaries among the relationships between human, nonhuman, and nonliving systems and are activated through mutating trajectories. f.Roche_S/he's long-lastingtunderstanding of the relationships between the intangible and the material and Coccia's studies on the bond between nature, architecture, and humanity, as well as their comprehension of reality as constant metamorphoses, set the ever-changing nonrules of their joint work.*

Valerio Franzone (VF): There are many overlaps and differences in your respective work. What is your approach?

Emanuele Coccia (EC): François and his work are legendary to me, but I never met her, him. Then a common friend suggested that we work together on a competition. When we met, it was evident that we shared a lot. It's interesting to work with François because he's a genius and has played an essential role in the architectural debate of the last few decades. Our conversations provoke me to question my ideas. We sometimes disagree and tell each other that what the other just said is bullshit. That's why I need our intellectual dialogue.

f.Roche_S/he (R-S): Emanuele's intentional confusion—"I never met her"—and *Gender Troubles* belongs to New-Territories, a fugitive, native immigrant strategy. I am not supposed to be in Paris. After our studio crashed in 2011—the Lehman Brothers' butterfly effect—we started to develop an art museum in Bangkok. I moved there with computers, robots, cats, and my trans partner to face a bottom-up situation—[which became] the original impulse behind New-Territories.

Then I met Emanuele. And in 2023 we created *The Chamber of the Past-Future* in Paris.

We built a stage for dispute: political deviance and dark humor in the shadow of extinction. [In the work], three digital characters in a 1960s concrete grotto, 40 meters below La Défense, form a court judging humanity. Visitors are on trial. It's a heterotopia, a theater of shadows where CCTV and the forbidden are deterritorialized and "conspiratorialized."

EC: Our approach remains speculative rather than purely constructive, as our questions extend beyond the strictly architectural. The problem today is how to overcome the poststructuralist approach, and that's why we comprehended that what is at stake is not just an architectural issue but broadly cultural and precisely philosophical. I want to emphasize it because neither project has a specific site or client request. So we could have a take that was broader than being purely architectural or constructive.

R-S: Ecology is a relational mode between living species. Yet I've always included non-Cartesian, mystical, and metaphysical approaches—emotional, sensorial failures—to reframe knowledge and power relations and to rethink the tension between fiction and nonfiction via synesthesia and apparatuses.

VF: François, since the digital architecture era, you have been among the few moving digital research into the built dimension, and you did it through simple technological stratagems. Slowly, you left architectural practice as we commonly understand it and the materiality of built projects and moved to the immaterial, abandoning physicality. What shaped your path as an oscillation between the intangible and the material?

R-S: The 1984 exhibition *Les Immateriaux* at the Centre Pompidou by Jean-François Lyotard has long sparked debate on the digital and emotional, the material and immaterial—yet it was misread by artists and architects as glorifying technology. Lyotard lamented this fetishization, linking it to the neglect of his Marxist years with *Socialism or Barbarism*. Early on, he saw the threat of Roosevelt's "military technostructure," which would later morph with Palo Alto's Silicon Valley into the weaponized digital libertarian structure.

As for me, I stand between discovery and alienation, indifferent to boomer approval. Cyberpunk, voiced by Bruce Sterling, is a dark Cassandra. Douglas Coupland's *Girl in a Coma* captures our ambivalence: alive and dead, like Schrödinger's cat, in limbo.

EC: François understood that it makes no sense to reject technology or progress, but it is better to control and subvert it. It is akin to Negri's sabotage: Modernity is not inherently evil; it needs to be reshaped from within rather than being opposed. Instead of proposing parametric architecture, as was typical, he revolutionized architecture by twisting technology.

R-S: I was a friend of Antonio Negri, influenced by Italian *operaismo*—entrism, workerism. The tactic: Infiltrate and inoculate from within. At Fiat in Turin, this exposed the weak point in distribution. In Genoa, a handful of frozen workers' cars paralyzed the city. Accelerationist activism. The question: Where is the weak point in the just-in-time flow?

For decades, I have inoculated synesthesia—an intentional disruption of perception and cognition, resisting MIT's classificatory logic, heir to the Enlightenment. This overlapping synesthesia lets us navigate cracks between biology, biopolitics, digital craft, dirty robotics, ecosophy, nostalgia, and amnesia—sidestepping the trap of masterplanning sadism or Bauhaus totemic ideology.

VF: To understand the limits, potentialities, and role of architecture, we cannot reduce it to professional practice alone. We must acknowledge that architecture is equally informed by its other forms of practice, including curatorial, editorial, pedagogical, activist, performative, and emerging ones. Is interdisciplinarity a given in design? Or is it a cover-up for old approaches?

R-S: In 2012, I edited *Log* 25*,* on resistance and resilience. I invited mathematicians like François Jouve and philosophers like Antonio Negri and Paul Preciado. The issue was not a multidisciplinary showcase but a cluster of principles of resistance—against "good taste" as distinction and academia as status quo. Few architects or artists joined; if repeated, I might exclude the discipline altogether. Now we return to a Beaux Arts "Groundhog Day," where architects dress their UBU thrones in Harvard footnotes. By nature, we expose the contradictions of society, mixing manifestos and countermanifestos, synapses and guts, where disobedience and activism embrace both honey and cyanide.

VF: You both have an interest in how different living and nonliving bodies intertwine. Metamorphosis is a permanent character shaped by multiple factors, not a temporary status. Consider our body's aging process and microbiomes: We are hybrid actors, not following binary logic. Still, we often don't accept such a narrative, but we believe we are firmly determined and unique.

EC: Architecture is an attempt to shape everyday life. Going back to your previous question, Valerio, it must be multidisciplinary and encompass the entire range of purposes and communities, as there is no unique structure that suits everybody. Architecture is the science, practice, and technology of communities. Today, in comparison to the 1960s and 1970s, there is a considerable misunderstanding about the meaning of *multidisciplinarity,* as many scientific fields are often overlooked. As François illustrated through *operaismo,* it makes no sense to refuse a form of knowledge. It's better to subvert it to change its form and application. Every discipline or model can be transformed into something that brings liberation. Architecture has a highly malicious attitude toward knowledge and toward time, because the question of metamorphosis is a question about the relationship between architecture and time.

VF: And about the relationships between living and nonliving bodies.

EC: There is a widespread tendency today to imagine that the most radical form of architectural sustainability is that of ephemeral buildings that are destroyed over time. Yet there is nothing more anti-ecological. Architecture that integrates transformation and metamorphosis is architecture that looks not to tomorrow but to the day after tomorrow. Tomorrow is what can be drawn from today. It is the form that derives from the calculation that identifies the forces that give life to the present. But radical architecture does not look to tomorrow but to what happens after tomorrow, the time that is not yet visible nor a simple logical and material consequence of the present. This is why it is also necessary to get rid of the idea of repair. It is a way of taking the future hostage, preventing the day after tomorrow from arriving and inoculating, grafting something unexpected. And it is a refusal to accept that change is a natural part of life and that organisms change to produce more life. This is exactly the attitude needed to be open to metamorphosis. Architecture should invent new lives for broken objects, not repair them, because things inevitably break, including the planet.

R-S: In a slum, nothing is permanent, nothing lost—a metempsychosis of matter and souls. We are instruments of passage, not of cultural ideology. Nothing is patrimonial; everything is negotiable.

Impermanency haunts my own devices, most now ruins or cankers in a Ruskinian dream—no white cathedral for me. The Japanese car park cracked in a Niigata earthquake; a hurricane tore the *Hybrid Muscle* in Chiang Mai, reshaped with locals in corrugated steel—these are far from patrimonial conservatism, unlike Paris's cathedral hypocrisy.

VF: Your most recent collaboration is *[n]Permanencies Tractatus*, which is on view at the Biennale Architettura in Venice. Is it a critique or a manifesto?

R-S: Neither manifesto nor critique. It just says: Move along, nothing to see. It's a stage—like theater props—where incoherence is allowed, recalling the 19th-century Incoherent Arts of Alphonse Allais. These bioincoherences set a scene for dispute, a polyphony of three voices.

Everything is prepared for transmutation and migration; organic matter is never spoiled. It is erasable and dissolvable in the lagoon. The Impermanence's Tractatus will feed the Venetian catfish and return to the food chain.

EC: This installation was more radical and coherent than the majority of the installations in the Arsenale. One of the problems of this Biennale, which was one of the weakest I have attended, is that in most projects, the architects limited themselves to working with materials. They didn't address that architecture is more than just reflecting on materials and sustainability; instead, they must imagine different forms of life, not only human. The primary purpose of architecture is to host lives and imagine communities.

Read the full conversation online at archpaper.com.

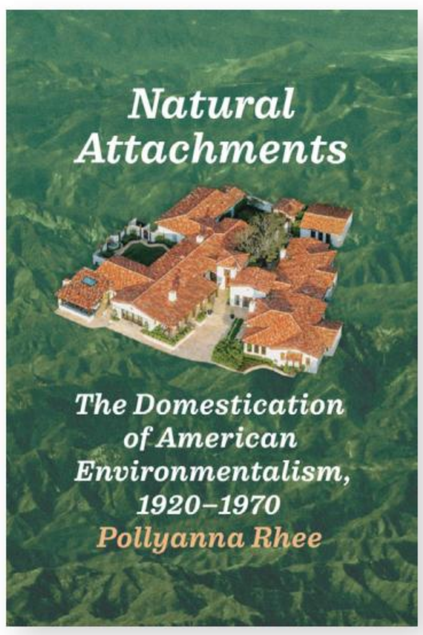
Emanuele Coccia is associate professor at the EHESS in Paris and has written extensively on ecology, architecture, and fashion. His last published book in English is *Philosophy of the Home* (Penguin 2024).

f.Roche_S/he are fugitive French-born doppelgängers/architects whose work explores the intersection of architecture, biology, and philosophy, often questioning the boundaries between the natural and the artificial, developing a pathology a biocyberpunk.

Valerio Franzone is an architect. The director of OCHAP | Office for Cohabitation Processes, his work spans design and research projects, teaching, and creating publications on how architecture tackles the current societal and environmental urgencies.

Natural Attachments: The Domestication of American Environmentalism, 1920–1970

Pollyanna Rhee
The University of Chicago Press
$32



The standard historical narrative of American environmentalism is fairly well established. With precursors in the conservation movement of the early 20th century, the environmental movement really began with postwar concerns that urban sprawl and pollution were coming to outweigh the benefits of economic growth. The year 1969 served as a catalyst, with the Cuyahoga River fire and the Santa Barbara oil spill sparking citizen initiatives like Earth Day and policy changes such as the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970.

The Santa Barbara spill anchors Pollyanna Rhee's new book, *Natural Attachments: The Domestication of American Environmentalism, 1920–1970*. But rather than moving forward from the 1970s, Rhee traces the spill's mobilizing power to the development of the wealthy coastal town of Santa Barbara in the 1920s. She argues that an idyll of "natural" living, which homeowners reinforced through architecture, planning, and historic and landscape preservation, paved the way for the rise of what she calls "ownership environmentalism."

Ownership environmentalists aimed to create "ideal domestic conditions," protecting the houses they owned and the high quality of life in their communities. Since ownership environmentalism was largely motivated by property value, those who did not own a house or who lived elsewhere were given less say over environmental policy decisions. According to Rhee, ownership environmentalism gave the Santa Barbara oil spill a rhetorical power far beyond that of other oil spills, of which there were nearly 100 in the first half of 1969 alone. But at the same time, it leveraged that power in service of economic elites rather than a broader vision of environmentalism as part of social change.

Natural Attachments is split into two parts. The first half begins in the wake of the 1925 Santa Barbara earthquake, which provided an opportunity for local power brokers to remake the city into a homogeneous, Spanish colonial vision that catered to the city's white upper- and middle-class populations. This intervention was the beginning of Santa Barbara as a symbol of the West Coast good life, a reputation Santa Barbarans furthered through advocacy for single-family homeownership and domestication of "exotic" plants. The second part focuses on the postwar era's attempts to preserve this quality of life, first through antigrowth policies and neighborhood associations and eventually through environmental advocacy after the oil spill.

Rhee's book is an ambitious, and largely successful, attempt to bring together environmental history and architectural history through a case study of one California town. It is particularly good in its focus on environmentalism in the second part of the book. There, Rhee shows how Santa Barbarans interpreted the postwar California population boom as a threat to their exclusive domesticated utopia. "Advocating for protections for existing homeowners," she writes, "gave rise to an environmental determinism that. . . justified the belief that the most valued regions of California were already full." In a city where studio apartments currently start at around $1,750 a month, Rhee's discussion of the postwar period is a prescient reminder that Santa Barbara's ongoing housing crisis is part of a longer history of exclusion.

The oil spill gained mainstream attention in large part because of influential Santa Barbara residents like former Ford Foundation president Robert Maynard Hutchins and ecologist-cum-racist-demagogue Garrett Hardin. Santa Barbara's renown for beauty paved the way for national outrage: "If it happened in Santa Barbara, then presumably very few places could assume protection," as Rhee puts it. Despite the frequent effectiveness of ownership environmentalism, Rhee writes, it "made no demands for radical changes in society" and in fact stood in "marked contrast" to the social conflicts of the 1960s. Rhee makes clear that Santa Barbarans' fury over the oil spill shaped environmental policy, while also showing how they failed to consider their own car-bound lives—Southern California led the world in gasoline consumption—as contributing to the oil slick covering their beloved beaches. This fundamental contradiction of ownership environmentalism dates back to the construction of oil wells in the city in the 1920s, as historian Michael R. Adamson recently wrote: "Even those who protested drilling in their backyards. . . supported regional automobility sustained by petroleum extraction in someone else's backyard." In concrete terms, this meant opposition to wells in the Mesa neighborhood, but support for extraction in Elwood, a few miles west of town.

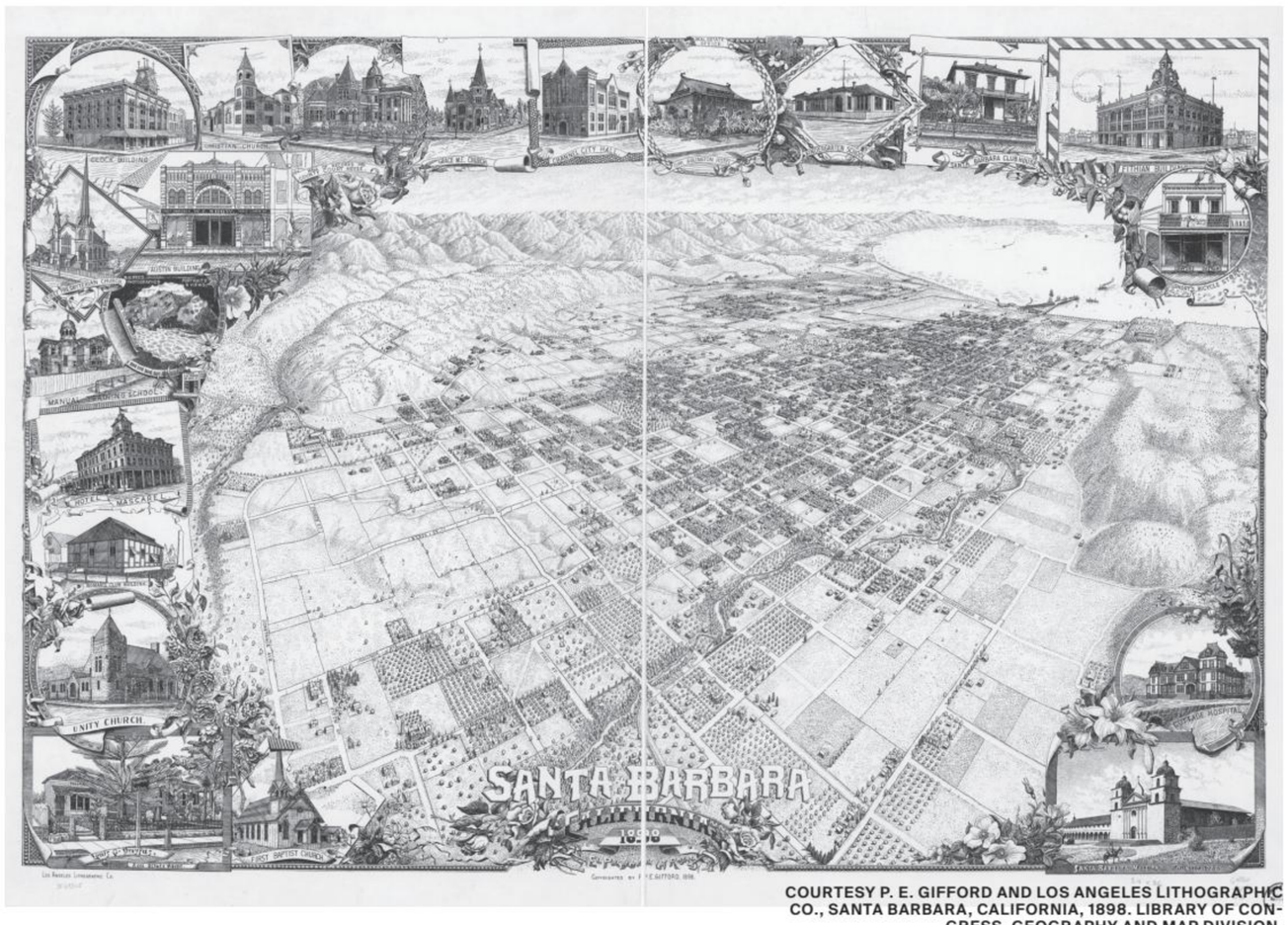
Natural Attachments is not without flaws. Although Rhee's narrative centers urban development, there is a notable lack of analysis of the actual construction and design of Santa Barbara, and the intellectual currents Rhee traces can remain frustratingly disembodied. For instance, the first chapter, which focuses on boosters' framing of design as a way to align with the natural environment, tells us little about the construction that followed the 1925 quake. This lack is particularly noticeable where Rhee emphasizes the exclusionary and often downright racist attitudes of the Santa Barbara elite. Did such attitudes translate neatly onto the built environment, or were they contested by marginalized groups? Albert Camarillo has noted that by the 1920s, Mexican and Chicano workers filled most manual labor jobs in Santa Barbara's construction industry—from Angulo Tile Works, which provided an essential material for the Spanish colonial fantasy, to brick- and lumberyards, street crews, and construction sites, as well as gardening crews. Such workers may have left fewer records than the figures Rhee focuses on, but they were no less essential to creating and maintaining Santa Barbara's domestic idylls.

The book's focus on ideas will also leave readers who have not been to Santa Barbara without a clear sense of what the place actually looks like. *Natural Attachments* comes in at just 160 pages of text, with a handful of black-and-white images and maps. A push for brevity may have led to the excision of important spatial analysis and additional images that would bolster and perhaps further nuance Rhee's narrative. In the end, *Natural Attachments* is more environmental history than architectural history.

Rhee concludes that "weaponizing nature to protect the quality of life for the few shows how environmentalism can be complicit with maintaining or even exacerbating social and spatial inequalities." She argues that we need to own up to the exclusionary history of ownership environmentalism to move beyond it. Rhee's thesis takes on new context in our current political landscape, as the second Trump administration guts environmental protections. Is Rhee's criticism of the environmental movement pointless or even divisive at a time when the Right is systemically dismantling environmental policies?

I think not. In 2013, Elon Musk got into an argument with Larry Page, Google cofounder and venture capitalist. Page mocked Musk for rejecting Page's faith in an "artificial general intelligence," a sort of digital supreme being that would oversee the future once humanity was destroyed by global warming. Literary critic Matt Seybold points out that Page had already given up on the future of humanity at a time when he was "arguably the foremost poster boy for market-based solutions to climate change. . .renewables, recyclables, clean-burning fuels, carbon capture and carbon credits, airships, asteroid mining." The last decade has shown how easily a veneer of ownership environmentalism can yield to nihilistic neoliberal antihumanism, often enriched by science-fiction fantasies of *Matrix* or *Dune* varieties. Although Rhee's book ends in 1970, her research provides insights that are every bit as valuable for diagnosing today's socioenvironmental condition as they are for understanding its past.

Alexander Luckmann is a PhD student in architectural history at UC Santa Barbara. He writes about the built environment.

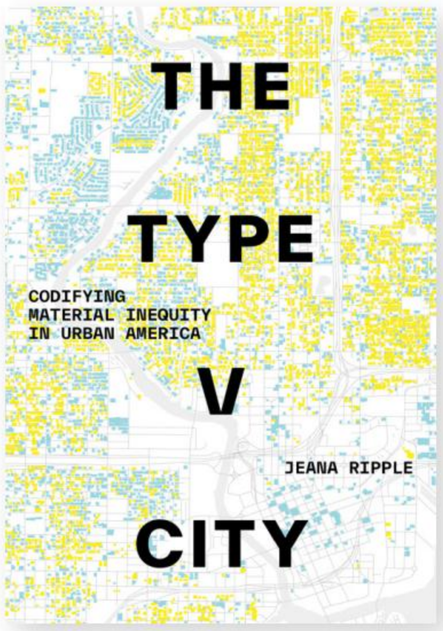


COURTESY P. E. GIFFORD AND LOS ANGELES LITHOGRAPHIC CO., SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, 1898. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, GEOGRAPHY AND MAP DIVISION.

Bird's-eye-view map of Santa Barbara framed by the city's notable buildings.

The Type V City

Jeana Ripple
University of Texas Press
$45



In the aftermath of the Great Fire of 1871, Chicago faced a fateful decision on how to rebuild. City fathers and business elites supported a citywide fireproof construction mandate. On the other side, the city's working class wanted to preserve its ability to build cheap wooden homes in peripheral neighborhoods.

In the end, Chicago adopted a compromise that set "fire limits" in and around downtown, establishing areas where fireproof building materials would be required. Wood construction would be permitted in outlying areas.

In the decades following the Great Fire, downtown Chicago would become a center of architectural innovation, serving as the launchpad for the skyscraper. The city's suburban-style residential neighborhoods would become engines of upward mobility for millions until the late 20th century, when whole blocks of wooden houses were so physically and economically distressed that they would be razed to the ground.

Did building codes play a role in this historical arc?

That's one of the central questions animating *The Type V City* by Jeana Ripple, a professor of architecture at the University of Virginia. Ripple examines how the spread of wood-frame "Type V" buildings shaped the economies, social relations, and well-being of five American cities: Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Tampa, and Seattle.

Chicago's 19th century codes set the precedent for the major building materials categories, ranging from Type I, totally fireproof concrete or steel to Type V, light timber and other combustible materials. In today's International Building Code, Type V is clearly dominant: 92 percent of new single-family homes and 85 percent of new multifamily homes in the United States use these materials. While American building codes have largely done the job they were intended for, with their narrow focus on fire risk, Ripple shows how they have failed in other regards.

Type V City arrives at a moment when building codes are receiving greater scrutiny in policy circles. Archaic regulations are being reevaluated in the midst of a crushing housing crisis and a popular revolt against the aesthetics of contemporary apartment design. Ripple's case studies provide insight into the myriad ways building codes affect the form and function of cities.

The competition between two priorities—affordability and durability—is a major theme throughout the book. Ripple's vividly rendered spatial analysis shows that Type V neighborhoods in Chicago were historically both more likely to be redlined and to see abandonment and demolition than neighborhoods of brick buildings. That could be a product of the higher maintenance costs and quicker rate of deterioration of wood structures as compared with masonry.

Ripple acknowledges that there were many other socioeconomic forces that contributed to these spatial and racial disparities beyond building materials. There are, after all, plenty of well-maintained, well-functioning wooden houses across Chicagoland and beyond. But in other cases, the consequences of building material choices are even more clear.

In her New York case study, Ripple tackles how building codes have perpetuated disparities in environmental health. The city's 1916 zoning code mandated masonry throughout most of the metropolis, but allowed wood construction in its "suburban limits," the as-yet-unbuilt areas stretching along the coastal plains of southern Brooklyn, eastern Queens, and Staten Island. The consequences of this decision were stark when Hurricane Sandy roared through. Ripple reports that a full 99 percent of "red-tagged" buildings, those deemed unfit for habitation, were Type V structures. In some of the buildings left standing, residents began complaining of "Sandy Cough" or "Rockaway Cough," as the molding wood of their houses sickened them.

Ripple also delves into how labor unions have leveraged building codes throughout urban history. Unlike Chicago and New York, Philadelphia historically required brick or stone construction throughout virtually the entirety of the city. However, the impetus here was not fire risk. Brick mason unions fought for these rules to be codified in order to preserve high-skilled, high-wage jobs on masonry construction sites. At the same time, they also limited access to those jobs from the city's communities of color. In Philadelphia, the brick masons were, and still are, as Ripple shows, a white man's club. The city's building codes were therefore directly connected to the perpetuation of employment segregation and racial inequality.

In other cities, building code enforcement became an instrument for displacing Black communities from centrally located neighborhoods during urban renewal. Ripple recounts how in Tampa, the many wooden houses in the Central Avenue neighborhood were used as a pretext for mass demolitions. Black neighborhoods in Tulsa and Charlottesville were razed under similar auspices.

Among Ripple's case studies, one city stands out for its commitment to wood construction. In its early pioneer days, Seattle, the nation's timber capital, stuck with wood construction even in the wake of devastating fires. In more recent decades, it has also been a Type V construction innovator.

It was there, in the 1980s, that chief building officer William Justen recognized that state codes would allow multistory Type V buildings to rise above one- or two-story Type I concrete podiums. Thus, the infamous 5-over-1 was born. In 2015, the International Building Code adopted up to five stories of Type V construction above a single story of Type I, enshrining the 5-over-1 as the default apartment typology of our time.

Ripple is concerned about the longevity of 5-over-1s, which now make up a large majority of new apartment buildings, given wood's propensity to expand and contract. She also decries their lack of adaptability to new layouts and uses, due to their large number of immovable structural columns.

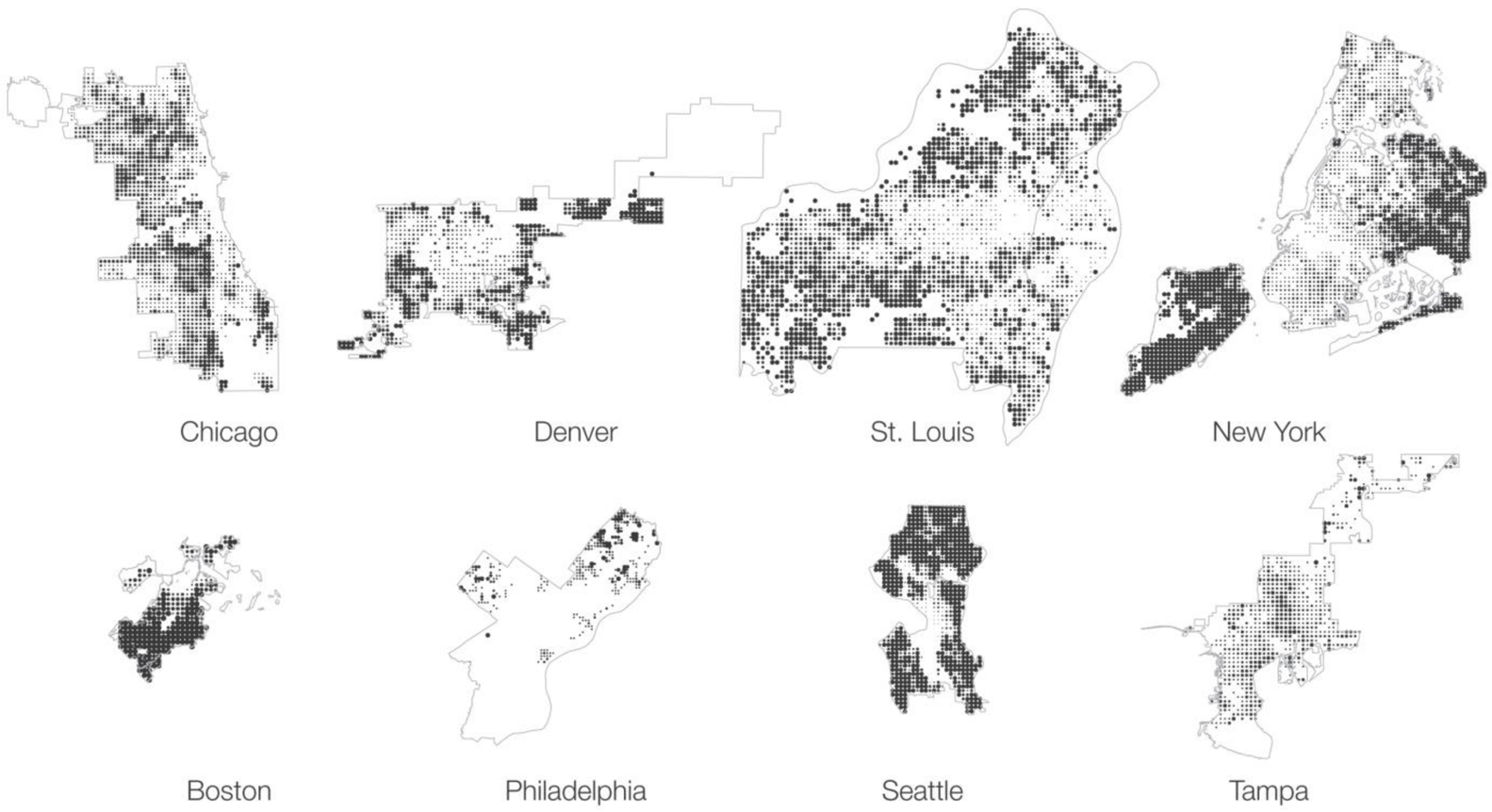
Yet Ripple has little to say on the most common criticisms levied at 5-over-1s: that they're aesthetically uninspired and perpetrators of gentrification. She likewise glosses over promising improvements on the horizon for the apartment typology *du jour,* even though it would fit quite nicely in the Seattle chapter.

Only briefly does Ripple mention mass timber, also known as Type IV construction. In 2018, Washington became the first U.S. state to legalize tall mass timber buildings, kicking off a trend that has spread nationwide. This engineered wood technology could offer many of the same efficiencies as Type V construction, with better longevity and fire resistance.

Ripple also neglects the "single-stair" movement, advocating for the legalization of European-style apartment designs in U.S. building codes. Many of the complaints levied at 5-over-1s—including their bulk, monotony, preponderance of studios and one-bedroom units, and lack of natural light—are connected to the dual-stair requirement in U.S. building codes. A single-stair design, by contrast, allows for more exterior faces and multibedroom units, more dynamic architectural possibilities, and less wasted corridor space.

Single-stair buildings have been legal in Seattle under limited circumstances since the 1970s, and in 2023, legislators passed a law that will permit a greater variety of single-stair buildings statewide beginning as soon as next year. Other states are following suit as more research comes out showing this design is safe.

Perhaps not since Chicago's Great Fire have building codes been so contested, yet Ripple is surprisingly silent on some of the most salient building code debates of the present day. Nonetheless, her book provides valuable historical context for the origins and impacts of these codes, including lessons that will be of value to today's building code reformers.



COURTESY JEANA RIPPLE

A visualization of Type V American cities. Darker shades indicate higher concentrations of wood-frame construction.

Benjamin Schneider is a freelance journalist covering all things urbanism. He is the author of *The Unfinished Metropolis: Igniting the City-Building Revolution*.

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