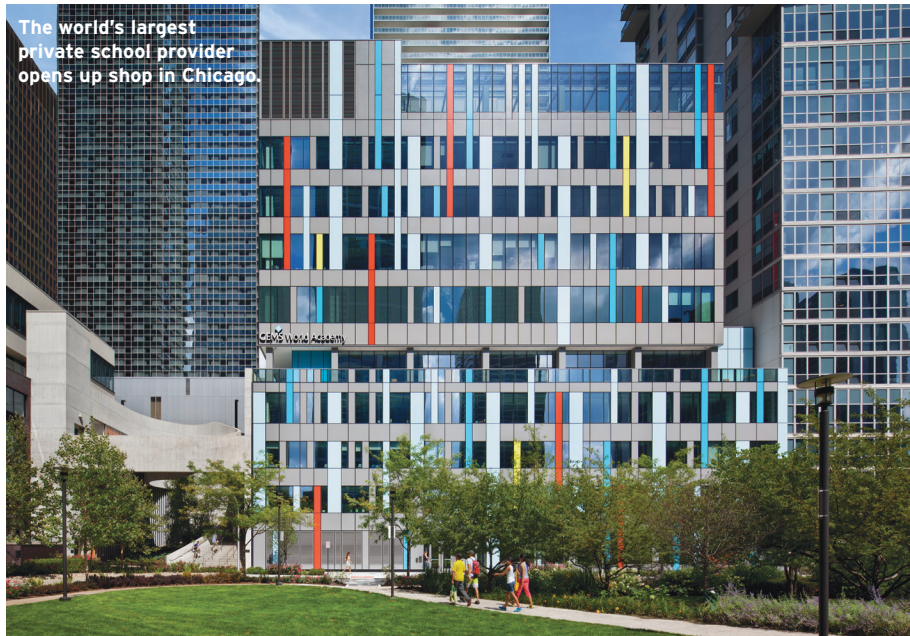


THE MIDWEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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\$3.95



The world's largest private school provider opens up shop in Chicago.

BKL ARCHITECTURE LLC AND DARRIS LEE HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

DESIGN TO FRONT OF CLASS IN CHICAGO'S INTERNATIONAL GEMS SCHOOL JEWEL OF LEARNING

Two years after its playful, primary color facade debuted on *AN*'s pages, the first phase of GEMS World Academy Chicago is bustling with students mid-way through their first academic year in the new building, the first U.S. outpost of a Dubai-based company that has become the largest private school provider in the world. Right

now K-8 students walk the light-filled halls at 350 East South Water Street, but the building is intended for K-4. According to the project's developers, a larger second phase of construction next door will welcome grades 5-12 starting in 2016. When both phases are complete the student body will be roughly 2,000 kids, said Peter Brown, the school's director

of operations. At \$28,800-to-\$36,000 per year, tuition at GEMS surpasses even that of Francis W. Parker, The Latin School of Chicago, and the University of Chicago Lab School, some of the city's most elite private schools. All new teachers must have at least seven years of experience, said Brown. Even **continued on page 4**



The Victorian theater is a symbol of Over-the-Rhine's rebound.

HAGLUND/PLICKER

TAX CREDIT INFUSION BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO CINCINNATI'S REVERED MUSIC HALL OVER HALL

The Cincinnati Music Hall will undergo a long-anticipated \$123.5 million renovation project largely due to a \$25 million Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit granted in December. The National Trust for Historic Preservation placed the building on a list of its 11 most endangered historic places only a few months prior to **continued on page 5**



Another makeover for St. Paul's Lowertown Historic District.

COURTESY SHERMAN ASSOCIATES

FORMER ST. PAUL HAIRSPRAY WAREHOUSE NOW LOFT HOUSING GETTING A NEW DO

The Lowertown Historic District in downtown St. Paul has been undergoing a new wave of redevelopment lately. This summer, the restored Union Depot re-opened as a multi-modal transit hub, including a new light rail line connecting St. Paul to **continued on page 3**

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Chicago's newest CTA "L" stop—Cermak-McCormick Place—arrives soon.

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

CHICAGO READIES NEW TRANSIT STOP NEAR MCCORMICK PLACE

Ross Barney Express

Carol Ross Barney has been designing train stations in Chicago for over 20 years. Recognition of her work, however, has often been limited to her buildings and efforts to involve more **continued on page 8**

ENFANTS TERRIBLES SEE PAGE 15



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SKYSCRAPING AND STAYING DOWN-TO-EARTH

After years of chilly development prospects, downtowns across the Midwest are sizing up a skyscraper boom of sorts.

Local developers are playing high-stakes Jenga in downtown Cleveland, proposing to stack horizontal forms between high-rises that reach 54 stories at their tallest point. NBBJ's design for nuCLEus, as it's called, is bold. If approved by the city and realized according to plans, it would be the city's fourth tallest building, and certainly among the skyline's most eye-catching.

In Minneapolis, a call for proposals to redevelop downtown's defunct Nicollet Hotel block received several submissions, including one for a new tower that would be substantially taller than Philip Johnson's IDS Tower, the tallest building in the state. Duval Development tapped Perkins+Will to outline plans for a skyscraper 80 stories high, stirring debate about the Twin Cities' urban character and the local real estate market. That buzz was ultimately for naught, however, as city planners rejected the plan one month later.

Shortly before Christmas Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel presided over a press conference confirming plans first made public five months earlier for a new supertall building in the Lakeshore East neighborhood—a proposal financed by Beijing-based Dalian Wanda Group. The 1,150-foot-tall, 88-story structure would be the first skyscraper over 300 meters since Trump Tower was completed in 2009; other than that, the city practically synonymous with tall building design and engineering hasn't reached such heights in 25 years.

So what should midwesterners make of all this? While the interest in tall towers speak to development trends—real estate markets seem confident the Rust Belt rebound is here to stay, and it's becoming a safer bet for large projects—they belie a larger question about design and urbanism in the region.

In the belt-tightening of various economic cycles over recent decades, cities in the Midwest and beyond have done best by returning to basic principles. In the years since the recession, we've seen good design even on meager budgets, and it often focuses on human-scale connections, inspired landscape design, street life—urban vibrancy in the least wonky sense. Think of the rise of landscape architecture as a discipline, the celebration of tactical urbanism and other grassroots initiatives, the general demographic shift back toward inner cities.

Minneapolis' public process ended with doubt about their would-be skyscraper's grasp of the local real estate market, even if the public (and at least one city councilman) seemed eager to set a new state record. That council member, Jacob Frey, said he hopes Duval Development takes up the plan elsewhere in the city. In December Alex Duval told AN, "No other site in Minneapolis satisfies the criteria that would sustain" such a building—we'll see if he reconsiders. At any rate the City of Minneapolis has decided the tower was out of scale with its plans for remaking downtown.

The other two projects (and perhaps more coming soon) are still up for debate. I hope this round of skyscrapers builds on ground-level progress throughout the Midwest. Tall buildings, after all, afford more open space for their density—both nuCLEus and Wanda's supertall allude to open space and urban context in their initial plans, but details are scant at this point. Cleveland and Chicago planners (and grassroots groups, if the city won't take up the charge) need to demand greenery, human-scale considerations, and other contributions to public space.

Without overplaying the importance of any given project, how our new skyscrapers embrace the city at a human scale will answer a critical question for midwest downtowns on the rebound: Are today's tall buildings a return to poor form, presaging a homogeneity of skylines with mere monuments to wealth? Or can we go tall again without losing that accessibility, modesty, and uncomplicated elegance that has always made the region a bastion for good design? **CHRIS BENTLEY**

GETTING A NEW DO continued from front

page Minneapolis. One block away, a new stadium for the St. Paul Saints baseball club (designed by Snow Kreilich Architects) is under construction next to the St. Paul Farmers Market. In addition, numerous restaurants, art galleries, and coffee and retail shops are cropping up in Lowertown.

"What a great time to rehabilitate a historic warehouse into a modern apartment building," said Amy H. Spong, Historic Preservation Specialist for Planning and Economic Development, City of St. Paul. She is referring to the Rayette Building, now Rayette Lofts, across the street from the Farmers Market.

In the early 1900s, the seven-story, 145,600-square-foot structure was a wholesale millinery business, then a laboratory for women's hair products—specifically, the Rayette Wave. By 1971, Rayette Laboratories, which also developed the hairspray Aqua Net and grew to acquire Faberge's cosmetics division, had vacated the building. Most recently, the concrete structure was used as a parking garage.

The recently opened Rayette Lofts contains 88 market-rate apartments, an exercise room with a yoga studio, and a community gathering space with pool tables, a large flat-screen television and a kitchen. A roof deck with grilling station overlooks the Farmers Market, new stadium, and Mississippi River.

The developer used federal and state historic tax credits for the adaptive reuse, so Kaas Wilson Architects of Bloomington, Minnesota, worked with the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service to ensure modifications were done in a historically appropriate manner. Because the Rayette building sits within an established landmarked district, the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission reviewed and approved changes to the exterior.

Kaas Wilson had the building's limestone exterior cleaned and reinforced. Inside the development, a ramp that wound from the first to the top floors was removed, and the cavernous opening filled with elevator shafts, egress stairs, and vertical ductwork for new mechanicals. The original windows had either been removed or badly damaged. So the architects studied historic photos, and sought out "whatever we could salvage to recreate the historic window openings and arrangements, and mullion patterns," said Ryan DuPuis, project designer, Kaas Wilson.

Since Lowertown is on a hill that slopes down to the Mississippi River, and the former warehouse sits on top of a raised basement, finding an opening for ADA accessibility was a challenge. The firm used a former window that had been enlarged into a garage door during an earlier alteration for a new accessible entrance with elevator.

Inside, the units have floor-to-ceiling windows with great views of Lowertown, polished gypsum concrete floors, and corrugated concrete ceilings and brick walls original to the building. The structure's columns were also left exposed.

"We didn't have much time left to rescue the building," said Spong. Open to the elements, the concrete structure was quickly deteriorating. "But we got to it just in time," added DuPuis. "We could have lost that corner of history in Lowertown. By protecting and converting the structure to a new use as Rayette Lofts, we've reinforced the street for another 100 years." **CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PUSHES ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION WITH DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EXTRACURRICULAR

Missy Ablin, a fellow at Detroit's Michigan Mellon ArcPrep, was recently showing some architectural drawings to her class. As part of a new program to diversify the discipline and improve arts programming in Detroit Public Schools, some of her students were seeing architectural renderings for the first time. "You can make money from that?" one student asked.

The University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning rolled out the first semester of its college

prep program for Detroit Public Schools students, offering 48 students from four schools pro bono architectural education, three hours per day, five days a week. Classes are taken for high school credit, but resemble intro college courses. The school hopes to add another eight students and three schools in the future.

"What's exciting about this program for us is that we're able to introduce architecture to Detroit, and to students in Detroit who already have that creative influence flowing," said the university's associate dean, Milton Curry.

The "Architecture Prep" program is in addition to an after-school initiative started in 2008 that Curry said has been successful. Beyond the instruction, students get a glimpse of career options and architecture outside

the studio.

Curry said the program's larger goal is to chip away at architecture's diversity problem. The city of Detroit is more than 80 percent African-American, according to U.S. Census data.

"We don't have the perspective of a broad cross-section of students in school, or in the profession—economically, socially, ethnically, racially—it hampers the intellectual advancement of the discipline as a whole," said Curry.

With funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, University of Michigan has committed to four years of the program, but Curry said he hopes to expand it further. **CB**

OPEN > RESTAURANT



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Designer: Studio K

Out with the old lounge, in with the new. Six months after Lumen closed its doors for good at 839 West Fulton Street, Footman Hospitality is debuting another late-night hangout for the Fulton Market crowd. The Betty harkens back to Chicago taverns of old, swapping Lumen's swank club vibe for dark wood, stacks of vinyl records, and leather lounge chairs.

Chicago-based Studio K, who also designed Perennial Virant and Girl & the Goat, filled out the 5,000-square-foot space with vintage and reclaimed elements as well as new furnishings. Scavenged antiques and vintage knickknacks occupy the shelves, including records hand-selected by the Footman Hospitality team, which plans to only play music on vinyl.

"We want to attract an eclectic group of people," said Chris Haisma, Footman Hospitality partner, in a statement. A menu focusing on small plates and a variety of spaces to accommodate groups of different size lend the restaurant and bar a flexibility of use. Upholstered bar stools and small wooden tables are more intimate arenas, while a red leather couch stretches the width of the space at one end of the room.

A fake peacock behind the bar and upright piano beside the argyle-patterned dance floor are kitschier features of yesteryear, spiking some levity into the cozy nostalgia carefully crafted throughout. **CB**



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EAVESDROP > THE EDITORS

MINNESOTA ENGINEER SPEAKS TRUTH TO POWER

"Can you be an engineer and speak out for reform?" That's the question one civil engineer and blogger posed on his website, *strongtowns.org*, after a former American Society of Civil Engineers fellow filed a complaint with his state licensing board. According to the blogger, **Charles Marohn**, it was retaliation for a post critiquing Minnesota's plan to spend much of its transportation budget on new construction instead of maintenance. The impulse to build more and more was indicative of a much larger problem in the profession, and in U.S. urban planning. "[Our system is] one big Ponzi scheme attempting to prop up a rolling development extravaganza of strip malls, big box stores, fast food, and cheap residential housing," wrote Marohn.

Eaves certainly doesn't want to incur the wrath of the Minnesota Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience & Interior Design (whew!), but bravo to Marohn for spilling some digital ink on the subject of smart growth that restores some meaning to the word "smart."

SEND ROAD DIET PLANS AND URBAN PLANNING SCAMS TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM



BKL ARCHITECTURE LLC AND DARRIS LEE HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

JEWEL OF LEARNING

continued from front page
assistant teachers, assigned full-time to younger grades and part-time for classes of higher levels, must have at least three years. Drawing on GEMS international community—which includes schools in the United Arab Emirates, Kenya, and Egypt—roughly one third of teachers at Chicago's GEMS have more than four years of experience teaching abroad. Students regularly conference with counterparts around the globe via touch-screen video displays mounted in every classroom.

In addition to the video displays and iMacs, Brown said the school emphasizes tactile learning and face-to-face interaction. Classrooms feel more like living rooms,

with adjustable furniture typically clustered for group learning exercises rather than blackboard lectures. A team at bKL Architecture oriented all of the classrooms toward the south, facing Lakeshore East Park and views of Lake Michigan. The six 720-square-foot classrooms per floor enjoy abundant natural light and class sizes of less than 18 students.

The red, yellow, and blue on the building's facade reappear on dinnerware in the cafeteria, whose tables are all dry erase boards for lunchtime learning and games. Variable-color LEDs overhead and modular serving tables lend versatility to the space, which includes a terrace for al fresco dining. Elsewhere splashes of color

Above: The school's library, which uses acoustic panels to divide an open plan. Below: A rooftop playground offers views of Lake Michigan and skyscrapers like Studio Gang Architects' Aqua.

enliven a palette of clean white surfaces and warm oak.

"Color adds vibrancy. It adds life. It seemed appropriate," said bKL principal Tom Kerwin. In the library, children play, read, or talk beneath three bowed collections of honeycomb acoustical panels that help delineate separate areas within an open plane, framed by white oak, lime green, and orange walls. That character extends throughout the classrooms, where students have hung pencil drawings depicting the dust bowl, raised baby trout from eggs in a science room aquarium, or asked via the whiteboard "What does an architect do?"

If GEMS' Chicago expansion stays on schedule for 2016, it may find itself with another deep-pocketed neighbor from overseas. Chinese developer Dalian Wanda Group plans to erect a \$900 million, 1,150-foot-tall skyscraper on the site to the east, set to open in 2018 if the city approves the project.

CB





JASON PEARCE/FICKR

OVER HALL continued from front page the tax-grant award.

"The River City's epicenter for the arts will gain even more civic importance once refurbished," said Anastasia Mileham, vice president of marketing and communications for 3CDC, the non-profit development organization leading the renovation efforts. Hannaford & Proctor designed the music hall during the Victorian era—along with some 300 other buildings throughout Cincinnati.

"Construction was completed in 12 months, just in time for the Cincinnati Music Festival in May of 1878," said Mileham. The businessman Reuben Springer asked the City of Cincinnati to match funds equal to his \$125,000 donation, making this the first building in recorded U.S. history to have been built by a matching funds campaign.

The architecture itself also bears historic significance. At a time when civic architecture was integral in society, Hannaford mastered the art of smooth-flowing circulation patterns and created the right mixture of awe and human-scale design with interiors beautiful enough to stage real-life theatrical scenes of 19th century socialization.

Placed on the National Historic Landmark list in 1975, Music Hall was built in the High Victorian/Venetian Gothic architectural style, and stretches 303 feet along Elm Street across from the newly restored, historic Washington Park in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood near downtown. The 225,000-square-foot, red brick building houses a vast performance space, Springer Hall, that holds over 3,000 patrons with world-class acoustics, and other ancillary spaces for smaller performances, meetings, lectures, rehearsals, as well as backstage construction

Top: The 1878 theater, whose restoration received a long-awaited infusion of tax credit funding this year. Below: Music Hall sits on Washington Park, in the rapidly transforming neighborhood of Over-the-Rhine.

areas and a grand ballroom. The building was prominently placed in front of a large boulevard that connects it to Union Station, another one of Cincinnati's iconic historic buildings. Linking the exposition center to the train station was a strategic cultural and urban design move at the time.

"We have been trying hard to renovate Music Hall for years," said Mileham. While a complete list of the renovation details and the architect of record have not yet been finalized, it is expected that a local firm will take on the project. Renovation work includes upgrades to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. There will also be improvements made to backstage technologies and seating throughout, in addition to repair work to the roof and brick walls, and an overall refurbishment of finish materials. After 150 years, the Society for the Preservation of Music Hall has gained momentum with the significant state tax credit. When the renovations are complete, the Cincinnati Ballet will join the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Opera, May Festival Chorus, and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra at the revamped Hall.

Mileham said the renovation will have a positive social impact on the city. The project has long been a symbolic centerpiece for the revival of the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, which has undergone a dramatic transformation in the last 12 years since 3CDC began its work there.

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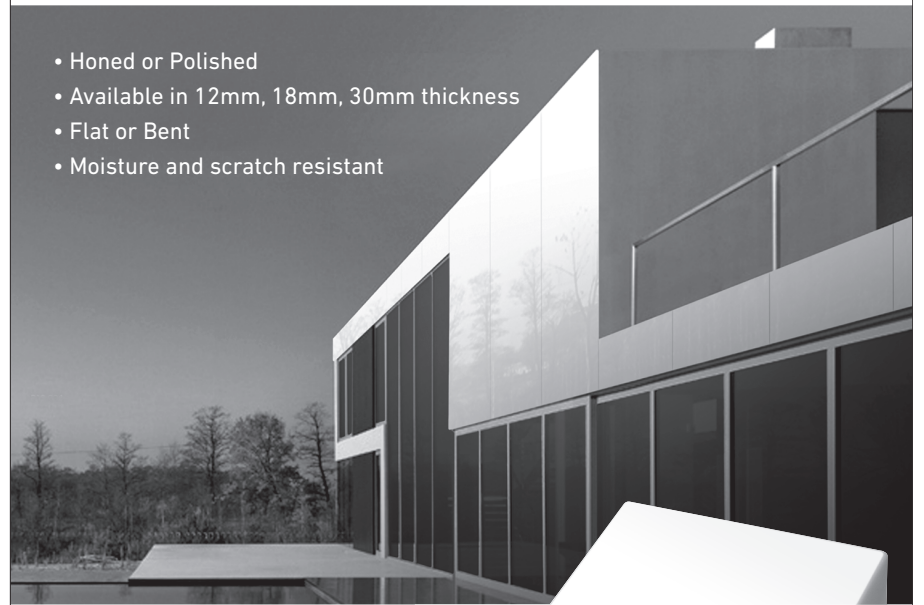
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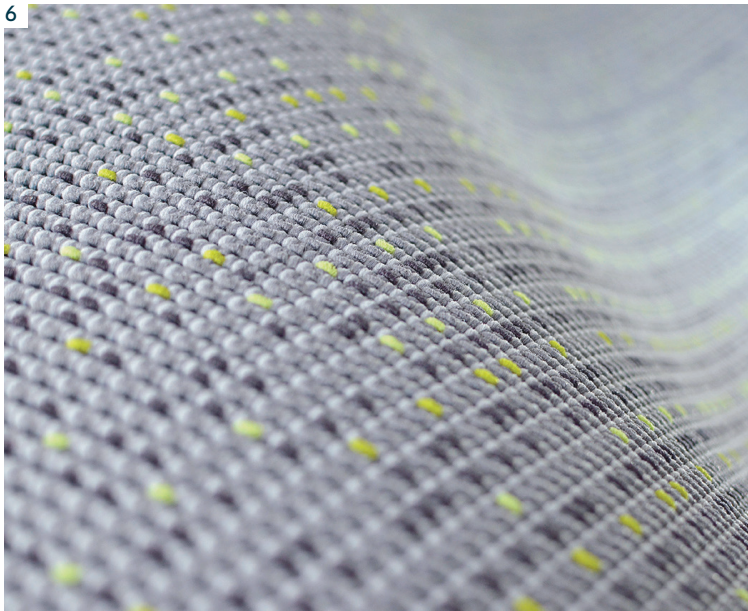
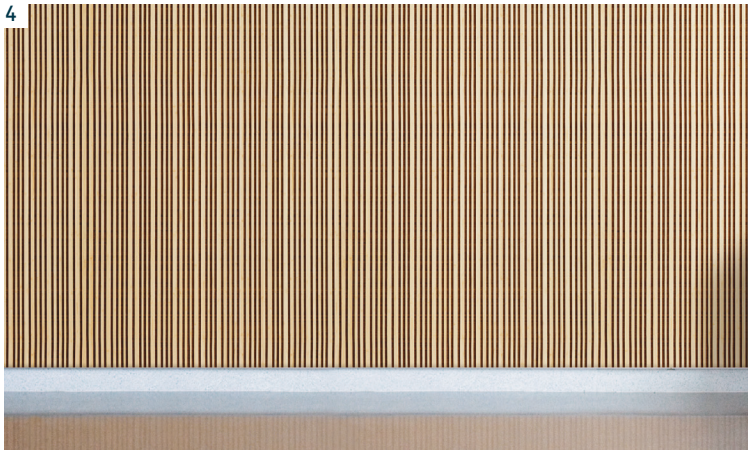
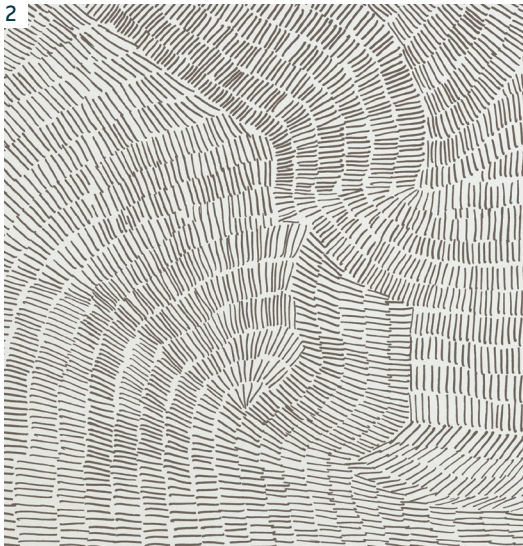
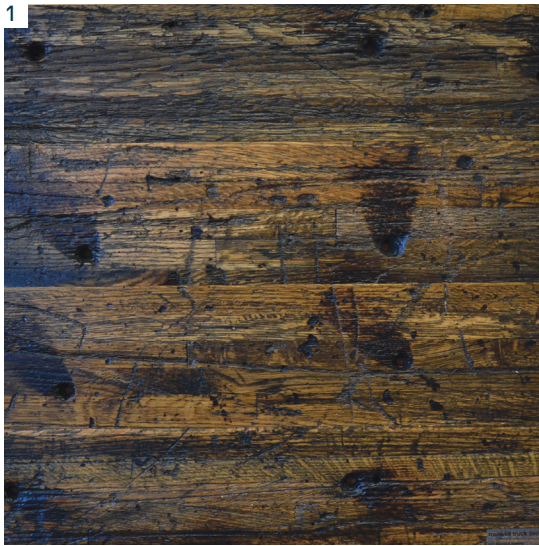


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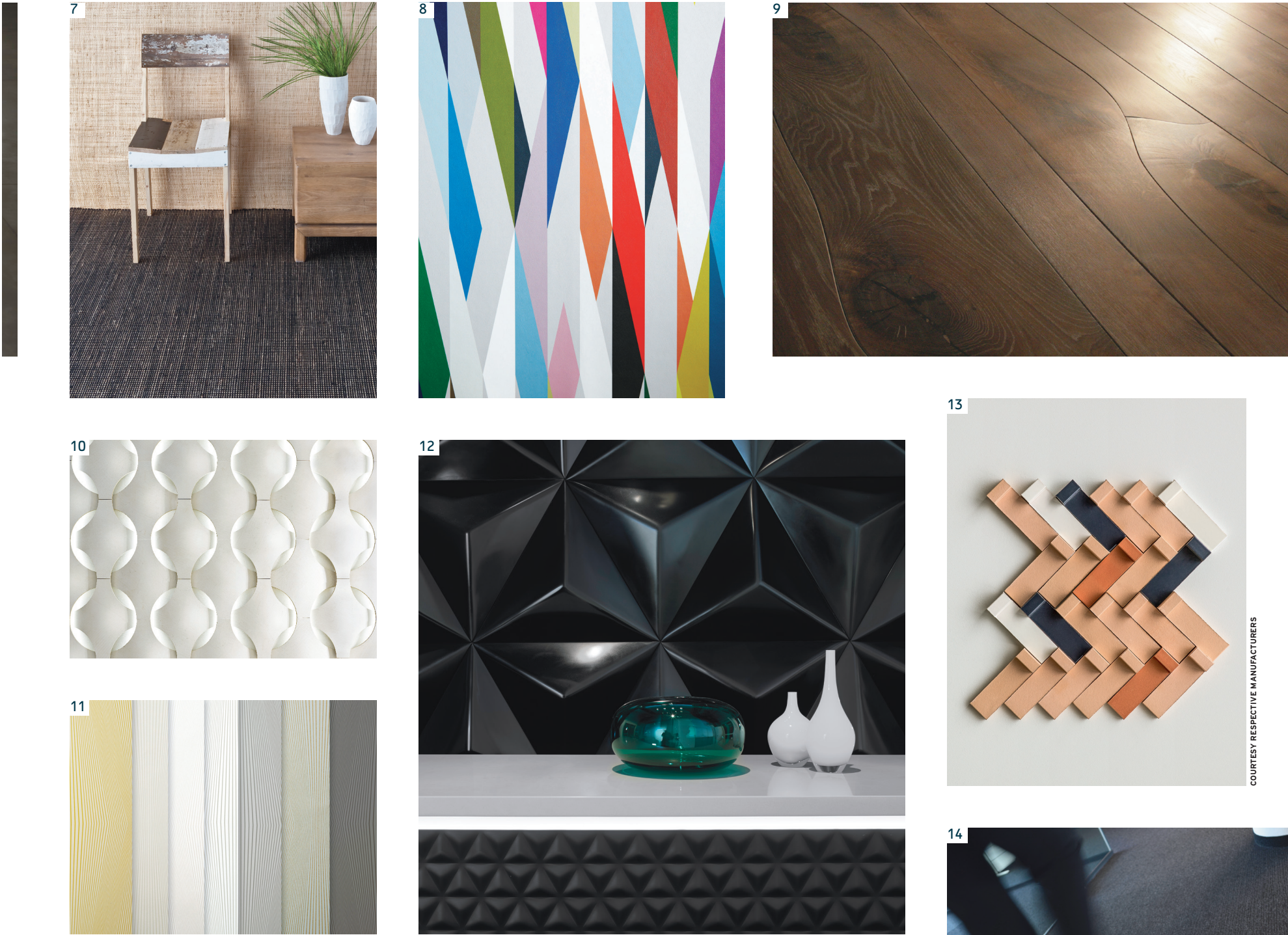
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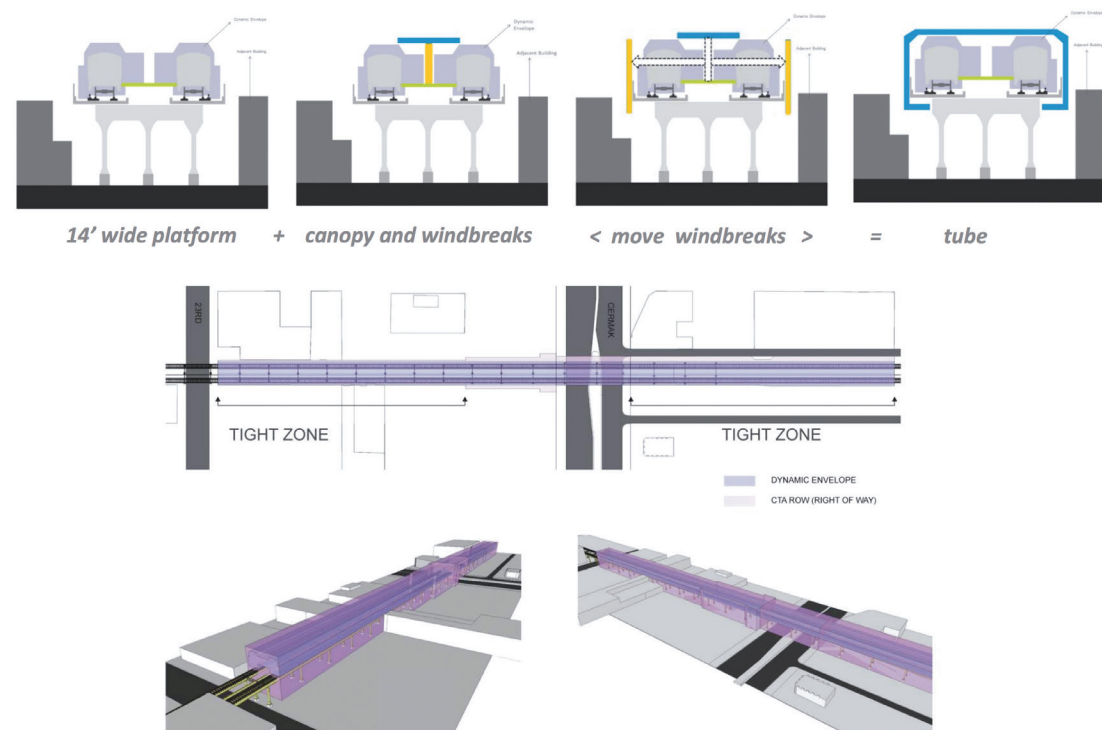


VISUAL GRACE NOTES TO ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITIONS, SURFACE MATERIALS CAN BRING TACTILITY, COLOR, AND PATTERN INTO A SPACE. FROM FLOOR TO CEILING, HERE'S OUR PICK OF THE PALETTE. BY LESLIE CLAGETT

8 HENRIK LARGE DESIGNTEX	9 WALDILLA	10 STAR LAND PORCELANICO	11 TALL WOLF-GORDON	12 DEEP NOCTURNE DUPONT CORIAN	13 TIERRAS ARTISANAL MUTINA	14 LUMINOUS CARPETS PHILIPS AND DESSO
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 18, 2015

Plans for the new CTA stop at Cermak-McCormick Place.



ROSS BARNEY EXPRESS continued from front page women in architecture. The past few years, though, have been more generous. When the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) opened its new Morgan station in 2012, *Chicago Tribune* critic Blair Kamin called it “a jewel in the West Loop’s crown.”

Ross Barney Architects designed the CTA’s first new train station in nearly 20 years, built to serve the rapidly growing West Loop neighborhood. Six years prior to this, she worked as a subcontractor for Parsons Transportation, helping rebuild the Belmont and Fullerton stations for the Brown

Line renovation. In February, the firm wrapped up work on yet another new Green Line station, this time at Cermak Road, near the McCormick Convention Center. It has a radical tube enclosure, making it the CTA’s only fully enclosed outdoor ‘L’ station. But Barney said she didn’t set out to design a tube

at Cermak.

The station has physical limitations stemming from a previous station’s three-track layout, in use from 1892 to 1977. To reduce infrastructure needs, the design uses the former center track’s space for a platform. The agency normally requires a 22-foot-wide center platform, but only 14 feet were available. “The dynamic envelope of the train is such that you can’t put any permanent construction [near the platform edge], so in this case there wasn’t even room for a bench,” said Barney. Weather protection and a wind barrier were necessities, but they kept columns and signage outside the track area.

“We connected the canopy and wind breaks on the side and we had a tube,” said Barney. The CTA is creating additional passenger amenity space by staggering where trains stop along the platform.

Barney’s firm has a diverse portfolio—including university buildings and the Chicago Riverwalk extension. But Barney explained that transit is the “lifeblood” of cities. “More cities are building trains now,” she said, “because they want what makes a viable, healthy city.”

In 1984, three years after Barney started her firm, Illinois required that five percent of all public contract work, including train stations, go to

women-owned firms. (That portion can be higher, depending on the municipality and project.)

Before, she received work from a project subcontracted to her firm in discrete parts. Whenever it needed more than five to 10 percent design, however, the contractor’s own architects took over.

“It would be dishonest to deny that my firm benefited from sheltered marked programs,” said Barney. But the limitation imposed by lead companies had made it hard to work on transit projects.

One of three women in her graduating class of 1971 at the University of Illinois, Barney has worked to include more women in architecture, and to support their work, for three decades. She co-founded Chicago Women in Architecture and served as its first president. Women make up half her staff.

The responsive tube design, along with the Morgan station’s soaring glass towers—calling out to people blocks away—signal that Barney is no longer simply fulfilling another company’s woman-and-minority-owned business requirements, but pushing transit station design to be more functional and beautiful for riders.

STEVEN VANCE

COURTESY ROSS BARNEY ARCHITECTS



VIRGIN HOTELS' U.S. DEBUT RESTORES AN ART DECO LANDMARK IN CHICAGO, WITH A WINK

SHAGADELIC

Lest you think Virgin Hotel’s new outpost in downtown Chicago is a mild adaptation of its parent company’s ribald

corporate persona—tempered for the historic confines of its art deco host—just know the lounge features a plush, circular

“shag room.”

The first U.S. location of Virgin Hotels inhabits the Old Dearborn Bank Building at 203 North Wabash Avenue in Chicago’s Loop, one of only two office buildings designed by architects Cornelius Ward and George L. Rapp. Finished in 1928, the 27-story building was named a local landmark in 2003.

On one hand it seems an unlikely fit for Virgin, whose bushy, hang-gliding CEO Sir Richard Branson exudes an aesthetic and sense of humor that draw more on his playboy persona than his royal honorific. But there is whimsy in the original building, too. Facade ornaments depicting peacocks, acorns, and mustachioed old men mesh with the hipster sensibility informing some of Chicago’s ongoing boom in boutique hotels. “It was clear that they didn’t want a hotel that was Britannia, over-the-top,” said Diego Gronda, managing and creative director at Rockwell Group Europe. “They wanted it very respectful, but with a wink.” The design directive, Gronda said, went something like, “Don’t add TNT and destroy it, and don’t be boring.”

Chicago architecture firm Booth Hansen, led by Marshall Butler, headed up restoration efforts, which were demanding after years of poor retrofits and neglect. Many of the historic

features of the original bank had been covered up, battered, or both. Designers made silicon casts of intricate ceiling panels, replacing shattered tiles that in some rooms made up more than half of the ceiling. Original terrazzo floors and a stately curved stairway greet entrants who enter beneath a relatively understated overhang.

Once inside the lobby, however, guests are as likely to notice the cheeky art as they are the Jazz Age grandeur. A custom-designed red carpet flows down the stairs, spilling into a blob by the entrance like a giant pool of paint. Famous paintings are restaged with stuffed animals behind the check-in counter, an old cigar store that now accommodates guest interaction via smartphone.

That chic enthusiasm dulls a bit at the threshold to the 250 “chambers,” or guest rooms, giving way to a subtler palette mostly devoid of splashy art pieces. Though area rugs depict abstractions of London’s Tube and signature red phone booths, cool creams, and whites aim for serenity in what Virgin’s PR material describes as “home away from home” for its frequent travelers.

The floor plan responds to a uniformity of business-class accommodations. The roughly 300-square-foot rooms open onto a small entryway with



a sink, split closets, make-up table and mirror, toilet, and shower with a tile bench. That area closes off with a shade, leaving the bedroom a separate retreat. In an interesting touch smartly cornered by Rockwell Group, custom beds feature a bonus headboard at the bottom corner for guests to lean against while reading or surfing a mobile device.

The heart of the hotel is the Commons Club, a double-height space beginning on the second floor that features a towering, elliptical bar, a cozily furnished “funny library,” and the moody “shag room” that can be closed off with a curtain and illuminated by an LED disk hanging overhead. Wary of overpowering the space with Virgin’s signature red, Gronda instead snuck it into the details in the carpeting—though it still screams in leather touches

on the center bar, which frames a kind of exploded chandelier made from silver balls with zinc and long mirrors. Amid all this, the floor plan maintains a clean sightline from the Shag Room at the building’s south end to the daylight brushing the exposed kitchen against the northern exterior wall.

Though surely over-the-top by purist standards—ceramic molds of English bulldogs are chained outside pet-friendly rooms; Branson’s self-explanatory art installation “Large Ball of Tangled Chargers” adorns the concourse of the business floor—Rockwell’s marriage of old and new befits the boutique hotel model and the historic setting alike. Is it the start of a British invasion? Virgin plans to open another hotel in Nashville next year, and has set its sights on New York for 2017. **CB**

PERKINS+WILL



The offices of hybris include a repurposed club from the early 20th century, where the Civic Opera Building's financier kicked back with whisky and cigars.

TOM HARRIS © HEDRICH BLESSING PHOTOGRAPHERS

As tech companies continue to take over historic office spaces in downtown Chicago, they walk a fine line with the architects and interior designers. How do you celebrate and preserve early 20th century work without dulling that youthful energy critical to so many software companies? Perkins+Will have struck that balance at the Chicago offices of Swiss e-commerce giant hybris.

To be fair, the firm started with a powerful space. The company has two noncontiguous floors of the Civic Opera Building at 20 North Wacker Drive, a throne-shaped colossus on the Chicago River that architectural firm Graham, Anderson, Probst & White is said—probably apocryphally—to have faced west so it turned its back on New York City. Programmers, sales people, and managers have occupied the

building's 29th floor for some time, but hybris' recent expansion onto the 39th floor does more than double the company's footprint—it lands it in the boozy, rarified air of the former Tower Club, which once occupied the same space.

Started as the Electric Club in 1916 by the building's owner, British-American business magnate Samuel Insull (who, according to legend, inspired the Monopoly

character Rich Uncle Pennybags), the Tower Club's dark wood and Tudor archways hosted dignitaries and high rollers for 95 years. In 2011 its patrons bid farewell with a final toast.

Old boys clubs may be fading along with the three-martini lunch and the social norms that sustained them, but companies like hybris fit surprisingly well into vaunted spaces like the Tower Club. hybris director Doug Gaffney pointed

out the wooden drop ceiling and restored floor made up of regal slabs of Ohio bluestone, looking not unlike the floor of a medieval castle. Slender, arched windows and rich wood detailing convey a coziness as well as a touch of the same standoffishness its stiff-lipped progenitors probably exuded. "This is why we didn't just want to take a hand grenade and rip this all out," said Gaffney. "There's a lot of history, and we wanted a unique space."

Perkins+Will restored the club lounge, retaining a ceiling-height humidor, fireplace, and a 75-year-old bar. The architects added contemporary touches, like proper lighting and meeting spaces ringed with floor-to-ceiling glass panels. Instead of storing members' cigars, the humidor now holds employee ID cards, while a stolid wooden door displaying the names of Tower Club presidents is repurposed in hybris' board room.

Splashes of the company's signature blue are apparent everywhere, though subdued on the Tower Club floor compared to hybris' 29th floor operations. The north and south wings, which house work stations and meeting spaces, are similarly modern. Though details are preserved, hybris' intervention is decidedly not pure preservation. But nor were previous retrofits that covered up historic details with drop ceilings, duct work, and acoustical tiles. "We uncovered layers of build outs, like peeling an onion," said Perkins+Will project manager Eric Evangelista.

The company's 29th floor is centered around a large circular area, linking a cafe, lounge, and elevator bays to the front desk. Like the open floor plan workstations, it is a nod to transparency that perhaps would have ruffled some patrician sensibilities in the original Tower Club. Or maybe they would have welcomed hybris, a global company whose revenue has soared in recent years. Either way, someone will raise a glass.

CB

RESOURCES

Acoustic tiles

Armstrong
armstrong.com

Lighting

Core Lighting
corelightingusa.com
Cooper Lighting
cooperindustries.com
Focal Point
focalpointlight.com
SLV lighting
slvlighting.com
Luminii LED linear lighting
luminii.com

Paint

MDC Metallic Paints
mdcwall.com

Reception desk backsplash

Avonite
aristechsurfaces.com

Movable partition

Modernfold
modernfold.com





AS THE CAMERA FLIES

PHOTOGRAPHER VINCENT LAFORET'S IMMERSIVE AERIALS OF NEW YORK CITY

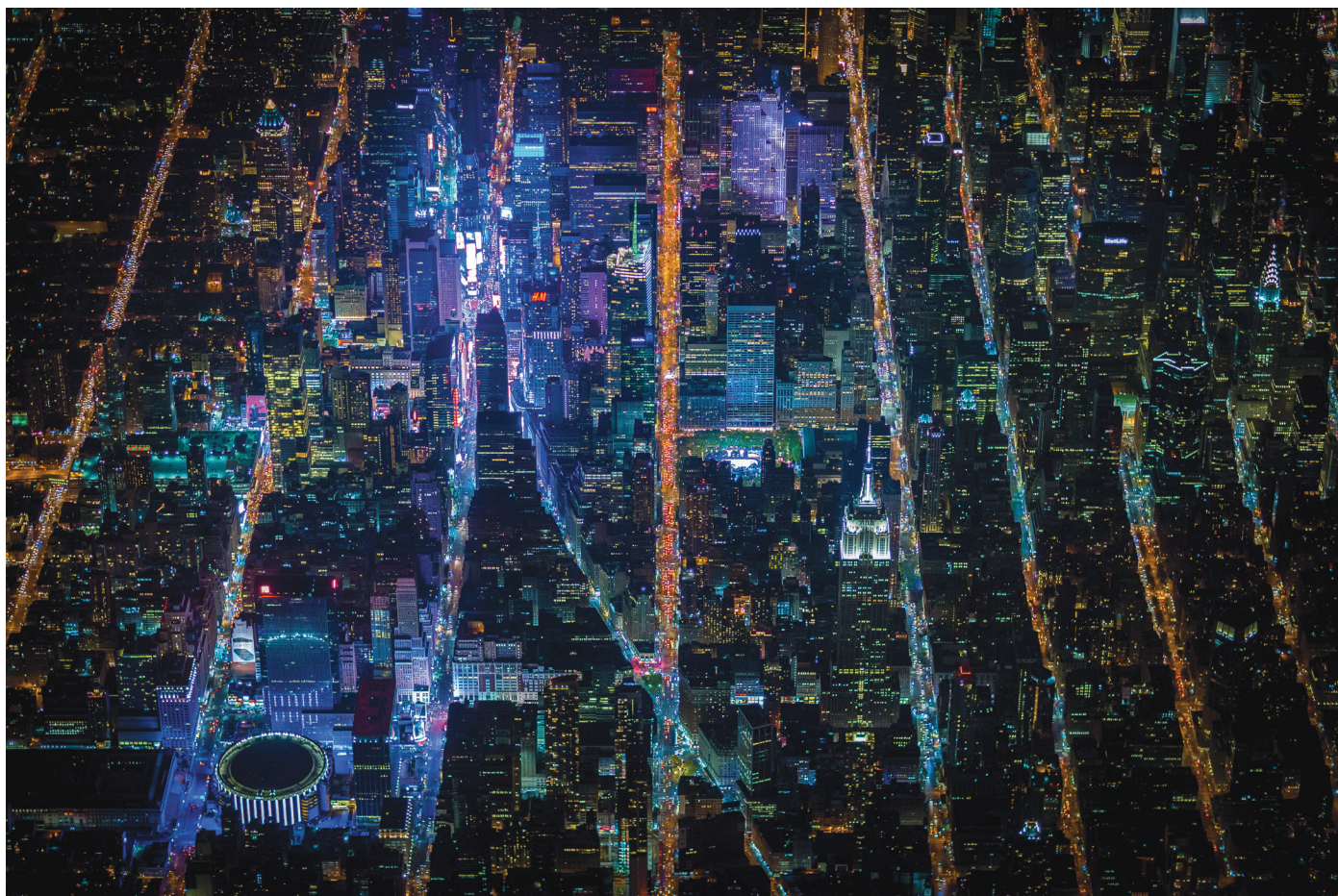


VINCENT LAFORET/FINEST.LAFORETVISUALS.COM



VINCENT LAFORET/FINEST.LAFORETVISUALS.COM

Laforet took these aerial photographs on a clear winter's night from a helicopter hovering at 7,500 feet. With the exception of some added saturation and highlights, the images are untouched.



New York City has been photographed from nearly every vantage point: sweeping panoramas, up close in detail, and from high above. But few images have captured the city's density and sprawl, its tightly packed grid, its constellation of yellow and neon colored lights, and its changing skyline quite like Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Vincent Laforet's recent aerial series, *Night Over New York*.

Commissioned by *Men's Health* magazine for a piece on psychology, Laforet proposed

chartering a helicopter and shooting the city from high altitude. "I always thought the streets of New York look like brain synapses," said Laforet. As a native New Yorker, who grew up enthralled by the cityscape, this assignment also presented a unique opportunity to photograph his home from a different perspective, one that is "between a satellite view and street view." Laforet, however, is not new to aerial photography. He has shot wildfires in California, the devastation of Hurricane

Katrina, and beach scenes at Coney Island from high above.

Before soaring thousands of feet in the air, he needed clearance from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and air traffic control towers. Once he received the green light, he flew up in an open-door helicopter, 7,500 feet above the city, balancing 20 pounds of camera equipment. The images, explained Laforet, are the culmination of a perfect storm: a remarkably clear winter night, today's advanced technology, and an intuitive

sense for a visually compelling picture.

"They are just photographs of the city but from a unique angle and it seems like the city takes on a different importance and you can almost feel the energy of the city," said Laforet.

The 50-plus images provide a myriad of views that at once convey the expansive breadth of the city and the concentration and individual character of the buildings that populate Manhattan's intricate network of streets and avenues. One of the more salient aspects of this series, from an architectural standpoint, is the shifting scale of the city, marked by new construction in the last few years. In one picture, as we look down from above Central Park toward downtown, we glimpse a cluster of new and old skyscrapers jutting up toward the sky between 57th Street and Herald Square; from there, the landscape flattens as the buildings and the streets get smaller and more compact, branching off from the grid in Lower Manhattan, and then narrowing at the very tip, punctuated by SOM's towering One World Trade Center. Revealed in these photos is the tension between the transience of the city and our own illusive fixed image of the iconic skyline. Some new additions posed a challenge for Laforet, specifically Rafael Vinoly's recently erected monolithic 432 Park Avenue. "It ruins the skyline and almost every aerial I shoot," said Laforet.

This entire project was completed and posted in a short period, which didn't allow time for retouching. Aside from sensors that pick up light, and adding some saturation and highlights, little was done to the photographs.

Working off the momentum of this series, Laforet is embarking on a multi-city tour from San Francisco to Tokyo, to capture these metropolises at night. "These pictures speak to how big the city is, how massive it is, and how connected and small we are," said Laforet.

NICOLE ANDERSON

HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PLAN

LONG NOTORIOUS FOR ITS LACK OF ZONING AND SPRAWLING, DEVELOPER-DRIVEN, LEAPFROG GROWTH PATTERNS, AMERICA'S FOURTH LARGEST CITY IS ON THE CUSP OF ADOPTING ITS FIRST GENERAL PLAN. FLORENCE TANG SPEAKS WITH THE ADVOCATES, PLANNERS, AND POLITICIANS WHO ARE SEEKING TO MAKE HOUSTON A SUSTAINABLE METROPOLIS WHERE ANYONE CAN PROSPER AND FEEL AT HOME.

Houston is famously, or notoriously, known as the largest city in America without zoning. It covers roughly 630 square miles. To put that in perspective, Houston could accommodate within its limits Washington, DC, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Boston, Baltimore, Cleveland, Denver, Miami, and San Francisco combined. As of the 2010 census, the city had a population of about 2.1 million with a metro area totaling 5.95 million. In the next 20 years, a million more residents are expected to call the Bayou City home.

In the past, Houston has managed such projected growth by expanding its hub-and-spoke freeway system and sprawling out across the vast coastal plain on which it sits. Now, however, a convergence of political forces, an urban planner from Harvard, a newly installed city planning

director, the united voices of citizens, leaders, and groups across jurisdictional lines, and a tenacious campaign lasting more than a decade from one non-profit board is producing a road map for sustainable growth and development.

In September 2014, Mayor Annise Parker directed the planning commission to create Houston's first General Plan. "Houston is constantly changing and growing. We have to have a better way to plan for that growth," said Parker in a statement. "A general plan will allow us to better coordinate our resources, create opportunities for innovative partnerships, and provide a path to achieving our goals."

BLUEPRINT HOUSTON AND THE GENERAL PLAN

Mayor Parker's announcement

marked a major milestone in the decade-long journey that Blueprint Houston, a nonprofit organization formed in 2002, has spent advocating for a plan. "We have tried to be the squeaky wheel in the face of mayors," said Joe Webb, an architect and chairman of Blueprint since 2010.

Among other efforts, Blueprint raised \$120,000 to hire an experienced planner to advise the city in how to develop the plan, scopes, budgets, and timelines. "The city, having never done this before, had no concept of resources," said Webb. The City of Houston pitched in \$10,000 to hire the consultant.

Blueprint hired Peter Park—the urban planner, professor, former Loeb Fellow, and visiting critic at Harvard's GSD, former planning director of Milwaukee and Denver, and director of his own planning

practice—to work as a consultant to the City of Houston's Mayor's Office and the Planning Department.

Park's track record includes innovative planning in urban land use and regeneration, transit-oriented development, and zoning code reform. His research and work focuses on the link between leading innovation for quality design and practical implementation strategies for communities.

Blueprint also held three citizens' congresses over the years to collect visions of what citizens wanted their city to be. "We compiled all that and gave it to Peter Park," said Martha Murphree, Blueprint's executive director.

THE URBAN PLANNER

Park initiated the exploratory steps for the plan to spur the discussion about viable strategies critical to the growth of a major metropolitan

area. He worked with city staff to define the scope of the plan and what it should accomplish.

"It's a big change from what Houston has been in the past, and while Houston does not have zoning, there are a lot of regulations. They have regulations that cities with zoning are getting rid of," said Park. "Houston has been going along without a plan, and people ask, 'Why do you need a plan?' but the past approaches of building highways and annexing is not a growth pattern and won't serve the city in the long run."

This historic approach of meeting challenges as they come has created a reactive state and Park believes it is not a viable approach. "How can you have a broader conversation of coordinating growth and policy and vision so that you can optimize the development of the city over time? There are a lot of project plans, and services, and MUDs, and mechanisms, but no overall vision about what's the big idea," continued Park.

Park explained that there are myriad reasons to have plans and, for Houston, the relationship between development and transportation needs to be addressed—not just cars and future traffic, but also the relationships between development and various types of transportation beyond the automobile.

"Too much development, too much traffic—that comes with growth and change," said Park. "There are changing patterns of Americans moving back into



the city and wanting a walkable urban city. It hasn't been a priority. [Walkable areas are] not going to be everywhere, but it ought to be easier to do in Houston and the next generation of people who inherit the city are interested in these urban walkable places. Where people go and want to be there is a high priority on the human scale and activities for people. American cities prioritize the automobile at the expense of other things: freeways cut through underrepresented neighborhoods or high parking requirements result in objects in a big surface parking lot. High parking requirements and wider roads have not made it easy to create walkable urban areas but I think that is changing."

Park cited Houston's Complete Streets policy (a plan to make streets safer and more accessible, that Mayor Parker issued an executive order for in 2013) as one of the major initiatives that would fall under this broader umbrella vision for the city to grow, protect established neighborhoods, and find ways to direct growth and investment where it is most beneficial.

He also spoke about Houston's light rail system, MetroRail. The system opened its first line in 2004 and has five new lines in different stages of planning and construction. "I have heard people criticize the light rail and it's ridiculous," said Park. "The corridors are going to become enormously successful and will be able to demonstrate to other cities what capitalized transit investment looks like."

Park also addressed the city's tradition of freewheeling, speculative development. With good planning in place, he said, the risks associated with this type of unrestrained urban growth can be mitigated. "More clarity can be broadcast from the city as a signal to the investment community," he said. "[Planning can] coordinate major tax breaks, increase jobs, and distribute density in a smart way to concentrate it on the transit corridors." He added that smart planning is also about adding density, more affordability, and greater mobility without more and more cars on the road.

"It's the nature of success that brings people together," said Park. "If you aspire to make great places, people will want to experience them."

THE PLANNING DIRECTOR

In March 2014, Mayor Parker and City Council installed Pat Walsh as Houston's top planning and development official. Walsh is a trained civil engineer from Carnegie Mellon and the University of Texas, Austin, and former director of transportation and long-range planning for the City of Sugar Land. "We have made great progress in developing the plan,"

Facing top: This NASA satellite image captures, roughly, Houston's Inner Loop, merely the inner ring of the city's 630 square miles. **The rest:** These photos by Houston-area artist Patrick Feller show some of the odd juxtapositions of the city, including what remains of Freedman's Town, which was settled by freed slaves in the wake of the Civil War.

said Walsh. "We are wrapping up the vision and goal statement and then we will add more meat to the bone."

He also pointed to a planning and coordination tool, an interactive map available online, with layers of project information on it from various groups such as Buffalo Bayou Partnership, METRO, TxDOT, management districts, TIRZ (a Texas version of tax-increment financing), and the parks department. The city has been asking for voluntary participation from these organizations. The map will be on the city website and powered by its geographic information system.

The plan, as Walsh described it, is being created in a compressed timeline of 10 months. It will be at a higher level as a planning document and is an opportunity to assess whether or not the city

has the right tools and if it is using them in an efficient and right way. "We have to do a better job of coordinating with the amazing numbers of entities who do planning in the city, and we have got to work in a more strategic way to work with our development community to utilize our land in the most effective way possible," said Walsh. "We want our development community to be successful and we want to support them. And we know there are ways we can work together to mutually benefit. Houston is very successful in many ways without zoning. But we regulate development with subdivisions, landscape ordinances, dedication of right of way, drainage, and parking. We do have a lot of deed restriction-like zoning protections. We do not expect zoning to be an outcome of this. This is about making sure we are

effective as possible at creating and enhancing the city."

One of the ordinances to be examined relates to parking. Walsh said the city would revisit its parking policies to encourage vibrant walkable areas where people can visit their local restaurants and shops by foot, on a bike, or using transit. "Or it could be thinking more systematically about parking," he said. "There are opposing interests with parking, there is a balance to be struck."

One of Walsh's goals is to gain a maximum degree of community support for the plan by being transparent and soliciting community input so that any future mayor will also have interest in supporting the needs of the people. "I am cautiously optimistic that this plan is going to offer valuable insight into how Houston can achieve good governance," said Walsh.

That is a sentiment echoed by Park. "If a plan reflects what people wanted then it's more likely to be adopted and taken," he said.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

On January 8, Jennifer Ostlind, division manager of Houston's planning commission presented the draft vision statement for the General Plan. "Houston offers opportunity for all. We celebrate our diversity of people, ideas, economy, culture, and place. We promote healthy and resilient communities through smart civic investments, dynamic partnerships, education, and innovation. Houston

is the place where anyone can prosper and feel at home."

The plan is uniting major stakeholders from METRO, the Texas Medical Center, Greater Houston Partnership, Greater Houston Builders Association, Urban Land Institute, Houston Independent School District, The Kinder Foundation, TxDOT, and Harris County to churches, neighborhoods, management groups, and professional groups to coordinate, collaborate, and focus their efforts on strategies to deal with a host of future growth and investment issues: infrastructure maintenance, growing the tax base, efficient spending of tax dollars by City Council decisions, and streamlining the planning and permitting procedures.

"It's a business plan," said Webb, "A set of guiding principles and strategies based on what the citizens said about goals and priorities."

The city will inform and engage the public in the coming months by conducting a series of outreach strategies before the framework plan is presented publicly to City Council for adoption in late summer/early fall 2015. If successful, the General Plan could transform Houston from a model of automobile-enabled urban sprawl into a paradigm for how post-war American cities might reinvent themselves in the 21st century.

FLORENCE TANG IS A DESIGN PROFESSIONAL AND JOURNALIST BASED IN HOUSTON.



FACING TOP: COURTESY NASA; REST: PATRICK FELLER

FEBRUARY

WEDNESDAY 18
LECTURE

Mitesh Dixit:
Violence
7:00 p.m.
Archeworks
625 North Kingsbury
Chicago
archeworks.org

THURSDAY 19
EVENT

Behind-the-scenes Tour:
Institute of Environmental
Sustainability Loyola
6:00 p.m.
Institute of Environmental
Sustainability Loyola
6349 Kenmore Ave.
Chicago
architecture.org

SATURDAY 21
EVENT

IMA Horticulture Symposium:
The Living Landscape
8:00 a.m.
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
imamuseum.org

MONDAY 23
EVENT

Hacking Architecture
Visualization
4:00 p.m.
Miami University
501 East High St.
Oxford, OH
muohio.edu

TUESDAY 24
EVENT

The Future in High-
Performance Enclosures:
12th Annual Building
Envelope Event
7:15 a.m.
Maggiano's
516 North Clark St.
Chicago
aiachicago.org

LECTURE

Redhouse and
Kelmscott Manor
7:00 p.m.
Glessner House Museum
180 South Prairie Ave.
Chicago
glessnerhouse.org

WEDNESDAY 25
LECTURE

Baumer Lecture Series:
Lance Freeman,
Urban Planning
5:30 p.m.
Austin E. Knowlton
School of Architecture
Gui Auditorium,
Knowlton Hall
257 West Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, OH
knowlton.osu.edu

THURSDAY 26
EVENT

War Stories: A Bartholomew
Voorsanger Talk
6:00 p.m.
University of St. Thomas
Anderson Student Center
2115 Summit Ave.
St. Paul, MN
stthomas.edu

FRIDAY 27
EVENT

Food for Thought:
Presentation by 2014
St. Paul Prize Design
Competition Winners
11:30 a.m.
Amherst H Wilder Foundation
451 Lexington Pkwy. North
St. Paul, MN
aia-mn.org

MARCH

TUESDAY 3
LECTURE

Insights – Minnesota Design:
A Celebration Featuring
Andrew Blauvelt
7:00 p.m.
Walker Art Center
1750 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
walkerart.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Dream Cars:
Innovative Designs,
Visionary Ideas
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
imamuseum.org

WEDNESDAY 4
LECTURE

Chicago Architecture 101
6:00 p.m.
Chicago Architecture
Foundation
224 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
architecture.org

TUESDAY 10
EVENTS

Architectural Filmmaking
by Ian Harris
12:00 p.m.
University of Minnesota
100 Rapson Hall, St. Paul, MN
umn.edu

Post-Industrial Chicago:
Retrofitting our Building
Stock for the Booming
Tech Business

6:00 p.m.
Chicago Architecture
Foundation
224 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
architecture.org

WEDNESDAY 11
LECTURE

Making Material Interactions:
Architecture As Catalyst
Lecture Series
9:00 a.m.
Bell Museum of Natural History
10 Church St. SE, Minneapolis
bellmuseum.umn.edu

THURSDAY 12
EVENT

Possible Worlds:
Architecture Between
Speculation and Proposition
6:00 p.m.
University of Minnesota
100 Rapson Hall, St. Paul, MN
umn.edu

POST YOUR OWN EVENTS
AT ARCHPAPER.COM



COURTESY CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER

REMEMBER THE FUTURE: DANIEL ARSHAM

Contemporary Arts Center
44 East 6th Street
Cincinnati, OH
March 20–August 30

Remember the Future is the first major exhibition in Ohio by Cleveland-born artist Daniel Arsham. In it, site-specific installations respond to the scale, light, and structure of the Contemporary Arts Center building in Cincinnati. Known for “making architecture do all the things it shouldn’t,” Arsham’s work marries theater, classicism, and hallucination by liquefying gallery walls, furniture, and the human form. Eerie, cloth-covered figures ripple from the walls as if trying to entice the viewer to another world on the far side, while elsewhere Arsham makes the walls appear to be in the process of melting. The artist’s recent work has involved casting outdated media devices—cameras, film projectors, and microphones—in geological material such as volcanic ash, crystal, and crushed glass.

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Guggenheim Helsinki model by Andrew Kovacs.

INDIVIDUALS, ALL TOGETHER

Treatise: Why Write Alone?
Jimenez Lai
Graham Foundation
Through March 28

many years, Lai and his colleagues published all at once. The result is a bright and unusual show more playful than provocative, but a strong statement nonetheless—since ancient Italian architects broke from building (*fabris*) to explore reason (*ratio*), architects have always been more than factories for functional built work. Subtitled, *Why Write Alone?*, Lai's show is "a Tarzan call into the forest of bad attitudes" yielding 14 individual responses, "where the selfish pursuit of writing amasses to form a collection."

The contents of that collection are as varied as its participants, which hail from the expected hubs of New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, but also as far as Belgium and Greece. Participants include: Bittertang, Lai's own Bureau Spectacular, CAMES/gibson, Design With Company, FAKE Industries, First Office, Pieterjan Gincels, is-office, Andrew Kovacs, Alex Maymind, Norman Kelley, Point Supreme Architects, SOFTlab, and Young & Ayata. The treatises themselves will be available in March, according to the Pentagram-designed pamphlet that accompanies the show.

Some are subtle smirks, like First Office's white-on-white wall paintings and useless light switches that turn the building itself into a "really weird riddle," according to Lai. That kind of deadpan humor infuses some of the work of Norman Kelley—Carrie Norman and Thomas Kelley—who offer a series of defective furniture. Each piece in their collection is somehow wrong, but it's wrong with panache. The question (beyond "should I sit in this?") seems to be, "Is this defective, or daringly designed? Is it over- or under-designed?"

Such questions come and go as one tours the two-floor exhibition. Lai's own wall-drawings, a mishmash of "recurring dreams" that he considers "cave paintings," are a pleasant chaos. Cartoon characters converse in a geometric

continued on page 16

When I met Jimenez Lai at the Graham Foundation in Chicago, he was literally putting the finishing touches on his new show, *Treatise: Why Write Alone?* The 35-year-old head of Bureau Spectacular was perched on a ladder, adding a few more

strokes to his stream-of-consciousness tableau of cartoons that covers an entire wall of the gallery at 4 West Burton Place. Climbing down, he explained the show's origins.

The show draws most directly on the "Pamphlet Architecture" series Steven Holl

and William Stout started in the 1970s. "They had their expression of youth," said Lai, "and maybe this is ours." He called it "an ice-core sample" of emerging and nonconformist designers.

Rather than roll out their treatises over



WILLIAM ZBAREN

LEARNING MORE FROM MIES

Last is More: Mies, IBM, and the Transformation of Chicago
By Robert Sharoff
Images Publishing Group, \$50

The story of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe is the story of Chicago. The two share a narrative of proletariat upbringing, of unmatched ambition, a few lucky breaks and, ultimately, of lasting influence.

Last is More: Mies, IBM, and the Transformation of Chicago illustrates the parallel trajectories of these two giants of the last century through Robert Sharoff's evocative text and William Zbaren's crisp, luminous photography. Unlike their previous efforts in the *American City* series, Sharoff and Zbaren here serve not only as author and photographer, but also as archivists, historians, and interviewers.

The book is split neatly into thirds, perhaps in homage to the historic tripartite elevations that populate Chicago's streets. The first section is the most thoroughly researched, focusing almost exclusively on Mies, who is shown at the outset gazing up at one of his structures rising out of the cacophony of

construction, in front of a backdrop of crumbling brownstones. Like his work, he is elegant, severely modern, in purposeful juxtaposition with his antiquated surroundings.

Using minimal brush strokes, Sharoff draws a vivid profile of Mies, from his early, tepidly received experimentations, through his rise as European academic and leader of the Bauhaus, to his somewhat ambivalent arrival in Chicago and the Illinois Institute of Technology. He spoke limited English, but his ascent to becoming one of the most prominent architectural educators, designers, and thinkers of his generation, or indeed any time, was dazzling.

Six Mies projects are explored in depth, each succinctly characterized in text and a series of photographs that blend portraiture and abstraction. Zbaren's images of 860-880 North Lake Shore Drive show the buildings just after dawn, washed in warm sunlight to accentuate the restrained

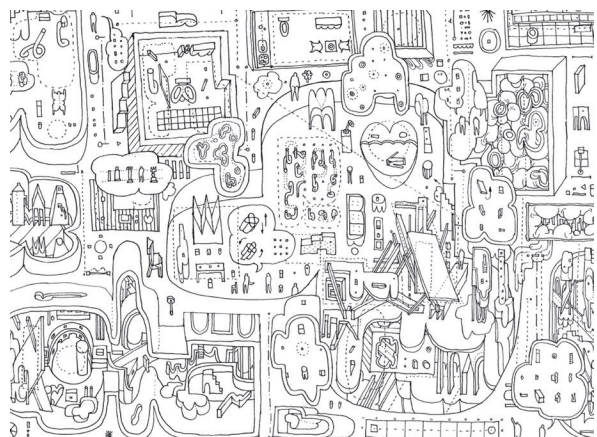
elevation details and bring out the rich travertine texture in the plazas, which Ronald Krueck characterized as "a garden by Mondrian."

Similarly, the enormous Federal Center superblock could easily read as oppressive, with relentless repetition of mullions and black steel-clad skin. Instead the images explode with life as Zbaren smartly incorporates Alexander Calder's bright red Flamingo installation into each frame to serve as exuberant counterpoint to the buildings' subtle articulation.

The IBM building is explored in particular depth. The book features sequential images of the steel structure rising out of the muddy riverfront site, the finished 52-story exterior and the august, exceptionally umber-toned, interior.

Mies did not live to see the completion of the IBM building (he died in 1969 at the age of 83), but the legacy of the structure looms large. Upon its opening in 1972, the *Chicago Sun-Times* called the building "Twentieth Century architecture at its finest." It has also proven itself to be a presciently sustainable building. The curtain wall employed double-glazing, the floors were zoned for

continued on page 16



Left: *Cave Painting V* by Bureau Spectacular.

other basic forms that recalls Peter Eisenman's analytical drawings and postmodern projections. The Chicago-based collective Design With Company warps Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City development concept with a surreal model of Midwestern farms interrupted by palatial architecture and kitschy "world's largest" totems.

How exactly the work displayed in the *Treatise* show exemplifies the manifestos of its 14 inventive contributors might only be clear upon the publication of their written work in March. Even without that context, the show engages on many levels, provoking questions, second looks, and subconscious explorations that seem to answer Lai's subtitle—why write alone? It produces new work, unburdened by others' expectations. Why write together? No solitary designer could dream up the wild collection of work displayed here, much less the strange and sometimes wonderful relationships that result between them.

CHRIS BENTLEY IS AN'S MIDWEST EDITOR.

WHY WRITE? continued from page 15 language, floating on a sea of architectural memes—Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye, Frank Gehry-esque pavilions, and even the agglomerated wooden orbs of SOFTlab, which hover a few feet from the wall, pop up in the black-and-white painting.

Other installations tickle a more emotional layer of consciousness. Brussels-based Pieterjan Ginckels turns a second-floor room into a fog-filled theater for immersive video work that he called "low-tech, rendered opera." Dirge-like electronica scores a psychedelic first-person ride through strange and familiar places under

a lime green sky. Andrew Kovacs' work is that of "an intellectual hoarder," said Lai, collecting forms and unfinished architectural solutions in his "Guggenheim Helsinki Model," which is overrun with little orange visitors. Bittertang's hanging *Piñata* marries inviting surfaces and bright colors with smears of earwax and disconcerting organic forms, encapsulating both the wonder and repulsion with which we approach nature.

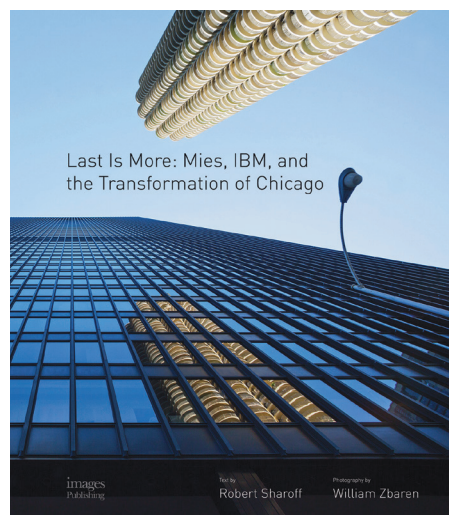
While the playful collection is very much of its time, historical references and allusions to precedent abound. Alex Maymind's *100 Drawings* ruminate on grids, layers, and their intersections with

LEARNING MORE FROM MIES continued from page 15 targeted heating and cooling, and air intake was monitored via a rooftop weather station and regulated by automated dampers.

The section closes with a conversation between Sharoff and Dirk Lohan, a Chicago-based architect and grandson of Mies. Lohan adds a bit of humanity to a picture that could otherwise easily slip into two-dimensional archetype. He discusses the weekly dinners with his grandfather and remembers that Mies never missed an episode of Gunsmoke and only told jokes in German.

The second section of the book supports Ada Louise Huxtable's claim that "only in Chicago has the Miesian lesson been properly learned," by exploring the legacy of Miesian architecture and the Second Chicago School. Sharoff and Zbaren illustrate how Mies' architectural progeny effectively spread the gospel of structural purity, aesthetic refinement, and rational programming across Chicago's dense downtown district. Mies was so enamored with the muscular structure and expansive column bays of the Richard J. Daley Center that he is purported to have said, "I wish I had done it."

The final third is a loving look at the architectural context Mies inherited when he moved to Chicago in 1937. Zbaren's images of the elegant First Chicago School skyscrapers are a mix of intimate detail and broad streetscape context, and highlight the elemental luster of these innovative structures. These pages feature Cobb's extravagant Chicago Athletic Association, Burnham and Root's austere Monadnock Building, and



Sullivan's lyrical Carson, Pirie, Scott Building with its vast expanses of glass, decadent cast-iron work, and unyielding terra cotta faces, which make it seem both hazily historic and exceedingly contemporary.

The sequencing of the book is a little disjointed, jumping back to Sullivan and Burnham when all momentum is pushing toward Jahn and Gang. Though the ordering is out of step with the cool dialectic that defines the projects within, and the postscript feels mismatched to the rest of the book, the elegant layout, sumptuous imagery, erudite text, and supporting archival material deftly capture the rarified architectural intent shared by this cadre of designers who helped transform a ramshackle, industrial city into a gleaming, dynamic metropolis.

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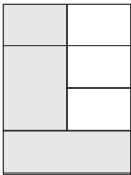
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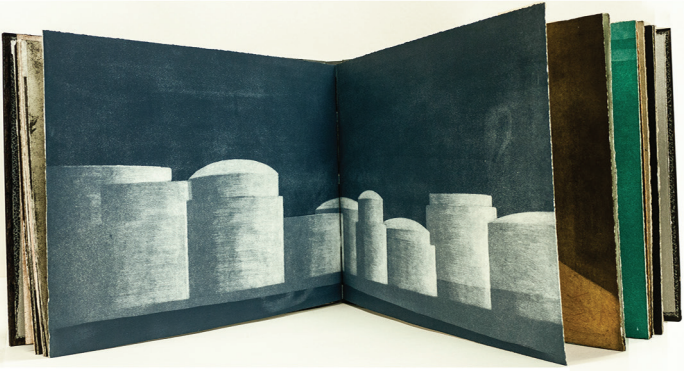
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The Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture is split between two campuses: Taliesin East in Spring Green, Wisconsin (below, left), and Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona (left and below, right).

He addressed issues that are central to the American problem and the world problem, that include: How do you make a home, what is a home? How do you shelter it and yet make it open to its community? What is that community when it is no longer just a center city or out in the farm? What is suburbia and what kind of forms can we develop for suburbia? How can we make an architecture that works with the land instead of being built on it? How can you create work environments that are open and conducive to the kind of creativity and sharing that we now understand is central to work? How can you create places of leisure and play that are again open and that celebrate our achievements and allow us in a playful way to reimagine the American and the world environment?

BETSKY TAKES ON TALIESIN

In January the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation tapped **Aaron Betsky** to head its school of architecture, which is split between two campuses: Taliesin in Spring Green, Wisconsin, and Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona. Betsky, the former director of the Cincinnati Art Museum will move to Scottsdale in April. Though he assumes the role immediately, Betsky said his specific plans for the curriculum are still in progress.

As dean, Betsky faces a challenge beyond academic leadership. Last year the Higher Learning Commission changed its rules governing for-profit universities and schools that, like the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, are part of institutions whose “missions extend beyond academics.” To retain the school’s accreditation, the Foundation will spin off its academic entity. But to do so it said it must raise \$2 million before the end of 2015, or it will lose its standing once the new rules take effect in 2017.

Chris Bentley: Why did you decide to take

this position?

Aaron Betsky: I’ve been involved with architectural education for literally decades and I’ve always been a strong believer in the notion of experimental architecture, and an architectural education that doesn’t perpetuate the myth that architects just go out there and make the dumbest buildings possible. Architecture is a way you can come to an understanding of the human-made environment we’ve all created together and how you can make that better in a social sense, an environmental sense, and in a physical sense. So a chance to do that with a school that has such a great tradition of experimental architecture, that comes out of Frank Lloyd Wright’s engagement with everything from the notions of what makes a home, to what makes a workplace, to the nature of American suburbia and beyond.

What’s been your experience with or impression of the Frank Lloyd Wright

School’s academic character? What would you like to change and what would you like to keep the same?

It’s not a big school where people are doing fairly standard building design. It’s a place where people are really trying to figure out what architecture is. They do it not just on the drafting table and the computer but out in the desert itself, especially in Scottsdale building their own shelters. I think a lot of people still think about Taliesin as a place that might continue the forms of Frank Lloyd Wright. But if you look at the student work you can see that Victor [Sidy] and the people who have been there have really begun to think more about how he thought of architecture as very important for what he called democracy—how he saw it in the arts and crafts tradition and the tradition of American pragmatism.

What is Wright’s relevance to contemporary practice?

Are you charged with separating the school from the foundation, the fundraising, or purely focused on the academics?

Yes we need to raise money and I am already working with the school on that. We have a couple of galas. We’re working on some other ways that we’ll need to continue as an independent entity. It’s obviously a very big part of the job.

What is the fundraising situation so far? Are you on track to meet the goal?

Yes I am confident we’ll meet it. Some funds have already been raised. I can’t tell you what the percentage is but there are substantial pledges as well as hard cash in the door. Look, I’ve spent the last 15 years of my life—if not longer—raising money. In Cincinnati I was able to raise about \$80 million over the last eight years. Schools are more difficult in some ways than museums, but I’m confident we’ll be able to raise the money for this school with its great traditions and name recognition for an even better future.

CHRIS BENTLEY



PATRICK DARBY (TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT); TALIESIN PRESERVATION



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