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# ARCADE

DIALOGUE ON DESIGN

\$8 FALL 2013

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# Designing Data

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KAREN CHENG



**ART MATTERS** Welcome to Simpson City by Charles Mudele **PRACTICE** Designing to All the Senses: An Interview with Joshua Aidlin by BUILD IIc  
**PERSPECTIVE** Double Framed: The Architectural Photography of Aditya Prakāsh by Vikramāditya Prakāsh **BOOK REVIEW** Leaned In by John Parman

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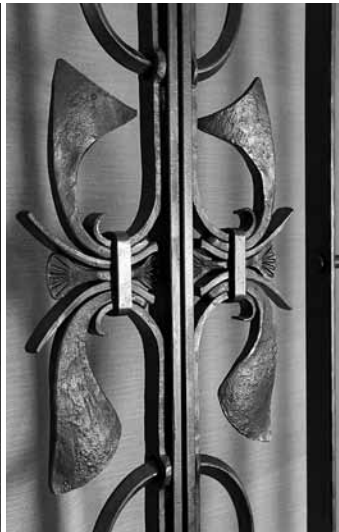


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The mission of ARCADE is to incite dialogue about design and the built environment; our goal is to inspire designers, creative professionals and design enthusiasts to reconsider how design impacts the world around us and, in turn, instigate positive change. ARCADE magazine is published quarterly by the Northwest Architectural League, a nonprofit educational organization. Donations to ARCADE are tax-deductible. Visit [ARCADENW.ORG](http://ARCADENW.ORG) to join ARCADE online.

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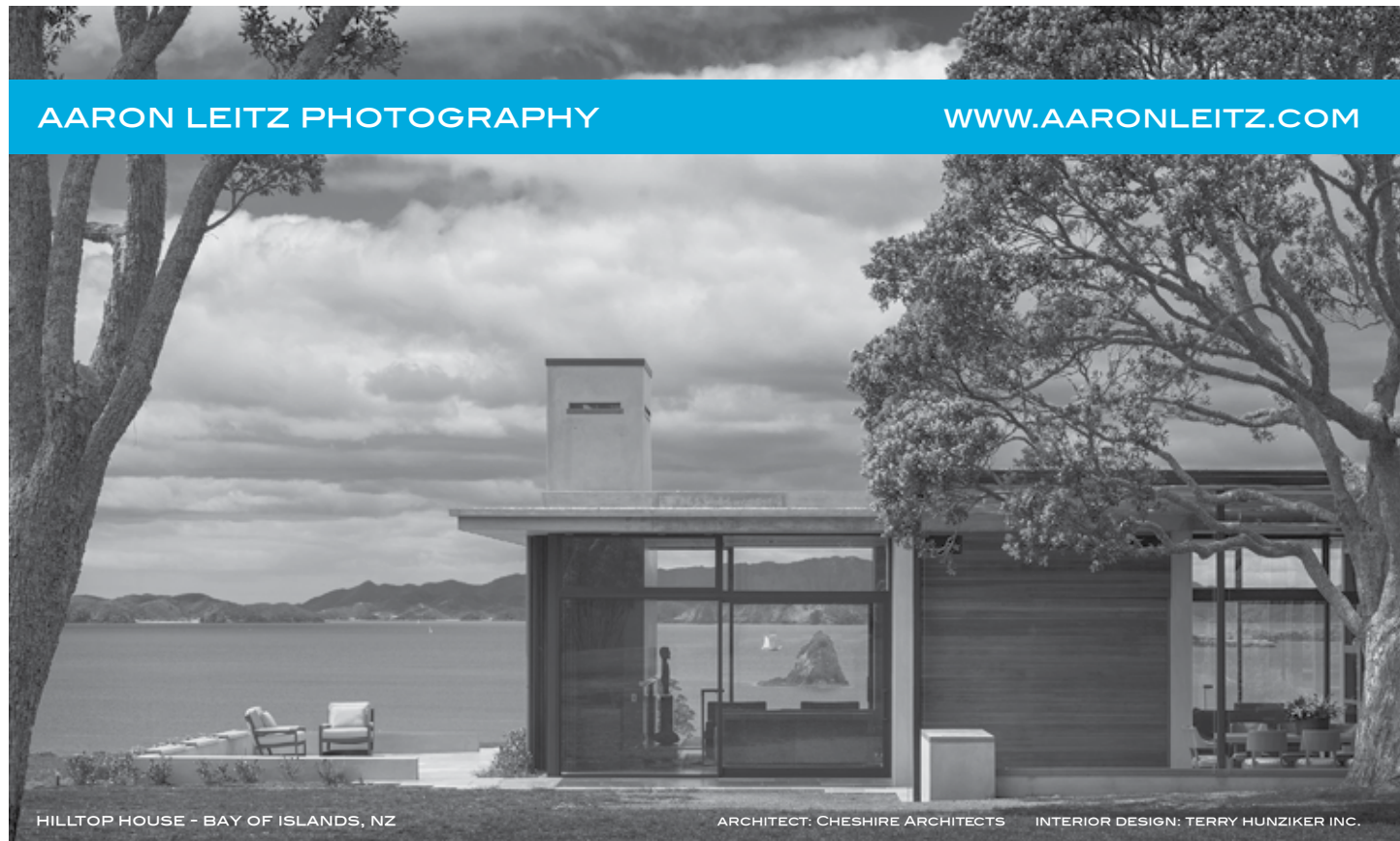
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"US Casualties in Iraq: 03/2003-05/2008," designed by Owen Irianto (see page 45).

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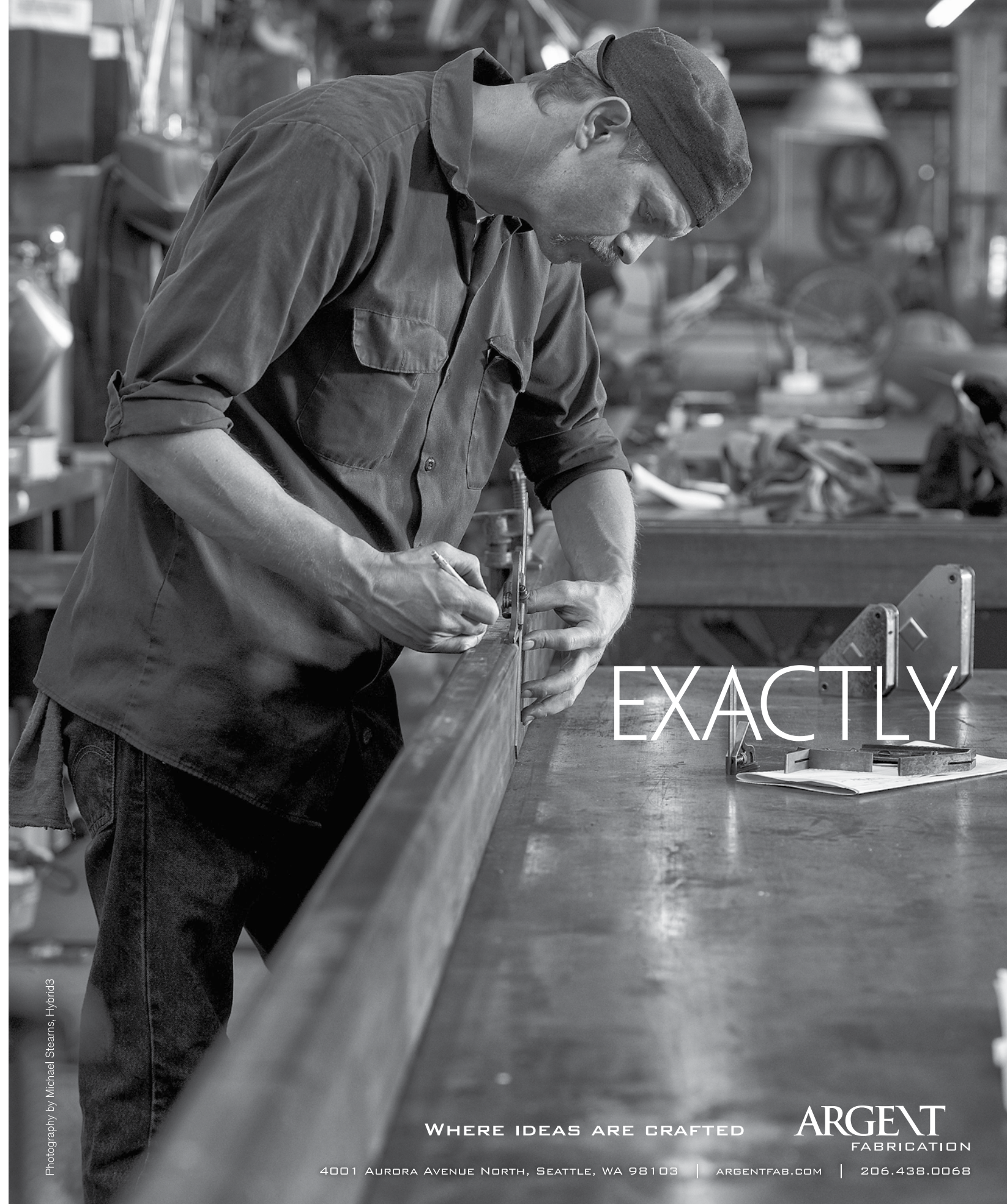
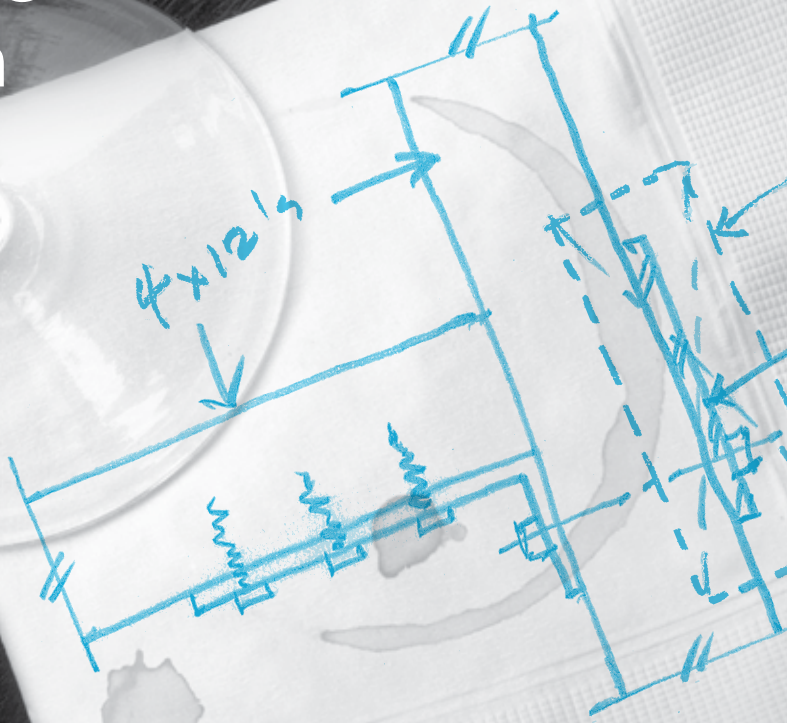
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ART MATTERS

# Welcome to Simpson City

Charles Mudede

*Buster Simpson // Surveyor*  
Frye Art Museum  
Through October 13, 2013

The Buster Simpson exhibit at the Frye Art Museum contains a good amount of work from the artist's four-decade long career. Almost all you need to know about him, his philosophy, his urban interventions and eco-art in general is in and right outside the gallery. The retrospective even extends to Post Alley, where Simpson installed flying and crisscrossing laundry lines. But the center of this solar system of installations, artifacts, videos, sculptures and events is displayed on the wall near the gallery's cafe. It is a fragment from a *Seattle Times* story called "Odd Parcels." Written by Alf Collins, the article opens with a picture of young Buster Simpson sitting on a "Stonehenge-like jumble of concrete rubble." He is at once in the deepest past and the distant post-apocalyptic future, the world before and after the urban, the times before and after the human. But why is he here, in this strange and culturally dusky zone, and why is it here that we find the core around which this whole exhibit orbits?

What first must be understood about Simpson is that though he was a part of the hippie movement (his first major work was, indeed, a sculpture for the Woodstock Music and Art Festival in 1969), he broke with it in one fundamental way. While most hippies saw the city as *the* problem, as an environmental disaster and wasteland, as a corrupter of human nature and its profound and nourishing relationship with the rest of nature, Simpson saw the city as a part of and continuous with nature. While many hippies fled the city, making the woods and rural towns their homes, Simpson did not leave but instead saw the city as the solution to many of the ecological challenges of our times. It was almost impossible for the standard-issue hippie to see this way of thinking as anything other than nuts; from his or her perspective, the earth could only be saved if humans lived with the trees, became self-sufficient and owned less stuff.



Above: Photo of Buster Simpson from *Odd Parcels* "Elliott Bay Park and the eye of the beholder" by Alf Collins, *Seattle Times*, 06/29/75. Copyright 1975, Seattle Times Company. Used with permission. Photo: Pete Liddell. Left: Buster Simpson, *Shared Solar Clothesline*, 1978. Photo documentation of the installation. Courtesy of the artist.



Buster Simpson. *Woodman*, 1974. Photo documentation of the street action. Courtesy of the artist.

## Simpson saw the city as a part of and continuous with nature.

ideas expressed in David Owen's now-famous book, *Green Metropolis*. Owen:

Spreading people thinly across the countryside may make them feel greener, but it doesn't reduce the damage they do to the environment. In fact, it increases the damage, while also making the problems they cause harder to see and to address... Thinking of crowded cities as environmental role models requires a certain willing suspension of disbelief, because most of us have been accustomed to viewing urban centers as ecological calamities.

Life in the city turns out to be greener than life in rural areas. Humans in the woods do more damage to the environment than humans in densely packed urban cores. The reason why hippies failed to see things this way is because it's counterintuitive. But Buster Simpson did, and that's why he sat on that jumble of concrete, and that's also why that image in the timeworn newspaper is at the center of his retrospective. "Simpson has been working with the wreckage of building and construction as an artistic statement growing out of [a] recycling ethic," stated *The Seattle Times*. That debris came from the construction of I-5 and was dumped in an area that would become Myrtle Edwards Park. In his proposal for the redevelopment of that park, which he submitted in 1974, Simpson argued that the city should preserve the debris and incorporate it into the landscape. The concrete was a part of the city, and the city is always a part of nature, and nature is a part of the universe. In short, Simpson urbanized the hippie ethic—an ethic that's become a part of our daily lives. We are not only all hippies, but we now live in Simpson City.

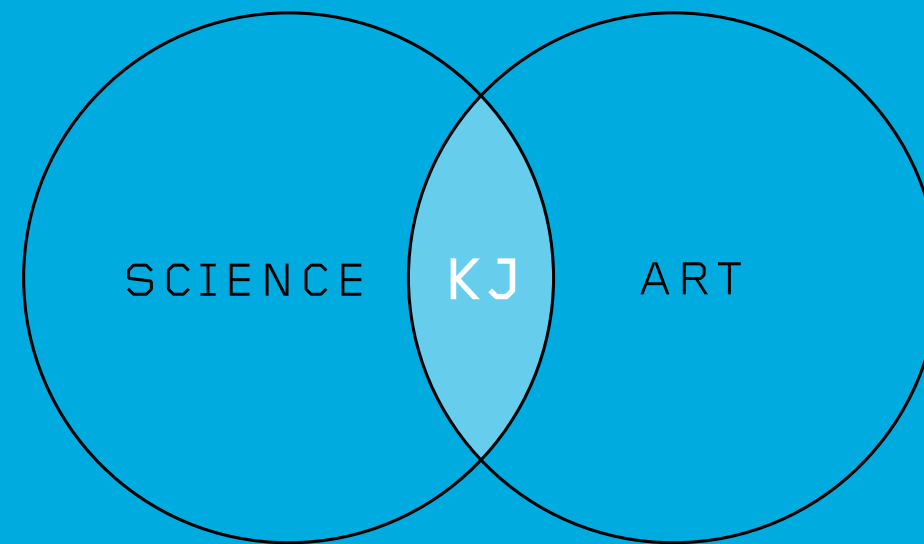
**CHARLES MUDEDE** writes about film, books, music and his life in Rhodesia, Zimbabwe, the US and the UK for *The Stranger*. He is also a filmmaker: Two of his films, *Police Beat* and *Zoo*, premiered at Sundance, and *Zoo* was also screened at Cannes. Charles has written for *The New York Times*, *Cinema Scope*, *Ars Electronica*, *C Theory* and serves on the ARCADE Editorial Committee.

of life. They were the pioneers of the new and coming post-growth economic order.

And in a way, they were right. To a certain extent, we have all become hippies—we aspire to eat locally, buy organic vegetables, eat less meat, recycle waste, politically support renewable forms of energy, and see ourselves as inside, not outside, nature and the grand biogeochemical cycle. But the big difference is that we are doing this in the city.

This is where Buster Simpson was ahead of his time, back in the mid-'70s, back before most people had ever heard anything like the

Kevin Tomlinson's documentary *Back to the Garden*, *Flower Power Comes Full Circle* gets to the heart of what was then the dominant hippie-mode. Filmed in rural Washington in 1988, *Back* is about a community of hippies who abandoned the city (Seattle in particular) for an existence they imagined to be truer, healthier (spiritually and physically) and environmentally sustainable. They saw themselves not as the past but as the future. If humankind wanted to avoid extinction, the hippie way of life would have to become the mainstream way



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PRACTICE

Wexler's Restaurant, ceiling detail, San Francisco, CA.  
Photo: Matthew Millman

## Designing to All the Senses

### An Interview with Joshua Aidlin

**BUILD IIc**



Bar Agricole, San Francisco, CA. Photo: Matthew Millman

**L**ast spring BUILD visited with designer and architect Joshua Aidlin at his San Francisco office, where they discussed what it means to be multidisciplinary, why his firm, Aidlin Darling, designs for the entire food chain and the importance of camping out on-site.

**BUILD: Some firms push the envelope of design, while others tend to get things built. What ingredients have contributed to the fact that Aidlin Darling is doing both very well?**

Joshua Aidlin: My business partner, David Darling, and I set out to create a studio environment rather than an office environment. It's based more on an academic studio—both physically and emotionally, in its size and in how we study a problem. The platform we originally started with was not just to create buildings; we wanted the studio to be multidisciplinary so we could potentially take on sculpture and industrial design projects as well. Having an ethos of exploration in all creative mediums opens the door to discovery on any project, emotionally and sensually. For that reason we're Aidlin Darling Design and not Aidlin Darling Architects.

From the beginning we were also furniture designers and makers. We have a fascination with how things are made. Once we have a commission, it's an opportunity to create something much more than just a building; it's an opportunity to explore different materials, light and the physical makeup of architecture.

**How do different clients respond to this ethos of exploration?**

Often times, residential clients tend to be more conservative than the clients of public projects, whether it's a restaurant, a school or a chapel. Because it's not what they're living in, they're much more open to exploring different physical manifestations of architecture. As we have segued from being a private to a more public-sector firm, this relationship has opened up exponentially.

**Moving out of the residential realm and into the public realm, do people have fewer preconceptions about what things should look like?**

Absolutely, and this gives us more freedom. San Francisco can be a very conservative market, but it's slowly changing. Fortunately, we've already established our reputation of creating thoughtful, well-crafted architecture, and we have plenty of built work. We can reassure a client that they'll get an extremely high-quality building, making them more willing to experiment with the architecture.

**With the design role you've played in some of Northern California's most notable restaurants, bars and wineries, is there a common thread for you between food and design?**

Given our rural backgrounds, we have this interest in designing to the entire food chain. We're fascinated with the whole ecology—from worker housing and organic markets, to restaurants and wineries.

We're currently working with chef-owner Corey Lee (Benu) and bartender-owner Thad Vogler (Bar Agricole), each of whom is obsessed with the craft of food. The ingredients and combinations are an art form to them, just like buildings are to us. With these projects, it's essential to get inside the psyche of what's important to the bartenders and chefs.

For example, the entire design of Bar Agricole is driven by a very simple concept: At 95 percent of restaurants, your liquids are served by the bar. This means the bartender is attending to everyone at the bar and also scrambling to accommodate the patrons in the dining room. Given this circumstance, the drinks are typically compromised. The design of Agricole centers around two bars: a public bar and a private bar that serves the restaurant exclusively. As a diner, every drink you get – whether it's coffee, tea, beer, wine or a cocktail – is treated with the same specificity and craft as the food. This concept drove the entire plan.

**Your role in The Edible Schoolyard Project takes the involvement of an architect fostering community to the next level. Can you describe how this project came to be?**

I live right next to the projects, and I would take my son to the rec center every Saturday to watch basketball games. Looking around one day, I noticed that all of the children were surviving on Coca-Cola and Cheetos. I started to ask myself why this was, and I realized that the only bodega in a five-block area wasn't serving anything healthy. We're essentially asking the youth of the community to go to school on a diet which is criminal. There is no possible way they will be able to focus and achieve academically.

My response was that I needed to show my son what it means to be a part of a community, and I needed to be a problem solver out of concern for my community. A light bulb went off, which happened to parallel a fifteen-year endeavor to tear down the projects and rebuild low-income, market-rate and affordable housing. I started teaming up with the public schools, community members and developers to create an edible schoolyard and an organic marketplace. The marketplace is where the entire community comes together on a daily basis to learn about, purchase and share food in a healthful way. Since then, we've been doing much more semi-self-initiated, community-driven, sustainable work.

**Your team takes on architecture, interiors, landscape design and product design projects. Is there a threshold at which being multidisciplinary spreads the firm too thin?**

There certainly is a danger to it. I used to physically make everything, and I don't have time for that anymore; I miss being in the woodshop. I still think the cross-pollination within the studio is reinforcing rigorous designs in ways you might not predict. There may be a threshold, but we haven't crossed it.

**Is there a perfect-size office in your experience?**

We're at the tipping point with sixteen or seventeen people because David and I don't want to solely be managers. At this size we still get to engage at the level of materiality and detail exploration. I get to go to every meeting with the craftspeople on a project and have a dialogue with the project architect. I get to have conversations with the maker about how far we can push concrete or how to texture the finish. If we get too big, I won't be in any of those meetings. Ultimately, you want to enjoy what you do, and if you love collaborating with the makers and engaging people who really need your services, you have to have the time to do it.

One of the things that makes our studio unique is that we treat everyone in the office as a designer. We need them to be designing regardless of what they're working on. Everyone gets a lot of input on the design whether they have two or twenty-five years of experience. It's an incredibly democratic office.

We're currently designing a 30,000-square-foot high school in Santa Rosa, and we started it with a collaborative group design effort. We gave the whole studio the problem statement, and a week later, before the principal and project architect had even started designing, everyone presented their ideas. It was shocking how many great concepts percolated unconsciously and ended up in the final design.

**What challenges have you faced over the years?**

The biggest challenge was segueing from private to public sector work because we had to jog the public's perception of our firm. That involved an aggressive pursuit of requests for proposals and qualifications and then winning those commissions without much public work experience. You have to find someone willing to take a chance on you.

**What measures do you use to track the success of the firm?**

Much of it is how you feel at the end of a project and being proud of what you do. With every project, we've left everything on the table. It's not like we've held back. That's all you can really ask. We take great pride in the culture we've developed within the studio.



Sonoma Spa Retreat, Sonoma, CA. Photo: Bruce Damonte

**You've mentioned that your work requires slowing down and taking in the stimuli of a site. Being the urbanite that you are, do you have psychological tools to help you slow down and get into that mode?**

It involves the ability to only take on projects that you can devote a focused effort to. We try not to overbook ourselves. If you give yourselves enough time to actually focus on the design, you can do it. On every one of our projects, we camp out on-site, whether rural or urban. Just being there with no distractions and absorbing what the site has to offer allows a quietness and an ability to reflect.

**Your work is based on sensuality as a counterpart to the rationality of architecture. Is this a response to a society that's become too scientific about things?**

## Having an ethos of exploration in all creative mediums opens the door to discovery on any project, emotionally and sensually.

It's a huge personal focus and a personal obsession with craft. You can walk into a very rational building and feel nothing. But you know it when you walk into an Eero Saarinen, Frank Lloyd Wright or Peter Zumthor building. They are acknowledging all of the senses—and that is the backbone of our practice. By designing to all of the senses, your buildings will ultimately have a very sensual quality.

**What is on your nightstand? What are you currently reading?**

*Atmospheres* by Peter Zumthor.

**JOSHUA AIDLIN** is a founding partner of Aidlin Darling Design, formed with David Darling in 1998. Aidlin Darling Design rigorously explores design across a wide range of scales, programs and disciplines with the goal of enabling poetic, sustainable and appropriate solutions. The firm has been chosen as a National Design Award Winner by the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and has been awarded over thirty regional, national and international design awards in the past two years. Joshua received his bachelor of architecture degree from the University of Cincinnati.

**BUILD llc** is an industrious design-build firm in Seattle run by Kevin Eckert and Andrew van Leeuwen. The firm's work focuses on permanence, sustainability and efficiency. BUILD llc maintains an architectural office, a cabinet shop and is most known for their cultural leadership on their blog. [blog.buildllc.com](http://blog.buildllc.com)

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## PERSPECTIVE

# Beyond Design & Thinking

Linda Norlen

*Design & Thinking*  
2012, US  
Production Studio: Muris Media  
Director: Mu-Ming Tsai  
Producers: YuHsiu Yang, Melissa Huang

**T**he term “design thinking” is not new; it has been used in the architecture and design professions in various ways since the 1970s. In the past decade, however, the term has become shorthand for the idea that designers approach problem solving and innovation in ways that have relevance beyond the design fields.

The filmmakers from San Francisco who made the 2012 documentary *Design & Thinking* were able to interview some of the most respected advocates for design thinking today: David Kelley, one of the founders of both the design firm IDEO and the Institute of Design at Stanford (the d.school); the late Bill Moggridge, cofounder of IDEO, then director of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum; Tim Brown, the current CEO of IDEO; and Roger Martin, dean of the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.

Brown and Martin have each written a book about design thinking, and Brown offers the film’s most succinct definition of the term: “Applying the methodologies and approaches of design and designers to a broader set of issues and problems in business and society.”

Those design methodologies include using observation, “ethnography” and other kinds of user research to understand human needs, and looking at how various societal systems relate to each other. Design thinking itself, according to Moggridge, is a process of several steps: making creative leaps to solve a problem, representing those leaps with prototypes and then choosing between versions to develop concepts. This approach – learning by doing – allows interdisciplinary teams of designers and non-designers to solve problems together using both explicit thinking and tacit knowledge.

The film tells us that design thinking has the potential to help solve grave problems in the world, but the examples the filmmakers

**Brown and Martin have each written a book about design thinking, and Brown offers the film’s most succinct definition of the term: “Applying the methodologies and approaches of design and designers to a broader set of issues and problems in business and society.”**

chose don’t adequately convey the breadth or depth of the issues design thinking can be used for.

Another overall problem with *Design & Thinking* is that it offers no narration to guide viewers other than quotations from the various “talking heads.” As valuable as many of those are, there are limitations to this method of storytelling. The quotes alone often aren’t pointed enough to tell the full story, and several speakers admit on screen that they’ve never heard of design thinking before. (Their remarks are among many things in the film that don’t belong there.)

Speaker after speaker talks about the value of prototyping – testing ideas quickly and cheaply – and failing fast in order to ultimately succeed. Martin describes how liberating it is for business students – who are trained to be analytical and “get the right answer” – to learn these lessons from designers. It would have been instructive for the film to follow even one case study that shows this happening.

Though the film doesn’t say so, the design thinking trend has been understandably attractive to corporate leaders, who are under pressure to spur their companies to innovate or risk becoming irrelevant. Design thinking held the promise of being a predictable process that businesses could adopt to improve their chances of creating innovative products, services and experiences.

For the design professions, having business and other fields embrace design thinking has been mostly positive because it has positioned design as a practice offering substantive knowledge rather than one that mainly makes things pretty. Still, some designers feel that wider acceptance by business and society has come at a price: that the emphasis on business process and strategy has diluted the contribution of the individual designer and the use of interdisciplinary teams has relegated the designer to facilitating group process as much as designing.

The biggest danger of design thinking though, as Martin says in the film, is that people try to reduce it to a formula and in the process lose most of the value of design. Evidently this has happened in many cases, which is one of the reasons that Bruce Nussbaum (formerly at *Businessweek*, now professor of innovation and design at Parsons, The New School of Design) declared two years ago that design thinking had already delivered all the benefits it had to offer.

Other writers at the time disagreed. Author and anthropologist Grant McCracken, though critical of the quality of ethnography used by designers, argued that design thinking was needed more than ever, and, indeed, two years later design thinking is still with us.

One theme of *Design & Thinking* is that design thinking can be used by all kinds of people. (The film opens with shots of protestors in the Occupy movement, a populist reference, though hardly the best example of design thinking.) Whether or not large corporations abandon design thinking for the next management trend, there’s no doubt that design thinking, based as it is on a long-tested process, will still offer much of value, particularly in the public and non-profit realms. There are far more serious issues in the world in need of attention than there are design thinkers to work on them.

**LINDA NORLEN** is a design consultant, writer and affiliate professor in the Division of Design, University of Washington. She directed the inaugural (2011 and 2012) Seattle Design Festivals for the nonprofit Design in Public.



Photos courtesy of *Design & Thinking*

## PERSPECTIVE

# Double Framed

## The Architectural Photography of Aditya Prakāsh

Vikramāditya Prakāsh

**M**y earliest recollection of my father, as much of a “recol-lection” as one can have from being a four-year-old, is of running behind him barefoot, barely keeping up, skipping over thorns and bushes, and the occasional nail and rebar, visiting construction sites. We lived in Ludhiana then, a mid-sized Indian city that is still the industrial heart of the state of Punjab. In the '60s, Ludhiana was also being transformed into the nucleus of the Kennedy-Johnson sponsored so-called “green revolution”—an extremely successful but ultimately toxic process designed to multiply the agricultural output of Punjab by transferring the latest “science” of high-yield seeds and crops to the area along with, of course, the accompanying pesticides. My father’s job, after working for ten years on the Chandigarh Capital Project, was to design the three agricultural universities that formed the academic core of this transnational transfer of knowledge. A part of Jawaharlal Nehru’s postcolonial developmentalist vision (with the West “on tap rather than on top”), these universities, like the “green revolution” they nurtured, were designed to jump-start modernism in India. Much was expected of them.

My father liked to photograph his buildings under construction, and for the early-1960s, he had state-of-the-art equipment with which to do so: a Rolliflex TLR and an Argus C3. He had obtained the cameras by persuading the American and Canadian scientists who lived around our house to bring them back for him from their visits home. He surely must have paid dearly for them, but clearly, at that time, photography was a passion for him, and with my father, nothing but the best ever sufficed. The best from the West surrounded us in the rest of our lives too. We spoke English at home as fluently as Hindi and Panjabi. We watched our slides on a Kodak carousel projector, heard music from a Gerrard record changer

and recorded our conversations on a Grundig spool tape recorder. My mother had the latest Belling oven, a hefty Hoover vacuum and a shiny Moulinex “mixie” at her disposal.

And so it was that early on weekend mornings, when the light was good and it was still not too hot, my father set off to capture his creations on celluloid with his little boy in tow. Construction safety seemed not to have been an issue at the time, and since we lived on the very campus he was building, everything was close by and protected from external traffic. On the weekends, my mother, I well presume, must have been quite happy to get me off her hands.

Today, more than four decades later, and five years after my father’s death, when I look back over those photographs, I am struck by the studied intentionality of their framing. These are not casual shots documenting construction progress. Rather, they are carefully composed visual essays. Browsing through them, I can almost see my father shuffling between his two cameras, often photographing the same building with both. The square shapes of the Rolliflex negatives freeze the buildings within the frame as if to capture a core essence, while those from the Argus use the inherent directionality of the rectangle to shuffle the eye to a point outside the frame, as if the critical reference lies somewhere beyond. I sense that there is a visual game at play between the two cameras, one following the other, as if to say *catch me if you can*.

The buildings themselves are stark Modernist creations, rationally assembled masses in brick and concrete, with clean rectilinear outlines punctuated by the occasional circle or curve for contrast. Shorn of all decorative details and superfluous additions, the buildings present themselves unapologetically in their original naked materials and unadorned structural bones. Truly, they seem to literally follow the Modernist dictum that form follows function (plus materials).

Today, in our post-Postmodernist times, I am overawed by the lucidity and minimal-

ism of the building forms. But what is more striking is the manner in which they are photographed by my father. Unexpectedly, the photographs are neither rationalist nor strictly documentary. Rather, they seem to be self-consciously framed, with an almost disarming lack of candor, as if to explicate a sense of poesis submerged beneath the stark forms. One notices right away that deep shadows roll across the facades, sharply receding lines of perspective suggest drama, high contrasts between light and dark generate exaggerated depths. One cannot also help noticing the workmen and “inhabitants,” carefully positioned in the picture frame, standing motionless, waiting for the shutter, as if they were on a theatrical stage.

My father loved theatre. His finest building was the Tagore Theatre of Chandigarh, and he was a card-carrying member of the Acoustical Society of India. He founded an amateur theatre company, and at the ripe old age of eighty-five, was on his way to perform

**And so it was that early on weekend mornings, when the light was good and it was still not too hot, my father set off to capture his creations on celluloid with his little boy in tow.**







**My father's studied images project a sense of quiet anticipation. They show the ambitious worksites of a nation whose future, still unknown, is both fraught with doubt and filled with great expectation.**

in a play in Mumbai when he died suddenly on the train at 4 a.m. from a heart attack. What might the photographic staging of Modern architecture have meant to him?

I notice that his photographs always locate his buildings asymmetrically within the frame, as if decentering contained a vital visual clue to their exegesis. Invariably, the viewer's eyes wander, almost involuntarily, searching the whole frame for supplemental content, other clues to their author's mind. In one of my favorites, the raggedy outline of an extricated tree stump carefully frames the strict geometries of the buildings, as if the point needed additional contrast to be made.

Retrospectively, I am struck by the deep investments made by the first generation of Indian Modernists in the stark simplicities of Modern architecture. In Nehruvian India, perhaps the contention might have been moot that Modern architecture, such a vivid contrast to the messiness of the Indian city, could

in fact deliver the future. It may have been a hard aesthetic to sell at that time, as it still is for many. Even when they see my father's pictures today, many of my colleagues here in the US cannot move past stereotypical cultural oppositions between the "Indian" workers and the "Western" Modernism behind them.

How can we see beyond that? Clearly, these are not mythical images, like those by Marcel Gautherot of Brasilia rising magically from a dusty Amazonian plain, nor are these heroic images, signaling a triumphalist architecture at work, like Lewis Hine's images of the construction workers building the Empire State Building taking a lunch break. What then? I would suggest that my father's studied images project a sense of quiet anticipation. They show the ambitious worksites of a nation whose future, still unknown, is both fraught with doubt and filled with great expectation. As such, for me the photographs are doubly framed, both

self-assured and unsure, capturing the anxieties of an architect searching for meaning amongst his silent creations, with his wayward son in tow.

**VIKRAMĀDITYA "VIKRAM" PRAKĀSH** grew up in Chandigarh, India. He received his BArch from the Chandigarh College of Architecture and an MA and PhD in History and Theory of Architecture and Urbanism from Cornell University. He is an architect, urbanist, historian, professor at the University of Washington and the director of the Chandigarh Urban Lab, a multi-year project that studies Chandigarh, historically and today, as a case study in contemporary mid-sized urbanization in India. Vikram is widely published and is currently working on *Deruralization: Chandigarh in the Age of Globalization* and a textbook on the history of the architecture of India. Vikram lives in Seattle with his wife and three children.

All photos from the archives of the Aditya Prakāsh Foundation.



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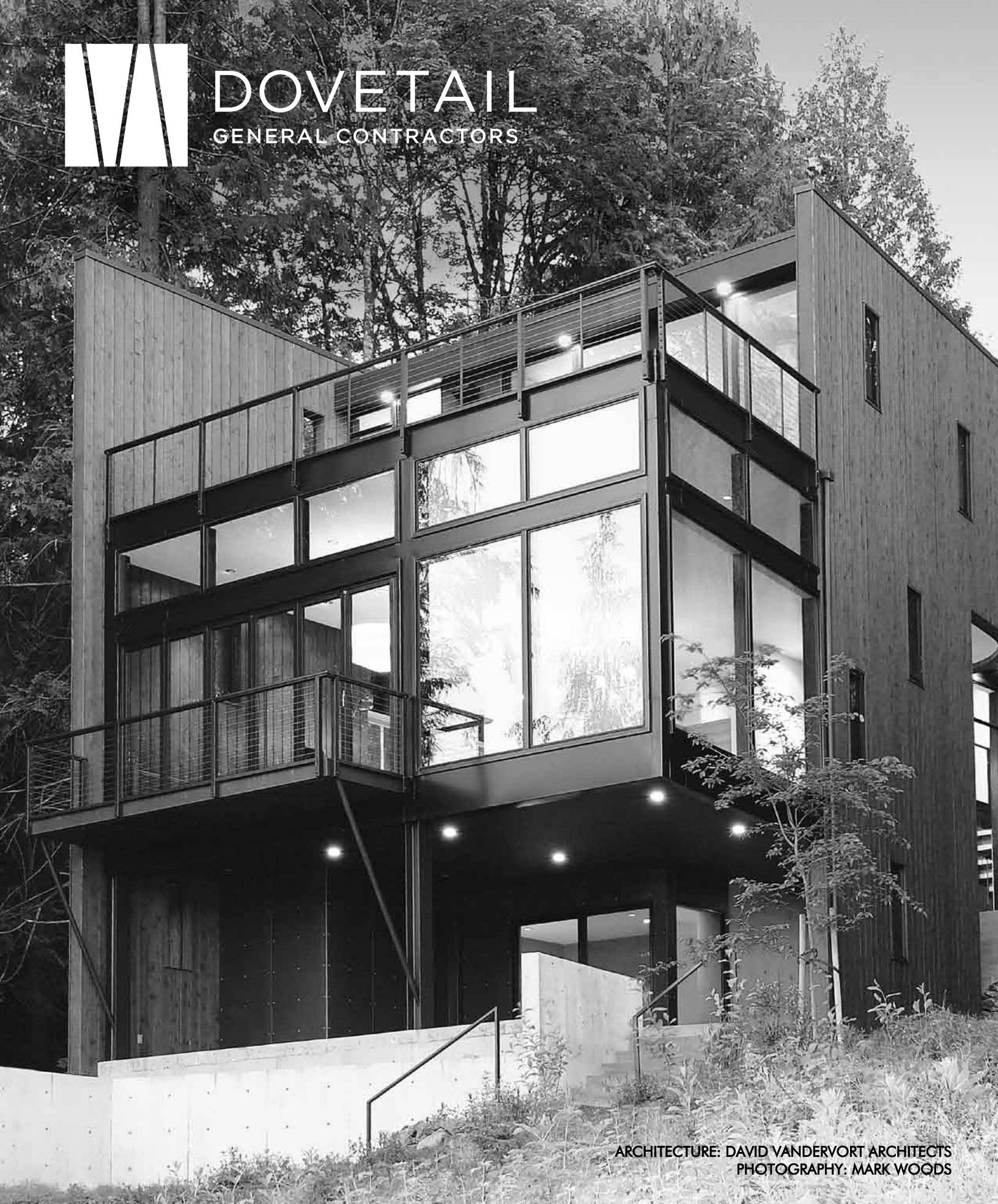
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ARCADE 31.4

FEATURE EDITOR: KAREN CHENG

## Designing Data





# Data provides the means by which science progresses, legislation changes, and society advances; data is the enemy of witch hunts, bigotry, and ignorance (not to mention Creationism). But data is always gathered at a certain time with a certain purpose; and to be useful it must be mined, parsed, and presented.

Peter Hall, "Bubbles, Lines and String: How Information Visualization Shapes Society" in *Graphic Design: Now in Production*, 2011.

**Welcome to the rapidly expanding world of big data.** According to IDC\*, a technology research firm, the "digital universe" is doubling every two years. By 2020, there will be 40 trillion gigabytes of data being created, replicated and consumed each year—data comprised of personal images, texts, Facebook posts, Twitter updates, banking transactions, security footage, scientific records, music downloads, blog posts, YouTube videos and more.

Of this vast quantity of data (5,200 gigabytes for every man, woman and child), IDC predicts that a small fraction—33%—"might have value if analyzed." Here, the researchers assume that someone (or something) will be responsible for selecting, combining and organizing millions of raw data elements into visualizations that reveal actionable, useful information.

The definition of what constitutes "useful information" can be quite personal and varied. However, perhaps Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver most universally define the term when they describe "information" as "that which reduces uncertainty" (from *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*). Data-based information should indeed strive to increase confidence; knowledge formed from empirical evidence and rational thought might greatly improve our understanding of both ourselves as well as the world that surrounds us.

This issue of ARCADE examines the multiple ways that information has been visualized in an effort to increase understanding and generate knowledge; this small collection also demonstrates the unique ability of data visualizations to combine both art and science to communicate and amplify meaningful messages. The survey is organized according to a three-part taxonomy proposed by the design critic Peter Hall in his essay\*\*, "Bubbles, Lines and String: How Information Visualization Shapes Society": Scientific Visualization, Journalistic Visualization and Artistic Visualization.

## SCIENTIFIC VISUALIZATION

As defined by Hall, scientific visualization is typically a tool for discovery; scientists use visual structures (such as plots, charts, graphs and diagrams) to reveal patterns and relationships that might not otherwise be easily apprehended. For example, by mapping the incidence of malaria over time and geography, scientists can discover where the disease is epidemic, as well as where rates are increasing, due to climate change (see "Understanding Malaria," pg. 34). In some cases, scientific discovery may also entail the development of new visualization tools, such as the treemaps developed by computer scientist Ben Shneiderman (pg. 37).

While not discussed explicitly by Hall, scientific visualization might also be considered to include the visual models that graphically communicate and explain scientific theories and phenomena. As described by information scholar Bill Ferster in *Interactive Visualization: Insight through Inquiry*, such models are valuable because they can provide a framework for understanding fundamental issues. The diagram of mosquito behavior (pg. 34) in "Understanding Malaria" acts as such a model, depicting and explaining multiple variables—feeding and resting times, preferred environments and sources, geography and control methods—in a single visual. In a more lighthearted way, the project "OMG SPACE" (pg. 38) also presents a scientific model—an exact scale replica of our heliosphere, where one pixel equals one kilometer.

## JOURNALISTIC VISUALIZATION

In contrast to scientific visualizations, journalistic visualizations are largely driven by the need to inform and explain complex topics to the general public. Often, these visualizations are a collaborative effort between specialists; the Nobel Prize information graphic (pg. 40) was created by the Italian information design agency Accurat, whose founders have degrees in economics, design, sociology and architecture. Similarly, *The New York Times* op-ed charts (pg. 44) of military fatalities in Iraq were created by Alicia Cheng of mgmt., a Brooklyn design consultancy, in collaboration with political scientist Adriana Lins de Albuquerque.

A particularly unique example of journalistic visualization is "Vendor Power!" (pg. 42)—a collaboration between designer Candy Chang, the Center for Urban Pedagogy and The Street Vendor Project in New York City. Published by the Center as part of their "Making Policy Public" series, and distributed directly to NYC vendors, this large-scale fold-out poster explains complex vending rules, and has become a useful tool for facilitating conversations between vendors and the multiple agencies that regulate their activities.

## ARTISTIC VISUALIZATION

Scientific and journalistic visualizations are similar in that both seek to answer relatively well-defined questions; in contrast, the role of artistic visualizations is more open-ended. According to Hall, artistic visualizations "bring to light and challenge the prevailing assumptions ... they offer new alternative modes of representation." Owen Irianto's "Casualties in the Iraq War, 2003–2008" (pg. 45) has a different point of view and aesthetic than *The New York Times* op-ed charts also covering the conflict; his project is most compelling in an installation format that encourages slower contemplation. Amy Keeling's "Shift" (pg. 46) was also originally designed as an installation, with an interactive software interface that allows users to self-direct their data explorations, determining which elements should be compared, aggregated, shown or hidden.

The purpose of organizing this collection of visualizations into a taxonomy is, of course, a form of information design itself; taxonomies exist to help us better understand the characteristics—functional, visual, structural—of groups within a larger whole. The field of information design contains widely varied schemas for the systematic organization of information (for example, see the sidebar on LATCH on pg. 35), each with their own advantages and detractors.

However, perhaps the most powerful schema for structuring information is the most ancient—stories. Research indicates that stories facilitate the imprinting of information into memory, and that humor, style and aesthetics play a role in the development of knowledge. In the field of information visualization, there is a fundamental debate between those from computational disciplines, who often wish to consider aesthetics from primarily a usability standpoint, against those from creative fields, such as design and journalism, who tend to place greater emphasis on emotion, beauty, stimulation and surprise. The group of visualizations presented in this issue of ARCADE aims for the middle ground between these polarities, acknowledging the equally valuable contributions of both art and science.

**KAREN CHENG** is the chair of the Division of Design at the University of Washington, where she teaches information design.



\*\*The Digital Universe in 2020: Big Data, Bigger Digital Shadows, and Biggest Growth in the Far East" by John Gantz and David Reinsel in *IDC View*, December 2012. [emc.com/leadership/digital-universe/iview/index.htm](http://emc.com/leadership/digital-universe/iview/index.htm)

\*\*Peter Hall, "Bubbles, Lines and String: How Information Visualization Shapes Society," *Graphic Design: Now in Production*, Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2011.

# MINIATURE MENACE MAJOR MALADY

Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease transmitted by the bite of mosquitoes belonging to the genus Anopheles. The success of malaria transmission varies greatly between vector species due to differences in the feeding and resting behaviors of the mosquitoes.

## FEEDING & RESTING BEHAVIOR

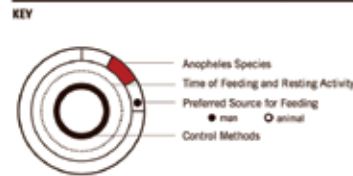
Female Anopheles mosquitoes require a blood meal for the development of eggs. After obtaining a full blood meal, the female will rest while the blood is digested and eggs are developed. Anopheles species have distinct preferences for where they eat and rest (indoors or outdoors). By understanding these differences in behaviors, malaria control measures can be best designed to reduce transmission.

**Nocturnal + Anthropometric**  
Mosquitoes that bite at night and prefer human hosts are the most efficient malaria vectors because they feed during sleep hours when humans are most vulnerable to bites.

**90%**  
of all the malaria cases around the world occur within Sub-Saharan Africa where many of these vectors live.

**Notable Vector: A. gambiae**  
Out of the 70 species of Anopheles that can transmit malaria, A. gambiae is the best adapted to spreading the disease due to its close connection to man at all stages of its life.

**Feed In, Rest In**  
Mosquitoes that feed and rest indoors are some of the most efficient malaria vectors. Because they bite inside, it means most of them are anthropophilic.



### Time of Feeding and Resting Activity



**NOCTURNAL**  
Mosquitoes that feed at night (between 10pm and 4am) are more efficient malaria vectors, biting human hosts while asleep.



**CREPUSCULAR**  
Malaria transmission is lower with mosquitoes that bite at dawn and dusk when people are more likely to be awake and moving about.



**ANTHROPOPHILIC**  
Mosquitoes that feed on humans are more likely to transmit the malaria parasites from one person to another.

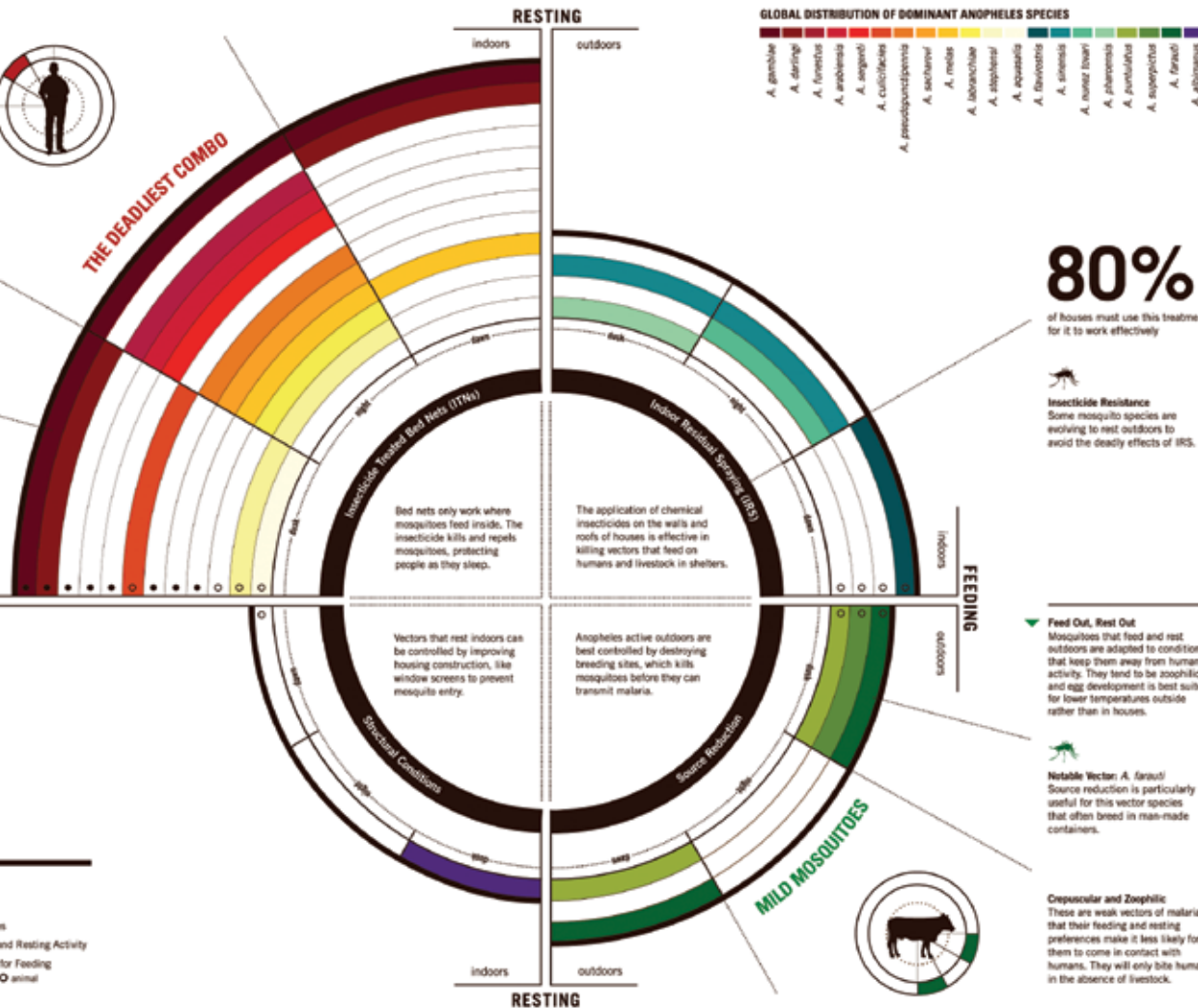
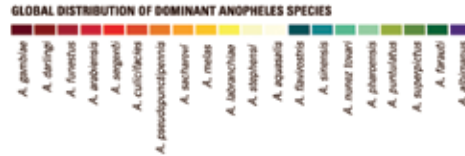
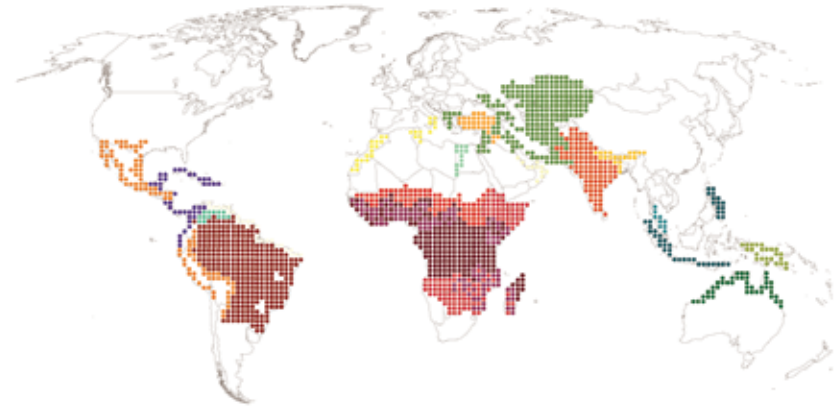


**ZOOFILIC**  
Zoophilic mosquitoes prefer feeding on livestock. They are the least responsible for malaria transmission.

### Preferred Source for Feeding



**ITNs versus IRS**  
Insecticide-Treated Nets and Indoor Residual Spraying are the most widely-used methods of vector control but method preference varies between countries.



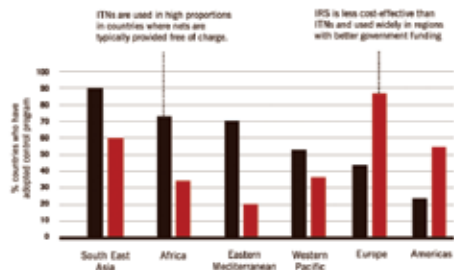
**80%**  
of houses must use this treatment for it to work effectively

**Insecticide Resistance**  
Some mosquito species are evolving to rest outdoors to avoid the deadly effects of IRS.

**Feed Out, Rest Out**  
Mosquitoes that feed and rest outdoors are adapted to conditions that keep them away from human activity. They tend to be zoophilic and egg development is best suited for lower temperatures outside rather than in houses.

**Notable Vector: A. gambiae**  
Source reduction is particularly useful for this vector species that often breed in man-made containers.

**Crepuscular and Zoophilic**  
These are weak vectors of malaria in that their feeding and resting preferences make it less likely for them to come in contact with humans. They will only bite humans in the absence of livestock.



## SCIENTIFIC VISUALIZATION

### Understanding Malaria 2010

Design: Tanya Test. [tanyatest.com](http://tanyatest.com)

Information design project at the University of Washington, Seattle.

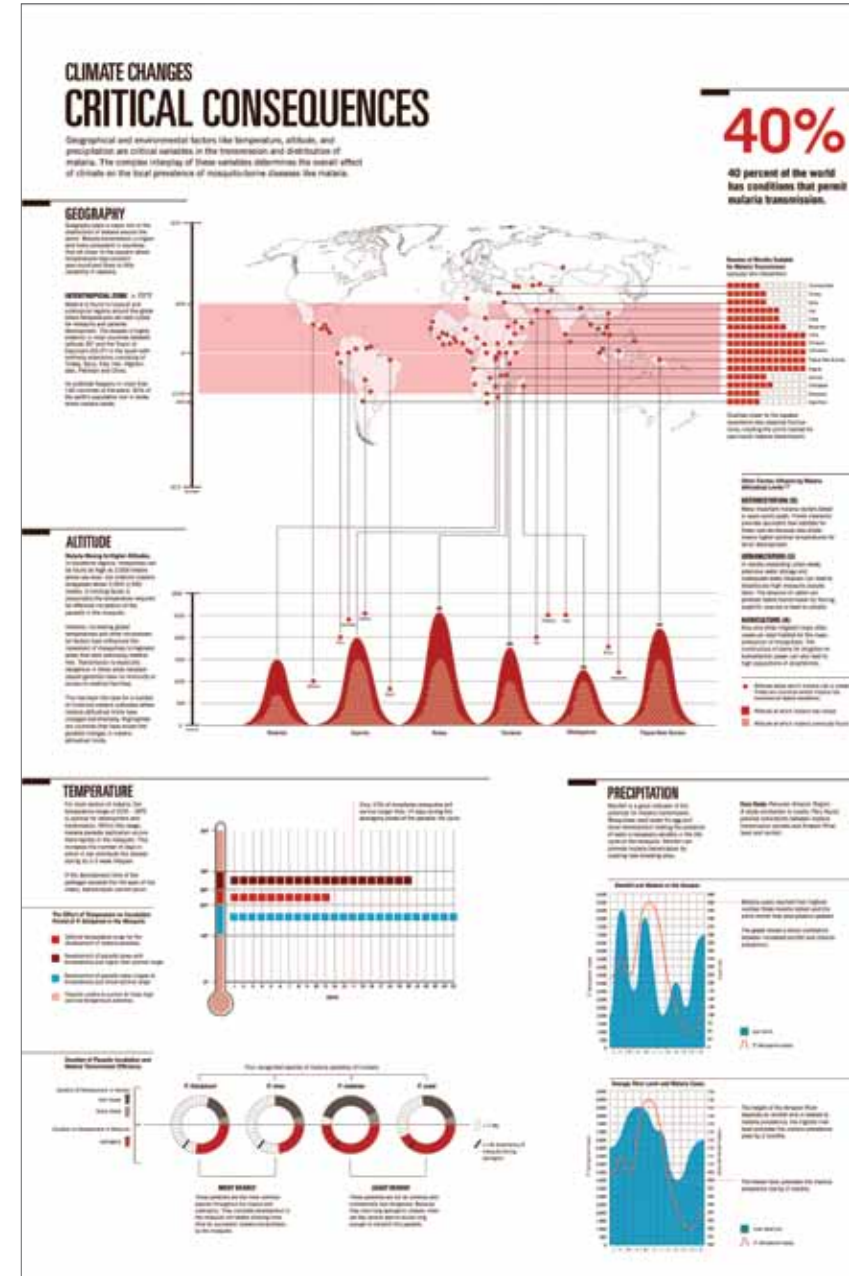
Faculty Advisors: Karen Cheng, Visual Communication Design; Carol Sibley, Genome Sciences.

This pair of information design panels explores several aspects of malaria—a mosquito-borne infectious disease that affects both humans and animals. On the first panel, a large, circular information graphic categorizes mosquitoes by their resting and feeding locations (indoors or outdoors), their preferred mealtimes (dusk, night or dawn) and their preferred feeding sources (man or animal). The strategies for controlling mosquitoes—and therefore, preventing malaria—are also shown in context to this organization.

For example, mosquitoes that prefer to feed indoors at night on humans are the most dangerous malaria vectors because they bite during sleeping hours. The best strategy for combating these mosquitoes are insecticide-treated bed nets. In contrast, mosquitoes that like to feed at dusk and dawn on livestock are relatively weak carriers of the disease.

An adjacent map displays twenty different mosquito species according to their global distribution. These species are color-coded on the main circular graphic, enabling the identification of the countries and regions at the greatest risk.

The second panel explores the incidence of malaria over time and geography. The disease is epidemic in the inter-tropical zone and has slowly moved toward higher elevations as a result of climate change.



### Wurman's LATCH by Callie Neylan

Richard Saul Wurman, graphic designer, architect, TED founder and originator of the term "information architect," believes that nearly all organizational schemes for data can be reduced to five basic dimensions known as LATCH: Location, Alphabet, Time, Category and Hierarchy.

**Location** usually focuses on geography. Which regions of a business have the highest sales? Which local markets have the steepest declines? Mapped locations can also be contextually appropriate; for example, doctors can be organized by mapping their medical specializations to corresponding parts of the human body, while mechanics might organize their activities around the location of various parts of an automobile.

**Alphabetical** organization of information is often the easiest route to take, one that provides a clearly discernable, scalable, cross-cultural structure. A single name in a phone book can be readily found, regardless if the phone book is in English, French or Portuguese.

**Time** also provides a simple form of organization. In a business context, we may wish to view changes in sales, profit or loss over a span of calendar years, fiscal years or financial quarters. Historical information is an obvious fit for chronological organization.

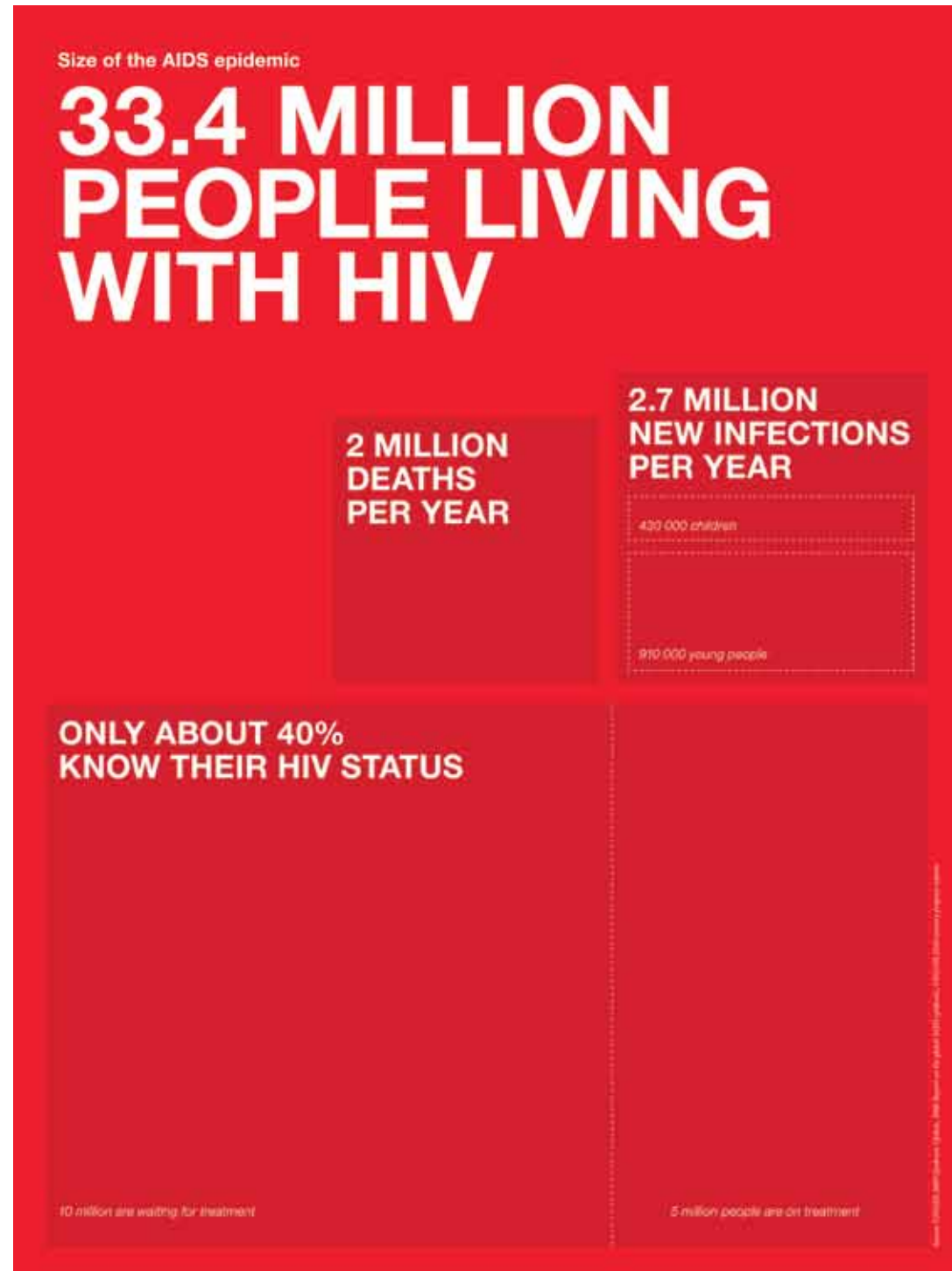
**Categorical** definitions are often more subjective and not as obvious in a dataset. In some cases, the mere act of defining categories introduces bias. For example, a popular movie might be categorized as "sci-fi," "drama" or "comedy," but determining which bucket a hybrid "sci-fi + comedy" falls into becomes the subjective call of an information designer.

**Hierarchical** organization presents information according to a perceived value or weight. Numerical scales naturally fall under this vein, as well as any other data points that can be objectively or subjectively measured and quantified.

These five organizing elements provide powerful lenses through which to glean insight from information. Interactive data visualizations can exponentially expand this power by allowing users to instantly combine and switch between lenses, offering multifaceted levels of understanding.

CALLIE NEYLAN is a writer and visual analytics designer at Microsoft.

By visualizing information, we turn it into a landscape that you can explore with your eyes, a sort of information map. And when you're lost in information, an information map is kind of useful. David McCandless, Author, *Information is Beautiful*, TED Global, July 2010, "The Beauty of Data Visualization"



**UNAIDS Treemaps 2010**

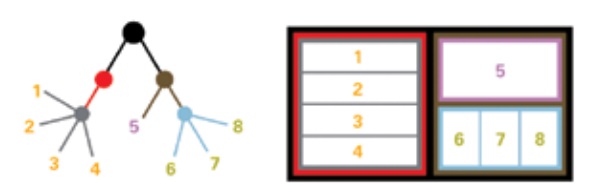
Design: Michael Lindsay, studiovertex. [studio-vertex.com](http://studio-vertex.com)  
Originally published in Outlook 2010, the annual report of UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. [unaids.org](http://unaids.org)

In the early 1990s, computer scientist Ben Shneiderman developed a novel form of visualization called a "treemap." Treemaps display hierarchical relationships with nested rectangles. The original motivation for developing this type of information display was to better represent the storage space on hard disks—to visualize the size and organization of thousands of files in multi-level directories and subdirectories.

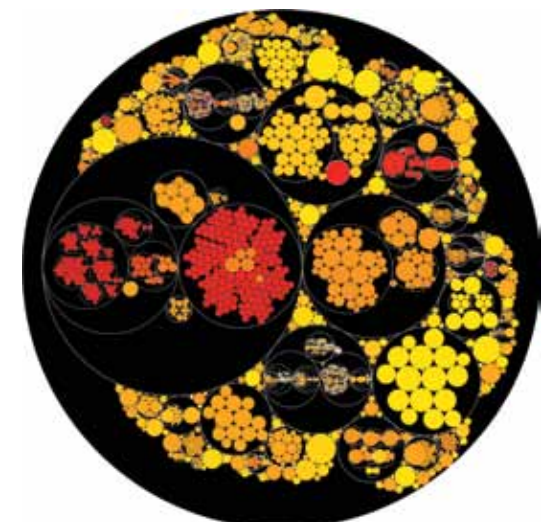
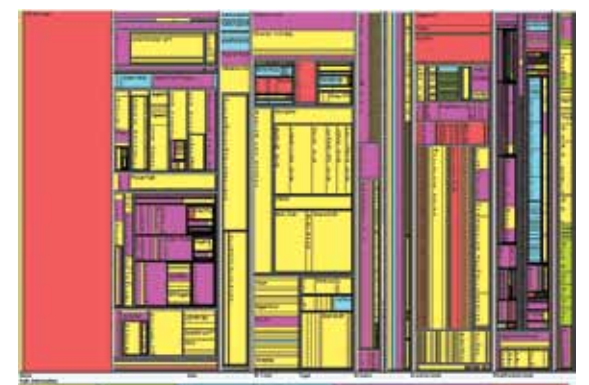
For UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS), Michael Lindsay of studiovertex designed a pair of treemaps that detail the prevalence of HIV worldwide. The first treemap (left side of the above spread) visualizes the status of those living with HIV (new infections vs. fatalities; those receiving treatment vs. those waiting for treatment). The second treemap (right side of the above spread) depicts the geographic regions where those with HIV live, drawing attention to the disproportionate incidence of HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia as compared to the United States and Western Europe.



**How to Make a Treemap**  
To create a treemap, a tiling algorithm must be defined—a formula and method for dividing a large rectangle into smaller specified areas. The algorithm used in the diagram at right translates the nodes of a tree into horizontal or vertical partitions.

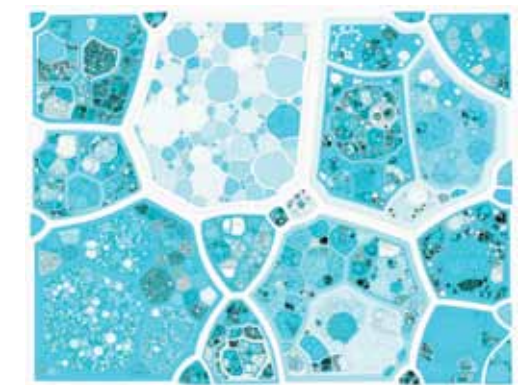


Right: An early treemap generated by the computer scientist Ben Shneiderman, showing the file storage on a 1990 color Macintosh.



**Pebble Treemap**  
A treemap generated by Kai Wetzel that uses nested circles to represent disk usage and the file directory structure. Color denotes the age of files (red=newer, yellow=older). Unfortunately, as Kai notes, the circular forms are spatially inefficient.

**Voronoi Treemap**  
A treemap created by Oliver Deussen that uses polygons to display a directory structure of 62,000 files and 42 gigabytes. Brighter colors indicate lower hierarchy.

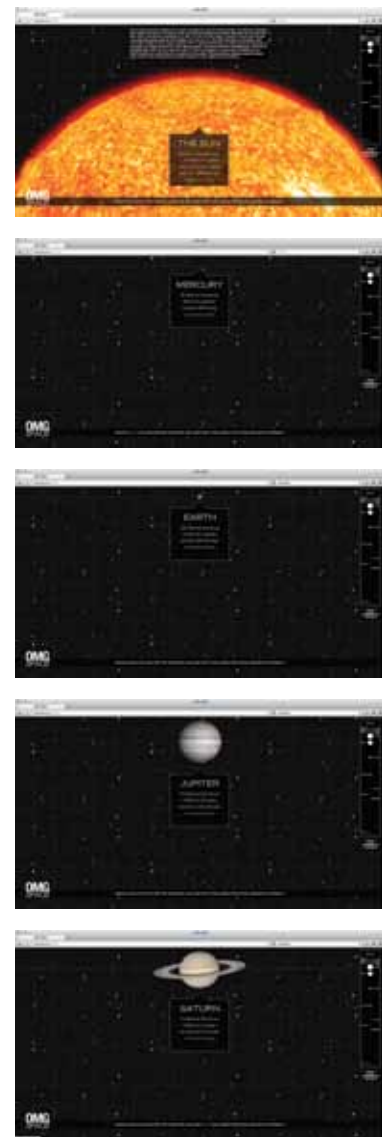
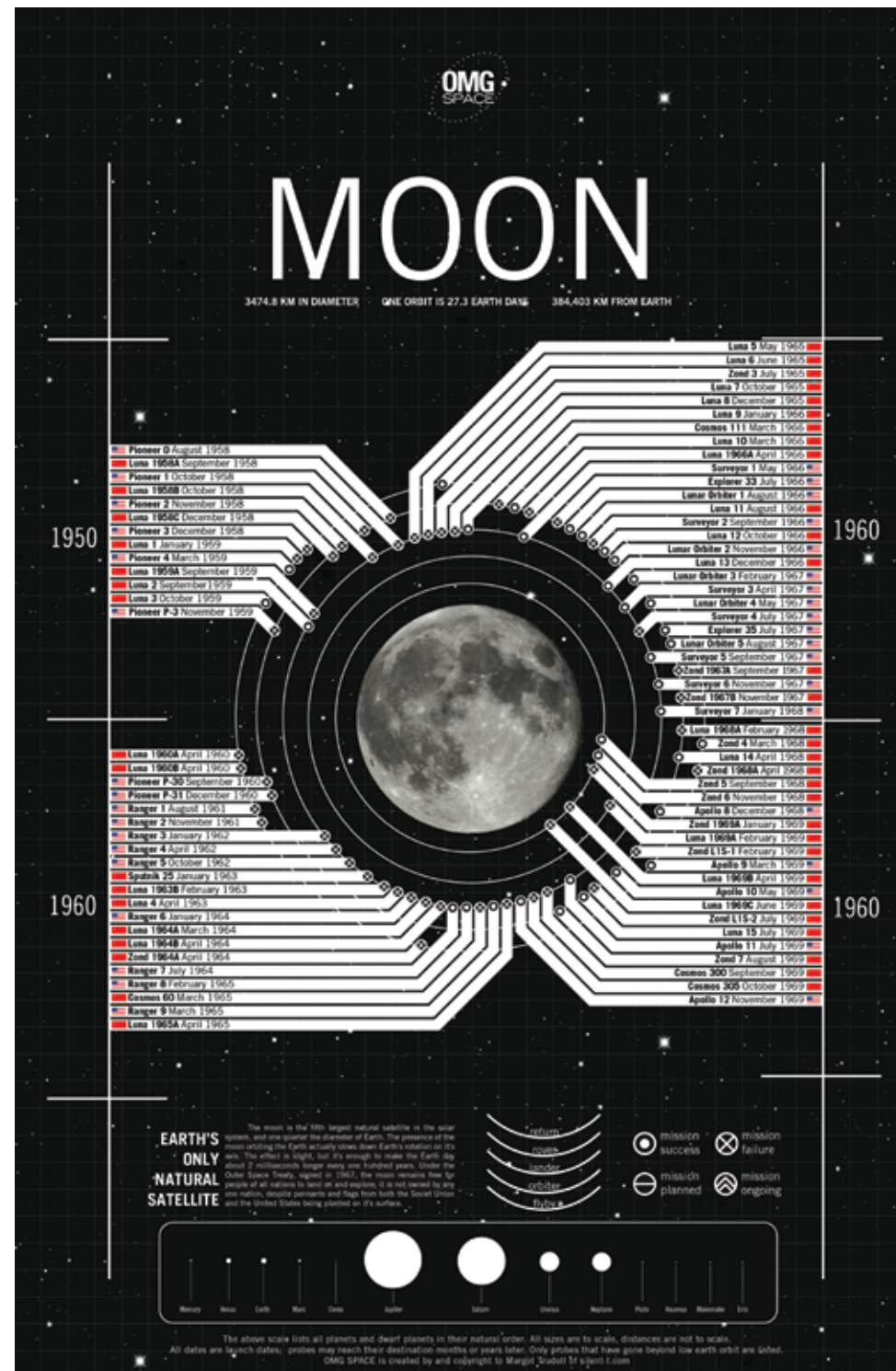


**The purpose of visualization is insight, not pictures.** Ben Shneiderman, founding director of the Human-Computer Interaction Laboratory, University of Maryland, *Readings in Information Visualization*

**OMG SPACE**  
omgspace.net  
2012

Design: Margot Trudell. *silent-t.com*  
B. Design Thesis Project,  
OCAD University, Toronto, Canada.

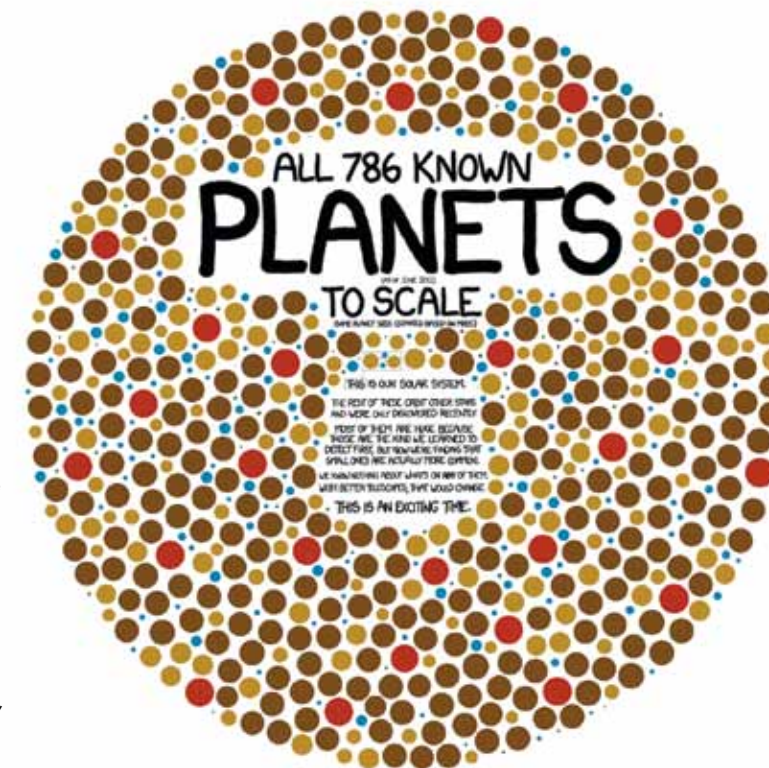
“OMG SPACE” functions as a real-scale, digital model of the 10 billion kilometers (6.2 billion miles) between the Sun and Eris, the largest-known dwarf planet in our solar system. The size of each planet and the distances between them are calculated at a ratio of 1:647, with 1 kilometer equaling 1 pixel. The project also includes detailed information graphics that document attempts by all nations to explore the Sun, Moon and planets—Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune—via spacecraft (of note: China has plans for a manned lunar mission within the next few years). The goals of the project are to illustrate the scale and grandeur of the heliosphere, and to highlight the exceptional efforts and achievements made by scientists in exploring outer space. The name of the project (“OMG SPACE”) is intended to encourage excitement about the space sciences, especially amongst younger audiences.



**Lunar Space Exploration**  
Under the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, the earth's moon (and all of outer space) remains free for exploration and use by all countries. The chart at left details every mission—forty-nine failed and thirty-four successful—from 1950–1960; a second poster (not shown) covers 1970–2000.



**Cité de l'Espace**  
A physical scale model (Parterre des Planètes) of the heliosphere at Cité de l'Espace, an adventure park in Toulouse, France. Left image by Emmanuelle Jallibert; right image by Manuel Huynh ([www.mh-photos.fr](http://www.mh-photos.fr)).



**All 786 Known Planets**  
A simple visualization of 786 confirmed exoplanets (planets outside our solar system) as of June 2012. As of August 1, 2013, the number of discovered exoplanets is now 927—still a tiny fraction of the 100 billion planets estimated to exist in the Milky Way galaxy. The 8 planets in our own solar system are shown in the small grey box in the center of the graphic. Note the sampling bias toward giant planets, which are easier to detect. Design by Randall Munroe. [xkcd.com](http://xkcd.com)



**Cell Size and Scale**  
A fascinating view of scale in the micro world. This interactive online module has a simple slider that enables the progressive comparison of smaller and smaller objects—from a coffee bean to a carbon atom. From the Genetic Science Learning Center, University of Utah. [learn.genetics.utah.edu](http://learn.genetics.utah.edu)

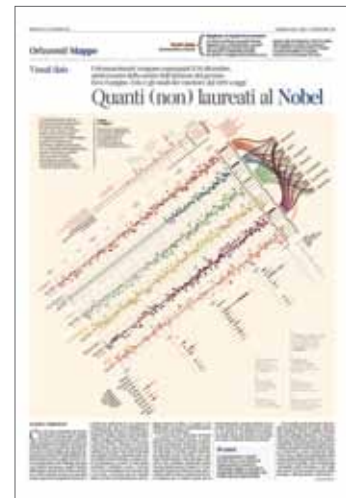
Design should never say, “Look at me.” It should always say, “Look at this.” David Craib, Founder of Parable Communications, Canada, *401 Design Meditations*

### Nobel Prizes and Laureates, 1901-2012

Design and production: Accurat (Giorgia Lupi, Gabriele Rossi and Simone Quadri, with Davide Ciuffi, Federica Fragapane and Francesco Majno). accurat.it

This densely layered information graphic combines the age, gender, education and birth city of Nobel Prize laureates from 1901 to 2012. Laureates are organized into six categories: Chemistry, Economics, Physics, Literature, Medicine and Peace. Each dot represents a single laureate; the x-axis shows the year the prize was awarded, and the y-axis shows the individual's age at the time of the award.

The visualization reveals several insights. The average age ranges from 57-66. Men dominate all categories, although women have more representation in Peace and Literature. Except in the area of Literature, the laureates most often hold a doctoral degree—and this degree is awarded most often by seven universities: Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Caltech, Columbia, Cambridge and Berkeley. In the first half of the century, Nobel laureates were most often born in Paris; after 1950, New York dominates.



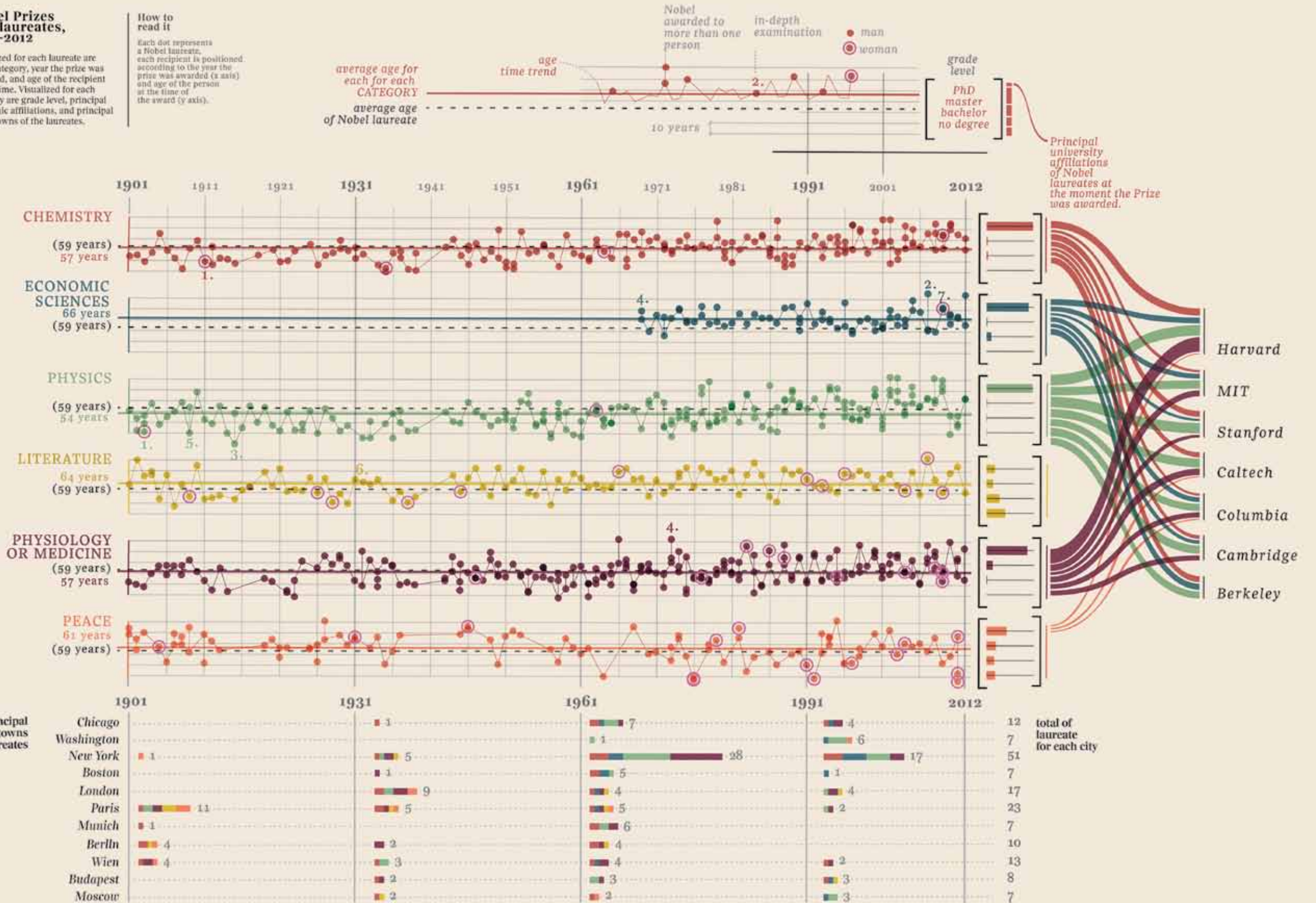
This information graphic was originally published in *La Lettura*, the cultural supplement of the Milanese newspaper *Corriere della Sera*.

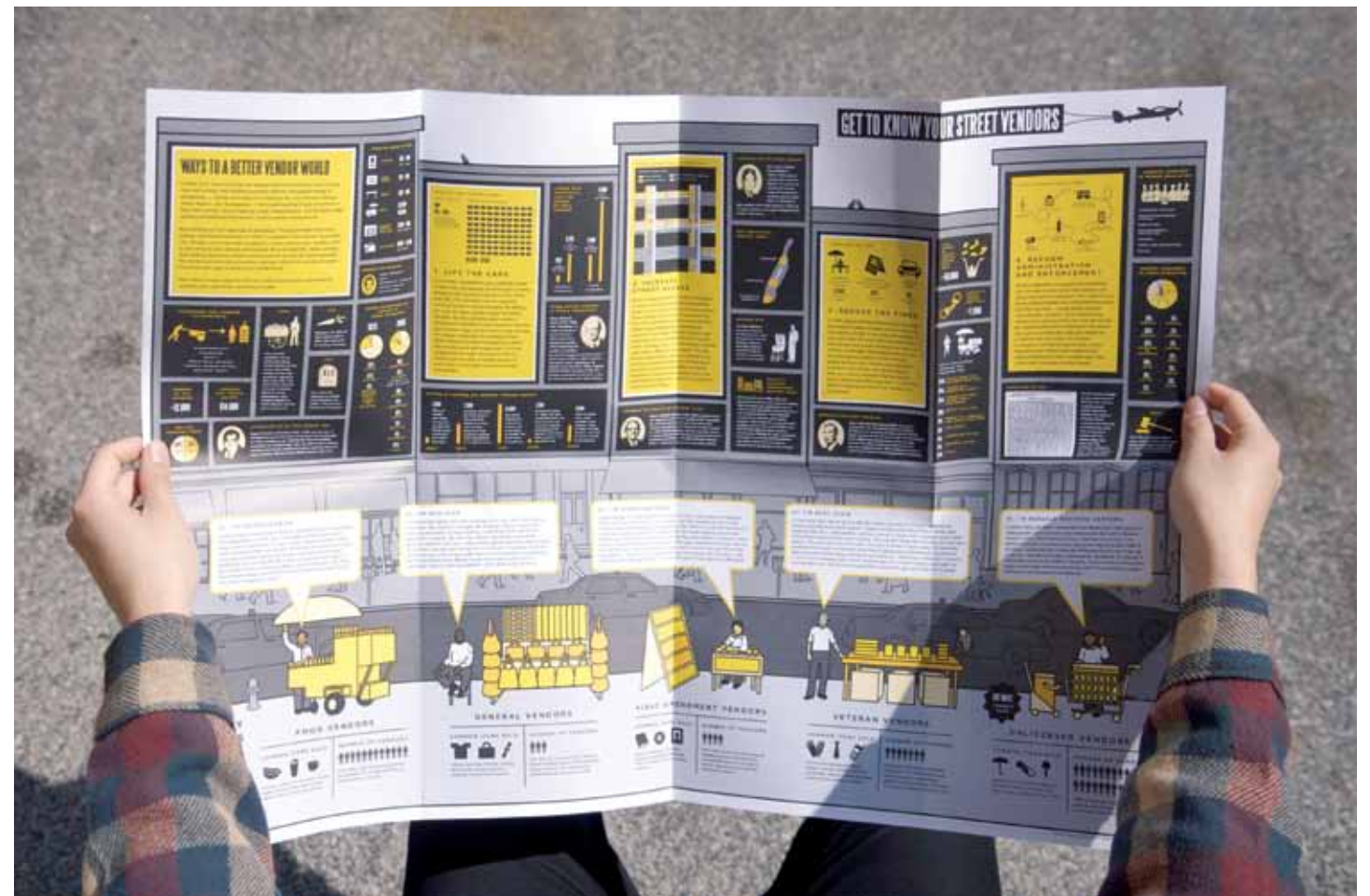
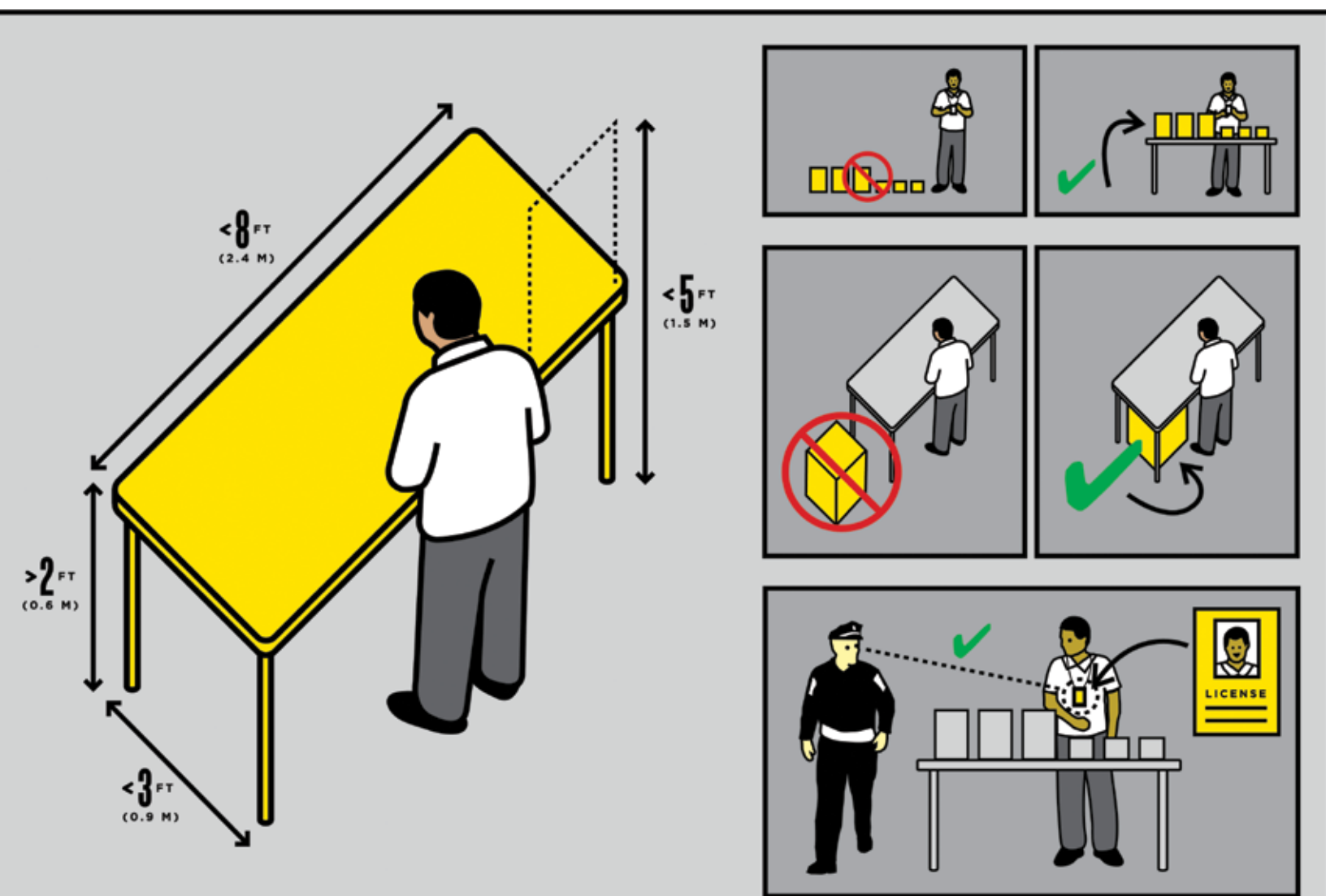
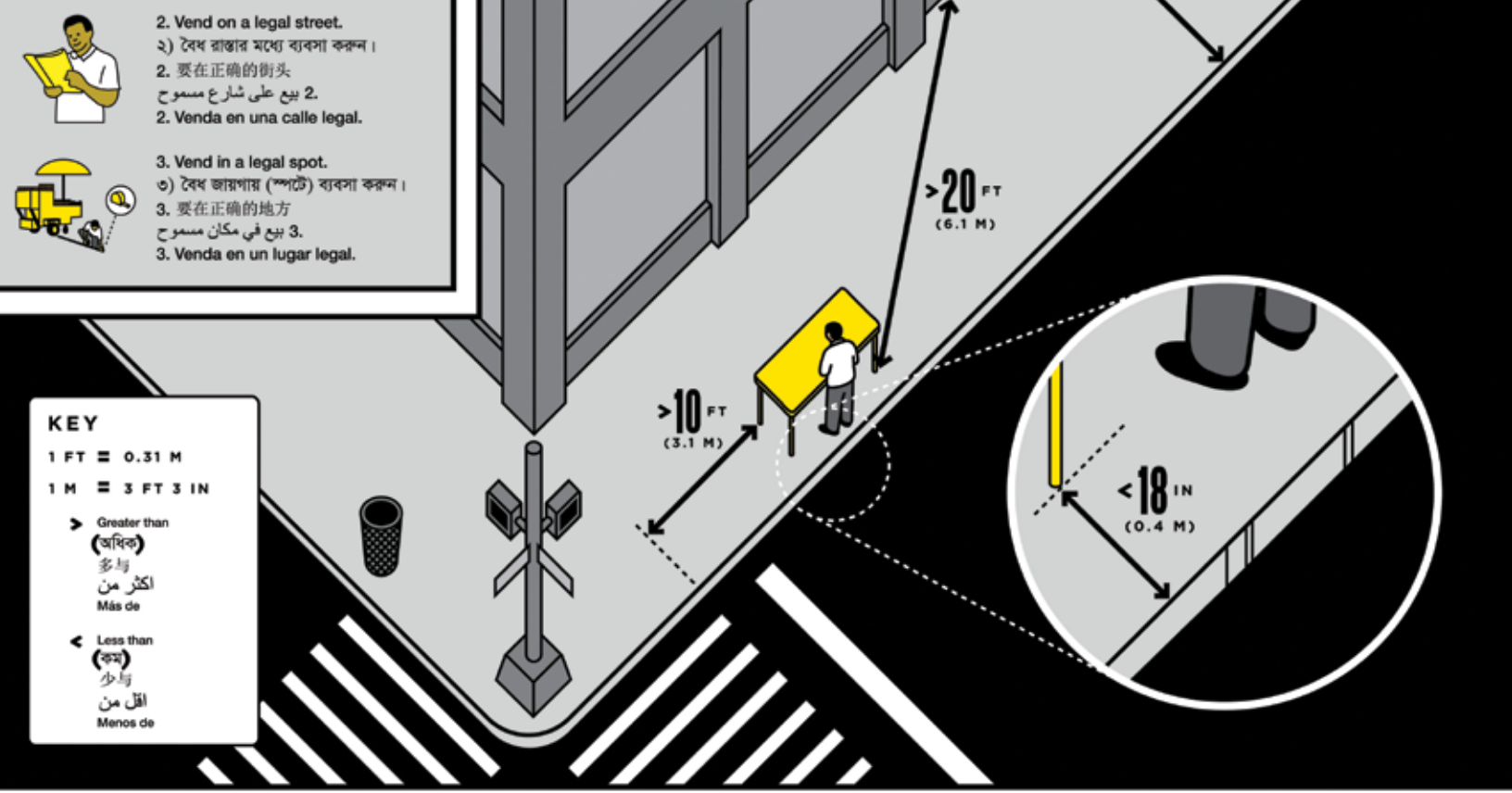
### Nobel Prizes and laureates, 1901-2012

Visualized for each laureate are prize category, year the prize was awarded, and age of the recipient at the time. Visualized for each category are grade level, principal academic affiliations, and principal hometowns of the laureates.

#### How to read it

Each dot represents a Nobel laureate, each recipient is positioned according to the year the prize was awarded (x axis) and age of the person at the time of the award (y axis).





**Vendor Power! 2009**

Design: Candy Chang. [candychang.com](http://candychang.com)  
Collaborators: Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) and the Street Vendor Project.  
Created through the CUP's Making Policy Public program. [makingpolicypublic.net](http://makingpolicypublic.net)

In 2009, The Street Vendor Project, designer Candy Chang and the Center for Urban Pedagogy created "Vendor Power!" to decode rules and regulations for New York City's approximately twenty thousand street vendors. This folding poster uses simple graphics and minimal text—translated in the five languages most commonly spoken among NYC's vendors—to help these individuals understand their rights and avoid the unnecessary fines that result from many of the most-often violated laws.

In addition to clear explanations of general vendor requirements (having a license, vending in a legal spot), the guide also clarifies relatively arcane details (such as how far from the curb vendors must place their tables) and provides advice from more experienced vendors on "ways to a better vendor world."

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a Brooklyn-based nonprofit organization. "Vendor Power!" is part of the CUP's "Making Policy Public" program, which uses graphic design to make public policy accessible, meaningful and shared. The Making Policy Public series includes twelve printed guides to date, each the product of a commissioned collaboration between a designer and an advocate.

**NYC Code Section 35-A**  
Vending regulations are typically communicated in complex legal writing. Shown at right: a portion of the city code for vendors who are US veterans.

**Veterans of the armed forces who vend in cities having a population of one million or more**

(i) no specialized vending licensee shall occupy more than eight linear feet of public space parallel to the curb in the operation of a vending business and, in addition, no specialized vending licensee operating any vending business on any sidewalk shall occupy more than three linear feet to be measured from the curb toward the property line;

(j) each specialized vending licensee who vends from a pushcart or stand in the roadway shall obey all traffic and parking laws, rules and regulations as now exist or as may be promulgated, but in no case shall a specialized vending licensee restrict the continued maintenance of a clear passageway for vehicles;

(k) no specialized vending licensee shall vend using the surface of the sidewalk, or a blanket or board placed immediately on the sidewalk or on top of a trash receptacle or cardboard boxes to display merchandise. No specialized vending

licensee display may exceed five feet in height from ground level. The display may not be less than twenty-four inches above the sidewalk where the display surface is parallel to the sidewalk, and may not be less than twelve inches above the sidewalk where the display surface is vertical. Where a rack or other display structure is placed on top of or above a table or other base, the size of the base shall not be less than the size of the display structure placed thereon. Nothing shall be placed on the base so as to exceed the size limitations contained in this...

The only way to communicate is to understand what it is like not to understand. Richard Saul Wurman, *Information Anxiety*

## A Year in Iraq 2008

Design: Alicia Cheng, Partner, mgmt. mgmtdesign.com

Research: Adriana Lins de Albuquerque, PhD candidate, Political Science, Columbia University.

Originally published in *The New York Times* on Sunday, 6 January 2008.

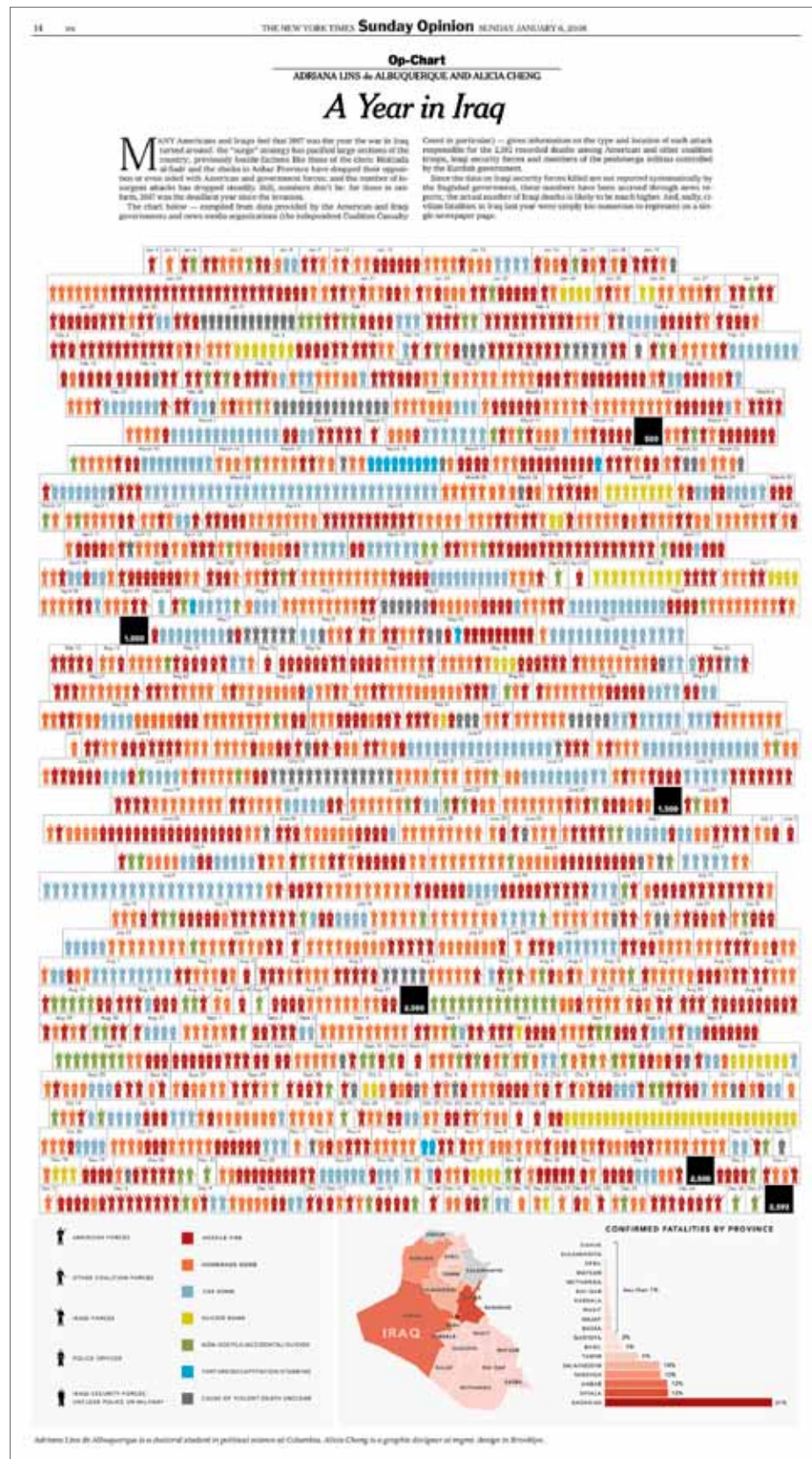
Published in *The New York Times* op-ed section, this "op-chart" represents a journalistic approach to documenting the Iraq War, examining the dates, quantities, nationalities and ranks of military fatalities. The chart is a modern version of the pictographic diagrams developed in the 1930s by Viennese social scientist Otto Neurath. Neurath worked closely with German designer Gerd Arntz to develop more than four thousand pictograms used to communicate complex social and economic facts to Viennese citizens—with the hope of inspiring political reform. The resulting graphics are known as the "Vienna method of visual statistics," or ISOTYPE (International System of Typographic Picture Education). Neurath believed that ISOTYPE charts were accessible regardless of language barriers because all information was represented visually, using repeated symbols in a "ruler" format.

### Six Rules for Infographics

1. An infographic is, by definition, a visual display of facts and data. Therefore, no infographic can be produced in the absence of reliable information.
2. No infographic should include elements that are not based on known facts and available evidence.
3. No infographic should be presented as being factual when it is fictional or based on unverified assumptions.
4. No infographic should be published without crediting its source(s) of information.
5. Information graphics professionals should refuse to produce any visual presentation that includes imaginary components designed to make it more "appealing" or "spectacular." Editors must refrain from asking for graphics that don't stick to available evidence.
6. Infographics are neither illustrations nor "art." Infographics are visual journalism and must be governed by the same ethical standards that apply to other areas of the profession.

Developed by Juan Antonio Giner, founder and president of Innovation International Media Consulting Group, and Alberto Cairo, infographic director of *Epoca*, a weekly news magazine in Brazil, in response to the publication of inaccurate information graphics covering Osama Bin Laden's death.

Published by the Harvard University Nieman Watchdog Project (niemanwatchdog.com) to ensure that editors follow basic, ethical journalism standards in the presentation of infographics, and endorsed by 106 journalists and design experts from 27 countries.



## Casualties in the Iraq War, 2003–2008

Design: Owen Irianto. owenirianto.com

Information Design Project, Division of Design, University of Washington, Seattle.

Faculty Advisor: Kristine Matthews, Visual Communication Design

This visualization presents a stark comparison of US troop casualties (4,075) and Iraqi fatalities (91,094) occurring between 2003–08 during the Iraq War. Iraqi deaths are represented with a single dot, while US military members are listed with their full names. This visual strategy highlights the vast difference in scale and resources between the two nations, while also revealing and challenging the viewer's assumptions about what (and/or who) is more significant.

An alternate exploration of this data set is shown on pg. 7 of this issue. In this variation, US fatalities are organized chronologically, in a radial form reminiscent of paper targets.

These visualizations are not overtly political; they contain no additional elements that editorialize the Iraq War as either noble or futile. However, both visualizations have a sense of authority and objectivity that is deliberately applied toward emphasizing the reality of death as a result of political conflict. As such, these information graphics function as powerful antiwar statements.



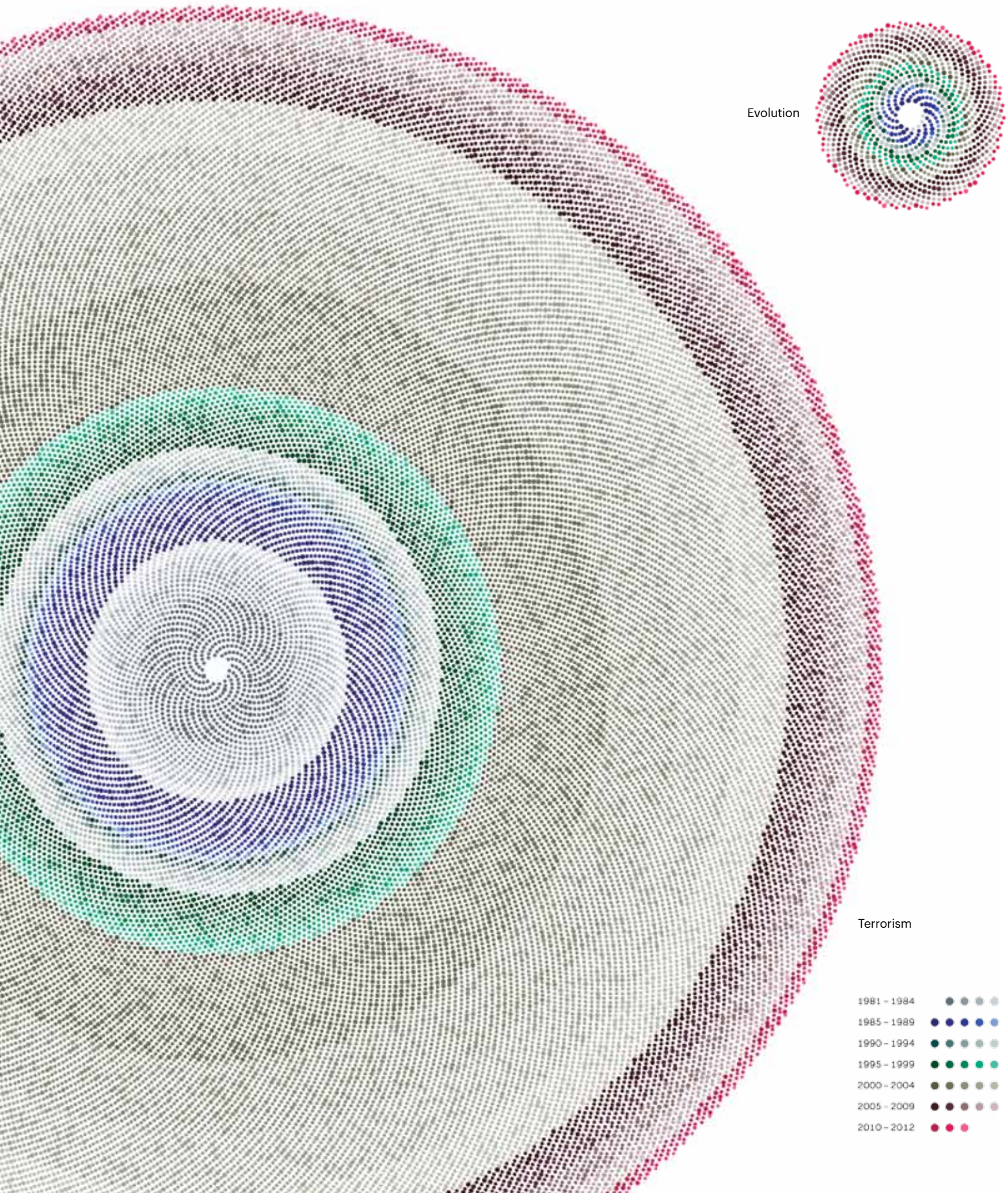
The digital print measures 18" x 110." On the right, Iraqi fatalities are represented by a series of dots. On the left, US military fatalities are organized into four columns of alphabetical names.

Above detail photograph by Owen Irianto. Right photograph by Hart Boyd.

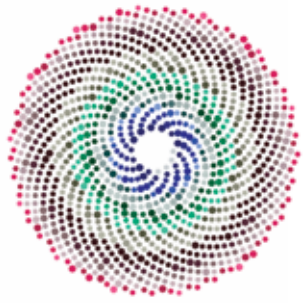


**Infographics are not just a translation of what can be read to what can be seen. They help us understand, create and experience our reality. They reveal the hidden, explain the complex and illuminate the obscure.** Francesco Franchi, Art Director at *IL*, the monthly magazine of *Il Sole 24 ORE*, *Malofiej 17*

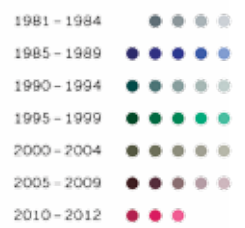




Evolution



Terrorism



**Shift: Thirty Years of  
The New York Times  
(1981-2012)**  
2012

Design: Amy Keeling. [amykeeling.com](http://amykeeling.com)  
M. Design Graduate Thesis,  
University of Washington, Seattle.  
Faculty Advisors: Karen Cheng (Chair),  
Annabelle Gould, Tad Hirsch and  
Christian Marc Schmidt (Guest Faculty,  
founder of Schema Design).

“Shift” is an interactive module that visualizes the popularity of news topics in *The New York Times* over the past thirty years (1981-2012). Users can select from twenty-four different topics (derived from Gallup Trends) to generate a data circle. Each circle is formed from dots; one dot equals one news article, and larger dots represent articles published on the front page. Dots are placed in a Fibonacci sequence to emulate a living, growing structure.

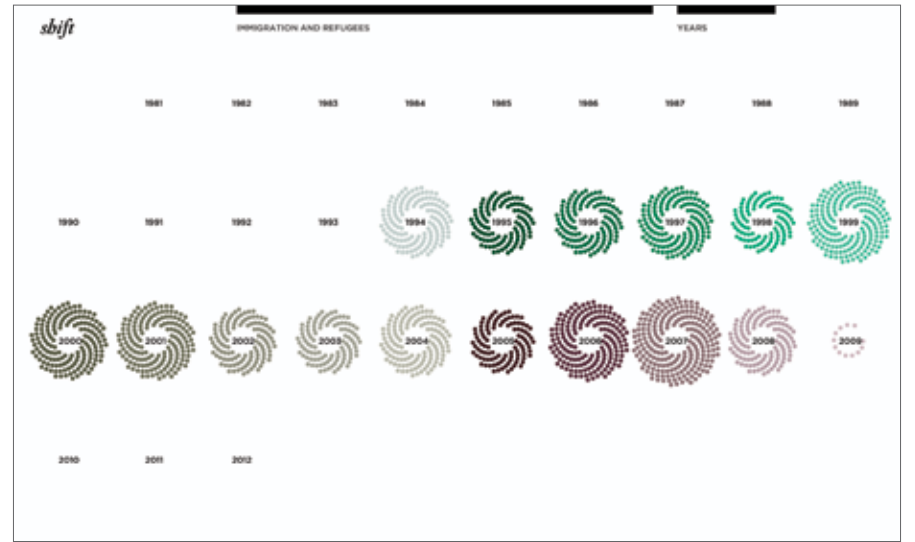
The size of the resulting topic circles indicates popularity. Large circles (Terrorism) show greater public interest than smaller circles (Evolution).

The interior of the topic circles can be read like the rings of a tree, with color bands representing the time of publication. A wide band of a single color shows strong interest during a specific time period (for example, the large pink band in Health Insurance and Managed Care coincides with 2010-12).

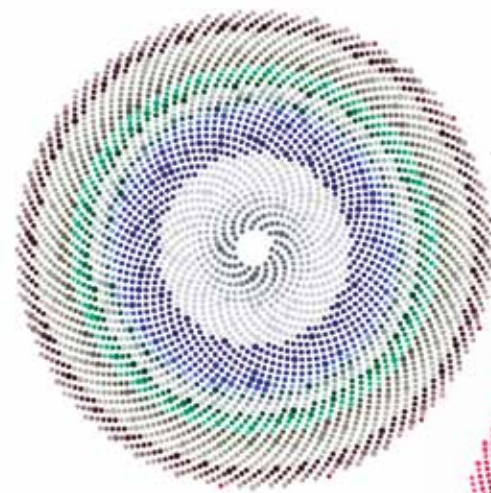
If the colors of a circle vary widely (Oil and Gas) the topic has been of consistent interest over time. “Shift” was created using the open-source programming language Processing ([processing.org](http://processing.org)) which was developed by Casey Reas and Ben Fry at the MIT Media Lab.



Oil and Gas



**Immigration and Refugees**  
Screen from the interactive module with the “Immigration and Refugees” topic selected, sorted by year.



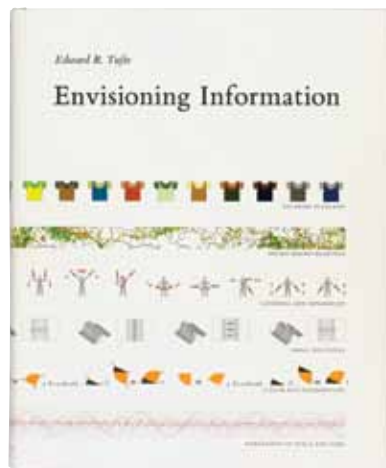
Church and State



Health Insurance and Managed Care

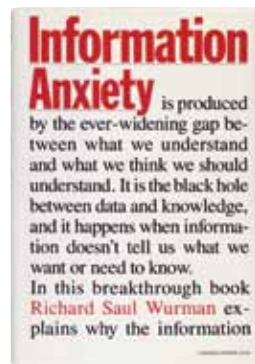
# The Information Design Bookshelf

1  
**Envisioning Information**  
By Edward Tufte  
Self-described by Tufte as his most design orientated book. Richly illustrated with a wide range of both modern and historical examples that demonstrate Tufte's key theories on high data-ink ratio, chart junk, small multiples, layering and separation.

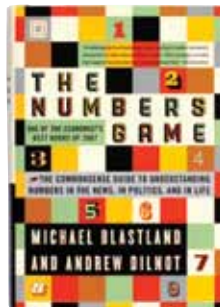


1

2  
**Information Anxiety**  
By Richard Saul Wurman  
Notable for the presentation of Wurman's Five Hat Racks or "LATCH"—his method for organizing information by Location, Alphabet, Time, Category and Hierarchy. While somewhat dated now (published in 1989, updated as *Information Anxiety 2* in 2000), it's still a very interesting, highly personal and wide-ranging, post-modern manifesto on the need to "transform information into structured knowledge."



2



3

3  
**The Numbers Game**  
By Michael Blastland, Andrew Dilnot  
A simple, easy-to-read introduction to statistics (and statistical error) from BBC journalist Michael Blastland and economist Andrew Dilnot. The cases cited by the authors are very accessible and nontechnical.

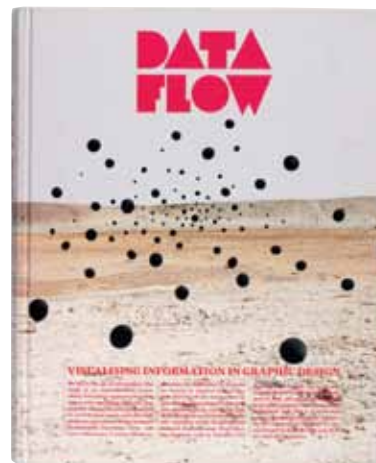


4

4-5  
**The Information Design Handbook**  
By Jenn Viscoky O'Grady, Ken Viscoky O'Grady  
**Designing Information**  
By Joel Katz  
Both of these books are short, well-organized introductions to the principles of visual perception and information organization. These "bridge" textbooks explain basic perceptual psychology to designers and present simple design principles to a more technical audience.



5



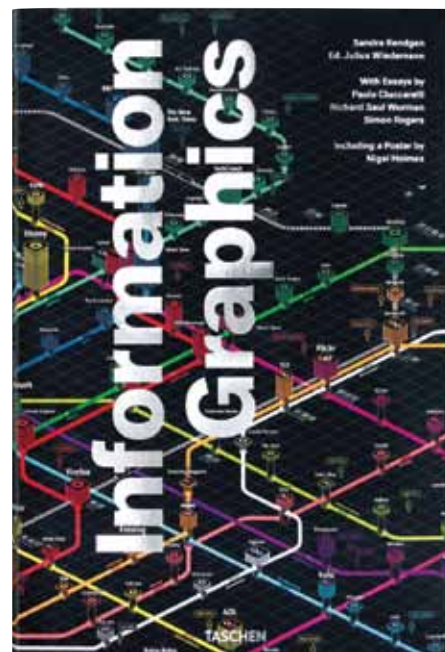
6



7

6  
**Data Flow: Visualising Information in Graphic Design**  
Edited by R. Klanten, N. Bourquin, S. Ehmann, F. van Heerden, T. Tissot  
Published by Gestalten, an extensive, cutting-edge collection of innovative diagrams and data visualizations. The editors have compiled a particularly sophisticated and innovative survey of work from all over the world. This 2008 title was followed in 2010 by *Data Flow 2*.

7  
**Visual Storytelling: Inspiring a New Visual Language**  
Edited by R. Klanten, S. Ehmann, F. Schulze  
Another beautiful Gestalten compendium, but with greater focus on narrative information graphics. Includes interviews with well-regarded practitioners such as *The New York Times* Graphics Department and Francesco Franchi, art director for *IL-Intelligence in Lifestyle*, the monthly magazine of *Il Sole 24 ORE*.



8

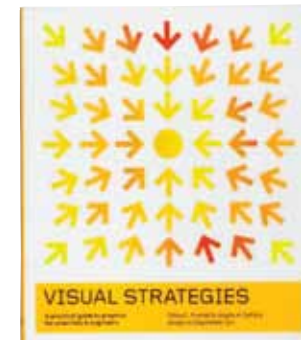


11



12

8  
**Information Graphics**  
By Sandra Rendgen  
Edited by Julius Wiedemann  
An enormous (10" x 15" x 3") large-scale survey of superbly reproduced information graphics, organized according to Richard Wurman's Five Hat Racks: Location, Alphabet, Time, Category and Hierarchy. A typically bold and lavish Taschen production. The introductory essays (by Wurman, Paolo Ciuccarelli, Simon Rodgers and Sandra Rendgen) are quite good.



9



13

9  
**Visual Strategies: A Practical Guide to Graphics for Scientists and Engineers**  
By Felice C. Frankel, Angela H. DePace; Designed by Stefan Sagmeister  
A unique collaborative effort between research scientist/science photographer Felice Frankel, biologist Angela DePace and designer Stefan Sagmeister. A detailed guide specifically for scientists and engineers who need to create informative figures that explain their research findings.



10

10  
**The Data Journalism Handbook**  
By Jonathan Gray, Lucy Chambers, Liliana Bounegru  
An open-source guidebook that explains how to access, analyze and display public and private data to support the development and writing of news stories. Available for download as a free PDF at [datajournalismhandbook.org](http://datajournalismhandbook.org). Produced as a joint initiative of the European Journalism Centre and the Open Knowledge Foundation.

11, 12, 13  
**The Feltron Annual Report**  
By Nicholas Felton  
Since 2005, information designer Nicholas Felton has documented all aspects of his personal life (waking/sleeping times, musical tastes, meals, travel, exercise, etc.) by creating infographics that are compiled into the annual "Feltron" report. The resulting explorations are data visualization as art. Pictured from right to left are the reports for 2007, 2010 and 2012; visit [feltron.com](http://feltron.com) for additional years and page views.

### Click on It

#### Information Designers

- Alberto Cairo [thefunctionalart.com](http://thefunctionalart.com)
- Nicholas Felton [feltron.com](http://feltron.com)
- Francesco Franchi [francescofranchi.com](http://francescofranchi.com)
- Ben Fry [benfry.com](http://benfry.com)
- Jessica Hagy [thisisindexed.com](http://thisisindexed.com)
- Jonathan Harris [number27.org](http://number27.org)
- Nigel Holmes [nigelholmes.com](http://nigelholmes.com)
- Robert Kosara [eagereyes.org](http://eagereyes.org)
- Martin Krzywinski [mkweb.bcgsc.ca](http://mkweb.bcgsc.ca)
- David McCandless [informationisbeautiful.net](http://informationisbeautiful.net)
- Christoph Niemann [christophniemann.com](http://christophniemann.com)
- Stefanie Posavec [itsbeenreal.co.uk](http://itsbeenreal.co.uk)
- Nicolas Rapp [nicolasrapp.com](http://nicolasrapp.com)
- Edward Tufte [edwardtufte.com](http://edwardtufte.com)
- Bang Wong [bang.clearscience.info](http://bang.clearscience.info)
- Richard Wurman [wurman.com](http://wurman.com)
- Nathan Yau [flowingdata.com](http://flowingdata.com)

#### Information Design Consultancies

- Catalog Tree [catalogtree.net](http://catalogtree.net)
- Column Five [columnfivemedia.com](http://columnfivemedia.com)
- Density Design [densitydesign.org](http://densitydesign.org)
- Dubberly Design Office [dubberly.com](http://dubberly.com)
- Fathom [fathom.info](http://fathom.info)
- Hyperakt [hyperakt.com](http://hyperakt.com)
- Periscopic [periscopic.com](http://periscopic.com)
- Pitch Interactive [pitchinteractive.com](http://pitchinteractive.com)
- Schema Design [schemadesign.com](http://schemadesign.com)
- Stamen Design [stamen.com](http://stamen.com)
- Tactical Technology Collective [tacticaltech.org](http://tacticaltech.org)

#### Infographic Charts/Posters

- History Shots [historyshots.com](http://historyshots.com)
- Pop Chart Lab [popchartlab.com](http://popchartlab.com)
- Timeplots [timeplots.com](http://timeplots.com)



#### Information Design Blogs

- Chartsnthings (Blog of *The New York Times* Graphics Dept.) [chartsnthings.tumblr.com](http://chartsnthings.tumblr.com)
- Chartporn [chartporn.org](http://chartporn.org)
- Data Visualization [datavisualization.ch](http://datavisualization.ch)
- Facebook Data Science [facebook.com/data](http://facebook.com/data)
- Info Design [informationdesign.org](http://informationdesign.org)
- Information Aesthetics [infosthetics.com](http://infosthetics.com)
- Sankey Diagrams [sankey-diagrams.com](http://sankey-diagrams.com)
- Swiss-infographics [swissinfographics.com](http://swissinfographics.com)
- Visual Complexity [visualcomplexity.com](http://visualcomplexity.com)
- Visual Loop [visualloop.com](http://visualloop.com)
- Visualizing [visualizing.org](http://visualizing.org)

#### Information Design Tools

- Gapminder [gapminder.org](http://gapminder.org)
- Google Charts [developers.google.com/chart](http://developers.google.com/chart)
- Many Eyes [www-958.ibm.com](http://www-958.ibm.com)
- Processing [processing.org](http://processing.org)
- Wordle [wordle.net](http://wordle.net)

#### Information Design Organizations

- International Institute for Information Design [iiid.net](http://iiid.net)
- The Information Design Association [informationdesignassociation.org.uk](http://informationdesignassociation.org.uk)
- Society for News Design [snd.org](http://snd.org)

#### Publications with Infographic Features

- Data Art with BBC backstage [data-art.net](http://data-art.net)
- Fast Company* [fastcompany.com/infographics](http://fastcompany.com/infographics)
- GOOD [good.is/infographics](http://good.is/infographics)
- The Guardian* Data Store [guardian.co.uk/data](http://guardian.co.uk/data)
- The New York Times* [smallmeans.com/new-york-times-infographics](http://smallmeans.com/new-york-times-infographics)
- The New York Times* Innovation Portfolio [www.nytimes.com/innovation](http://www.nytimes.com/innovation)
- Visualizing Data: *A Harvard Business Review* Insight Center [hbr.org/special-collections/insight/visualizing-data](http://hbr.org/special-collections/insight/visualizing-data)

#### Information Design Videos

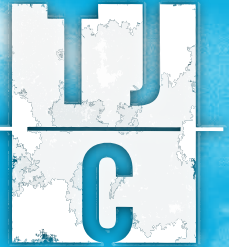
- Hans Rosling TED Talk "The Best Stats You've Ever Seen"
- David McCandless TED Talk "The Beauty of Data Visualization"
- "Journalism in the Age of Data" from Stanford University
- "The Art of Data Visualization" from PBS ([video.pbs.org](http://video.pbs.org))
- The New York Times*: "All the News That's Fit to Post"

#### More Online Information Design Projects

- GE Data Visualization [visualization.geblogs.com](http://visualization.geblogs.com)
- Growth of Walmart [projects.flowingdata.com/walmart](http://projects.flowingdata.com/walmart)
- Information Design Patterns [infodesignpatterns.com](http://infodesignpatterns.com)
- Newsmap [newsmap.jp](http://newsmap.jp)
- San Francisco Crimespotting [sanfrancisco.crimespotting.org](http://sanfrancisco.crimespotting.org)
- Sense of Patterns [casualdata.com/senseofpatterns](http://casualdata.com/senseofpatterns)
- Slavery Footprint [slaveryfootprint.org](http://slaveryfootprint.org)
- The Virtual Water Project [virtualwater.eu](http://virtualwater.eu)
- We Feel Fine [wefeelfine.org](http://wefeelfine.org)



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## NORTHWEST VIGNETTE

## A Surprising Richness of Order University of Washington's Winkenwerder Hall

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner



Details of by-pass wood construction and diagonal struts that resist wind and seismic forces eliminating the need for interior shear walls. Image from the Visual Resources Collection, College of Built Environments, University of Washington.

“The choice of wood, as the principal material, is a logical outgrowth of the building’s function. Through skillful articulation of the structural members, the building has a rigorous linear character which is made warm and human by the quality of the wood...”  
—*Jury statement, National AIA Awards, 1966*

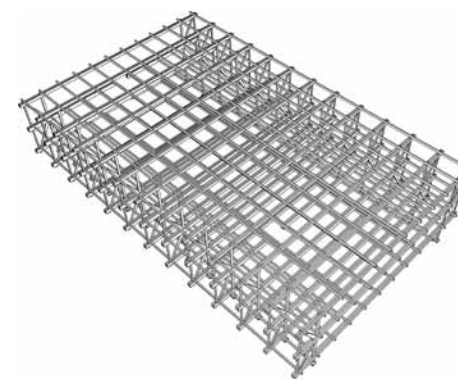
Our image of Seattle’s University of Washington campus is largely one of brick and stone. In addition to Rainier Vista, our recollections of the campus are shaped primarily by its historic core—the Liberal Arts Quadrangle (“The Quad”), the Central Quadrangle (Red Square), and the Science Quadrangle. In outlying areas the buildings are often more modern, but the primary material is still usually brick. There are exceptions—the best known is the Faculty Club (1958-60; now the University of Washington Club), in steel, glass and stucco, by Paul Hayden Kirk and Associates and Victor Steinbrueck. Much less well-known, but equally deserving of attention, is the Hugo Winkenwerder Forest Sciences Laboratory (1962-64; now Winkenwerder Hall). A tour-de-force of wood construction by Grant, Copeland, Chervenak and Associates, the building was recognized nationally with an AIA Merit Award in 1966.

One reason Winkenwerder Hall is not well-known is that it is so well-hidden. Tucked into a grove of firs behind Anderson Hall (the Gothic Revival home of the Forestry School since 1924), Winkenwerder is virtually invisible from Stevens Way, the main road through the UW campus. Just walk behind Anderson Hall, however, and one will find a pleasant outdoor space framed on two sides by Anderson and Winkenwerder and on its third and fourth sides by Bloedel Hall (1970-71), also designed by Grant, Copeland, Chervenak, which repeats the structural system and architectural expression from Winkenwerder. Winkenwerder and Bloedel are three-story buildings that achieve their richness not through formal manipulations but, rather, through well-crafted, tectonically expressive detail.

In plan, Winkenwerder is a rectangle measuring 144 by 72 feet. The order of the building is determined by its glu-laminated wood structural system, which is based on a regular 12-foot module from north to south and an 8-foot module from east to west. The wood structure is a clear example of by-pass construction with pairs of 5¼-by-17¾-inch



The skylit, light-filled atrium occupies two bays and provides for primary vertical circulation by means of the stairs partly visible through the glazing. Image from the Visual Resources Collection, College of Built Environments, University of Washington.



Three-dimensional view of the glu-laminated wood structure which provides structural support, architectural order, and visual character to Winkenwerder Hall. Drawing by University of Washington students Cameron Wu and Moonyoung Ryu.

glu-lam beams extending through the building from east to west at 12 feet on center, passing on either side of the 5¼-by-6½-inch glu-lam columns; in the other direction, resting on these beams, at 8 feet on center, are glu-lam purlins, 5¼ by 9¾ inches.

The architects intended the building to have nearly complete flexibility within this structural frame. The plan is organized by a double-loaded corridor running on center from north to south; the corridor walls are fixed and designed to provide services to the laboratories. All other walls are nonstructural and could be removed. The diagonal struts are located on the exterior, providing lateral strength to resist wind and seismic forces, eliminating the need for interior shear walls and reinforcing the character of the building. The exterior expression of the upper two floors is wood frame and glass in-fill. Only at the lowest level, partly below grade, are the walls solid. The top floor is shaded by an exterior glass sunscreen which helps maintain a temperate interior. The primary vertical circulation occurs in a glazed and light-filled atrium that occupies two of the regular bays.

In their published statement, the architects noted that the glu-laminated structural system provided an appropriate working environment for the study of forest products. They noted that, surrounded by a grove of trees, the building enabled the occupants to see the material “in its natural and finished state.”

Although Winkenwerder Hall is nearly fifty years old, it is still surprisingly fresh. In an era when many buildings create interest through formal manipulations, Winkenwerder reminds us that designs based on structural order and material expression may become quite powerful through their consistency, coherence and well-crafted detail.

**JEFFREY KARL OCHSNER** is a professor in the Department of Architecture who currently serves as associate dean in the College of Built Environments at the University of Washington. He is the author of *Lionel H. Pries, Architect, Artist Educator: From Arts and Crafts to Modern Architecture* (2007) and *Furniture Studio: Materials, Craft, and Architecture* (2012).



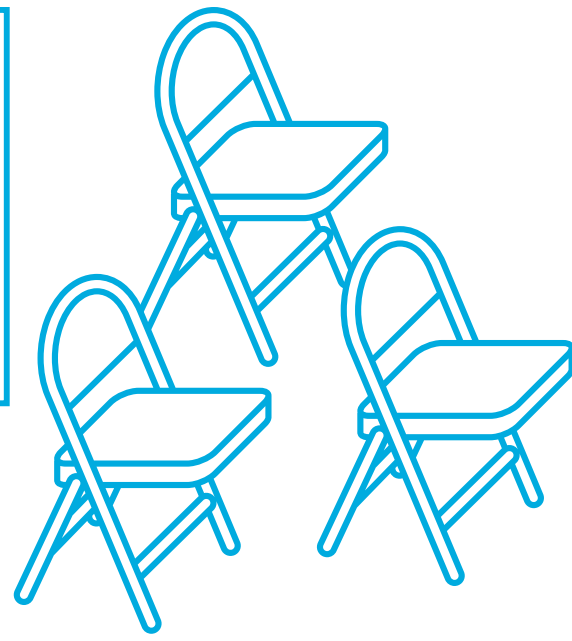
Ray K. Metzker. Chicago. 1957. Gelatin silver print. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Gift of the Hall Family Foundation, 2011.21.43. © Ray K. Metzker

The Photographs of Ray K. Metzker  
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SERIES  
DESIGN  
LECTURE



## April Greiman

The Seattle Public Library - Downtown  
Saturday, September 28, 2013  
Doors at 6:30 PM | FREE Admission

April Greiman is a trailblazing designer recognized as one of the first to embrace computer technology as a design tool. Greiman is also credited with establishing 'New Wave' in the US during the late '70s and early '80s.

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## TRAVELOGUE

# Genius of Landscape Communal Built Environments and an Architectural Mystery in the Yucatán

**Sam Hammer**

Photography: Sam Hammer

Individuals, communities and societies build landscape. How societies form, how communities relate, what people do every day and all their lives reflects and builds landscape. Societies make landscape in different ways. All societies construct landscape communally. In fields, roads and cities, building and maintaining are collective endeavors. Tires, feet, exhaust – all part of a shared action – motion, erosion, corrosion. A pile of garbage, a garden, a coating of soot or fresh paint.



\* \* \*

Prelude: Valladolid, a sleepy Yucatecan town, a place of conflict where the “caste wars” were fought by the Mayans, desperate for self-determination, economic and social freedom. Nightmares crawl up onto you from the blood spilled here.

Today Valladolid is cheerful, leafy and lively. Janet suggests we follow the “Route of Seven Churches” to get the lay of the land. First hesitating, then confidently, we follow the tourist information map. We see the spire of one church from the plaza of another we visit. We drink a coke in the semi-shade of a tree filled with birds.

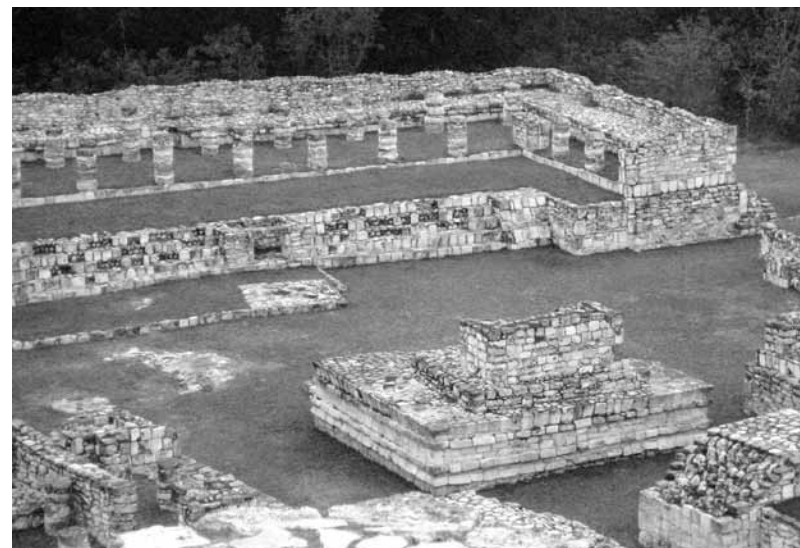
We consider the flat landscape of Valladolid and its churches, every one replacing a Mayan pyramid. We reimagine the city in its Mayan incarnation, a different place but one still filled with people, markets, roadways and pyramids.

Continuation: Mérida, Yucatán’s capital, a pulsing city of over a million. Valladolid’s

“Seven Churches” are replaced by twenty or more. Walking the narrow colonial sidewalks, bathed in fumes from careening buses, this is a grey city for all its vibrancy, coated in the dust of exhaust and baked by tropical light. The buildings squat together in the hot light of noon or in late-day shadows. Walking more than in Valladolid, we see more and we see less.

South of the city—a fork in the road. In ancient times, one road led to Ticul and trade in the interior, another to Campeche, the sea and beyond. Ancient geography superimposes itself. The modern place melts onto the bones of the old. Standing here, Mérida becomes real, not just a collection of shops, restaurants, hawkers, buses, trucks and evening strollers. Mérida is history. What communal efforts built it?

The next day—a cool, rainy bus ride to Mayapán, supposedly the only Mayan ceremonial center that remained active into European times. At Mayapán – after a long ride into uncharted areas teeming with



ruined pyramids in the middle of busy villages – we encounter a super deluxe coach carrying Germans, who have spilled onto the site. They are doing yoga on the buildings, kneeling and stuffing notes into cracks in the structures, possibly thinking about human sacrifice.

They leave, almost forgetting the smallest, weakest, oldest member of their group in her wheelchair. We have Mayapán to ourselves. In the wind and low sky of grey clouds, spitting raindrops, it is intense—intensity of travel, intensity of site, intensity of an encounter with the plain lunacy of foreigners who travel with cognitive maps so clearly clashing with the place they visit. Mayapán looks like it was buried almost to the tips of its pyramids. It reminds us that much lies beneath.

On the bus back to Mérida we are chilled, tired and overwhelmed with the site, hard to interpret. In town we try for a Spanish (not Mexican) restaurant, are chased away by cigarette smoke and steep prices. We wander the downtown streets of Mérida hungry and thirsty, a head above the crowds that pack the workaday sidewalks.

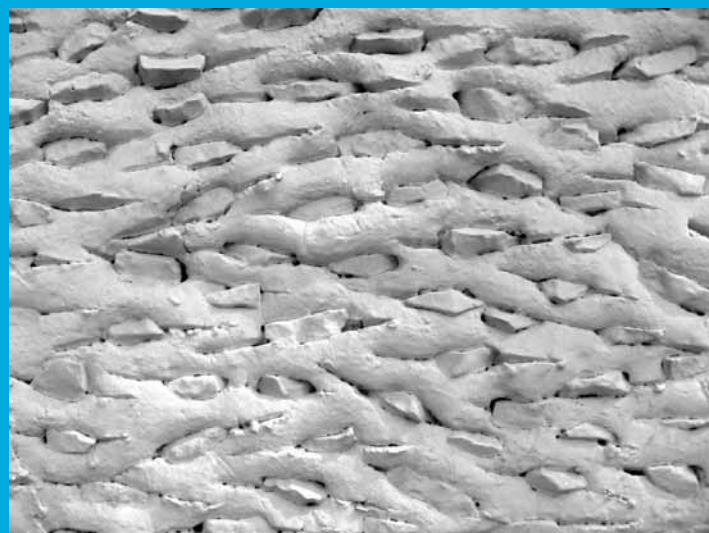
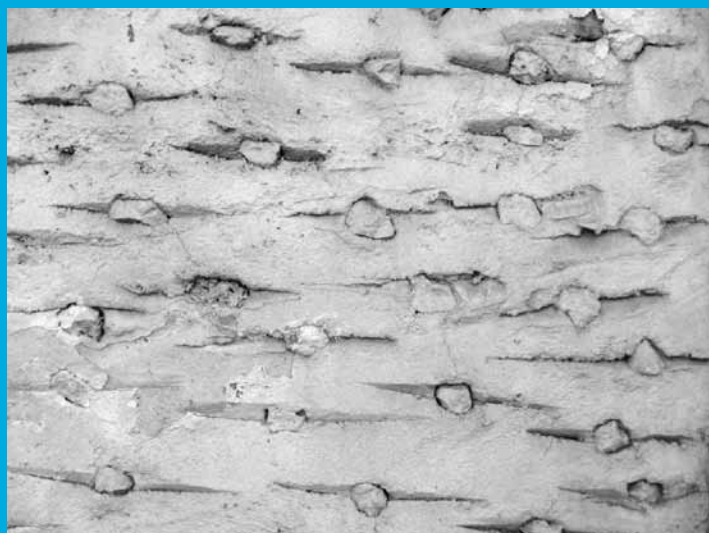
Janet points out a parking lot raised just above street level. On the far wall of the parking lot are two baroque columns, remains of a Spanish-era chapel. Why the chapel? And why is the parking lot raised in dead-flat Mérida? Obvious. It’s sitting on temple ruins.

Is this whole city sitting on ruins? Is Mayapán, ruins itself, sitting on even deeper ruins? Valladolid? The surrounding villages? Is there any place in the Yucatán not sitting on ruins? How did they come to be buried? Some we know were recycled—contemporary



**Standing here, Mérida becomes real, not just a collection of shops, restaurants, hawkers, buses, trucks and evening strollers. Mérida is history. What communal efforts built it?**





Mérida (not yet Mérida), when the Spanish arrived. They were the chips left by generations of stonecutters – hundreds of years’ worth – who trimmed the stones that built the temples, evidence of collective human work on the landscape. Colonists incorporated the chips into their stucco, and there they sit. Puzzle solved.

The ancestors of today’s Mayans built a landscape of glorious cities of worship and power. The by-product: unassuming chipped stones piled in the streets, created over ages by many hands. The collective goal of the Mayan civilization was the building and upkeep of those cities. Every hand in society supported the priests, sacrifices and physical presence of the cities of ritual that became Valladolid and Mérida. Temples and pyramids were built from stones trimmed and chipped near these sites for hundreds of years. Landscape: a collective human endeavor.

Postlude: A visit to New York City and Ground Zero. “Occupiers” are still stationed at Zuccotti Park, a few steps away. The hor-

rible, scarred landscape, the hole, the crowds, the bronze bas-relief of heroes of the NYPD, overwhelmed by a calamity beyond their ken and beyond their means to ameliorate. Yet all around the scene of disaster, all around the milling people, all surrounding the Occupy protesters soars the landscape of Wall Street, which we as a society continue to build with all our focus. Cranes pushing skyward, the landscape of the financial apparatus is the centerpiece of our communal efforts. Whatever we save, buy, eat or “invest” contributes to those buildings, to that financial “community.” I realize with a dollop of shame that these towers are our pyramids, this landscape of greed our bequest to the future.

**SAM HAMMER** is a professor at Boston University. He also teaches at the Boston Architectural College and is a fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Academies of Science. He shares his thoughts on science, art and sustainable design on two blogs, **Scientist/Artist** and **Botany Without Borders**. [scientistartist.blogspot.com](http://scientistartist.blogspot.com), [botanywithoutborders.blogspot.com](http://botanywithoutborders.blogspot.com).

roadside walls built from the whitewashed sacbeob stones, churches constructed from the rocks of temples and pyramids.

But the puzzle I’ve been trying to solve since I first came to the Yucatán: What to make of the stucco walls decorated playfully, skillfully, boldly, with what appear to be random stone chips.

Experiment: Ceramics Studio, Boston University. Up here on the fifth floor I’ve been venting my creative instincts, finding new colleagues and new ways to play with clay, struggling with a project referencing the pillars of Ake, near Mérida, where I took dozens of photographs of amazing, oversized, isolated, windswept, sculptural stone pillars.

My ceramics experiment is a mixed bag. None of my miniature pillars sing with the energy and awareness of the real thing. I decide to carve, painstakingly, chipping off pieces of my small imitation Ake pillars, coming to grips with the shape of the rocks I’m trying to depict, building a pile of random leather-hard clay chips—chips that look exactly like the random stone chips of the stucco walls in Valladolid. I return to my Flickr site, where I’ve faithfully recorded every picture that’s worth sharing of my time in Mexico. I stare, breathless, at a wall in Downtown, Mérida, whitewashed but grey with soot and smoke, chock full of tightly packed, random-looking stones.

But those stones weren’t random. They littered the streets of Valladolid (not yet Valladolid), and they littered the streets of

## Mayapán looks like it was buried almost to the tips of its pyramids. It reminds us that much lies beneath.





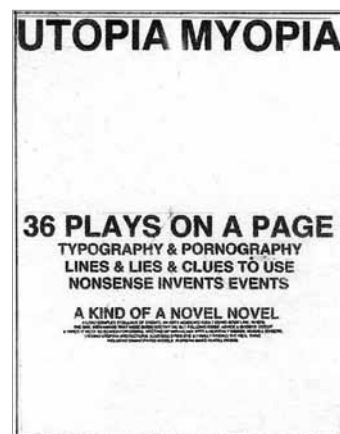
## BOOK REVIEW

# Leaned In

John Parman



*WHY? WHY NOT?*  
Barbara Stauffacher Solomon  
Fun Fog Press, 2013



*UTOPIA MYOPIA*  
Fun Fog Press, 2013

**B**arbara Stauffacher Solomon is a San Francisco-based artist, graphic and landscape designer, and writer. Now in her eighties, she's written (and illustrated) a riveting memoir. Her openness about the life she led while she transformed into what she became makes for a "writer's book." Design figures in it, but life – a life that a novelist would kill for – keeps upstaging it.

At nineteen she married Frank Stauffacher—filmmaker and founder of the San Francisco Film Festival. She lost him to brain cancer nine years later. The memoir begins with Stauffacher Solomon, a widow at twenty-eight, arriving in Switzerland with her mother and a young daughter, Chloe. Encounters in San Francisco convinced her that designers were serious and artists were not, so she applied first to Zurich's Kunstgewerbeschule and then to Basel's. Zurich told her to come back in a year, but Basel's Armin Hofmann and his wife, Dorli, took her in. Her studies at one of the leading schools of Swiss graphic design began:

Only a few miles away, French philosophers were writing and questioning everything visual, but Armin didn't read those books, and neither did we. ... The first assignment was to paint an alphabet acceptable to his discerning eyes. For six months, we struggled with twenty-six capitals and twenty-six lower-case letters, straight lines and wiggles. ... Our design tools were minimal. Curved lines were drawn by eye. Intuition merged with geometry. ... I could sense each millimeter of paint. ... My only concern was for the weight of each line and space.

The opening chapter lights up her studies like Velazquez's *Infanta*, but the wider world is still in the picture: a daughter to raise, a mother to propitiate and men who came courting. After immersing us in the school

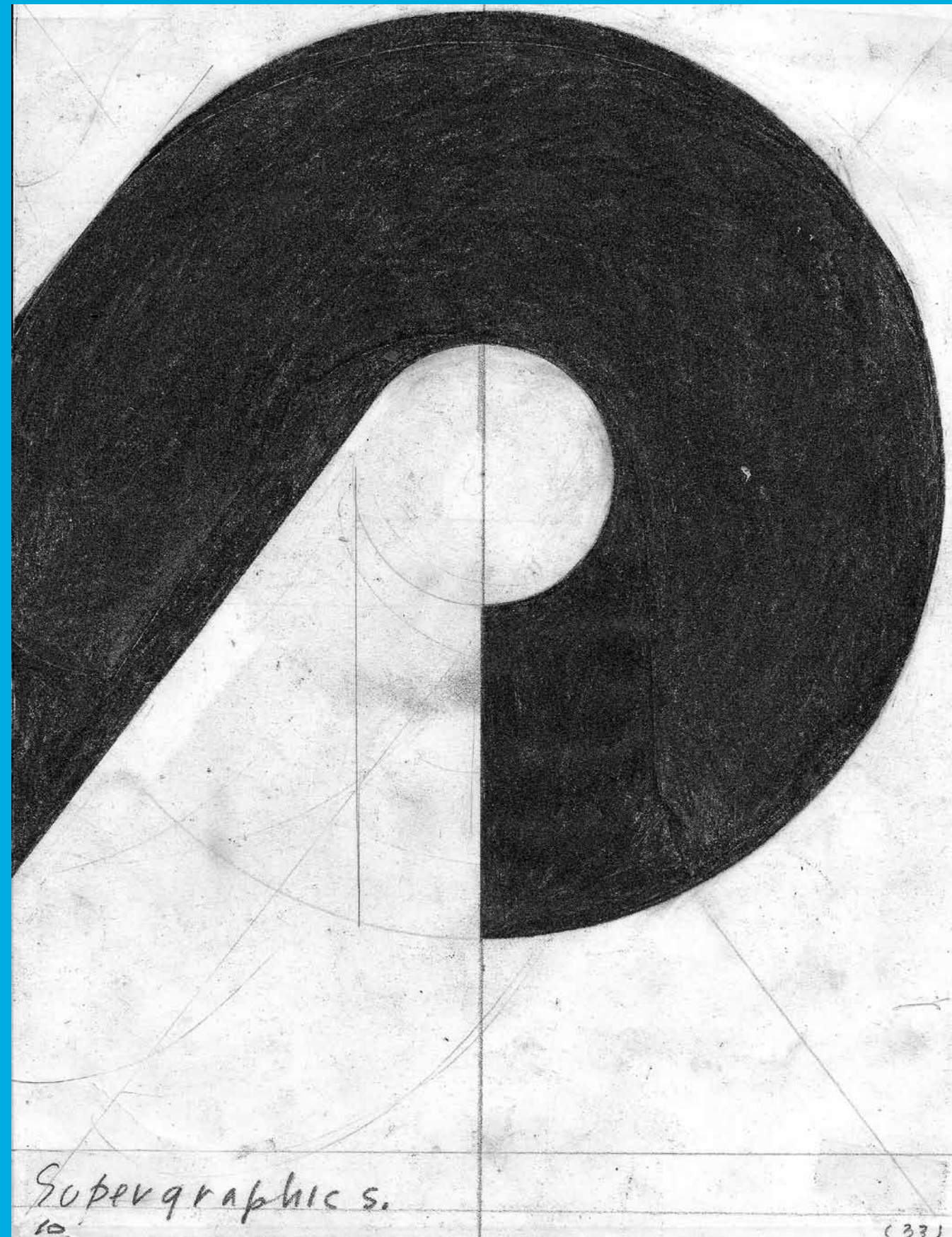
and its immediate aftermath, she turns to her own backstory. Chapter two reprises her San Francisco childhood, her training as a dancer, and her marriage to Frank and their time together as a luminary, bicoastal art-and-film-world couple in the heady 1950s. Then death appears, preceded by frailty, denial and bewilderment. Frank dies in his late thirties.

Stauffacher Solomon's life as a designer, post-Basel, begins with chapter three—a firsthand account by a woman who took it all in. Returning to San Francisco, she set up shop as a graphic designer. Lawrence Halprin gave her a place to work and then pulled her into the Sea Ranch. Applying her Basel-honed alphabet to its walls, she invented supergraphics. Her pocket history brings the Sea Ranch team alive. Here's Joseph Esherick:

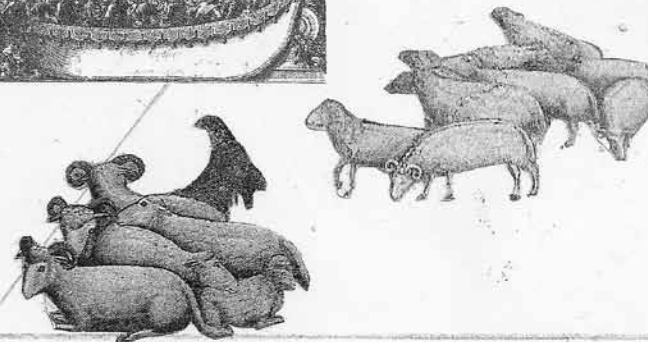
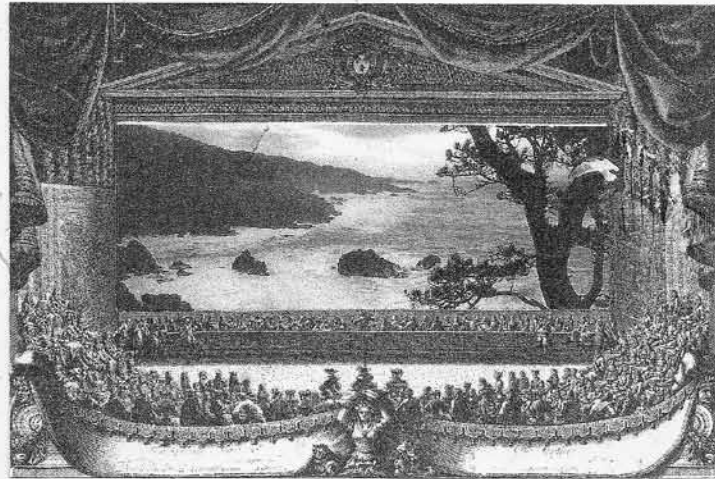
He was the perfect architect to design Sea Ranch-style houses. A master of the laid-back, Northern-California reverse-snobism style of architecture, he dressed in tweed jackets, frayed Brooks Brothers shirts, and old khakis. In the shelter of a tall black-green hedgerow, Joe designed a line of six wood-shingle houses with sod-roofs—homes Al hoped future architects would emulate.

Al Boeke, "tall and meticulous, a good-looking American with a crew cut," was the visionary behind the Sea Ranch. Interested in new towns, he decided to build one. Halprin was his planner. As she notes, "Two optimistic 20th-century ideals influenced Larry at the Sea Ranch: community as learned through summers on an Israeli kibbutz, and modernism as learned at Harvard from Gropius."

Stauffacher Solomon judges that her work at the Sea Ranch was her best as a graphic designer. It drew immediate praise and coverage: spreads in *Abitare* and *Life*



# UTOPIA MYOPIA



# THE SEA RANCH

**SETTING**  
A piece of paper.  
Here.  
Now.

**CHARACTERS**  
Old Goat  
Chorus of Sheep

### ACT I

**Old Goat**  
The Sea Ranch was ten miles of barren paradise along the Pacific Coast. It is now ten miles of expensive land & architecture enjoyed by podigreed retirees living agreeably on wine & brie. Residents have expensive views, well-maintained beauty & annuities. Originally no one talked about wilderness conservation. The designers agreed that this edge of the world just waited to be discovered, enhanced, & photographed for glossy mags for the lucky ones to see.  
**Sheep**  
We hardly peep.  
**Old Goat**  
I'm the Old Goat long on this land who understands & tells you the early plans that changed this land from was to would-be.  
**Sheep**  
We only blep.

### ACT II

**Old Goat**  
The developer/money-man, a former architect, Al Boeke, wrote these words when asked what he planned for this land: "An ideal, attractive & viable New Town that is physically detached, uses & husbands the natural environment & sympathetically unifies the design of residential, civic, cultural, commercial, educational, recreational & job supporting facilities all in a manner that attracts & sustains a broad range of residents maintaining their locally self-governing democratic community. A New Town is not a suburb, a farm-clave, a resort, a project or an egocentric or elitist dream. It is a viable community."  
**Sheep**  
Maybe. We will see.

### ACT III

**Old Goat**  
The Landscape Architect Larry Halprin delighted in the spectacular site. He'd lived on a kibbutz as a lad & loved that land. He thought it right to plan his version of a kibbutz in California sunlight.  
**Sheep**  
Is that all right?  
**Old Goat**  
I don't bite. A kibbutz is an utopian community based on agriculture & inhabited by socialists, not socialites. On the other hand, The Sea Ranch Rules forbid furrows & manure on their "natural" meadows. Only indigenous species allowed.  
**Sheep**  
We sheep are better off here. Here, we may be poseur décor, but on any kibbutz we'd be lamb chops for dinner.

### ACT IV

**Old Goat**  
The architect Bill Turnbull wanted to build buildings that grew from the land & a condo rising from the cliffs. The architect Charles Moore, designed buildings that won prizes & success. He did not fail. He soon became Dean of Architecture at Yale.  
The Public Relations lady, Marion Conrad, lined up lots of press for publicity & parties & got what she needed in return: remuneration to pay her kid's tuitions.  
The Graphic Designer Barbara Stauffacher saw her chance to paint art on white walls, from wall to ceiling to wall, which was, after all, what she had been trained for & did it.  
**Sheep**  
Face it kid, a hit, all of it.

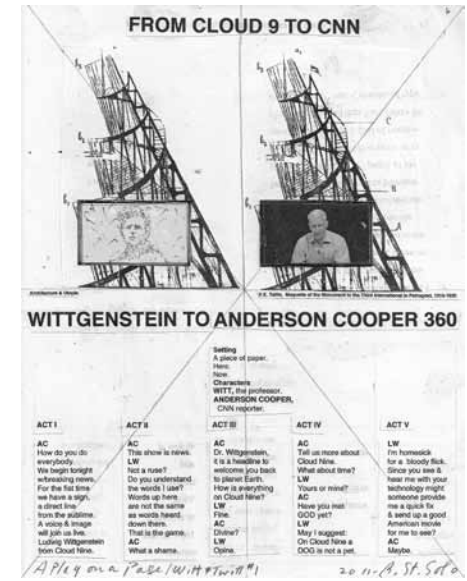
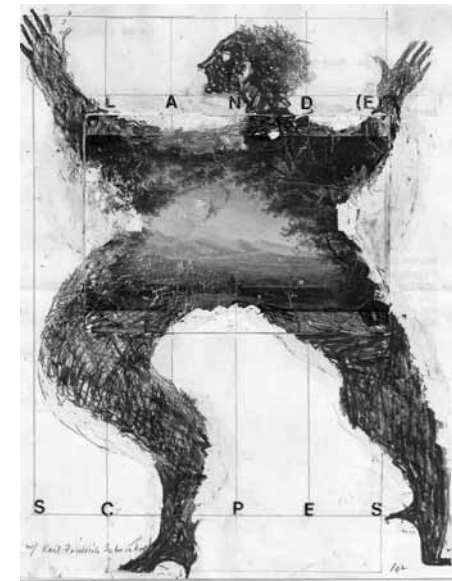
### ACT V

**Old Goat**  
Then the salesmen took over. No more New Town/kibbutz aspirations. No more architectural inspirations. Rules controlled. Cops patrolled. "This is prime real estate," said the salesmen. "Second home sites with great tax breaks." Exclusive. Restricted. Expensive. "Think of profits." Everything is disposable. The "to-be-preserved-forever" meadows are bulldozed for more sites & roads. Odd shaped houses sprout on the land like poison mushrooms. Swanky & laid-back fancy. It is steep on those cliffs, nothing cheap.  
**Sheep**  
We weep.

Utopia Myopia #3

2011 ©

Be St. Solo



and the cover of *Progressive Architecture*. "If it doesn't look right, you can just paint it out," *Life* noted. When she finally visited the Sea Ranch in 2005, she found that in fact everything she'd done there had been painted over. "It's hard to hate hypocrisy and work as a designer," she writes. "Design is the cover-up, good manners for people anguished by the possibility of accidents." Offered a plum job by Massimo Vignelli, she spent a week in New York, deciding, "Enough. I don't want to do this anymore." Back in San Francisco, she married Dan Solomon, an architect twelve years her junior.

Before and after their daughter Nellie was born, she studied history, philosophy and architecture at Berkeley, focusing on the question, "What do architects do?" Aware of the antagonism between architects and landscape architects, she started to draw "French trees planted in straight lines: it was French Formalism vs. English Naturalism; the Hundred Years War all over again." Her drawings first interested Philippe Bonnafont, whose gallery was the epicenter of Bay Area post-regionalism, and were then exhibited at the Walker Art Center by Mildred Friedman. Soon after, Giancarlo Monacelli of Rizzoli offered to do a book-length version of her master's thesis, "Notes on the Common Ground between Architecture and Landscape Architecture." *Green Architecture and the Agrarian Garden* was under way.

She travelled, visiting Europe with her family to see examples of "common ground." She won a Rome Prize. She wrote and drew in the midst of a marriage. "How's your book?" a friend asked. "Read the walls," she

answered—the spreads were pinned up all over the house. At the end of the 1980s, her marriage ended and she started a second book, *Good Mourning California*. "I was mourning my marriage," she writes, "but I tried not to let it show on the pages." Instead, she and her daughter Nellie criss-crossed the state by car, doing the research.

Both books were finished, published and acclaimed, drawing the attention of a new set of collaborators, like Ricardo Bofill in Barcelona and the Paris horticulturist/landscape architect team of Louis Benech and Pascal Cribier. With them, she won a competition for I.M. Pei's Pyramid site at the Louvre:

I flew into Manhattan for a meeting at his office. I.M. and I stood near the elevator waiting for Louis and Pascal. They arrived, and Pascal said, "The French Government doesn't want an American woman on the winning French team." Pei looked appalled. It was the 1990s. Women were supposed to demand their rights. But there was no right I could demand. I'd been paid.

Other competitions followed, including Battery Park City's Vesey Park and the linear ribbon along San Francisco's Embarcadero Promenade. Her experiences with these projects speak to the frustrations of the public process, yet she managed to design a version of Vesey Park that was exactly what she wanted: "a green rectangle of grass, like the Marina Green, simple and open." Her unstated conclusion is that it doesn't diminish its rightness or its integrity that it only exists on paper.

Stauffacher Solomon's memoir is timely. In January 2012, *Architect's Journal* editor Christine Murray put out a groundbreaking issue on the situation of women architects in England, spurred by a hair-raising RIBA survey that showed how bad off they were compared to men. In March 2013, Sheryl Sandberg published her manifesto, *Lean In*; in June, the Pritzker Prize jury, chaired all too fittingly by an Englishman, Lord Palumbo, once again deprived Denise Scott-Brown of her share of Venturi & Scott-Brown's prize.

In delivering his news, Lord Palumbo noted lamely that Scott Brown would be eligible for the Pritzker "in the future." At least she's always been in public view, whereas Stauffacher Solomon had slipped into relative obscurity until some Europeans drew attention to her pioneering work as a supergraphiste, sweeping away her male architect collaborators' casual blurring of credit. Typical for her, she's produced a companion volume to the memoir. *Utopia Myopia* collects thirty-six plays in précis form, each with an accompanying drawing. It's as if she's saying, "Here's the concept; now write it. I don't have the time."

Like every good memoir, *Why? Why Not?* leaves future readers with parting words. Hers go something like this: Lean in or lean out—I did both. Keep your eyes open. Take notes.

**JOHN PARMAN** is a founding editor of **TraceSF.com**. He also writes for *The Architect's Newspaper*.

## HAPPENINGS

# Design-Minded Events in the Northwest

For a complete calendar of events and to sign up for ARCADE's newsletter, visit [arcadenw.org](http://arcadenw.org).



Rendering: Trevor Dykstra

AN ARCADE PRESENTED LECTURE:

## Designing Data, Karen Cheng

**ARCADE + Seattle Design Festival**  
**Thursday, 19 September**  
**6:00–7:30 pm**  
[arcadenw.org](http://arcadenw.org)

Easily interpreted data is vital to the discovery, understanding and development of new ideas by industries and individuals. Effective information visualization requires precision, clarity and a strong narrative that connects with viewers on a personal level. In this lecture during the Seattle Design Festival, Karen Cheng, chair of the Division of Design at UW and editor of this issue's feature section, "Designing Data" (see pg. 31), will present a range of data graphics, illuminating the nature of the design process and beauty of these information artifacts.

For tickets and more info, visit [seattledesignfestival.org](http://seattledesignfestival.org) or [arcadenw.org](http://arcadenw.org).

Seattle Art Museum, Arnold Board Room,  
 1300 1st Ave, Seattle WA 98101

## Seattle Design Festival: Design in Health

**Design in Public, AIA + Partners**  
**Friday, 13 September – Sunday, 22 September**  
[seattledesignfestival.org](http://seattledesignfestival.org)

With an abundance of health professionals, cutting-edge research institutions and concerned designers and citizens, Seattle has emerged as the perfect setting to examine how design and health are correlated. As indicated by the title "Design in Health," the third-annual Seattle Design Festival will explore ways in which design affects health and can have a positive impact on our lives. Over thirty partner organizations, including ARCADE, will present lectures (see "Designing Data"), films, installations, tours and more at the "Design Block" in

Pioneer Square and throughout Seattle. This festival is open to all interested in exploring the intersection of environmental design and public well-being and discovering how what we design can, in turn, strengthen our communities.

For tickets and a calendar of events, visit [seattledesignfestival.org](http://seattledesignfestival.org).

## IN THE COMMUNITY

*Drawn from the Olympics:*  
 Stephen B. Nguyen and Wade Kavanaugh  
 Suyama Space  
 16 September–13 December 2013  
[suyamaspace.org](http://suyamaspace.org)

*Civilization Design Lecture Series*  
 April Greiman Lecture  
 28 September 2013  
 Stefan Sagmeister Lecture  
 8 November 2013  
[wearecivilized.us/lectureseries](http://wearecivilized.us/lectureseries)

*Buster Simpson // Surveyor*  
 Frye Art Museum  
 Through 13 October 2013  
[fryemuseum.org](http://fryemuseum.org)  
 Read Charles Mudedede's article on  
 Buster Simpson on page 10.