

ARCADE

ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN IN THE NORTHWEST

VOLUME 27.02 / WINTER 2008

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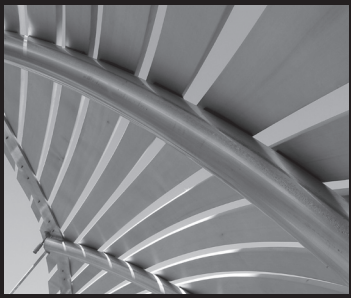
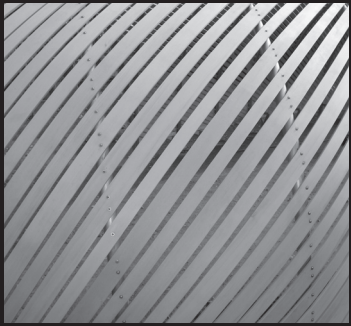
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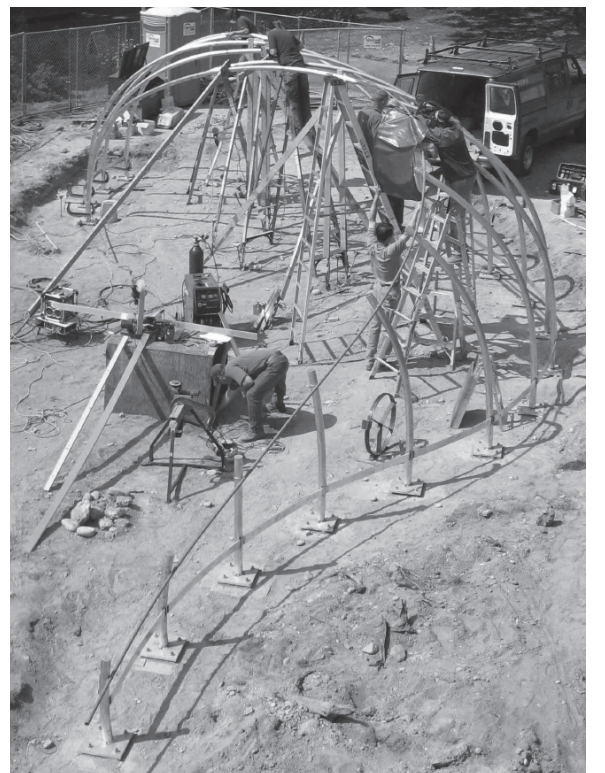


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One Man's Quest for the
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"The landscape architect Kathryn Gustafson nearly saves the Arsenale section all by herself with an evocative garden hidden behind the warehouse buildings..."
– Christopher Hawthorne, The Los Angeles Times, September 17, 2008

"But 'Towards Paradise' by Gustafson and her combined Seattle and London offices, blew everything else away." – Hugh Pearman, Gabion [London], September 2008

Towards Paradise is an allegorical representation of the path to enlightenment, an invitation to take stock of what we have lost, nourish our bodies and souls, and contemplate our life journey under the "clouds" of Venice.



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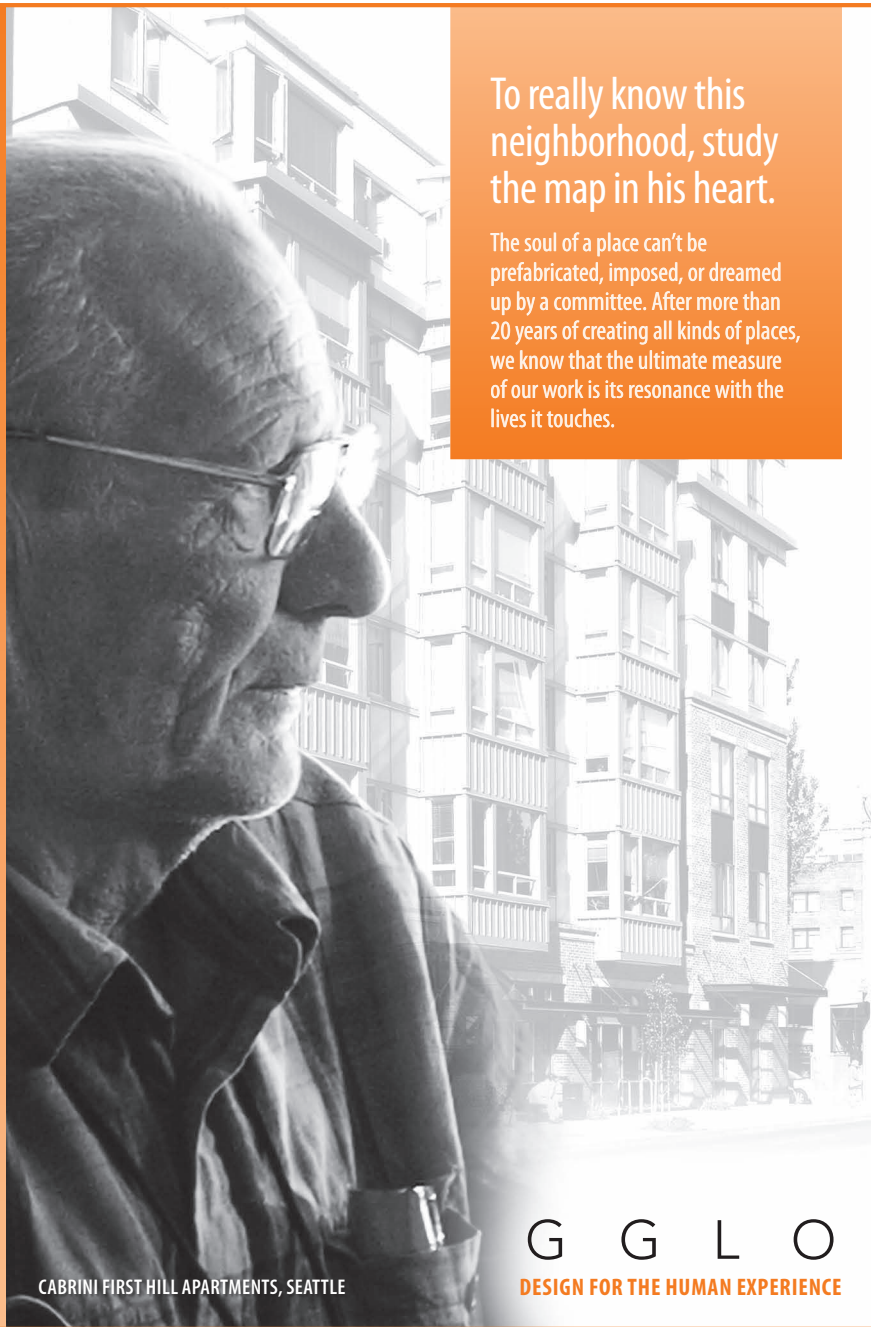
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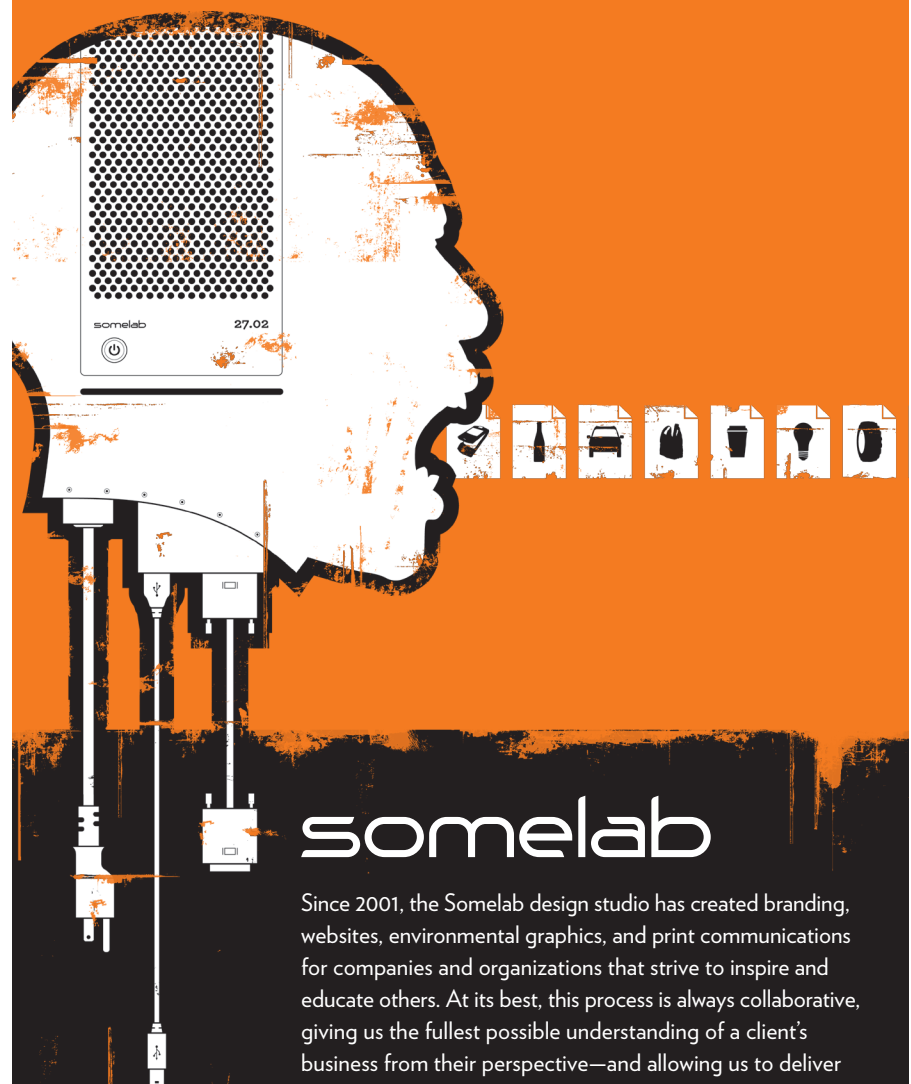
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MOVEMENT, MUSIC, ARCHITECTURE

remembering portland's city dance

randy gragg

I'm not sure exactly when, but at a Tuesday lunch meeting in June or July, it suddenly became inevitable that in the course of a September Sunday afternoon over 1,000 Portland, Oregon citizens would join hands with friends and strangers to circle around a tiny brick fountain encircled by six women slowly undressing and dressing while serenaded by a violinist playing a montage of early Minimalist music. It was as fitting a final image — a last dance — as could be imagined for the conclusion of the 18 months of meetings we had spent organizing a celebration of the Portland Open Space Sequence. Better known as Ira Keller Fountain, Pettygrove Park, Lovejoy Fountain and the little (and little-known) Source Fountain, the sequence was designed by Lawrence Halprin and Associates between 1963 and 1970 during a period when Lawrence was most influenced by his wife, choreographer Anna Halprin. On September 14, 2008 musicians, dancers and Portland citizens joined in a celebration of the plazas — not as historical artifacts but as stages for an exploration of the interdisciplinary creative influences that produced their design. We called it “The City Dance of Lawrence and Anna Halprin.”

Design of Portland's plazas began the year President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, with the last plaza dedicated days after the Kent State University massacre. Their creation parallels some of America's most turbulent times, yet their joyously wet invitations to play — during an era where visitors only parked, worked, shopped and left — launched a revolution of boldly designed public spaces in Portland. The plazas' seamless mix of landscape, theater and urban design changed the course of landscape architecture.

My own interest as a kind of executive producer of City Dance began when I learned about an extraordinary moment of urban history: the day Keller Fountain was dedicated, hippies and other counterculture types danced with “straights” in Keller Fountain's 13,000-gallon-a-minute deluge (egged on by a dripping-wet Halprin himself) mere days after cops sent 28 Portland State University students to the hospital at a protest of the Kent State University killings and the Vietnam War. Just six months later a 30-year-old attorney named Neil Goldschmidt won a post on City Council and two years after became the country's youngest mayor of a major city. But he was merely the face of the much larger revolution that led Portland's storied '70s urban renaissance. In short, that day in the fountain marked Portland's turning point.

I wrote a newspaper article about it. My editor, a newly transplanted New Yorker, was so taken with the story, he put it (an architecture history piece, mind you) on the Sunday paper's front page. A choreographer friend called me up and introduced me to the groundbreaking dance of Anna Halprin, Larry's wife. Turns out, during the period Larry was designing Portland fountains, Anna was laying the groundwork for what her students Yvonne Rainier, Trisha Brown and Meredith Monk would transform into Postmodern dance. A few conversations later, Ron Blessinger, artistic director of Portland's Third Angle New Music Ensemble, joined in, informing us that, at the same time, Anna's circle of musical collaborators (Morton Subotnick, Terry Riley, Lamont Young and Pauline Oliveros) were creating the first tape-loop samplings and playing the first notes of what would become Minimalism. Small wonder Larry Halprin scribbled in his notebooks that Portland's new plazas should be “spaces that say ‘come in’ not ‘stay out.’” We quickly realized we needed to let that historic convergence inspire another one.

The idea excited architects, artists, politicians, bureaucrats, plus plenty of funders. We raised over \$120,000 from sources ranging from the National Endowment for the Arts to adjacent property owners whose names had never before appeared in a dance or music program. But even as this completely collectively bred idea and entirely horizontally organized effort unfolded and more than 100 musicians, dancers, technical staff and volunteers lured, entertained and shepherded over 1,000 people through two hours of avant-garde dance and music in three fountain plazas, the ending was, in a word, uncanny. Nearly everyone in attendance patiently stood, piled in a narrow corridor, waiting to join hands in a slow dance around the tiny fountain Larry Halprin had dubbed “The Source.”

I'm not a sentimental guy. Had Linda K. Johnson and Ron Blessinger told me their planned conclusion of our 18-month dialog, I might have tried to talk them out of it. But I never asked and they didn't volunteer. In the end, the experience taught me a lot about architecture, art and history, about Lawrence and Anna Halprin, and most of all about public imagination: that faith can only be measured by how deep you look.

RANDY GRAGG IS A LONGTIME WRITER ABOUT ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE NORTHWEST. HE EDITS *PORTLAND SPACES* MAGAZINE.

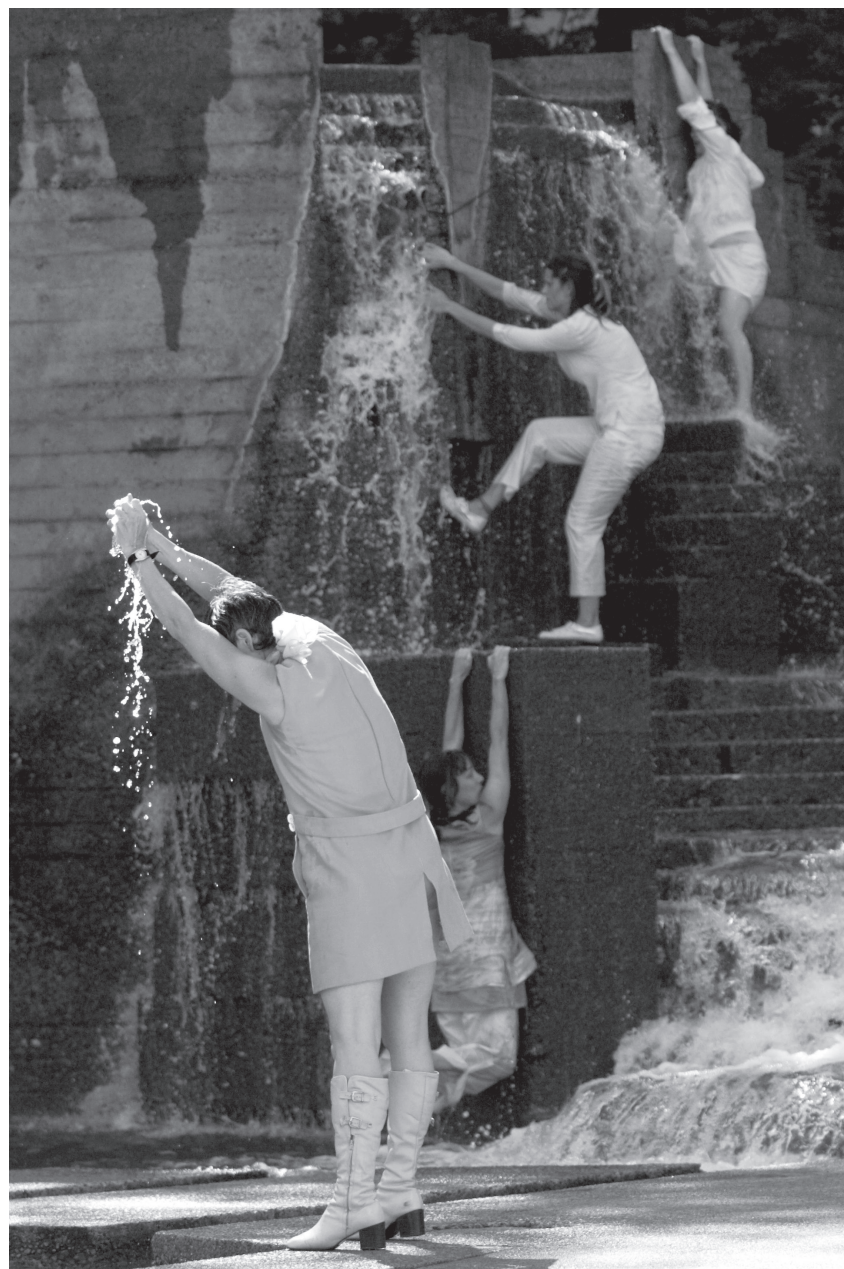


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On September 14, 2008 musicians, dancers and Portland citizens joined in a celebration of the plazas — not as historical artifacts but as stages for an exploration of the interdisciplinary creative influences that produced their design. We called it “The City Dance of Lawrence and Anna Halprin.”

NEW STEPS

awards program: making space for bodies and words in the visual culture

clair enlow

It's becoming a familiar refrain of design juries: We're not satisfied with pretty pictures. And so it was with 2008 Awards for Washington, this year's AIA Seattle design awards program.

Performance is the word of the year and *Perform/Transform* was the theme. The usual slides of submitted projects were queued up for the tall screen in the lobby, but the thousand-plus architects assembled in the two-level lobby at Benaroya Hall on the evening of November 3 had only a short time to bathe in the glow of the images. Then the performance began. Four members of Heidi Duckler's Collage Dance Studio appeared on the balcony and portal to the auditorium, draping themselves over balcony rails above and climbing over deconstructed chairs below.

It was not the first time the AIA Seattle awards program began with a blast of exchange air from the wider cultural world. A few years ago it was Pecha Kucha, a performance-based answer to PowerPoint that puts conceptual imagery firmly ahead of photos.

Bill Gaylord, who co-chaired the awards program with Mary Johnston, said the dancers had come into Benaroya only once to block out their site-specific piece. Johnston said that after the rehearsal she heard one of them say that they had "created a good structure today"—an aha moment for her that affirmed the connection between dance and architecture.

Awaiting admittance to the award ritual itself, attendees seemed unaware of the performance in their midst. But after the audience sat down the dancers took the stage, twirling around with rolls of parchment and meeting at a prop table. The best moment was when they mimed a generic design awards jury — staring thoughtfully, re-crossing knees, straining forward with earnest praise and sitting back with critical appraisal.

After they left and before the jury took the stage, Johnston offered this thematic background:

For some, dancing—or even watching dance—is a little uncomfortable, perhaps because it is so unabashedly of the

body. But as architects, it is good to remember that ours is a physical endeavor—it is body oriented. It is with our eyes, hands, feet, legs and skin that we experience space. Great architecture can help us overcome our inhibitions about moving through our environment intentionally and gracefully. It can make dancers of us all.

The real jury this year was led by Susan Szenasy, editor-in-chief of *Metropolis*. She must have found that similar events in other cities are small, perfunctory affairs in school auditoriums because she marveled at the crowd, the stage and the cordless microphones. She also made much of the fact that the jury toured around to likely projects as part of its deliberations. Some favored projects didn't make the cut afterwards — because, she reminded those assembled, pictures don't tell it all.

The three-person jury itself consisted of San Francisco architect David Baker (David Baker + Partners), architect and MIT professor Nader Tehrani (Office dA) and B.C. architect and UBC professor Patricia Patkau.

Sustainability, the not-too-deep subtext inside the title word *perform*, was definitely a factor in their choices. *Perform* is the new *function*, a standard by which to judge modern architecture in the age of environmental consciousness. It

carries a high expectation that building systems will work together as never before. In a profession that seems forever caught between art and service and between the right choice and the bottom line, this is progress.

But overall, this jury rewarded the architectural virtues of thoughtful urbanism, modesty and economies of means.

Weinstein A|U got two out of the four honor awards, both for community-based facilities that serve multiple agendas: EX3 Ron Sandwith Center in Federal Way sets up active, flexible spaces around a daylit gymnasium. Through its transparent stairwell, the Montlake Branch of Seattle Public Library combines a gracefully civic front door with a higher reading room that draws in the neighborhood.

Weinstein A|U also got a Commendation for Agnes Lofts on Capitol Hill, which the jury appreciated for joining forces and floors with the nearby Piston & Ring Building and for enlivening the street with its loft windows.

It was also a good year for E. Cobb Architects. "Gym," a condominium re-renovation inside the old Queen Anne Elementary School, reconnected the space with the shell of the original building. It got a Merit Award, and the firm also got a Commendation for "56 Piles," an aptly named three-unit hillside project that combines parking and flex spaces.

The jury really liked Bohlin Cywinski Jackson's enlightened renovation of a 50s rambler in Woodway, giving it one of the four Honor Awards. BCJ also got a Merit Award for "Envelope House," a new pillar of modern urbanism for a rezoned neighborhood — despite the fact that it replaced a traditional one-story bungalow.

Miller|Hull received a Merit Award for the Kitsap County Administration Building, a dramatically modern and transparent government structure. Miller|Hull also got a Citation for "Bumper Crop," an unbuilt project based on the unlikely combination of a suburban parking lot and an overhead urban farm.

Another Merit Award went to Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen for an imaginative extra at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. The Noah's Ark there is an interactive exhibit that represents flood narratives in many cultures — and the animals came with the architecture. And NBBJ got a Merit Award for the Banner Medical Center in Gilbert, AZ, which was commended for breaking down the hospital typology into smaller chunks.

Three projects in particular seemed to define this year's program.

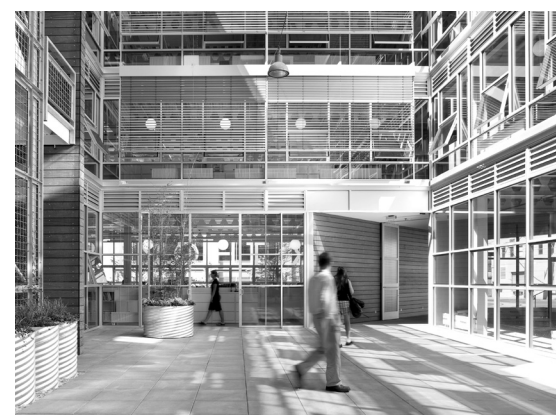
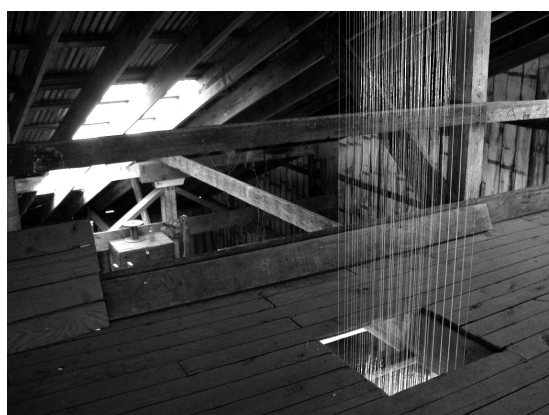
One is Weber + Thompson's Terry Thomas, a courtyard office building on the eponymous street corner in the South Lake Union neighborhood. Although they only gave it a Commendation, the jury spoke at some length about this airy study in natural light and ventilation, giving it one of the ultimate compliments of the night when Baker said the project made him hopeful that architecture need no longer be "a victim of the building's mechanical system."

They were also volubly inspired by Atelier Jones' VO Shed, a small prototype collection center for used vegetable oil, to be set in an urban alley. Tehrani marveled that "something this diminutive in scale could act as a civic structure. A thoughtful garbage disposal...that's what we need in the urban landscape."

The jury seemed most taken with Robert Hutchison and Susan Biemiller's poetic site-based work — a shaft of light-absorbing-and-reflecting monofilament stretched through a hole in the floor of an inhabitable old fishing shed in Astoria. The shed continues to decay even as it is enjoyed by its occupants — now in the ethereal presence of the materialized light. Stretching the definition of architecture, they gave it an Honor Award. It was as close a fit as any to both words *perform* and *transform* — all with an insignificant environmental footprint.

As well she might, magazine editor Szenasy injected yet another comment on the cultural conflation of architecture and photographic images. Clearly addressing the members of the audience whose projects were not picked for awards, she offered counsel on the writing of submittals: "When you start learning to write about your project, you will understand it better."

Her comment went beyond writing simply for the purpose of communicating. It was a direct challenge to assumptions that too much talk can kill the fragile muse of architecture. Instead, it might enhance performance.



TOP: HONOR AWARD, SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY MONTLAKE BRANCH, WEINSTEIN AJU ARCHITECTS + URBAN DESIGNERS LLC, PHOTO: LARA SWIMMER
 ABOVE LEFT: HONOR AWARD, 7, ROBERT HUTCHISON & SARAH BIEMILLER, PHOTO: ROBERT HUTCHISON
 ABOVE RIGHT: COMMENDATION, THE TERRY THOMAS, WEBER THOMPSON, PHOTO: LARA SWIMMER
 PREVIOUS PAGE: AIA HONOR AWARDS NIGHT DANCERS, PHOTO: JEFF VARLEY



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NATURE IS A WORK IN PROGRESS

120 years of the making of stanley park

mari fujita

The exhibition *The Unnatural History of Stanley Park* opens with the statement “Vancouver treasures Stanley Park.” It’s true — we Vancouverites revere the 1,000-acre green space that opened in 1888 with Lord Stanley’s dedication: “to the use and enjoyment of peoples of all colors, creeds, and customs, for all time.”

To mark the 120-year anniversary of the Park, the Vancouver Museum, in partnership with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, created an exhibition that chronicles the history of the third largest city-owned park in North America. The exhibition’s opening statement continues, “We revere the park because it seems to preserve real nature amid an urban forest of condo towers. But Stanley Park is a park, and parks are necessarily creations of men and women.” And with this in mind, the visitor is sent off to venture through a series of galleries that explore themes of natural disaster and human intervention, tales of logging and wildlife control measures, commercialism and unbuilt projects in Stanley Park’s history.

The thesis of the exhibition is very clear and a very clever way to present the history of this oft-romanticized site in the city: Stanley Park is human made and therefore not “real nature” even though we like to kid ourselves into believing our picnics, bike rides and mini-hikes are a kind of exploration, a trip to a pristine ecosystem, a journey into the wild. The

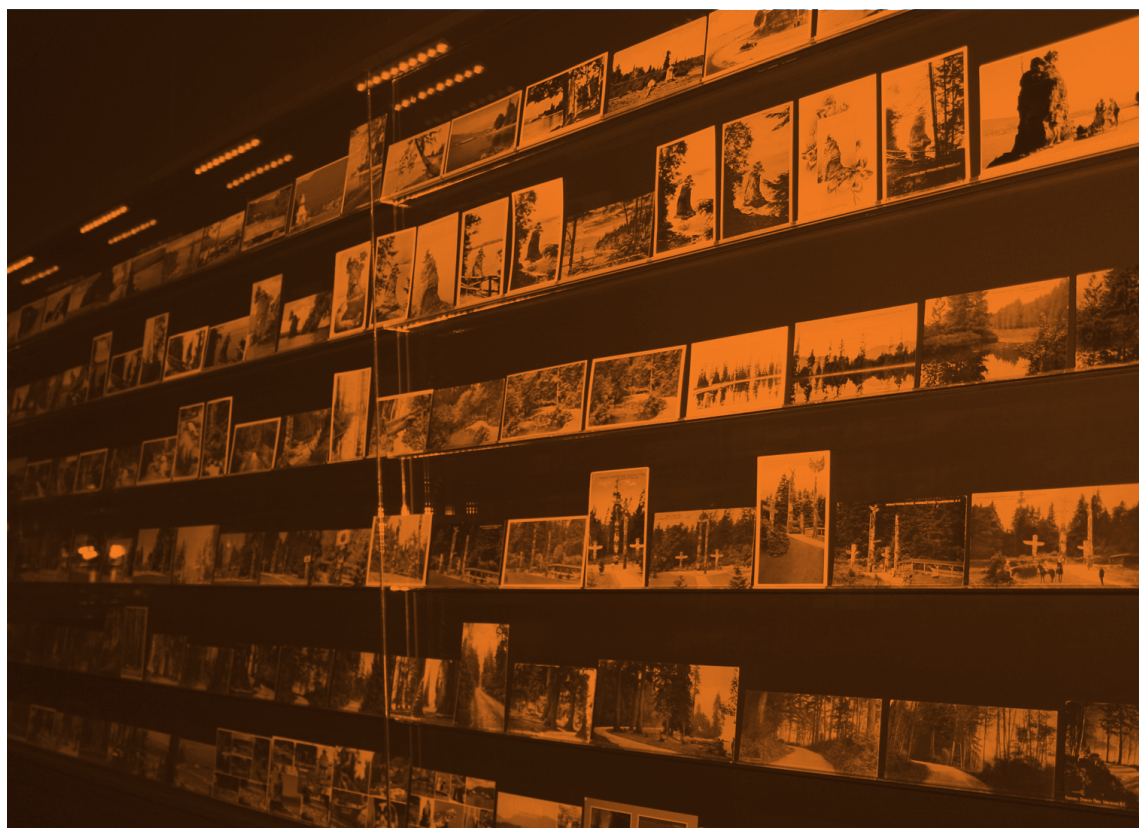
park is crossed with roads and paths, fire control demarcations and animal observations. It is monitored, measured and manufactured.

The exhibit attempts to tell the story through fragments of information, anecdotes and cases and cases of Stanley Park memorabilia. Amid the bric-a-brac of Stanley Park teacups and Loins Gate Bridge ashtrays are actual kernels of information about the identity of the park and our readings of it. In the section titled “Improving Stanley Park? Gallery” a series of unrealized projects for Stanley Park are displayed. These include a private tramline (1911), an artificial lake (1912), a museum for the Art, Historical and Scientific Commission of Vancouver (1931), an aviary (1947) and Alberta Slim’s Western Show’s proposal to provide elephant rides (1957). Through these failed interventions we see how the public and policy makers of Vancouver struggled to reconcile development with the rendition of nature the park sought to depict at the time. The elephant ride was too commercial, the artificial lake and accompanying classical gardens were too grand and the tramline would enable working class people from east Vancouver, giving rise to the “fear that the forests’ charms would be destroyed by ‘thousands of people with picnics and bottled beer.’” It is through these failed proposals that a sense of the park as a site of heated debate was communicated: everyone wanted to play a role in its design.

In addition to the relics of discarded visions, the gallery includes a rank of columns onto which visitors can pin cards expressing their ideas on how to improve Stanley Park. Responses ranged from: “Keep it as ‘indigenous’ as possible even if it means removal. Return to nature...and lose the zoo,” to “Building a new zoo,” to “Ceasing and desisting further ‘improvements.’ Stanley Park is the most beautiful setting in BC? Canada? North America? The World? All we have to do is stop and enjoy the view,” and “Ban ALL motorized vehicles!” Reading through the approximately 80 cards pinned to black columns, one has to conclude that the exhibition had failed to effectively communicate its thesis. Rather than be impacted by the narrative of the exhibit that attempts to demonstrate the artifice of the park environment, most posters either (1) merely broadcast their favorite conservative environmental activist position, (2) request things go back to the way they were at their favorite point in history or (3) request additional services be installed at their preferred location. Of these three groups of people, the first two clearly missed the bit about the park being a creation of men and women, and the third group may be no more than oblivious. The public has not been elevated to a position of productive dialogue.

The last section of the exhibition, the “You in Stanley Park Gallery,” is a vast space containing four large screens. Upon them are projected a collection of park snapshots collected from the public via Flickr and YouTube shown in a random sequence. As I pondered the image of a featureless group photo of 40-somethings taken in the Rhododendron Garden, I felt a flash of inspiration. People occupy the blooming spaces in the park season after season, and generations of memories are layered upon the space, so when there is a question about the shape of the Park the public is inspired to participate. This park then, as a creation of men and women, may truly be the most public space in the city because for the past 120 years, it has been shaped and debated and contradicted and built and torn down and rebuilt by public opinion. The park is alive and vital. In addition, if Stanley Park is the site upon which we project our notions of nature, then it can also be understood as the mirror to the space we call “urban.” As such, it is most important that we continue to treasure Stanley Park because it also informs us of who we are.

The Unnatural History of Stanley Park at the Vancouver Museum until February 15, 2009. Exhibition presented in English and Chinese. For more info go to: www.vanmuseum.bc.ca.



POSTCARD GALLERY. PHOTO: DANNI FITZPATRICK

MARI FUJITA IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE UBC SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND PRINCIPAL OF FUJITAWORK, A VANCOUVER-BASED DESIGN PRACTICE.

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Adaptation: Video Installations by Ben-Ner, Herrera, Sullivan, and Sussman & The Rufus Corporation is organized by the Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago. The exhibition is curated by Stephanie Smith, Smart Museum Director of Collections and Exhibitions and Curator of Contemporary Art. This exhibition is supported by the Office of the Provost and the Arts Council, University of Chicago, the Feitler Family Fund, Larry and Marilyn Fields, Susan and Lewis Manilow, Dirk Denison, and the members and friends of the Smart Museum. Presentation at the Henry is organized by Associate Curator Sara Krajewski and supported by media partner KUOW 94.9. This exhibition is presented with major support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, ArtsFund, and PONCHO. In-kind support provided by Hotel Max. Image: Eve Sussman & The Rufus Corporation. *The Rape of the Sabine Women (Girls at the Pool)*. 2005. Photographic still. Courtesy of the artists and Roebling Hall, New York. Photo: Benedikt Partenheimer.

2009: HAPPY NEW YEAR

marking time

karen cheng

According to the World Resources Institute, US paper consumption has fallen more than 10% since 1999 (down to a mere 665 tons per person each year). Perhaps the “death of paper” can be attributed to the decline of paper-based-planning (or PBP, as it is known by industry professionals). Paper calendars are now considered passé; at a recent meeting, a colleague characterized my pocket agenda as both “lo-fi” as well as “analog.” While I am clearly an e-mail addict (I must hit the “get-mail” button at least a hundred times a day), I am not really what you would call a gadget freak. In fact, an AT&T salesman once told me that I was very likely the last cell phone virgin in Seattle. I’ve tried Palm Pilots (tap-tap-tap) as well as iCal and Outlook; nothing is as cheap or convenient as paper. There is some evidence that other PBP Luddites may exist. A 2006 study (admittedly biased: sponsored by Mead Westvaco, a manufacturer of planners and organizers) discovered that 87% of consumers still use paper for their planning needs. Half of those surveyed (51%) used a combination of paper and electronic planning; one third (36%) used paper exclusively, while only 13% used electronics alone. Therefore, it is quite likely that paper calendars will continue to exist—especially given the impetus of the American capitalism. According to the Calendar Advertising Council, paper calendars are an excellent marketing vehicle. More than half (55%) of those surveyed admitted to using—and even requesting—a free promotional calendar. Since 72% of users check their calendars five or more times each day, a single promotional calendar generates at least 1,800 brand exposures per year.

Of course, many people are willing to forgo brand messages by actually purchasing a blank calendar. However, in this case, one needs to find something worth looking at five times each day. There is no point bothering with At-A-Glance, DayTimer, DayRunner, etc.—these calendars are deeply flawed (terrible typography, terrible graphics). After several weeks of research, I suggest the following options:

1. A4 ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS DIARY

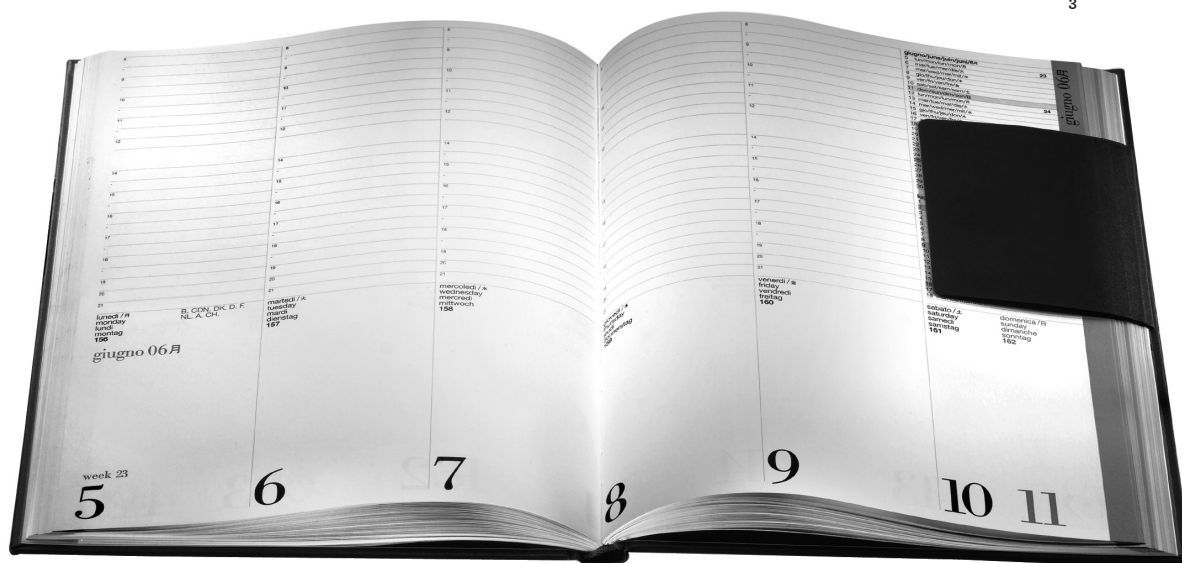
WWW.PARAGRAFDIARY.COM

An elegant but somewhat conservative desk diary. At almost 2 pounds, the “weight-to-usefulness” ratio is a little low (you need a desk). Clean san-serif typography, with a unique yet functional AM/PM notation system. However, the title of this diary implies that graphic design is a secondary art form (to architects, at least). Bound in silk twill, it’s best for an old-school, formal architect/designer (one that wears suits and ties).

2. MMMG (MILLIMETER/MILLIGRAM) PLANNERS

WWW.MMMG.NET

Three amusing agendas from Seoul-based design studio Millimeter/Milligram (MMMG). Fun but also a bit cute (best for designers under the age of thirty-seven). I am not sure if I would enjoy circling/filling in the perpetual system everyday. Still, great to see a witty take on this often too-serious object.



3. NAVA MILANO PLANNERS AND NOTES

WWW.NAVAMILANO.COM

I bought this calendar (designed by Bob Noorda, Dutch modernist designer) last year. It’s a safe choice, available in several formats, all highly stylized and beautifully produced. Text in English, French, German and Italian (of course). A classic—the graphic equivalent of Giorgio Armani—clean and elegant. Also, check out the Nava Notes designed by Artemio Croatto. Not really a calendar, but the page header allows the diarist to circle the day, month and year. The cover (linear gloss texture) is a masterpiece of subtlety. Why can’t Nava make this into a real calendar? It’s a bit hipper than the Noorda design.

4. TYPOTHEQUE DIARY / SKETCHBOOK

WWW.TYPOTHEQUE.COM/BOOKS/TYPOTHEQUE_DIARY_SKETCHBOOK_2008

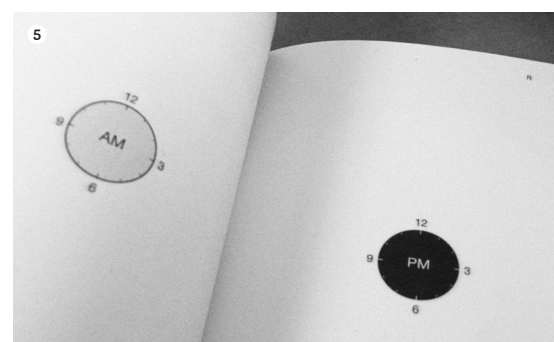
Designed by typefounder Peter Biłak. A particularly glamorous pocket diary/sketchbook with a foil-stamped cover (design changes every year). The book is specially bound using the “Otabind” method, which ensures that it lays flat when opened. Not as practical as other diaries (I prefer to have times for each day) but very slick (goes with an i-Phone and the new MacBook).

5. MUJI CHRONOTEBOOK

WWW.ORCADESIGN.NET/MUJI.HTML

Designed by Wong Kok Keong of Orcadesign in Singapore and winner of the Judges’ Prize in the MUJI 2007 Design Competition. Hard to find (only available in limited edition). Uses a circular format—a white circle represents AM, and a black circle represents PM. The diarist enters tasks according to this 24-hr analog “clock.” Again, less functional than traditional formats but intriguing. Perhaps the design brings the user closer to a Muji version of Zen... an excellent state of mind for the new year.

KAREN CHENG IS CHAIR OF THE DESIGN DIVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON AND THE AUTHOR OF *DESIGNING TYPE* (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2006).





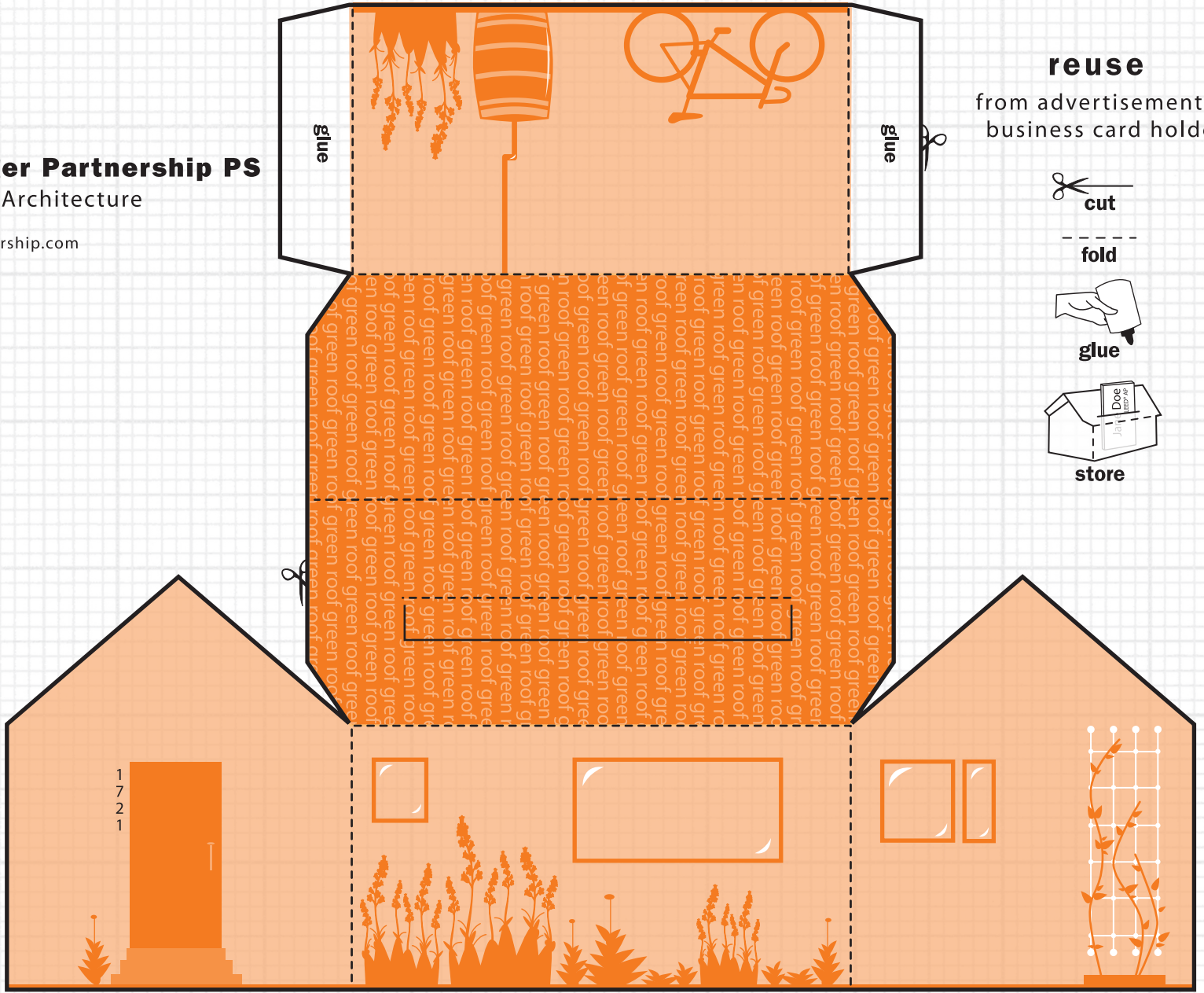
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RUBBISH!

art and the plastic bag

jen graves

Villainy used to be so much more fun: Its ranks did not include disposable bags. Those days are over, for in the last six years, starting with a tax in Ireland in 2002, governments around the world have been banning, taxing and otherwise discouraging paper and plastic bag use. This coming January 1, Seattle is imposing a 20-cent fee on disposable paper and plastic bags.

Let us agree that paper bags are not an interesting subject for aesthetic consideration. Brown, flat and forming a distinct border between what's within them and what's without, paper bags are materially dull. They do not mold to their contents or blur, intriguingly, the appearances of those contents. They do not shape-shift. They are not silky. They are a mere sidekick to the real bad guy: the plastic bag.

Even within the, uh, symbolic field of the plastic bag, there exist two types, one more dastardly (and alluring) than the other: the onion-skin-like sacks distributed at checkout counters are both more pernicious and more inviting than the heavier black trash can liners. The small, thin grocery sack meets its contents on both ends of the spectrum of consumption: It is there when the yellow banana comes home; often it is there when the black banana oozes toward disintegration. And those little grocery sacks seem to multiply like spores in the night. According to reusablebags.com, 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags (they can't even get a *close* estimate!) are consumed worldwide every year—this means both the thin and the Glad varieties.

All of this omnipresence and vague condemnation gives the plastic bag a delicious cultural currency, and a menace is always good material for artists. Many have begun using the plastic bag as a medium in itself, one charged and capable of expressing conflicting ideas even — maybe especially — when emptied of objects.

One warm spring day last year, Seattle-based artist Susan Robb used plastic bags to such hopeful, simple and wondrous effect that she nearly dismantled the whole toxic history of the things. Taking over the public lawn in the middle of lush Volunteer Park, Robb inflated 50-foot-long black garbage bags by holding them open, allowing the wind to rush into them, and then anchoring them to the ground at one end. Heated by the sun, like hot air balloons, a sea of them lifted and swayed wildly until the sun went down like great (occasionally slapstick) cilia underwater. She called them *Warmth, Giant Black Toobs*.

In a gesture of total innocence, Joshua Allen Harris powered his guerrilla street sculptures this past summer with the warm air of the New York subway system. He taped together trash bags in animal shapes and tied them over subway grates on the streets. When trains passed, the animals inflated and jumped to life, standing erect and proud and trembling slightly. Then, with a painful slowness, they collapsed back down into sorry, soft little heaps.

British artist Gavin Turk took the toe-stubbingly opposite approach to the black plastic bag. Even before the Irish took on the scourge in 2002, Turk cast one in bronze and painted it black, looking full of trash and tied up ready for the curb. These weighty, eternal bags continue to be mistaken for the real thing in galleries, making the point that the plastic bag's greatest talent, problematically, is to endure. But how else to obscure our filthy aftereffects?

In the 1999 movie *American Beauty*, the jerky, mesmerizing movement of a grocery sack in the wind is treated as a poetic subject, a source of some unbidden, untapped potential. It is far from political or narrative. It is a new American abstraction. But in the hands of Seattle-based Jamey Braden, L.A.-based Olga Koumoundouros and the French-Algerian artist Kader Attia, the force that animates the plastic bag is not symbolically neutral air. Braden and Koumoundouros make a distinction between the corporate retail sack and the "Thank You" bags distributed by mom-and-pop shops. In Braden's show this past summer at McLeod Residence in downtown Seattle, she depicted one of her longtime favorite subjects: the thinking, worrying thank-you bag. In delicate watercolor and ink on paper works, the bags float in mid-air, casting shadows beneath them and thought bubbles above them. "Who is it that I'm talking to?" one asks.

In Koumoundouros's August 2007 installation at the Bellevue, Washington contemporary art space Open Satellite, she created a temporary shelter and a series of posters based on a

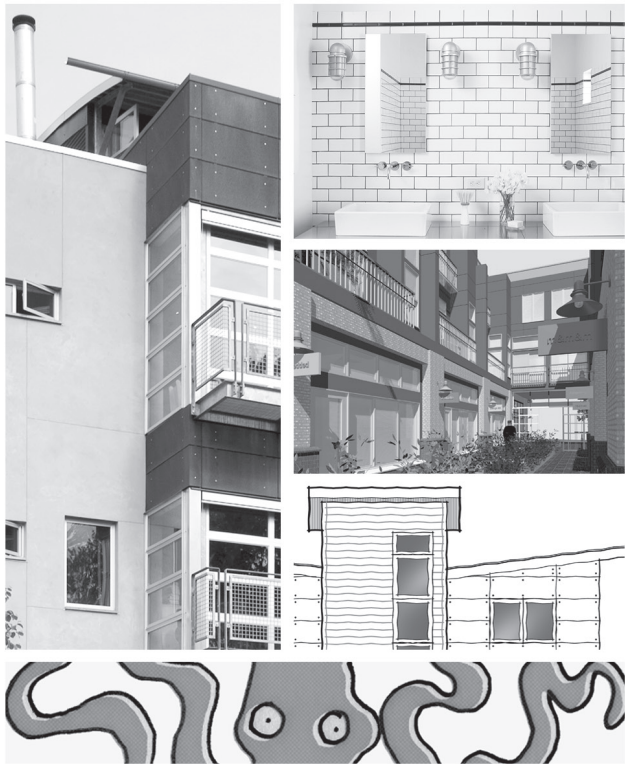


ABOVE: SUSAN ROBB, *WARMTH, GIANT BLACK TOOBS*, 2007. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND LAWRIEMORE PROJECT, SEATTLE.

RIGHT: KADER ATTIA, *UNTITLED (EMPTY PLASTIC BAGS)*, 2008. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ANDRÉHN-SCHIPTJENKO, STOCKHOLM AND THE HENRY ART GALLERY, SEATTLE. PHOTO: RICHARD NICOL

nearby abandoned residence — a deteriorating rambler surrounded by high-rise towers like the one housing Open Satellite. She imagined two worlds, one modest and crumbling, the other rising and willfully forgetting. The thank-you bag was a relic, engaged in some ill-defined system of guilt assuagement. "Thank you," the bag read, positioned on a poster next to the words, "I feel better now." Who is the "I" and who is the "you"?

Attia made the most searing recent use of the plastic bag in his winter 2008 Henry Art Gallery exhibition in Seattle. He didn't do much: he just opened the bags, poked out their sides with his hands and then left them on display on top of plywood tables. They inspired extreme caution since the slightest wind could move them — even though they were the opposite of precious. Why protect a bag? It was hard to explain. Attia based the installation on his experience walking by a food-bank line for the poverty-stricken in the neighborhood of his studio. But you didn't need to know that to sense that these were frail bellies, bellies on the verge of being substantial, the opposite of Turk's saturated rocks. Attia seemed to know the fullness of even an empty bag.

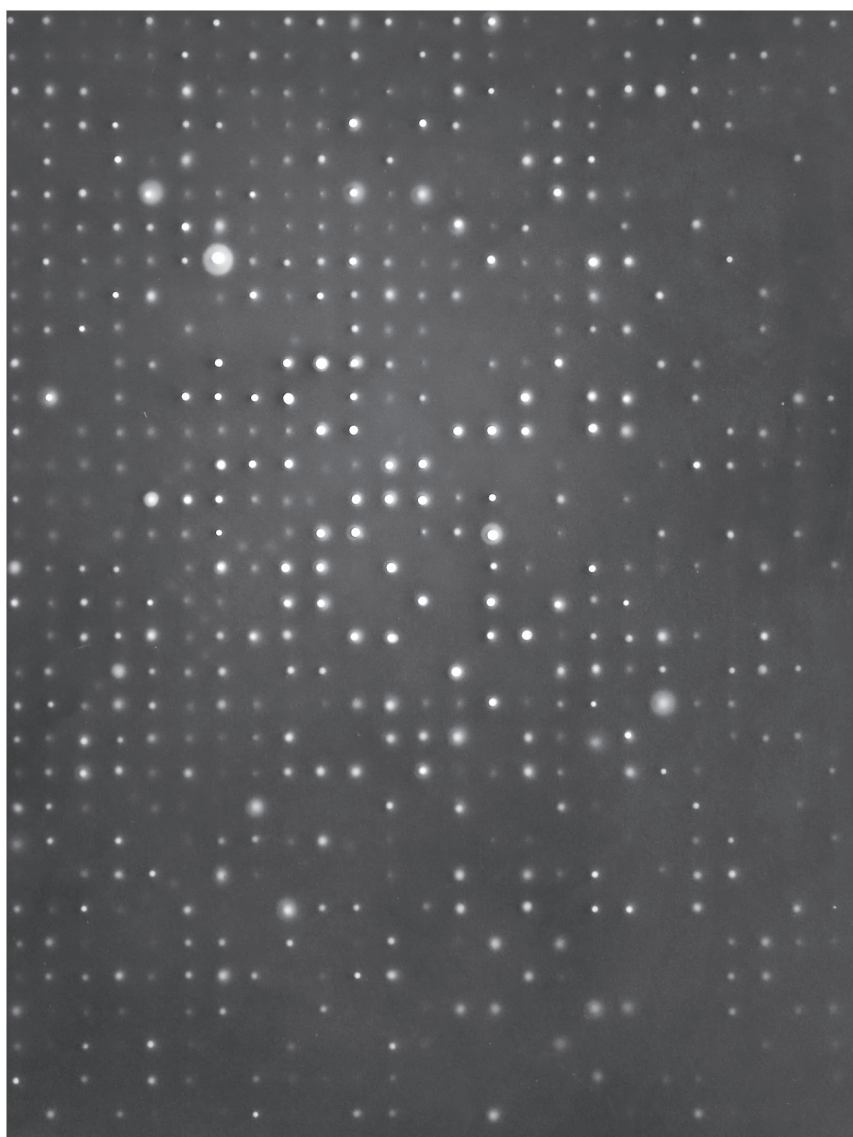


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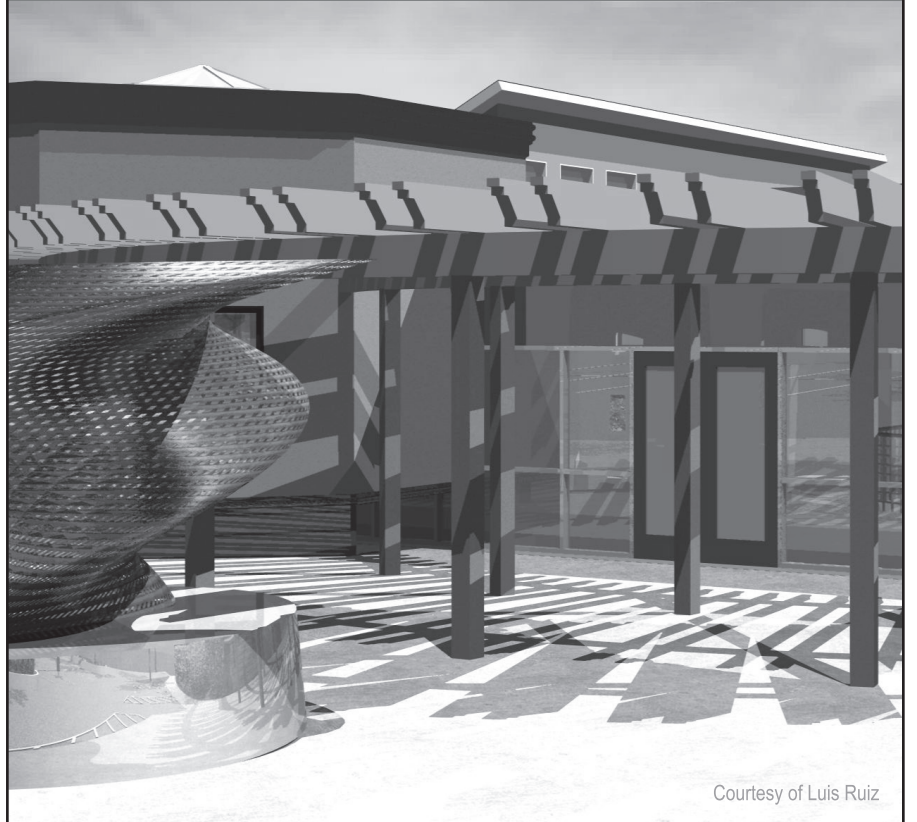
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Echo, (detail, full size 33 x 33 inches) · mixed media with resin · 2008

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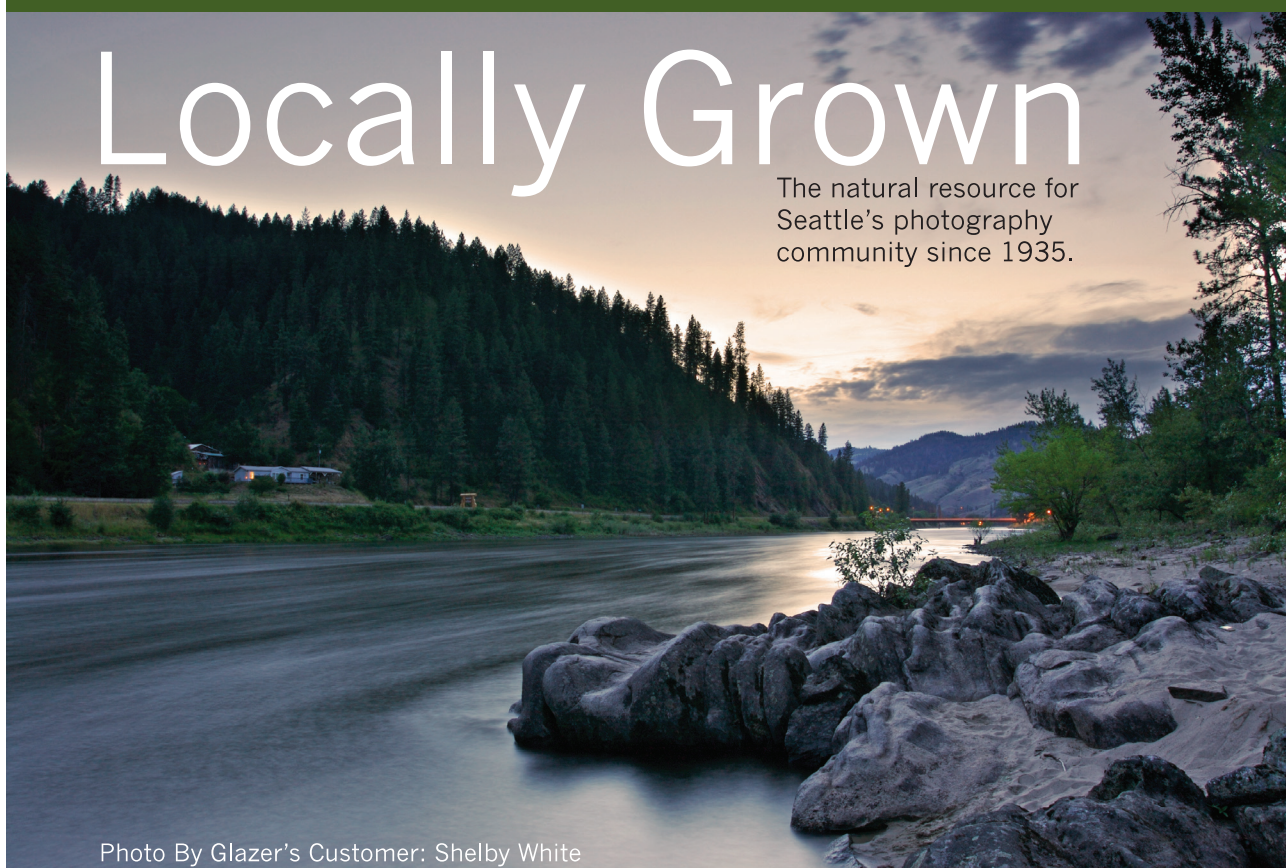


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THE ART OF WASTE

abigail guay

Chris Jordan's subject matter, in the artist's words, is "the immense scale of our consumption" (*Intolerable Beauty: Portraits of American Mass Consumption*). It is the life cycle of commercial products, the habits of the individual consumer and the social implications of systems of consumption: power, excess and waste. Jordan, who until 2002 was a practicing lawyer, has experienced hurried success as an art photographer, gaining attention in his native Seattle and in national and international forums. His accomplishments derive not only from his images but from his role as a pop statistician and a vocal proponent of an environmental policy that favors far flung and immediate action.

Jordan's photo portraits of the Pacific Northwest's industrial sites and waste management facilities treat accumulated waste as landscapes: towering mountains and crumbling cliffs, vast plains planted with discarded products and industrial debris. These dense, sensual images express a Romantic appreciation for the aesthetics of ruin and share scope, physical size and subject matter with Edward Burtynsky's sweeping photographs of polluted mine sites and Andreas Gursky's portraits of architectural spaces that are chockablock with people or products.

The deep impression of our collective environmental footprint enjoys limited visual representation by the popular press, whose eco-lite reportage often comes across as a slow, simultaneously mouthed "oops." But Jordan has had the experience of seeing the evidence first hand, of being privy to hint after hint after screaming hint. While he began taking photographs of regional trade and waste locations because of their formal qualities, the massive stacks and piles of cast off tertiary materials comprise dozens, hundreds, sometimes thousands of individual components that are snowflake unique, worthy of attention as finite objects in an infinite, unknowable panorama. Jordan's project has developed into a piecemeal survey of the innumerable components and vistas of this panorama, a deconstruction and reconstruction of artificial landscapes.

The landscape has long been a vessel for thinkers and makers who need a big, complicated metaphor for big, complicated propositions, and nowhere has this been more so than in the United States. In the mid-19th century, Manifest Destiny, the desire to expand presence and influence to the Pacific and beyond, heavily influenced social programs and personal philosophies. Expressive of this were the compulsory taming of nature, the dominance and displacement of native peoples and the consumption and manipulation of resources acquired as populations and powerbases shifted. While some artists working during this period of expansion embraced the dominant ideology, an influential set including the Hudson River School endorsed a proto-environmentalism, a Romantic appreciation for the sublime, pre-industrial/Enlightenment landscape. Popular during this period were enormous, day-glo, heaven-on-earth landscape paintings that depicted nature as both endless and unknowable.

In the Pacific Northwest, one still catches a whiff of Manifest Destiny. The mountains and trees (logging facilities aside) remain tall, the glimpses of the sea (beyond our busy ports) heroic. We have arrived, but we are searching. Chris Jordan binds this duality in his photographs of the region. Romantic and enterprising sentiments mingle; nature and industry are at once tamed and untamed. Photographs such as *Recycling Yard #6* (see page 25), offer a lewd materiality, an unexpected sensuality. The shiny but tarnished debris, in fact large but made miniature by the photographic process, has been gathered, bound and stacked like so many delicate, geometric birds nests. And in the center of the image some of the debris has come loose and cascaded down the stacked structure, forming a bronzed and alluring mess.

In the early 20th century, Progressivism emerged as a broad-based reform movement with core philosophies of social justice and regulation. President Theodore Roosevelt, one of the most influential proponents of the movement, responded to the environmental impact of expansion by creating conservation-related federal projects, acts and advisory bodies. Concurrent to the birth of broad environmental stewardship in America, however, was the makeover of Manifest Destiny as the American Dream, a messy, ecologically destructive system of elbow grease, industry and capital. Pulling oneself up by the bootstraps was an attainable promise and in its long, smelly wake: factories, Ford, the interstate system, suburbia, disposable cutlery, Kmart, imported consumer electronics, Styrofoam, and waste, lots of it.

By mid-century, increasingly mobile and convenience obsessed consumers had observably impacted the roadside and greater environments. Littering was a new vice and characters such as Woodsy Owl, Smokey the Bear and the tear-spilling Native American of Keep America Beautiful fame made direct pleas to the individual consumer. This approach was problematic in a medical sense: it addressed the symptoms of rash consumption rather than its core illness. Similarly, Chris Jordan, after settling on his industrial subject matter for its awkward beauty,

was compelled by frequent exposure to scrutinize production/consumption cycles, their damning statistics and the efforts to counter environmental impact. As it is with the wider, ever more educated public, this information gives Jordan the opportunity to fine tune his criticism and his art practice.

For the past two decades, more and more artists have created practical applications for work on ecological themes. (Contemporary with this work are the science fair type projects of artists who adapt trials, taxonomies and prettied Petri dishes for a museum or gallery environment and these environments only, a good example of which is the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art's 2000-01 exhibition *Unnatural Science*.) These applications are most often achieved by introducing scientific and engineering practices into the art-making process and are most effective when an artist draws on the expertise of professionals working in relevant fields. In many cases, the art status of the final project is evident only in the participation of the artist and the financial or institutional support of an art foundation or museum. A successful and influential example of this is *Revival Field*, an ongoing multi-site project by Mel Chin. Working with Rufus Chaney, a research agronomist for the USDA, Chin sows gardens of hyperaccumulators, plants thought capable of removing heavy metals from contaminated soils. The gardens function as artworks and as field laboratories for Chaney's research, which if successful, will be used to clean soil on a larger scale.

For his ongoing series *Running the Numbers*, Jordan assembles images to build composite landscapes. (Additional to his earlier, more documentary photography practice, he introduces other art historical standards, such as nudes and abstractions.) The artist multiplies a single object or a group of like objects — cigarette packs, plastic cups, prison uniforms — to create busy, didactic compositions that present, literally and unflinchingly, data on national and international consumer habits, as well as statistics associated with controversial social programs and behaviors. Jordan has consistently favored large format prints, but to fully represent the complexity and detail of the *Numbers* images, to impact the viewer who can, for instance, read the label of one plastic bottle in an image purported to feature two million, he produces installation images that are, on average, five-feet tall and upwards of eight-feet long.

Art making often moves through stages analogous to scientific and empirical processes, from concept to deliverable, and Jordan's recent practice is in line with the activities of the environmental advocates and science/design innovators giving shape and urgency to the consequences of unfettered production and consumption. Whereas Mel Chin's *Revival Field* represents an intersection of art with botany and chemistry, Jordan's visual presentation of information gathered by consumer and research groups could be expressed as easily with graphs and pie charts. (One wishes that Jordan would more consistently site the sources of his statistics, however.) From an empirical standpoint, the photographs differ little from the video segments produced "outside a major tobacco company" by the American Legacy Foundation, in which smoking death statistics are represented on a giant, block-long banner or by a crowd of people playing dead on the adjacent streets and sidewalks. Because of and despite this day-to-day didacticism, the *Running the Numbers* series is both practical and poetic. The one-two punch of statistical evidence that is both complicatedly, densely visual and bluntly numerical conveys the full compass of the artist's subject matter. And the photographs, they are calm, but urgent, information landscapes.

ABIGAIL GUAY IS THE EXHIBITIONS DIRECTOR OF OPEN SATELLITE, A CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE IN BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON. FROM 2002-2006 SHE WORKED AS A PROJECT MANAGER AT THE JENNY HOLZER STUDIO, NY, WHERE SHE COORDINATED INSTALLATIONS AT ART INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC SPACES ACROSS THE US, EUROPE AND ASIA.







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PREVIOUS PAGE: CRUSHED CARS #2, TACOMA, 2004, 44" X 62"
ABOVE: PALLETS #2, SEATTLE, 2003, 44" X 60"
RIGHT: RECYCLING YARD #6, SEATTLE, 2004, 44" X 59"





CHRIS JORDAN

PICTURING
EXCESS

EARLIER THIS YEAR, CHRIS JORDAN PRESENTED A TALK AT THE TED CONFERENCE IN MONTEREY, CA. TED, COINED IN 1984 TO REFLECT THE FORUM'S ORIGINAL SCOPE — TECHNOLOGY, ENTERTAINMENT, DESIGN — IS AN INTERNATIONAL ROUND-TABLE FOR LEADERS, MAKERS AND DISCOVERERS IN ALL FIELDS. THEIR ANNUAL FOUR-DAY CONFERENCE, AT WHICH 50 SPEAKERS ARE EACH ASSIGNED AN 18-MINUTE SLOT, OFFERS AN UNPRECEDENTED, KNOCKOUT ARRAY OF IDEAS AND ACTIVITY.

THE FOLLOWING WORDS FRAMED JORDAN'S POWERPOINT PRESENTATION ON THE *RUNNING THE NUMBERS* SERIES; MISSING FROM THIS SELECTION ARE HIS COMMENTS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COMPOSITE PHOTOGRAPHS AND HIS REFLECTIONS ON THE STATISTICS THEY REPRESENT. PRESENT IN THIS EXCERPT IS A STARTLINGLY ADEPT CALCULATION: THE UPSHOT OF ANY NUMBER OF SIMPLE AND DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES WHEN CONDUCTED BY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE.

JORDAN RENDERED HIS AUDIENCE, HIS ESTEEMED, ENGAGED AND FORWARD-THINKING AUDIENCE, PERFECTLY, SELF-CONSCIOUSLY SILENT.

“My work is about the behaviors that we all engage in unconsciously, on a collective level. And what I mean by that — it’s the behaviors that we’re in denial about and the ones that operate below the surface of our daily awareness. And, as individuals, we all do these things, all the time, everyday. It’s like when you’re mean to your wife because you’re somebody else. Or when you drink a little too much at a party just out of anxiety. Or when you overeat because your feelings are hurt or whatever. And when we do these kind of things, when 300 million people do unconscious behaviors, then it can add up to a catastrophic consequence that nobody wants and no one intended. And that’s what I look at with my photographic work... Now, I want to emphasize that these are just examples. I’m not holding these out as being the biggest issues. They’re just examples. **And the reason that I do this, it’s because I have this fear that we aren’t feeling enough as a culture right now. There’s this kind of anesthesia in America at the moment. We’ve, we’ve lost our sense of outrage, our anger and our grief about what’s going on in our culture right now, what’s going on in our country.** The atrocities that are being committed in our names around the world — they’ve gone missing, these feelings have gone missing. Our cultural joy, our national joy is nowhere to be seen. And one of the causes of this, I think, is that as each of us attempts to build this new kind of, of world view, this whole, optical world view, this holographic image that we’re all trying to create in our mind, of, of the inter-connection of things, the environmental footprints, 1,000 miles away of the things that we buy... As we try to build this view and try to educate ourselves about the enormity of our culture, the information that we have to work with is these gigantic numbers, things in numbers in the millions, in the hundreds of millions, in the billions and now in the trillions. Bush’s new budget is in the trillions, and these are numbers that our brain just doesn’t have the ability to comprehend. We can’t make meaning out of these enormous statistics. And so that’s what I’m trying to do with my work, is to take these numbers, these statistics from the raw language of data, and to translate them into a more universal visual language that can be felt. Because my belief is if we can feel these issues, if we can feel these things more deeply, then they’ll matter to us more than they do now. And if we can find that, then we’ll be able to find, within each one of us, what it is that we need to find to face the big question, which is how do we change? That, to me, is the big question that we face as a people right now... How do we change as a culture, and how do we each individually take responsibility for the one piece of the solution that we are in charge of? And that is our own behavior. My belief is that you don’t have to make yourself bad to look at these issues, I’m not pointing the finger at America in a blaming way, I’m simply saying this is who we are right now, and if there are things that we see that we don’t like about our culture, then we have a choice. The degree of integrity that each of us can bring to the surface, to bring to this question, the depth of character that we can summon as we show up for the question of how do we change, it’s already defining us as individuals and as a nation, and it will continue to do that on into the future. And it will profoundly affect the wellbeing, the quality of life, of the billions of people who are going to inherit the results of our decisions. I’m not speaking abstractly about this. I’m speaking... this is who we are in this room. Right now. In this moment.”

“Depicts 38,000 shipping containers, the number of containers processed through American ports every twelve hours.”





“Depicts two million plastic beverage bottles, the number used in the US every five minutes.”





“Depicts 1.14 million brown paper supermarket bags, the number used in the US every hour.”



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NEW URBANIST ‘SOUTHLANDS’ A C.U.V. WHEN WE NEED A PRIUS?

an exchange between trevor boddy and andrés duany

The following is an edited version of an exchange sparked by Boddy’s May 18, 2008 column in the Canadian newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*.

TSAWWASSEN, BRITISH COLUMBIA:

May 13, 2008 saw several downer developments, and it wasn’t even a Friday. First, huge layoffs were announced at Canadian auto-makers, in large part because our factories turn out vehicle lines tending towards SUVs and light trucks, and Americans have stopped buying both.

What’s worse, there was a linked announcement that our countrymen — in relative terms — are still buying these gas-guzzlers. Lulled into false security by a commodity price boom that temporarily shields us “hewers of wood and drawers of water” from global financial and sustainability realities, Canadians are still drivin’ like it’s 1999.

Later the same day things got even glummer. The occasion was the presentation of drawings and ideas for the Southlands project in the Vancouver suburb of South Delta, produced in a design charrette stage-managed by Andrés Duany, the co-founder of New Urbanism. Having its first and best expression in the works of Duany and partner Elizabeth Playter-Zyberk, the New Urbanism is best known for drawing on 19th century urban forms (and all too often, 19th century architecture) as a means of improving the layouts and livability of suburban tract developments. Straddling the communities of Boundary Bay and Tsawwassen, right next to the American border, developer Century Group would like to turn these pastoral fields and woodlots into the hub of an all-new suburban Southlands community for 5,000 people.

Worse and worse, I thought, as I watched as the ever-entertaining architect Duany and his flown-in specialist team presented leafy, low-density suburbia, while claiming for themselves a front line position in the good green wars. In his talk, Mr. Duany boasted the two schemes presented — cutely named “Tuck” and “Sweep” — were “pioneering designs.”

These were “pioneering” solely in the rustic architectural vocabulary that kept popping up in the charrette-produced drawings. Call it Pseudo-Agro Vernacular, Mr. Duany’s presentation cited 19th century rural Swedish agricultural buildings as valid sources for building “up here in the north,” on the shores of “Bounty Bay,” he said.

In the Lower Mainland’s urban fringes, we still take the New Urbanism seriously, in the same way we still lust after Ford Explorers. My own view is that history will regard the New Urbanism as a last gasp attempt to reform suburbanism from within, before high energy prices and new respect for land compels much denser development.

This is the same kind of density combined with high amenity that has turned the very word “Vancouver” into a verb and an ideology: Progressive cities now “Vancouverize” because they believe in “Vancouverism.”

We Vancouverites sell American planners and developers high density, high amenity urban development attuned to the needs of the new century, then local developers like the Century Group go consultant shopping in Miami and end up buying the terminally pleasant nostalgia of New Urbanism. Go Figure.

Going to figures actually helps puncture New Urbanism’s claims, especially the spiel that schemes like the one for Southlands presents a radical increase in suburban residential densities. While this may be true by the standards of sunbelt United States, Canadian cities have historically developed at higher densities, largely because we lack such sprawl-inducing public policies as the tax deductibility of mortgage interest (even for vacation homes!) plus the US Department of Defense-funded Interstate Highway system.

The New Urbanism is so dangerous because it makes claims to cure the very sprawl and social class separation that it causes. There are worse ways to develop the suburbs but none so two-faced. The New Urbanism is city planning’s equivalent of the “Compact Utility Vehicle.” The Duany charrette’s “Tuck” and “Sweep” models offer us a Honda Element and Land Rover LR2 when what Tsawwassen really needs is a Prius or a Smart Car.

The stakes are huge for the Century Group, owned by the long-established South Delta Hodgins family. I cannot fathom the perambulations of land use policies that left Southlands’ 531 acres outside of BC’s development-inhibiting Agricultural Land Reserve boundaries, but such is the case. A proposal to put 1,895 units here from former owner George Spetifore was defeated in 1989 because planners and politicians objected to the sprawl it would induce across the entire Point Roberts peninsula.

If the Century Group’s current proposal is approved, the 2,000 housing units planned there will be worth between one and two billion dollars, so dropping a few hundred thousand on a lavish design charrette with pricey imported talent is chump change.

The Century Group is sensitive to perceptions (if not land use control reality) of this as a bucolic or natural zone and proposes about one third of Southlands’ site to be left in a semi-natural state, one third to be used for intensive gardens for residents and one third to be yards and houses. This said, the resulting overall density will be barely four dwelling-units per acre, only a 5% increase from the defeated 1989 proposal.

Mr. Duany is a superb speaker and even better salesman, but Vancouver has New Urbanists who are his design equals, notably two teacher-consultants: UBC’s Patrick Condon and SFU’s Michael von Hausen (both advisers to Southlands.) But even in the hands of designers as talented as all of these, the New Urbanism is ever more a dead letter. I hope South Delta rethinks things before this mock-utopia of gardens and lanes gets built.

ANDRÉS DUANY’S REPLY:

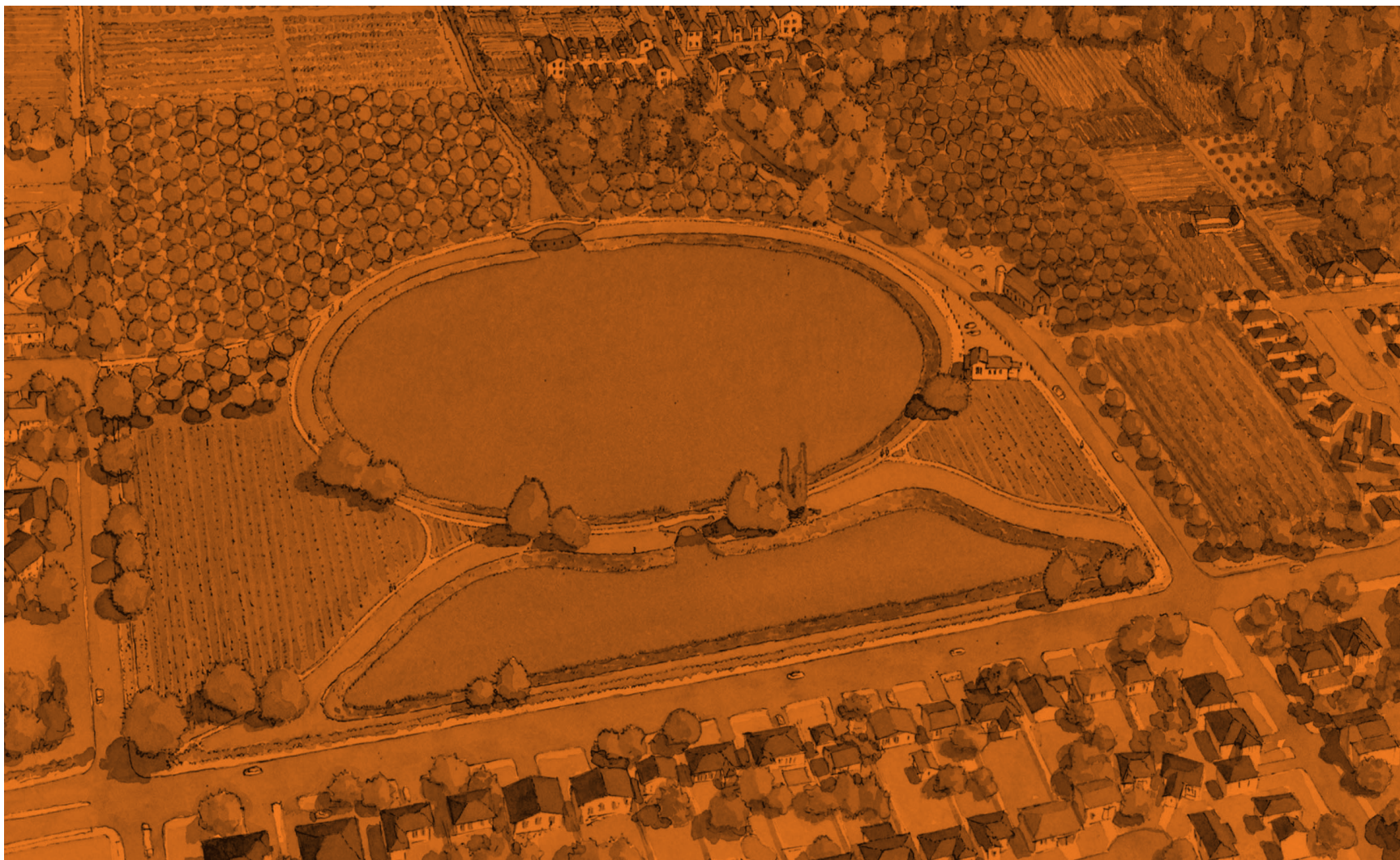
[In his May 16 review] Trevor Boddy makes simpleminded remarks about developing Southlands. That is unfortunate. Urbanism — the habitat of the human species — abhors simplification.

Mr. Boddy begins with the bumper-sticker insight that high density is the prerequisite for urbanism. He implies Vancouver is great because it is dense, while Southlands is *ipso facto* deficient because it is “barely four units per acre.” In so doing he ignores the elemental distinction between “gross” and “net” density. Southlands, which is designed specifically to embody food self-sufficiency, devotes 42% of the land to agriculture and keeps 26% open for other purposes. That kind of diversity — and not a crude single standard — is what authentic urbanism calls for. Such a range corresponds to the immense variety of human needs and desires. It also corresponds to the reality of a Vancouver that Mr. Boddy has only incompletely observed.

Besides, not all urbanism should be like that stereotype of [high residential, inner city] Vancouver: a single simplistic ideal. Tsawwassen is a very different kind of place, with its own history, desires and destiny. There is a pragmatic reason for the difference. The plan for Southlands integrates food security so that it can be more resilient in the long run than the infrastructure-dependent high rises of Mr. Boddy’s “Vancouverism.” For a reasoned

“The New Urbanism is so dangerous because it makes claims to cure the very sprawl and social class separation that it causes. There are worse ways to develop the suburbs but none so two-faced.”

TREVOR BODDY, *GLOBE AND MAIL*



THE 56TH STREET INTERFACE A LAKE FRONTING ON 56TH STREET WILL FORM THE FOREGROUND OF A PLEASING VISTA OVER THE OPEN FARMLAND. THE LAKE WILL FUNCTION AS A RESERVOIR FOR NATURAL DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION WATER. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE SOUTHLANDS PROJECT – WWW.SOUTHLANDSINTRANSITION.CA

explanation of this alarming prospect, see James Kunstler's book *The Long Emergency*. It is for such reasons that we must protect and cherish alternative models of urbanism no less than any other kind of habitat.

Mr. Boddy's demand for only local planners for Vancouver is small-minded. Does he not know that among the virtues of urbanism is cosmopolitanism? It is exceedingly provincial to be Vancouver-centric, and in my grateful experience, it is uncommon. When I have been professionally engaged in Vancouver — planning East Fraserlands, for example — I have encountered a robust pride but never such insular arrogance.

Mr. Boddy's small town mentality appears in snide comments regarding the Swedish wooden houses which we suggest should influence Southlands' architecture. He does not explain why he thinks it is a dumb idea (perhaps it is new to him). The architecture of the North European belt corresponds well to Vancouver's culture and its climate. Wood is the most sustainable technique for Canada, and the wooden versions of these northern buildings have been perfected only in the Scandinavian peninsula. Mr. Boddy, I suppose, would wish us to confine local building to the known brands of the concrete-and-glass downtown and to the arts-and-crafts style which permeates the suburbs — as if those styles were not once foreign!

Although Mr. Boddy dismisses Southlands as old-hat New Urbanism, it is truly an innovative design. Its inventive insistence on intensified agricultural activity at the urban/agricultural edge takes it beyond the one-dimensional, old and failed regional Urban Boundary between the developed and the open — a technique that has proven inefficient for agriculture and untenable in the long run.

It may be that Vancouver does not need to learn anything further about urbanism. But I'll bet that only Mr. Boddy is quite content with what he already knows; the real experts never stop learning.

TREVOR BODDY RESPONDS:

Duany's response advertently buttresses my analysis, while painting himself into a corner of suburban survivalism swirled with pastoral reverie — Mad Max goes to Sunnybrook Farm. It is revealing that he refers to the last chapters of Kunstler's *The Long Emergency*, which calls for victory gardens, home-made clothes and loaded shotguns beside every exurban door that he believes will soon become the last stand of civilization, when there is no more electricity to make those Vancouver elevators work.

What hurts is that I admire both of their critiques (Kunstler's of energy-wasting sprawl, Duany's of High-Modern urbanism), but reject the updated hippie dreams they propose as solutions. Both men enforce the suburban ideal they pretend to critique — home schooling

“Not all urbanism should be like that stereotype of [high residential, inner city] Vancouver: a single simplistic ideal. Tsawwassen is a very different kind of place, with it's own history, desires and destiny.”

ANDRÉS DUANY, PRINCIPAL, DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK & COMPANY

and re-tooling in Kunstler's apocalyptic, single-family redouts, while Duany presents low-density housing tracts interwoven with flower and herb gardens as the ultimate in enlightened, efficient and self-sufficient city building.

This is because something more than the stock market, automotive industry and banking system has melted down lately. The automobile-oriented, low-density, no-money-down suburban ideal is at the core of this mess. To the degree that the pretty compromises of New Urbanism keep this system operating, it will be as culpable for this continuing mess as any hedge fund crafter or mortgage re-packager. Developers and architects here — after being scrutinized by my pen — will tell you I hardly regard our city as perfect, but Vancouverism makes some fresh arguments about how North American cities can provide a high standard of life while questioning the whole package of freeways, land use separations and impoverishment of the public realm.

True provincials, Duany and Kunstler can only see the future as a variation on the United States of the 19th century. Too bad, because we are now fully immersed in the post-American 21st, with new sources of ideas, political power and yes, money. With crucial city building issues before us, the New Urbanism is only part way there, which is nowhere at all.

VANCOUVER ARCHITECTURE CRITIC AND URBANIST TREVOR BODDY IS CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION *VANCOUVERISM: WESTCOAST ARCHITECTURE + CITY-BUILDING* (WWW.VANCOUVERISM.CA) WHICH RUNS IN PARIS NOVEMBER 20 TO JANUARY 15, AFTER RUNNING LAST SUMMER IN LONDON'S TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

ANDRÉS DUANY IS A FOUNDING PRINCIPAL AT DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK & COMPANY (DPZ), WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS A LEADER OF THE NEW URBANISM, AND AUTHOR OF *THE NEW CIVIC ART AND SUBURBAN NATION: THE RISE OF SPRAWL AND THE DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM*.



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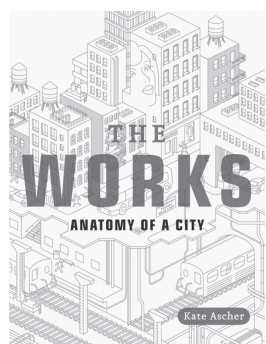
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THE NEW ANATOMY

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THE WORKS: ANATOMY OF A CITY

KATE ASCHER

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After four paragraphs, the short introduction of Kate Ascher's book *The Works: Anatomy of a City* predictably presents the organismic metaphor: "The chapters that follow explore five of the most interesting, and in many cases least visible, components of New York City's infrastructure: moving people, moving freight, providing power, supporting communications, and keeping the city clean. Like the essential systems that keep

a human body running, each of these is vital to the functioning of the metropolis." Though the book is great, filled with lots of information about how this or that aspect of a city (particularly New York City — the city of cities) functions, this metaphor, which is the central or organizing concept of the book, has deep problems.

So, the book contains two levels. At the first level, the level of information, interesting facts, obscure data, *The Works* is a great success. The writing and the colorful illustrations are simple, and frequently the sections ("Substations and Transformers," "Harbor Maintenance," "Subway Announcements," "Classification Yards," "Pipeline Deliveries," "Exporting Garbage") provide odd or unexpected details. For example, the Long Lines building on 33 Thomas Street in lower Manhattan, which was built in 1974 for AT&T's long distance network, can "withstand nuclear fallout"; or, a torpedo-shaped robot is used to inspect the walls of aqueducts for cracks and leaks; or, that "[r]emote control doesn't turn an appliance off or on—it just activates an 'instant on' device that always remains on. So for every remote activated, there's an electrical appliance drawing electricity from the grid in 'sleep' mode."

The city never sleeps, never freezes, never ceases consuming. And because urban life is this restlessness that knows no way to cease and sees in rest the same dark relationship that the wakeful see in sleep ("I never sleep cause sleep is the cousin of death" rapped Nas in "NY State of Mind"), each chapter in *The Works* is packed with dizzying statistics of the big city's daily existence: Everyday the subway system in NYC handles 4.5 million passengers; or, NYC has 11,400 traffic lights; or, NYC eats 100 million bananas a year. Trains enter and exit the city nonstop. Ships enter and exit the harbor nonstop. Planes arrive and depart nonstop. The rhythms of nature mean nothing to New York. Only a catastrophe — a blackout, a terrorist attack — can slow or stop the city's production and reproduction of itself.

But let's get back to the second level, the problematic level, the level of the book's organismic metaphor. It is an old metaphor. It goes back at least to Book IV of Aristotle's *Politics*. The body parts, or organs, function for the well-being of the whole, the body. The city has a head (its city hall, libraries and universities); the city has a stomach (its restaurants and markets); the city has intestines and an anus (garbage collection, sewer system and waste treatment). Fine. It all makes perfect sense. But the neat fit of the organismic metaphor distorts more than it makes apparent. Organs, as we understand them, are essentially fixed, hard, final. They do not change what they are and what they do. We are born with a number of organs, live with them and die when the vital ones collapse or wear out. We may try to replace an organ ("Stabbed

A city's assemblages are in constant transformation. The energy, waste and traffic systems are never at rest or stable. In short, a city can completely remake itself.

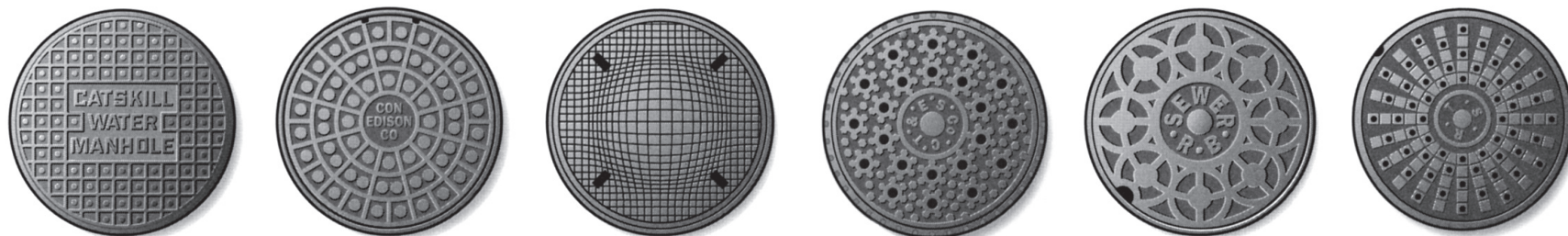
that man right in his heart/Gave him a transplant for a brand new start," rapped Grandmaster Mel Melle in "The Message"), but it does nothing different or new as an organ and function. A city's parts, or assemblages (and now I'm borrowing directly from Manuel DeLanda's borrowing of Gilles Deleuze), are much more flexible and can be radically transformed.

In *A New Philosophy of Society*, DeLanda distinguishes organs from assemblages is this way: An organ is dependent on the whole, the body for which it functions. Remove it from this whole and it stops and dies. An eyeball outside of its body of origin is nothing. An assemblage, however, can leave a body, exist on its own or connect with another body, another organization. Though I prefer the assemblage model to the organ one, it is not because I agree with this detachment and reattachment concept ("relations of exteriority," as Deleuze calls it) but because it indicates that organs are fixed and assemblages are flexible, not only in their movement from one state to another but also in their very composition. Assemblages can be reassembled and redefined.

A city's assemblages are in constant transformation. The energy, waste and traffic systems are never at rest or stable. In short, a city can completely remake itself. Take for instance the fact that in certain cities, the old, underground railway system is now used for cyber optics. The old use: transporting goods and people. The new one: transporting data. It's a completely different use of the assemblage. It's as if the heart were transformed from a blood-pumper to an organ that pumped memories. Because the function has changed, the whole meaning of the organ has changed.

The Works' reliance on the organ metaphor, rather than a more flexible paradigm, results in a short and weak last chapter, the future section. A far richer picture of the future can be drawn from an understanding of the city that sees its parts, functions and infrastructure as flexible, transitory and restless. The city never sleeps.

CHARLES TONDERAI MUDEDE IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR FOR *THE STRANGER*. HE WAS BORN IN AN AFRICANS-ONLY HOSPITAL IN QUE QUE (NOW CALLED KWE KWE), RHODESIA (NOW CALLED ZIMBABWE), IN 1969—KWE KWE WAS, AND STILL IS, A STEEL TOWN, MUCH LIKE CHARLES DICKENS'S COKETOWN. MUDEDE IS ALSO AN ADJUNCT PROFESSOR AT PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY, AND HIS WORK HAS APPEARED IN *THE VILLAGE VOICE*, *SYDNEY MORNING DAILY*, AND *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, AMONG OTHERS. MUDEDE BELIEVES IN REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST AND DAS CAPITAL.



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CONDITIONS
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Here are the four warning signs that you're in the presence of an "art" architecture book, meaning that the book-as-object has subsumed its content: 1) oversized letters bleed off the page, amputated in

mid-form to be reunited somewhere down the road 2) vertical and horizontal text exist on several, often illegible paper and ink combinations (try reading a sentence of black ink on red paper) 3) illustrations of designs are of isolated fragments and 4) instead of project descriptions there are sycophantic "interviews" and pontifications on topics you didn't know were architectural — like Sex and Nakedness.

Conditions, a book documenting the work of Snøhetta, a prominent Norwegian design firm, meets all four requirements, which is a disappointment to those of us who find the firm's work of interest. The office takes its name from a Norwegian mountain peak; at first glance they may appear to be dedicated

to Things Northern but are in fact an international affair, following somewhat in the mold of OMA (from the Netherlands, but who would know?). An 80-person firm with offices in Oslo and New York, they've been designing architecture, landscapes and interiors internationally since 1987. They got a big boost onto the world stage by winning competitions for — and building — the \$100M Alexandria library, which opened in 2002, and the Oslo Opera House, opened this year at a cost of \$745M.

This book, *Conditions* — designed and published by Lars Müller in Switzerland, who's produced many "art" architecture books, notably on Steven Holl — contains no plans, sections or elevations and almost no overall photographs of the buildings. The visual components consist of artistically-inclined fragment-photos and artistically-inclined diagrams with a lot of talk in between. Nevertheless, if you make the effort to peel back the layers of verbiage and take a long hard look underneath the graphic camouflage, you'll discover a design firm of real talent, skill and intelligence earnestly posing thoughtful questions to the world in the medium of built environments. A forthcoming second volume on this firm is called *Works*, also by Müller. My hope is that some of these provocative designs will escape the graphic straightjacket imposed upon them in the current book and be allowed to speak for themselves, for these are all buildings with much to say.



**INVESTIGATE ASK TELL
DRAW BUILD**
3XN ARCHITECTS
MATTEO CAINER
BLACK DOG PUBLISHING
2008, \$49.95

London-based Black Dog Publishing produces, like Lars Müller, books on both art and architecture, and their book, *Investigate Ask*

Tell Draw Build, is a monograph on the Danish firm 3xn architects. Like Snøhetta, they are what could be termed an "art" architecture firm and like the preceding book, this exuberant production is hardly a traditionally modern layout (in the Tschichold-ian sense). The difference is that this volume places the architecture front and center with graphics and commentary in more supporting roles.

3xn architects (three partners each with the last initial of "n") is of nearly identical age and size to Snøhetta, though instead of a second office in New York, they have two within their home country, in Aarhus and in Copenhagen. The firm presents larger-scale work here — hotels, theaters, office blocks, towers, museums and schools — so their ideas are necessarily of that scale. In a collaborative spirit mostly unknown in the US, Kim Nielsen of this firm meets once or twice a year in a regular informal discussion group with Kjetil Thorsen from Snøhetta, Ben Van Berkel (UN Studio) and Olafur Eliasson (Danish artist).

The book's language is the architectural dialect with which we're all familiar — not simplistic but comprehensible — presenting ideas in a way that clarifies, not obfuscates, the stories these buildings have to tell. Make no mistake: This is a flashy firm unafraid of tilted planes, twisted and swooping masses, random fenestration patterns and all the rest of today's current design trends. But there's a convincing narrative to each one that makes them come alive, whether or not you're prone to this brand of form-making.

Their most widely published project is possibly The Lighthouse, a strange mix of luxury apartments and non-profit housing visually indistinguishable from one another (it could happen only in Denmark!) in what will be Denmark's tallest building, designed within a collaborative team that includes UN Studio and Gehl Architects. Another high profile project is their Museum of Liverpool, a major museum opening within a year, though what exactly it contains — other than memorabilia of John, Paul, George and Ringo — remains unclear.

Graphically, it's difficult to find a specific project — the table of contents lists ideas, like "storytelling," "doppelganger," "harlequin" and so on — but the project titles are clearly displayed on page headers, and there are even plans and sections for those of us ancient types still needing them. Each project has a concise interview and project description



TOP: RENAULT TRUCKLAND. SHOWROOM AND TRAINING FACILITY. 3XN. LYON, FRANCE.
ABOVE: KARMØY FISHING MUSEUM, NORWAY. SNØHETTA. ©RICARDO GOMES.

high on content and low on hype. It's interesting to note how important competitions are to a firm like this — half the partners in the firm head up "Competition Departments," areas largely absent from American firms.

All told, this is a handsome and informative volume worth having on your shelf. When I finished looking through it, I felt as if I'd visited this energetic firm for a day, working with comrades on ideas I could understand. After putting down the *Snøhetta* book, I felt as if I'd just awoken from one of those dreams in which I was being given a classroom examination in a subject I knew nothing about, in a language I couldn't identify.

GLOBAL DANISH ARCHITECTURE #1

MARIANNE IBLER (ED)

ARCHIPRESS M. 2006, \$88.50

GLOBAL DANISH ARCHITECTURE #2 - HOUSING

MARIANNE IBLER (ED)

ARCHIPRESS M. 2007, \$88.50

Some of the best architectural publications today are hybrid book-journals, sometimes called "bookazines," the most well-known being the Spanish journal *El Croquis*. So it's no surprise that the richest and most rewarding of the Scandinavian volumes on my desk are such hybrids, namely two of the *Global Danish Architecture* series, edited by Marianne Ibler. The first volume, #1, has a wide variety of building types by an equally wide range of offices large and small, while the second, #2, focuses entirely on housing by Danish firms. These oversized books are packed with visual information portraying around 50 projects each — projects from 11 firms in #1 and from twice that number in #2, with a minimum of explanatory text.

As you might expect, there are no longer any stereotypes from the home of Danish Modern. Except for a few buildings with a clear homage to Scandinavian ideals of the 1930s-1960s, the nationality in the title of these books could probably be substituted with that of any European first or second-world country. Like it or not, this is universal civilization and it presents itself in stark contrast to the regional Scandinavian modernism that blossomed in the mid-twentieth century, where new ideas were incorporated into a social and aesthetic system without throwing long-held traditions overboard. In today's world, offices are located in cities to be close to projects or airports, and thinking is "global," without reference to local cultures, in part because evidence of such cultures is fast becoming extinct.

But in the exploration of housing types, the Scandinavian mentality reflects some of its past and as such continues to excel. Housing was perhaps the strongest contribution of this regional movement that so skillfully integrated modernist thought with regional attributes. Because countries like Denmark verge on a social democracy, the architecture of housing for all income levels and family structures had a high status that clearly continues to the present day. There is a collective imagination at work here that is astonishing



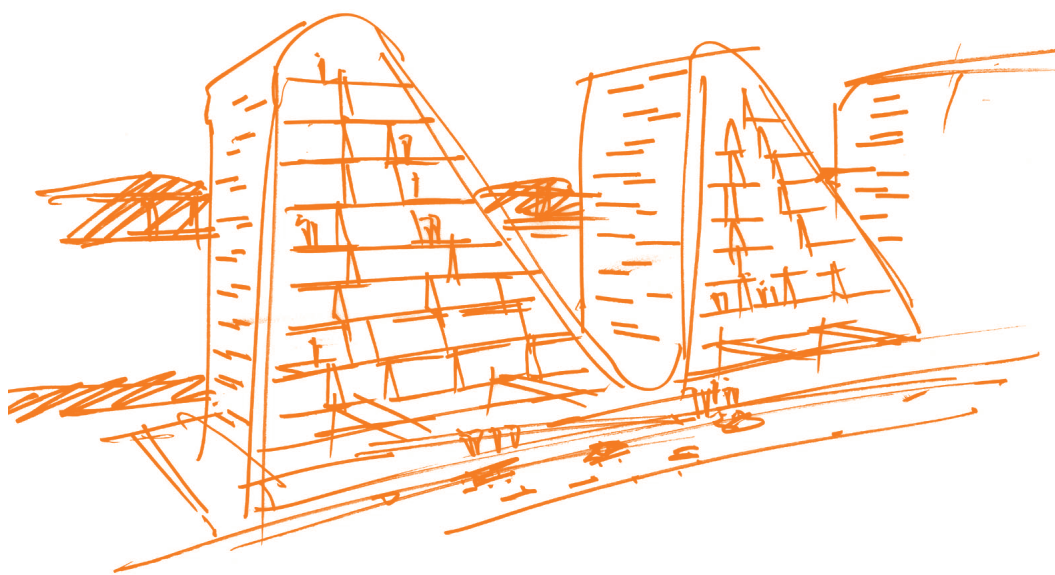
ABOVE: Ø-HUSENE, BJERRINGBRO, DENMARK. KPF ARKITEKTER.
BOTTOM LEFT: "THE WAVE" OR VEJLE BAY RESIDENCES — 140 UNITS, VEJLE, DENMARK. HENNING LARSEN ARCHITECTS.

when compared with the paucity of ideas in the United States, where this level of creativity is reserved for institutions or private houses of extreme wealth. The Housing issue (#2) shows off these mixed living environments and conveniently organizes projects by typology, making it a useful reference book in the office or studio.

Another surprise is that some of the simplest and most restrained projects in these books were created by the larger firms. One of them in particular, senior housing by Arkitema — an office with over 250 people in four locations — is a direct remake of Jorn Utzon's mid-century Kingo and Fredensborg courtyard schemes. But it is an homage of great skill, capturing the quiet strength and power of the original while altering the forms and materials to reflect contemporary conditions with a firm and confident hand. There is also plenty of the Koolhaas-school in the books — buildings made to look as outlandish as possible — but overall there is a refreshing absence of bombastic rhetoric, both visual and verbal.

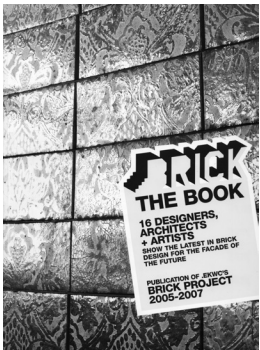
In all these books, there is the issue of saturation-by-computer-rendering, a phenomenon whereby all buildings take on a similar appearance by virtue of using the same digital zeros and ones to create their character. But in these two Danish compilations, there appears to be a greater effort by many of the firms to use advanced rendering technologies to focus on people and their relationships to buildings rather than on the buildings as art objects in space — though perhaps I'm only projecting this in a desperate attempt to give a Scandinavian regional identity to the work. To find out, I recommend that you simply order these two books and see for yourself. The third volume in this outstanding series, available this Fall, will focus on Climate, Energy, & Sustainability — and judging from the advance brochure, it will showcase the same high level of creativity as in previous volumes.

A recent academic study revealed Denmark's population to be the happiest on earth. No doubt this enviable state of bliss can be attributed not to the stable economy, strong education or good health of this tiny nation (half the size of Maine) but to the exemplary quality of its everyday architecture. Conversely, the bleakness of mainstream American building coincides directly with our low happiness quotient (number 23). But I may not be objective and, to paraphrase a classic poem: Has God's supply of tolerable architects / Fallen, in fact, so low? / Or do I overvalue Danes at the expense of Yanks / Do I? / It might be so.



BRICK + INNOVATION + CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

barbara swift



BRICK: THE BOOK
16 DESIGNERS, ARCHITECTS + ARTISTS
EDITORS, NOOR ZWINKELS AND RENÉ ERVEN
ILLUSTRATED. 105 PP.
EUROPEAN CERAMIC WORK CENTRE. PAPER, \$15.

The European Ceramic Work Centre's 2005–2007 Brick Project has culminated in a book documenting the three-year project. The EKWC is an unusual cultural organization providing opportunities to pursue research and experimentation with ceramics in a remarkable environment specifically supporting exploration backed by technical advisors,

facilities and colleagues from a broad range of disciplines. A workshop complex intent on the advancement of ceramics, the Centre in s-Hertogenbosch provides approximately 50 residencies per year; via the Centre of Excellence, special programs focus on exploration and innovation within the Dutch tradition of experimental design.

The Brick Project, funded in part by the German brick manufacturer Wienerberger, intended to stimulate technical and artistic considerations of “brick” with potentially tangible results. Sixteen proposals by artists, architects, and designers resulted in explorations of temperature transfer, vegetative support, ceramic scrims, transparent brick with optical elements, decomposing bricks, sound attenuation strategies and surface and reflective manipulation; forms ranged from brick-like pieces to vertebra to prefab facades. Some addressed aesthetics only, and others, function. In overlapping three-month residencies, participants were surrounded by each other, each group physically exploring their ideas, which culminated in an exhibit.

Brick: The Book is structured as an expanded exhibition catalog. Essays begin the book, followed by statements and images of work by each of the participants. The essays are by a diverse group including the editor of *Mark Magazine*; the marketing director for Wienerberger, an architect; the directors of the Centre and Stijlinstituut; and a design historian. A good editor could have taken the sometimes rambling texts and musings, the challenged translations, and quickly whipped the book into shape. This aside, the essays offer a view of exploration within the context of Western European thought. The clearest essay, by Peter van Kester, groups the efforts into five major categories — natural processes, crafts, durability, skin and concept — within the context of disciplinary cross fertilization and a reaction to modernism.

Creating an environment supporting risk and innovation using brick, such a common material — clay and such a familiar form — resulted in a glorious circumstance to explore fundamental questions. Does brick have to be in the typical modular form? Can it function in more ways? Can it be blue? Can it exhibit an accelerated natural decay? Can it grow vegetation? Does it have to be so heavy? Can it be transparent, bringing light inside? Can it be a prefabricated panel? Can it communicate emotion and myth? It is fascinating to see textile artist Marian Bijlenga's ceramics appearing like layers of felted wool; Jose Rojas's beautifully crumbling, thin-skinned, chocolate bricks; Arnout Visser and Erik Jan Kwakkel's exquisite porcelain rectangular sponges sitting among a multitude of prototypes by crazy industrial designers; and finally, Marieke Pauwels' decorative gold surface ornamentation in the Belgian architectural tradition. The Netherlands is a country of brick and the group has my admiration for tackling the concept of brick—a form and material with a ubiquitous presence and history.

This is one of those books I will keep, to flip through and read periodically, to goose my thinking and my view of the common thing — like a brick — and by association my assumptions about other common things.



ARTIST HILDE A. DANIELSEN.

PLEASE, NO MORE DESIGNER WORDS!

part I

ron van der veen

EDITOR'S NOTE: DUE TO THE URGENT NATURE OF THIS APPEAL AND ITS FAR-REACHING RAMIFICATIONS ON THE DESIGN COMMUNITY, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR ARCADE HAS DECIDED TO PUBLISH THE FOLLOWING LETTER IN ITS ENTIRETY. IN FAIRNESS, SINCE WE USUALLY LIMIT RON'S SIDE YARD RANTS TO 800 WORDS PER ISSUE, THIS TIMELY AND INSIGHTFUL COMMENTARY WILL BE ISSUED IN TWO PARTS. KELLY WALKER.

Dear Northwest Design Community:

Please let me introduce myself before I make my appeal. I am Scott Ingmoss*, a nurse administrator at a very large hospital in Seattle. More importantly, I hold the dubious title of brother-in-law to Ron van der Veen, your esteemed Side Yard columnist.**

Today, I am taking the drastic step of writing to you — the architectural design community — because after over 20 years of association with Ron and his artsy friends, I frankly can't stand the way you all talk anymore. I implore you, from this day forward, to use normal English, street slang, 'Merican, or any other dialect that will help us, your left-brained friends and colleagues, understand what the hell you are talking about.

I have to admit, it used to be kind of quirky and cute hearing Ron wax eloquently about his design aesthetic, even though it never made sense to me. Words like "charrette," "synergistic" and "genius loci" impressed me at first — until he started using them to describe football logos, front lawns and spoons. Then it hit me: He doesn't know what these words and phrases mean, either! He's a bull-shitter!

From conversations with Ron and his friends, and the design magazines that adorn his coffee table, I have concluded that "juxtaposition" is probably the most over-used architectural babble in the profession. For a long time I was too intimidated to ask what it meant. I thought he would scoff at me, a lowly plebe with no awareness of the innate beauty of the world. In fact, the first time I heard him say "juxtaposition," I thought he was saying, "it's just a position." Once, I remember thinking he was referring to someone's sleeping habits when he said, "It's just a position of slumbering masses." When I finally gathered the nerve to ask him the meaning of the word, he nonchalantly replied, "Oh, it just means that something is next to something else." THAT'S IT?

I just don't get why he (and the rest of you in the design community) can't say things in a direct, sensible manner. In my profession, language is exact: sick people are sick, stethoscopes are what they are, bedpans need no adjectives and there ain't no poetic way to say epidural. Now, I admit that even nurses have their code words: "gomer" refers to a very old person, and "code brown" is our way of saying there is a mess to clean up in room 212! But we nurses have the decency to keep our lingo to ourselves when in mixed company.

I think one of the most peculiar phrases Ron uses is actually a question. He often muses rhetorically, "What does this or that want to be?" as if inanimate objects or unresolved designs have untapped aspirations. I usually offer to get my stethoscope to see if I can hear an answer, but it's really just an excuse to get away from him before he drops another vague, multisyllabic bomb on me.

The straw that broke the camel's back was when Ron came by to help me install some tile floors. He stepped into my bathroom, assumed his philosophical architect stance and said, "You know, marble really speaks to the notion of the permanence of the earth." I laughed so hard I almost desecrated his "sense of place"! What made it even funnier was the fact that we were installing marble-like vinyl tiles!

So, in my effort to cleanse the design community of its oral flatulence, I've compiled a list of words and phrases that you should delete from your lexicon. This is just a smattering of phrases and words I've heard from my dear brother-in-law that have caused me bouts of head scratching. I have also included my best guesses at their definitions.

EDITOR'S NOTE: AS STATED EARLIER, ARCADE WILL ISSUE THE SECOND HALF OF THIS LETTER IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

* AFTER REVIEWING THE FINAL DRAFT OF THIS LETTER AND REALIZING THERE WAS AN EVER-SO-SLIGHT LIKELIHOOD THAT MANAGEMENT OF HIS HOSPITAL MIGHT SEE THE ARTICLE, RON'S BROTHER-IN-LAW DEVELOPED A MEDICAL CASE OF "COLD FEET" AND DECIDED TO CHANGE HIS NAME TO SHIELD HIS JOB. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT DOESN'T SHARE THE WIT EVIDENCED IN THE SEATTLE ARCHITECTURAL COMMUNITY.

** ORIGINAL LETTER INDICATES SPECIFIC SEATTLE BASED HOSPITAL. DUE TO SUBSEQUENT THREATS ON MR. INGMOSS'S "SENSE OF PLACE" BY ARCHITECTS WHO HAVE OBTAINED UNAUTHORIZED COPIES OF THIS LETTER, THE EDITORIAL STAFF HAS OMITTED HERE ANY REFERENCE TO THIS HOSPITAL.

RON VAN DER VEEN IS AN ARCHITECT WITH MITHUN, A COLUMNIST FOR SIDE YARD AND HATES HOSPITALS. SCOTT INGMOSS* IS REALLY HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW. RONV@MITHUN.COM

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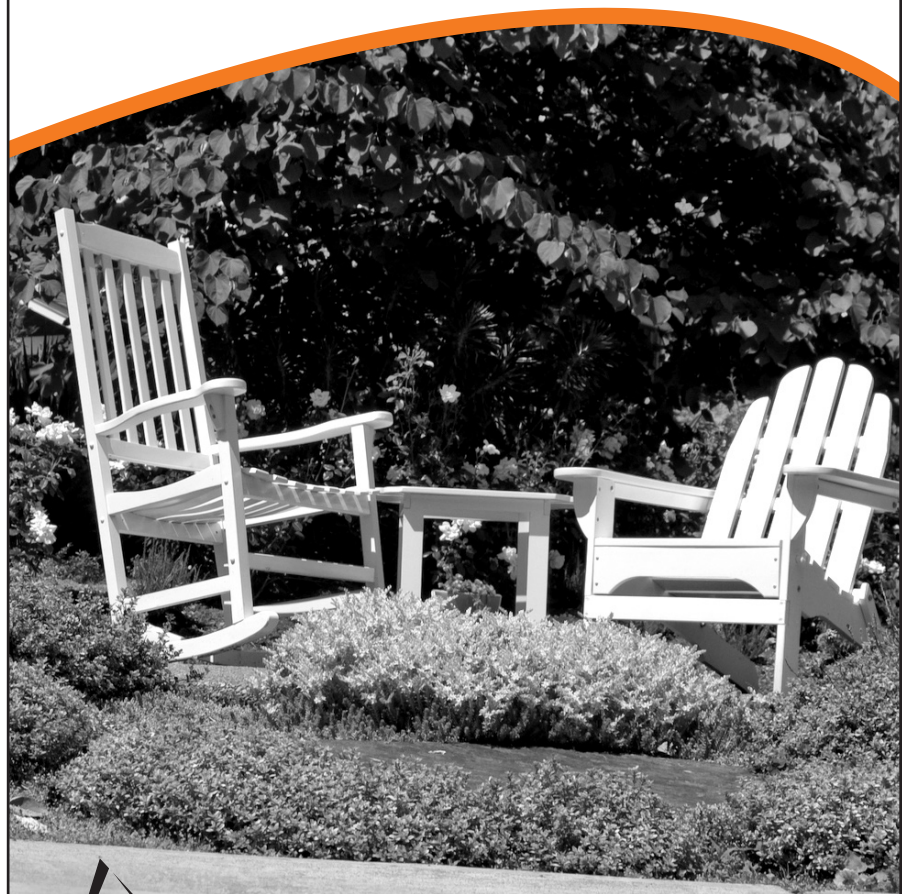
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*Mindy Lehrman Cameron, AIA
Design Principal*

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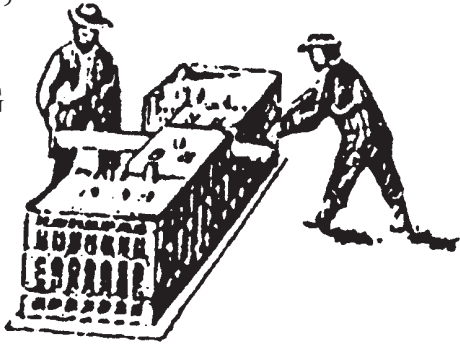
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ONE MAN'S QUEST FOR THE EVERYDAY PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURE

honoring the legacy of stephen a. kliment, faia

sharon egretta sutton

In the three decades before his untimely death on September 10 at age 78, Stephen A. Kliment authored, co-authored, and edited dozens of books that help advance the everyday practice of architecture. Not considering his many other writings, these manuscripts could comprise an entire continuing education curriculum for architects interested in becoming more responsive and responsible to our increasingly diverse society.

Such a curriculum would include *Writing for Design Professionals* (Norton, 2006), *Architectural Sketching and Rendering* (Whitney Library of Design, 1984; Watson Gupstill, 1999) and twelve *Building Type Basics* volumes (Wiley, 2000-2008) along with a rich list of publications on such varied topics as building safety, barrier-free design, building restoration, community design, neighborhood conservation and even environmental education.

Conspicuously absent from this curriculum would be Kliment's never published *America's Black Architects and Builders* (Norton, 2002), a book he was still seeking to bring to fruition at the time of his death. Taking its place would be his groundbreaking diversity series that appeared in *AIArchitect* (October-December 2006), beckoning practitioners, academics, clients and journalists alike to take action against the persistent lack of African American architects.

In the first of this 13-episode series ("Diversity: What the Numbers Tell Us," 13 October 2006), Kliment bluntly declared: "the bare figures defining the status of African American architects are...shameful." He continued by noting the post-graduation attrition rate of 68.4 percent for aspiring black architects, which "stands out as a tragic waste of talent, expenditure and initiative." Reflecting his broader commitment to tackling practical issues, Kliment's concern for the dearth of black architects was evidenced by his honorary membership in the National Organization of Minority Architects.

However, just as Kliment used his unswerving moral authority to call for a profession more representative of our society, he also used his journalistic talent to provide architects with the knowledge base they need to serve that ever more diverse population.

Born in 1930 in what was then Czechoslovakia, Kliment grew up in England and studied architecture in Paris and Cuba. He emigrated to the United States in 1950, earning a Bachelor of Architecture degree (MIT, 1953) and a Master of Architecture degree (Princeton, 1957). Of his early formative experiences, a fellow MIT alumnus, Robert A. Coles, FAIA, said: "Certainly, his experience in war-torn Europe...had a profound impression upon him and committed him to fight for the underdog, whether in the ghettos of Prague or America's inner cities."

Kliment's fight for social justice and practicality in architecture occurred on varied fronts throughout a career that encompassed architecture practice, journalism, and education. After graduating from Princeton, Kliment worked for Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill, and then in 1961, he became editor of *Architectural and Engineering News*. In 1969, he returned to practice as a partner in Caudill Rowlett Scott, where he remained until 1980.

During this period, Kliment's career took a clear turn toward journalism when he began authoring manuscripts that demonstrated his virtuoso command of technical issues. In 1987, Kliment accepted a position as acquisitions editor for Wiley and then, in 1990, he became editor-in-chief of *Architectural Record*. Despite an economic crunch — or perhaps because of it — Kliment crafted a distinctive magazine, overseeing its redesign by Vignelli Associates, inaugurating a column on computers and creating special focus issues. After a six-year tenure at *Record*, Kliment returned to Wiley as founding editor of its *Building Type Basics* series.

Kliment brought his enthusiasm for journalism to his writing courses at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and City University of New York's City College, where he was adjunct professor. Last February, while serving on a visiting team for the National Architectural Accrediting Board, Kliment shared that same enthusiasm with faculty and students in the University of Washington Department of Architecture. Complimenting students on the high quality of their publications, he urged them to continue developing their writing skills as a powerful way to influence the profession.



STEPHEN KLIMENT ON A SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY TRIP TO ALASKA, WITH HIS DAUGHTER PAMELA, TO SEE GOLD MINES/EQUIPMENT AND OLD ABANDONED TOWNS. PHOTO: PAMELA KLIMENT

Hearing these words, I was heartened as I realized that Kliment's advice on amplifying opportunities for black architects applies equally well to my students. In addition to careers in journalism, they can imagine wielding influence through projects that maximize human potential, through corporate careers (especially in the burgeoning health care and medical research industries) and as public administrators and elected officials — advice I will repeat with delight, knowing that I honor the very special legacy of Stephen A. Kliment.

SUTTON, PH.D., FAIA, IS A PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, A FELLOW IN THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND AN INDUCTEE IN THE MICHIGAN WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME. SHE WAS INTERVIEWED ON MARCH 20, 2000 FOR KLIMENT'S NEVER PUBLISHED BOOK ON BLACK ARCHITECTS AND ON MARCH 30, 2007 ALSO FEATURED IN ONE OF HIS MONTHLY *AIARCHITECT* DIVERSITY COLUMNS, WHICH FOLLOWED HIS 2006 DIVERSITY SERIES. FORMERLY PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL ACCREDITING BOARD, SHE IS THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO BE PROMOTED TO FULL PROFESSOR IN AN ACCREDITED PROGRAM OF ARCHITECTURE.

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