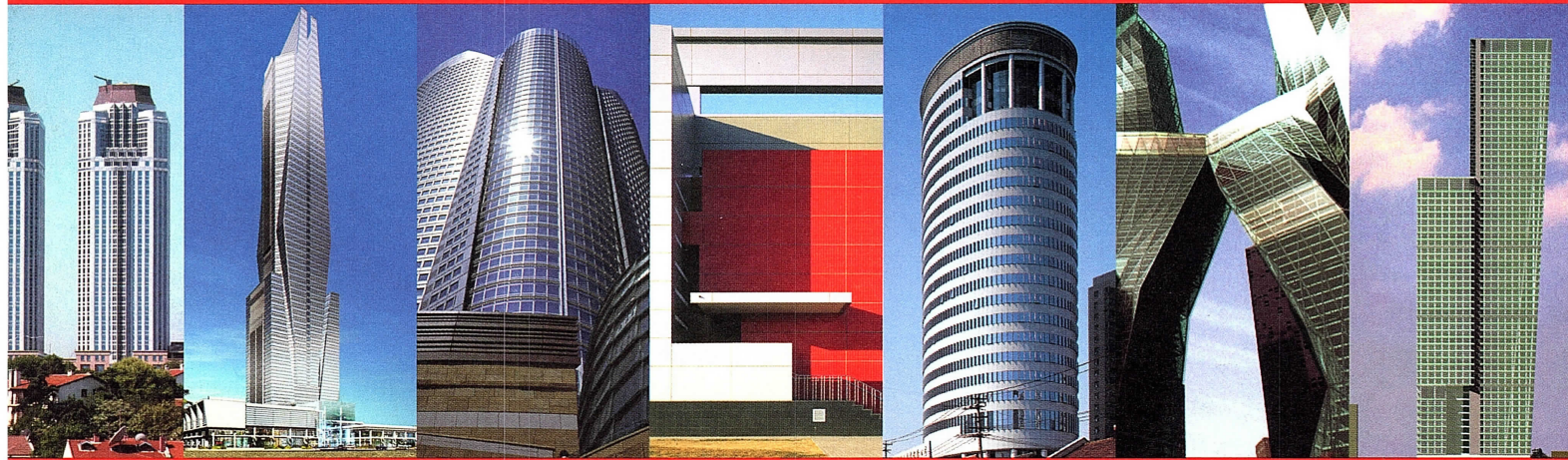


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Oculus

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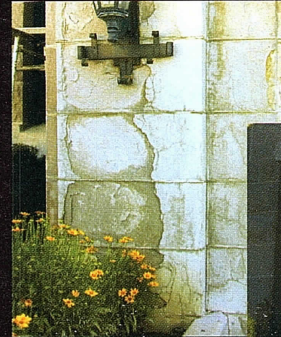
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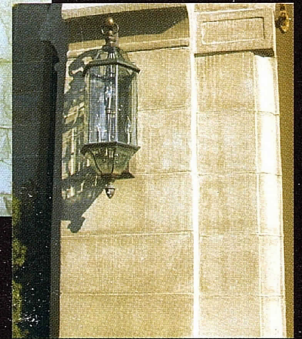
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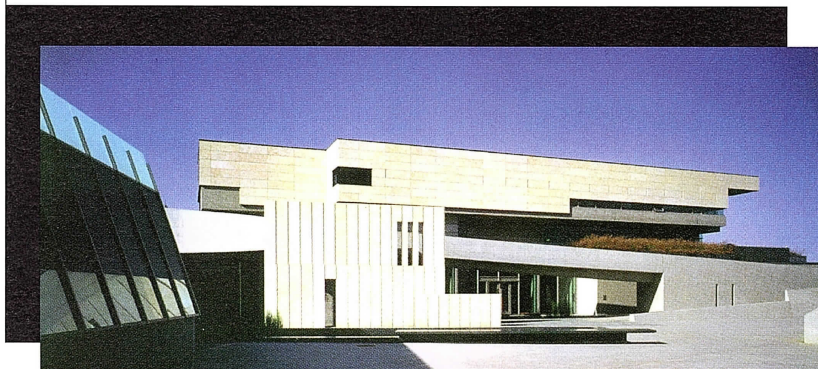
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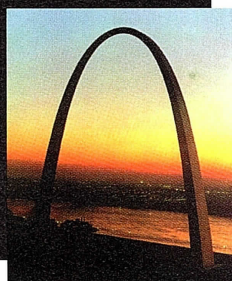
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Innovations & competitions

First Words

Letter from the President

For many years, American architects have worked in large numbers abroad designing museums, hotels, office buildings, hospitals, and residential buildings in all sizes and shapes. Today, local architects are headed to all points in Asia, including the Pudong area of Shanghai, which has grown under the influence of the innovative thinking of U.S. architects.

Many prominent foreign architects are working in the United States, and many have significant commissions in New York: Renzo Piano's new building for the *New York Times* Company; Lord Foster's new headquarters for the Hearst Corporation; Enrique Norten's Brooklyn Visual and Performing Arts Library; and Yoshio Taniguchi's addition to the Museum of Modern Art. Santiago Calatrava has been engaged to design the new permanent PATH commuter rail station at the World Trade Center site. As architects, we applaud this interchange and welcome our colleagues from abroad, just as we are welcomed in the global marketplace. We must keep our doors open to design.

Clients worldwide seek out the innovative design solutions of American architects, and the quality of work meets the highest standards. However, advances in building materials, attention to sustainability, regulations to enhance the work environment, and concern for employees have led to design innovations in Europe that are not yet fully embraced in the U.S. Our developers, owners, and governmental agencies need to look to the future and embrace new technology, materials, and methods of construction. Everyone can play a part in this great march to better design and quality. Change must come.

As a member of a firm (Pei Cobb Freed & Partners) that frequently works abroad, I note that more and more large projects are being awarded on the basis of competitions. Nearly all European projects that involve public funding are awarded in this manner, and competitions in Asia are now the norm. These often follow the AIA guidelines for a two-stage process, with credentials being submitted and then a short list of firms selected to compete.

Competition advisors and clients alike should provide for fair payment or adequate stipends for our ideas — our intellectual property. Clarity in describing the requirements for competition submittals is also an important responsibility of the advisors. A frequent problem, commented upon by several critics and journalists, is that the client expects too much during the brief period typically available for the second stage of a two-stage competition. Owners should not expect competition submittals to be the equivalent of complete schematic designs — for this, clients must allow time for the architects to familiarize themselves with owner constraints and user needs.

We have all heard pleas from our colleagues for relief from what seem continual charrettes. We want to do the work and, in fact, often need the work made possible by competitions. What can we do? We can recognize that competitions encourage innovation, create opportunities to think creatively for firms young and old, small and large. We must encourage competition organizers to be reasonable in their requests and to appropriately value the architect's efforts. But we must acknowledge, too, that at any given time, a firm might have to "just say no" to an improperly organized competition. If competitions are the wave of the future, the future is now. Let's do them in a manner befitting our profession.



JAMES BALGA PHOTOGRAPHY

The second exhibit of our inaugural year at the Center for Architecture will focus on the design of the Barcelona waterfront and recent planning in that great Catalan city. This show and others like it address the importance of international dialogue, which is critical to the practice of architecture and planning in today's ever-shrinking global community.

This cross-fertilization of art, architecture, and planning has defined the experiences of design professionals since the beginning of our profession. Witness the grand tours of Europe and the education of earlier generations of American architects at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris. The international dialogue continues today at many different professional levels — from our students participating in study abroad programs all over the globe to the large-scale urban planning projects that many AIA New York Chapter members are involved with in growing metropolitan areas around the world.

George H. Miller, FAIA, President, AIA New York Chapter

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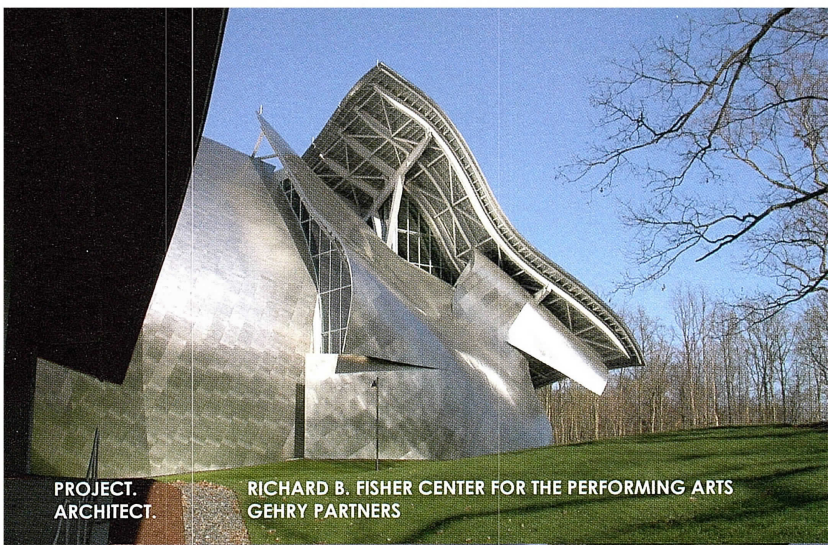
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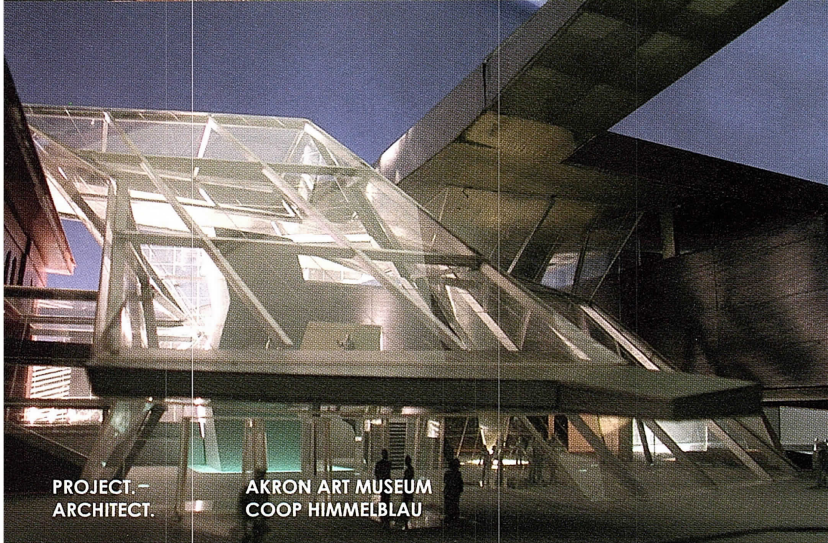


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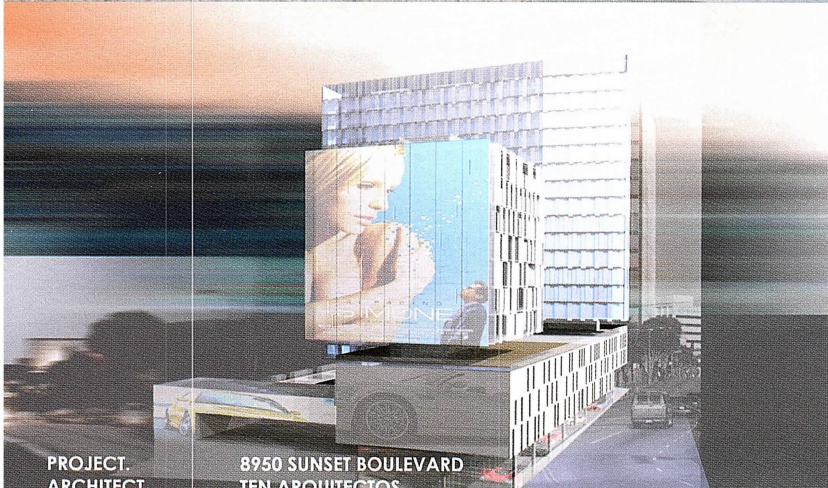
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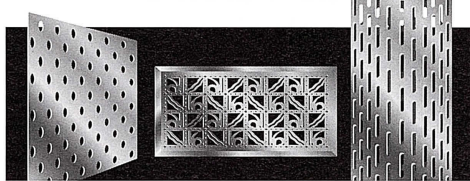
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Geography 101

First Words
Letter from
the Editor

One day I will visit the projects and places featured in this issue of Oculus – China, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, Zimbabwe – and elsewhere.



In the meantime, rather than present simply a portfolio of overseas projects by New York architects, we offer insider views of what working abroad entails – challenges met, lessons learned.

A candid Enrique Norten offers his take on some of the differences between working in the U.S. and Mexico in “So Says...” Southtown on Roosevelt Island raises the bar for developer-vernacular architecture, and it’s just “Around the Corner” (well, half-way across the East River, actually). Hugh Pearman, architecture and design critic for the London Sunday Times, proffers an “Outside View” about the invasion of the U.K. by American architects (perhaps we should have called it “Inside View”). “50-Year Watch” looks at the sad state of affairs of the United Nations secretariat building. “Good Practices” gleans insights from four veterans of international practices about doing business overseas. “In Print+” reviews a book about Le Corbusier’s adventures in America, and a Milan-based website that belongs in every virtual library.

You will notice that “Sound-Off!” is missing from this issue – due to space constraints; more Letters to the Editor next time. Just to remind you, the AIA New York Chapter has moved to its new home at the new Center for Architecture. Please send letters, musings, opinions to: Sound-Off/Oculus, c/o AIA New York Chapter, 536 LaGuardia Place, New York, NY 10012. Or you can e-mail me directly.

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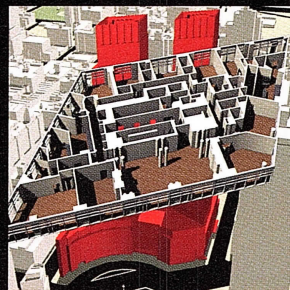
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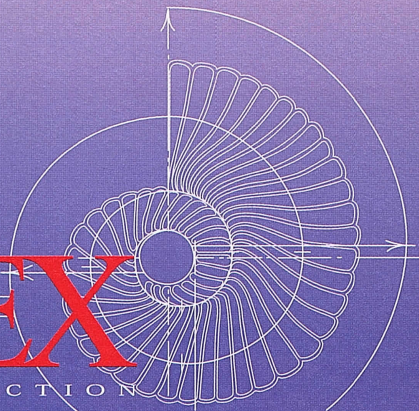
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A Look at "Before"

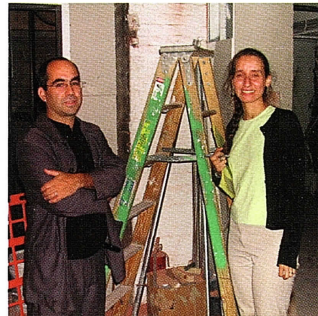
By Kristen Richards

By the time you read this, many of you will have already participated in the opening festivities at the new Center for Architecture in early October. (For those who didn't, please do stop by, say hello, and take in the exhibition – and the space!)

When this issue of Oculus went to press, the Center was still a hardhat zone and not ready for prime time photography (we'll have that for the next issue). In its stead, we decided to show you a sampling of "before" images that will give you an idea of the transformation wrought by architect Andrew Berman, AIA, project architect Irina Verona, and IBEX Construction.



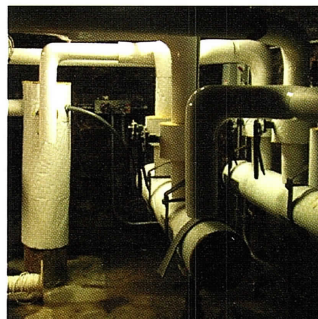
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 On August 1, New York New Visions (NYNV) submitted testimony on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping hearing for the World Trade Center site. We expect that it will be as current when you read this as it was when delivered. The testimony was prepared by Rosalie Genevro, Ernie Hutton, Assoc. AIA, AICP, Marcie Kesner, AICP, and the NYNV Executive Committee, and delivered by Marcie Kesner, AICP, Mark Ginsberg, AIA, and Hugh Hardy, FAIA. The following is an edited excerpt (full testimony is on the NYNV website at www.newyorknewvisions.org).

NYNV Statement:

We believe it is crucial at this juncture in the process to restate, emphatically, that the redevelopment of this site must be driven by a broad conception of the public interest – neither by private interests nor by the parochial goals and interests of individual public agencies. The redevelopment of this site is not a standard real estate transaction. The World Trade Center was not originally built to guarantee a revenue stream to the Port Authority, nor to maximize return to private investors in a real estate deal. Rather, it was built in an effort to rejuvenate Lower Manhattan and to build the city's and the region's economic health. And it was built with public money and through the exercise of public powers.

We commend the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), the Port Authority, and the City for undertaking this EIS process, but we urge them to take it seriously rather than as a political *pro forma*. The EIS process should be used as a way to examine options that can better inform and justify the final program and design decisions, thereby ensuring that the right decisions are being made for the right reasons.

While recent events are cause for optimism and the selected Libeskind scheme is an excellent framework for development, this resolution has emerged from an unclear process based on an unrealistic program and an undefined context.

At no time were true options examined to the given density, infrastructure, or use. The environmental impact process now represents the last best hope to examine alternatives to those disputed assumptions that underlie the preferred scheme. Looked at in the cold light of day, these disputed assumptions include too much density, too rigid a program, and too small a site. We should use the opportunity granted us by the horrific events of September 2001 to correct mistakes made in the initial site plan and building of the World Trade Center. At the same time, we must begin to seriously look at the site in the context of what is occurring around it.

Immutable and Mutable Aspects of the Master Plan

A master plan such as that by Studio Libeskind lays out broad parameters for future development. It contains “immutable” elements, which are essential to the overall concept, whose modification will jeopardize the underlying vision, and which should be changed only after serious public scrutiny and debate. We can also define those “mutable” elements that should be considered flexible, responsive to market concerns, and other evolving contextual factors during the extended period of building out the site.

Immutable Elements:

Memorial precinct separated from the surrounding blocks by being located approximately 30 feet below grade and buffered from other commercial uses by cultural facilities

A series of open spaces in the site plan centered on Fulton Street, connecting St. Paul's Chapel, City Hall Park, and the Brooklyn Bridge/Civic Center with the Winter Garden and the Hudson River

A “town square” created at the intersection of Fulton and Greenwich Streets

Bringing Fulton and Greenwich Streets through the site
The PATH station open to light and air above

Dealing with the barrier of West Street which effectively cuts Battery Park City off from the World Trade Center site and the rest of Lower Manhattan

Site redevelopment that sets a new benchmark for environmentally responsible design

Mutable elements:

Program and density: too much for a site constrained by other new uses including memorial, open space, and cultural venues

Underground connections and their effect on street-level uses

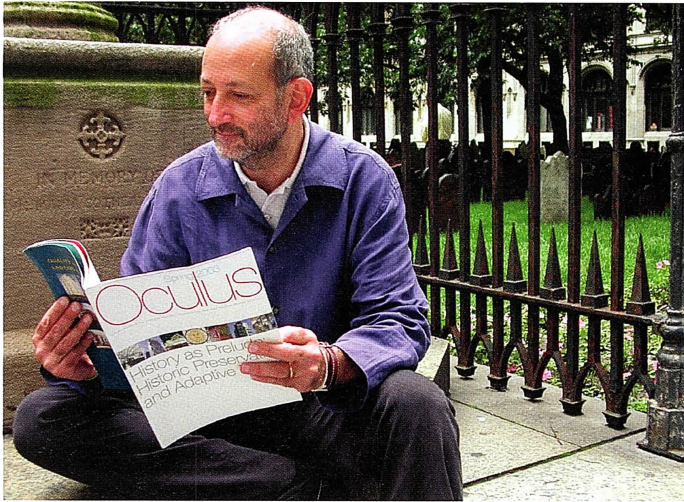
The bulk of retail space, which must not be allowed to exist primarily underground in an anti-urban mall

All of the above are vital issues that must be addressed in the ongoing planning and design process. We urge LMDC and the Port Authority to seize the opportunity presented by the environmental impact process to analyze alternatives that explore the implications of the elements, and to use the results to refine the development framework of the master plan, the design guidelines, and the building plans for the WTC Site.

So Says...

Enrique

KRISTEN RICHARDS



Enrique Norten, Hon. FAIA, founded TEN Arquitectos (Taller de Enrique Norten Arquitectos S.C.) in 1985. Among his numerous awards is the first Mies van der Rohe Award for Latin America. In July 2002 he received his first U.S. commission: the Brooklyn Public Library's Visual and Performing Arts Library. *Oculus* caught up with him during a short break on the last day of jurying Phase I of the World Trade Center memorial competition.

Kristen Richards: How does working in Mexico differ from working in the U.S.?

Enrique Norten: In the U.S., architects are usually the last to come into a project. In Mexico – and elsewhere – they're the first. Architects define the vision of the project with clients, find the sites, invent the programs, work on costs, schedules, and business plans, etc. Here, many times, architects are called when all that is done and defined, and therefore their participation is limited. By the time architects come into the picture the rest of the team has already been assembled – the architects can't even call in their own consultants. They're more like secondary team members.

Delivery of services is also very different. In Mexico, we produce and deliver many more and more thorough documents and information because we use less "standard" products and systems. In the U.S. and Europe, labor is expensive and materials are inexpensive; it's just the opposite in Mexico.

On the other hand, we spend less time in meetings with committees. Working in the U.S., we spend a lot of time in meetings with a lot of people. Decisions take longer and are more difficult to reach.

KR What are the major distinctions you see in how architectural practices do business?

EN The disciplines are very defined here – associations separate professions. It's more blurred in Mexico where "architect" is all encompassing. There is no separation between planning, urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, preservation architecture, etc. It is all architecture, and done by the same team and under one direction.

In other countries, architects take much more responsibility and that is perhaps why the profession is more respected elsewhere than here. In the U.S., it seems lawyers take care of everything. Being such a litigious society, architects have found a way to avoid responsibilities, and with that, have lost both control and have made themselves less necessary. In Mexico, we do not even think about being sued because that cannot and would never happen. If an architect "fails," his reputation would be hurt and it would be difficult for him or her to get more work. I think it is one reason why architects have lost so much respect within the community and society in the U.S.

KR What do you see as differences in the public's concern for high caliber design?

EN Americans seem more concerned with reduced perimeters of where one lives and works – it's direct and personal: "my" real estate is up/down or who's going to live next door. People don't seem to care too much about urban and architectural issues except as it affects them. In other cultures, I think, people are much more aware of the civic and public dimensions of the profession.

KR Why did you open an office in New York?

EN I love New York very much. It was always a dream of mine to be a part of the city – and a part of its architectural community. The second reason is the warm welcome I received after winning the international competition to design the Brooklyn Visual and Performing Arts Library.

KR Is your New York office busy?

EN Many opportunities have presented themselves since winning the Brooklyn competition. We're currently working on a development in Williamsburg, Brooklyn – a housing project that would include retail and services. Another project in Harlem includes

Norten

a hotel, clubs, offices, and condos. You might say we're working on the "edges" of New York.

KR Do you have projects elsewhere in the U.S.?

EN We're designing a mixed-use block on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles – for a New York developer.

KR Would you consider opening a second office in the U.S.?

EN New York is a special place. I don't want an office anywhere else.

KR What is cooking in your Mexico City office?

EN We have a variety of projects: two hotels and a contemporary art museum in Mexico City, a convention center in Guadalajara, a tourist development in Acapulco, and a number of others.

KR You also teach at the University of Pennsylvania where you hold the Miller Chair of Architecture. How do you maintain control?

EN I lead all of our design efforts, and am in constant communication with my people in both offices, either by phone or e-mail. There's only an hour difference between New York and Mexico City. Thanks to communications technologies, I can be in many places at the same time. If it's urgent, I just get on a plane to one city or the other – it's a four-hour flight and there are lots of flights. When I'm teaching, I make day trips to Philadelphia.

I try to keep to a schedule of ten days here and ten days in the Mexico City office, but it doesn't always work out that way.

KR You must accumulate a lot of frequent flyer miles. What do you use them for?

EN Travel with my family.

KR You were most eloquent at the "History as Prelude" conference earlier this year. Would you address the differences/similarities between U.S. and Mexico in dealing with historic preservation issues?



KRISTEN RICHARDS

EN I would say there is a different way of understanding history. The U.S. has a very short history, which makes people here overreact. In other cultures with a longer and richer history, people are more comfortable and relaxed about it. That also allows people to understand current time as being a part of history, without complexes.

KR In a sense, you're making history as a member of the World Trade Center Memorial jury. I know you can't tell us anything specific, but what can you tell us?

EN I have juried many competitions before, but never one so large – over 5,000 entries! The variety is amazing, and there are hundreds of submissions from non-professionals, just lay people – and many from children.

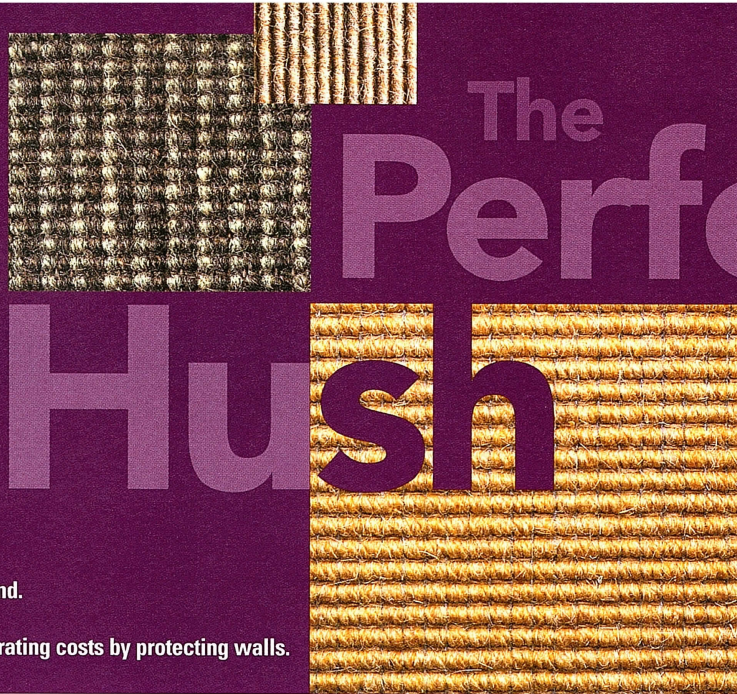
KR Any surprises?

EN The architectural community doesn't seem to have responded strongly. Perhaps because the competition was just too open. I would have expected more architectural solutions. Of course, the shortlist may have been announced by the time this issue of Oculus comes out, which may negate my comments.

KR This is your last day of the first round of screening. What has it been like?

EN I've been immersed in the experience. Overwhelmed, inspired – and exhausted.

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Around the corner

**Friendly Urbanity:
Southtown, Roosevelt Island,
by Gruzen Samton
By David Sokol**



THE DRAWING STUDIO

If you've found yourself on FDR Drive in the East 60s in the last year or so, you've probably witnessed the birth of Southtown. It is the final stage of Roosevelt Island's transformation into a vital, 21st century urban neighborhood. And it is, from master planning to architectural realization, Gruzen Samton's second Roosevelt Island project (the firm completed the towers-in-a-park Northtown Phase II in 1989).

Southtown's first debutantes are 475 and 465 Main Street, fraternal twins that, when viewed from across the East River, make a pleasant pair. They are cheerful without being Pop polychromatic. They are demure – not so large that the island appears to sag under their weight, or that the Queensboro Bridge appears to be bullied for its lunch money. They reflect the past: 475 Main Street terraces slightly to echo the fantastical Brutalist buildings of Northtown Phase I. They break with it, too: the buildings' footprints are splayed, so that the urban wall at water's edge has some breathing room.

A closer inspection, courtesy of the F train, reveals a few more positives. The splayed urban plan, for example, permits more residents to have skyline views. The buildings' entrances are clustered around Main Street, enhancing the sense of density around Roosevelt Island's main thoroughfare. This mid-river perch sits between the worlds of city and suburb, and Gruzen Samton weaves both together.

Flaws also come into sharper focus, and context is the big one. Sixth Avenue in the 20s, East 34th Street, the upper 70s, or Battery Park City – Roosevelt Island's newest additions could replace any of these neighborhoods' newest buildings. Or they could be at home in downtown Atlanta. Nowadays, developer-vernacular architecture

means streamlined neotraditionalism. Clad it in brick, glaze the corners, double-load the corridors, pin up a few moldings, and call it a day.

The design raises the bar, but doesn't break free from this category. On the other hand, neotraditionalism, Roosevelt Island-style, could have yielded much more.

Once upon a time, Roosevelt Island was Fritz Lang's Metropolis made real. The tram carried you through the air. A powerful vacuum system (still in use, and expanded to Southtown) carried trash to the central AVAC Complex. Modern met medieval in Northtown Phase I, which huddles around the winding Main Street. Life happened in multiple planes, even more so than in the bustling city proper. The island was a harbinger of progress, of the future.

What would honoring that tradition mean? Moving the pedestrian-friendly streetscape beyond the teachings of Jacobs and Duany, perhaps? Conceiving of buildings that energize themselves? Creating forms that hint at what we can someday do, rather than what we've already done? Smith-Miller Hawkinson, Gehry, Kennedy & Violich, Meier, or even the Battery Park City Authority might answer the question best. All have, or could have, changed the way we look at the New York City waterfront's functions, beauty, and accessibility for years to come. However, 475 and 465 Main Street – despite their intelligent urban planning – are ultimately a little too firmly planted in the present.

David Sokol is managing editor of *I.D.* magazine. Previously, he was the associate editor of *Retail Traffic*. His guest-edited issue of *Architectural Design* will be published in the U.S. in March 2004.

Rendering of Roosevelt Island's Southtown



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New York as Global City



"Maybe you won't build in New York, but you can build anywhere in the world because you are based in New York." — Gokhan Avcioglu, GAD

These words, spoken by a young architect from Istanbul recently relocated to Manhattan, are echoed – and borne out – by the other architects featured in this issue, which focuses on the international ventures and adventures of firms practicing overseas.

But more important than the array of international projects in the pages that follow are the vicissitudes involved in getting them built. These are as varied as the projects themselves.

Some of the firms featured have long-established international practices with overseas offices. Others do it all from New York. Large or small, working abroad is a test of mettle for U.S. firms, as several architects attest to in first-hand accounts of their work abroad.

A reality check can be found in the number of (mostly younger) firms that had grand international aspirations – but are not gracing these pages. Testing foreign waters can be an experience fraught with riptides, tsunamis, and sharks. Projects might come through, be put on hold, or get cancelled. In some cases, clients still owe money and a job is turned over to the local firm. Maintaining a long-term presence overseas requires a major investment of capital, diligence, and understanding.

We hope you enjoy this globetrotting issue.

Kristen Richards

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Eye on: United Architects

United Architects is composed of six firms and several dozen multitalented, cross-discipline individuals from locations around the globe. Since coming together for – and being named among the finalists in – the World Trade Center “Innovative Design Study,” the team has submitted proposals for work both in New York and abroad. *By John Howell, AIA*

United Architects

comprises:

Foreign Office Architects
(London, U.K.):

Alejandro Zaera-Polo,

Farshid Moussavi

FORM (Los Angeles):

Greg Lynn

Imaginary Forces

(Los Angeles):

Mikon van Gastel, Peter

Frankfurt

Kevin Kennon Architect PC

(New York City):

Kevin Kennon

Reiser+Umemoto RUR

Architecture PC

(New York City):

Jesse Reiser, Nanako

Umemoto

UN Studio

(Amsterdam, NL):

Ben van Berkel,

Caroline Bos

A chat with Kevin Kennon, a United Architects' founder and principal.

John Howell: Did United Architects come together as a result of 9/11?

Kevin Kennon: The short answer is yes, but the foundation had been laid prior to this. Most of us had known one another in one capacity or another, with maybe one or two degrees of separation. I've known Greg Lynn since college, and am also good friends with Jesse Reiser and Nanako Umemoto, and had been teaching with Jesse, Ben van Berkel, and Caroline Bos at Princeton. Imaginary Forces and I had worked together on several projects while I was a design partner at Kohn Pedersen Fox. The only component that I didn't know was Foreign Office Architects – Alejandro Zaera-Polo and Farshid Moussavi, but I got to know them fast in the course of the WTC competition.

Are you a business, an organization, a co-op?

Our attorney recently referred to us as “a common-law practice.” Actually, UA works on project-

specific joint ventures as an LLC [Limited Liability Company].

How did the WTC opportunity come to your team? Who was the “prime mover”?

I initiated the RFQ response. I called Jesse and Imaginary Forces, Jesse called Greg, and Greg called Ben and Alejandro. The next thing you knew we were working on our submission.

Separately, UA had done great quantities of work... but together had done nothing.

We put together examples of our individual work and worked very hard on our statement, which was all done by e-mail. There must have been 20 drafts!

We took advantage of everyone's strengths and talents: I had been the only one in the group who had previously designed a tall building in the city [Lehman Brothers] as well as Sotheby's headquarters; Ben had experience with very large-scale projects along with Alejandro; Greg is a most creative individual. Imaginary Forces was integral to the process as they humanized the effort from the beginning, keeping us from veering too far into abstraction. They could help the public visualize what we were doing.

All agreed upon strength-in-collaboration?

Yes. It is a great way for architects to practice. Architecture can be more improvisatory, and somewhat like playing in a musical ensemble. So just like a good jazz band you need the right kind of people to play with – and play off of.

During this time, where was everybody?

Ben and Caroline were in the Netherlands, Alejandro and Farshid were in London, Jesse was uptown, I was downtown, Greg and Imaginary Forces were in Los Angeles. During this whole qualifying period, we never met face-to-face. Most of our communication was by e-mail; we had occasional phone conferences. Jesse received word from Alex Garvin [then Vice President for Design and Planning at the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation] that “we were in” and quickly sent an e-mail to everybody. That was thrilling!

We had already decided that the best way to come together was to open a new United Architects office – neutral ground, as it were. Fortunately we had teamed up with Thornton-Tomasetti Engineers. They had a space available for us, and we



had it completely wired for 34 stations, phones, computers, plotters, and Internet connections – all within a week. IT expert Tom Hernandez, AIA, made this happen.

You must have been full of adrenaline when you heard the news.

We were by far the youngest designers selected, and we did it on our own terms. We didn't associate with a big firm or compromise our values just to get the job. We didn't try to figure out who the power brokers were, what each constituency was looking for, and end up giving them the lowest common denominator. It was more important to innovate...to do something that was new. We won just by being selected. And we were humbled by the experience.

What was your basic concept?

We didn't shy away from the original goal, which was an innovative design study. We all pretty much knew that we

would take on the vertical towers – the office building/high-rise component – and redefine it completely.

So where is United Architects going next?

There are some projects that make sense to go after as United Architects, and some that don't. We tend to do best on large-scale, complicated programs that fall between urban design and architecture. We were just shortlisted for the European Central Bank [ECB] in Frankfurt and several other projects are in the works.

These competitions are a big financial commitment, and while everybody shares the burden, it is still a lot of time. For example, several UA members opted out of the ECB competition, but are involved in another UA project. It keeps it fresh.

What practice changes, if any, would you make if a project, say the ECB, were awarded to your group?

We will always designate one principal-in-charge. In general, this is regionally based – whoever is closest to the client becomes the individual “face” of the project. For example, if UA is selected for the ECB project, then Ben and UN Studio will take the lead. I sent some of my people to UN Studio's office in Amsterdam, so did Greg. Then some of the work was done in New York, some in Los Angeles; the model was built and shipped from LA. We take advantage of our global reach made possible by technology. It's very liberating.

What is it about technology that gives you this liberating global reach?

There's a real digital divide that exists in the profession, and it's too bad. Most practices use digital in an analog sort of way, “a rendering's a rendering,” “a model's a model.” Everything

is compartmentalized into traditional categories. UA works in a completely digital environment. Everything we do is part of our database. The same files to create plans and sections are utilized for digital models, animations, videos, or for rapid-prototyping and laser cutting.

Please comment on what's happening at Ground Zero now.

I'm delighted in the selection of Calatrava; that really bodes well for the future. I think the real test of Libeskind's master plan is the degree that it serves as a mutable template – it needs to be flexible in order to respond to all of the social pressures imposed. I hope that is.

The whole process has highlighted the gulf between planners and architects, and the way each thinks about the city. Many planners were down right angry that the LMDC bypassed them and went right to architects to design the “master plan.” This was a bold step by Roland Betts [LMDC Board member and chair of its site plan committee] and others as it ran counter to the usual process, which is to do the plan first, and then have the architects come in and fulfill the master plan. I think that for too long, planners have divorced themselves from architecture and architects from planning. We need to have a meeting of the minds.

John Howell, AIA, is an architect and technologist with Jacobs Engineering in New York. Recently Chair of the Information Technology Committee, he has been assisting the AIA New York Chapter coordinate the various technology infrastructures – phone, data, video services – for the new Center for Architecture.

Shanghai

I live in Shanghai now, surrounded by traces of France. The length of Huaihai Road (formerly Avenue Joffre) is lined with plane trees, a lasting legacy of the road's former life as the graceful central artery of the French Concession period. Echo, our family terrier, gets her daily walks in the shaded gardens of the former Cercle Sportif Français. A short distance away, I can meander through Cité Bourgogne, a dense residential compound built by French developers in 1930. My elegant neighbor, Hervé, is Vice-Echanson de la Confrerie de la Chaine de Rotisseurs, and organizes sumptuous champagne tastings and related culinary events for fellow dedicated gastronomes. While the outward forms of some of these Francophile institutions survive in contemporary Shanghai life, their characteristics have evolved to become undeniably Chinese. The plane trees are now severely pruned to allow for the high-voltage wires for electrified buses and massive streams of pedestrians and bicycles. The Cercle Sportif gardens, once an exclusively francophone haven, is now a public park, where in the early mornings groups of older women and men quietly engage in tai-chi and rubbing tree trunks. Cité Bourgogne is one of many traditional long tang gated neighborhoods, Chinese/Western hybrids, filled with semi-private lanes, seated card games, low strung birdcages, electrical wires, drying bedspreads, and flapping underwear. These old quarters are under constant threat of demolition, as population pressure and high government land auction prices create the incentives for even denser high-rise development to take their place. I have worked as an architect and urban designer throughout Asia intermittently for more than 20 years now, and I have come to love the bawling, chaotic, closed-in feeling of Shanghai. It is a stimulating time to be here. Certainly, there is a lot of construction (although some claim that there still isn't a lot of architecture). More importantly, the whole society is in flux. Chinese cities such as Shanghai, grappling with the conflicting pressures of modern, Western-style development and the preservation of tradition, are evolving to incorporate aspects of both cultures.

Unlike many Western urban cultures, Chinese cities (and perhaps Chinese society itself) never emphasized development of the public domain. This is not necessarily a limitation or a weakness. On the contrary, it can be both practical and poetic when it comes to architectural practice. After years of working in Asia, and China in particular, I have started to move away from the strongly "Western" architecture and urban design models that were part of my training. I like to think that the resulting work is neither fully Western nor Chinese. I prefer to adapt the traditional Chinese urban language of courtyards, inner lanes, neighborhood walls, and city gates to create semi-private environments that I feel are both traditionally Chinese but still respond to some of the public characteristics of contemporary life. Shanghai has a long tradition of straddling cultures, so it is not



Taibao, Shanghai (2002): 550,000-square-foot office building; Ming Kong Architectural Design Company, Architect-of-Record (above) North Bund District, Shanghai (in progress): Master plan for one square mile of urban area, and design guidelines for 15 million square feet of new, renovated, and preserved buildings for commercial, residential, and cultural uses; Buckhurst, Fish & Jacquemart, traffic consultant (top right) Ciro's Plaza, Shanghai (2002): 1.1 million-square-foot mixed-use commercial complex; Shanghai Institute of Architectural Design & Research, Architect-of-Record; James Carpenter Design, specialized glazing (bottom right)

nghai

surprising that as a Western architect I feel comfortable here. It is a culture that has welcomed “foreign” practices, at least until it ends up making them thoroughly Chinese. As an American architect, I have been gradually transformed by the experience of working here; certainly the professional outlook and work look different as a result. Commissions for singular buildings tend to come out of our large-scale planning/urban design efforts. Our projects are substantially larger than what we would normally have a chance to do in the States; mixed-use developments with multiple buildings, extensive urban linkages, and intensive landscape design are the norm, not the exception. I am far more conscious of the distinctions between public and private space, and I focus reflexively on orienting entrances and principal façades away from streets, towards controlled internal environments. More than anything else, I work faster and agonize a lot less than I would back home. I adapt our architectural *parti* to what our Shanghai office staff is already typologically inclined to do, and focus instead on creating internal consistency rather than seeking unique solutions.

I have observed how effective a U.S. firm can become in China. In the last 10 years in Shanghai, our office has become accepted and sought after by foreign investors and Chinese clients alike. We have learned how to leverage our hard-won relationships with the all-important regulatory agencies to benefit both our clients and government planning objectives, and have become a party trusted by both sides. (We learned the hard way that although it is our clients who pay the bills, the regulatory agencies usually have the last word in the critical aspects of a project's scale, components, and design process.) We are much more selective about who we work for, and have learned how to pass on some of the unrealistic opportunities that land on our doorstep.

Shanghai is like no other Chinese city; with a culture that has traditionally looked to the West, it has urban and architectural traditions that seem more familiar (at first, anyway) than most other places in China. Differences remain, but the trend is for China to find its own voice, not simply adapt Western models. American designers and firms with solid presences in China will benefit from this evolution, not just because of a new awareness that will instruct their work anywhere in the world.

In the meantime, it is a pleasure to walk along Shanghai's leafy streets and to see our new buildings fit into and mold the new urban environment.

Christopher Choa, AIA, is a Senior Partner and director of HLW International's Shanghai office, overseeing a number of large-scale institutional, commercial, and residential projects.

HLW INTERNATIONAL



ZHONGHAI SHEN



GAD

About

An emerging Turkish architecture firm broadens its horizons by relocating to New York. By Richard Staub

While it's fairly common for large and mid-size New York firms to cast their nets abroad, it's not business-as-usual for a foreign high-design firm to completely relocate to the U.S. Yet that's what Global Architectural Development (GAD), a 10-year-old Turkish architecture firm with a growing design reputation, decided to do when it pulled up stakes and moved to New York from Istanbul.

In reality, it was a gradual move for the Tribeca-based practice. Gokhan Avcioglu and Ozlem Ercil, the firm's design and managing partners respectively, spent three years running offices in New York and Istanbul before settling here for good in 2003. In time, they built up a solid U.S. client base, became accustomed to New York's style of doing business (which is actually similar to Turkey's), and formed an alliance with another up-and-coming Manhattan-based architecture firm, SU11, which shares GAD's focus on computer-generated design. The firm already has a number of commercial and residential projects underway in New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia.

Why move? As Avcioglu points out, "We continued to get projects in Turkey and were on almost every list for invited competitions, but there wasn't an environment for developing design that stimulated me. We wanted to be in between the old and the new worlds. After experiencing 'the old world' for years, we wanted to be on the 'the new side.' New York is like 19th-century Paris, a center of new ideas, and a lively, fresh, and dynamic environment where provocative questions are asked, new ideas explored."

The firm has been exploring concepts of transitional, transparent, and folded space since it first opened its doors. Doing so in Turkey is unusual because, according to Avcioglu, Turkish architects generally keep modernism at an arm's length. Their priority is to save buildings that the government is not willing to protect and take a more contextual approach to new buildings in order to preserve Turkish culture. In contrast, GAD's contemporary response is to skillfully insert new design into historic or natural contexts. The architects respect and relish the relationship – and the tension – between the existing and the new.

An example is what Avcioglu calls the "Invisible Box," a multi-purpose event space inside the ruined shell of a 200-year-old palace in Istanbul. In 1999, the Marmara Hotel decided to reuse the elegant landmarked ruin and commissioned GAD to reclaim the space. The firm created a thin but strong stainless steel and glass box that is



suspended within the brick structure. This new interior is tethered to the brick walls with suspension rods, ensuring that the two structures remain equidistant from each other and can withstand extreme weather conditions and earthquakes.

A restroom coined "Groundscraper" by Aaron Betsky re-imagines the traditional Turkish public restroom for a popular park in Kadikoy, an Istanbul suburb. Inserted down into sloping ground, the facility is topped by a concrete disc that seems to float low over the landscape, held aloft by a narrow circle of windows. When lit at night, the windows alert passersby to the restroom's presence.

GAD's "Exploded House," under construction in Bodrum, Turkey, responds to old building codes that limit a house's size to 750 square feet. To work within the limit, the house has been exploded into three separate buildings for living, sleeping, and work, set just a few feet apart and linked by a glass atrium. The central glass vestibule is the home's entrance and main living area with 180-degree vistas of the stunning landscape and bay. Floor-to-ceiling windows, operated electronically, can slide down flush to the ground, allowing sea breezes to flood the interior.

The roofs are designed as pools to collect rainwater. Water cascades from one roof to the next and is then circulated back, creating a natural cooling system. A modern interpretation of Bodrum's traditional dwellings, the angular structures fit snugly into the clefts in the hillside.

GAD's most recently completed project is "Chameleon," a multi-purpose space used by the industrial conglomerate Borusan Company as an exhibition and seminar space and training center in Parkorman Forest. Located a few minutes drive from the center of Istanbul, the forest attracts thousands of visitors.

Like the Exploded House, Chameleon's shape is angled to fit into the landscape, and between and around the forest's century-old pine trees, which may not be destroyed. Walls and floors converge at surprisingly sharp angles; floors slope at unexpected points. A metal ramp hugs the side of the building and tilts up onto the roof as a terrace and additional exhibition space.



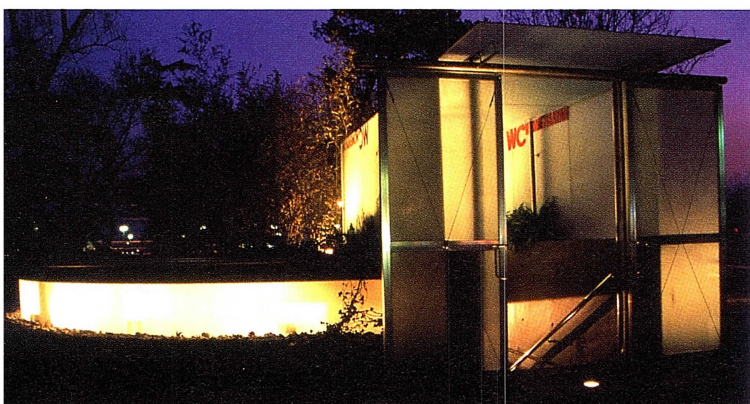
CAD

Quick to assemble – it went up in six weeks – the building is constructed from such strong, durable materials as steel and wood and can be easily replicated. The steel-clad façade will rust over time and give the impression of an aged structure abandoned in the forest.

It is too early to see any completed projects by the firm in the U.S., but one now underway gives a hint of what to expect. Philadelphia's Locust Club is being renovated by GAD and SU11 as a boutique hotel offering a spa, nightclub, and dining. The first of the project's seven phases is a bar and café whose ceiling, walls, tables, seating, and floors are being treated as a continuous surface. Continuing the go-with-the-flow feeling are suspended lights that extend from the ceiling like drops of liquid frozen midway.

GAD has its eye on projects that will let it extend its design reach in project size, scope, and location. Avcioglu is pragmatic about his new home and the future. "If you are in New York, you are in the center of the world," he muses. "Maybe you won't build in New York, but you can build anywhere in the world because you are based in New York."

Richard Staub is a marketing consultant and writer who focuses on issues important to the design and building community.



CAD

"Chameleon" – an exhibition and training center in Parkorman Forest outside of Istanbul (top left) "Exploded House" – three separate buildings for living, sleeping, and work linked by a glass atrium; rainwater cascades from roof pools (top right) "Invisible Box" – a multi-purpose event space inside the ruined shell of a 200-year-old palace in Istanbul (center) "Groundscraper" – a park restroom almost entirely underground (left)

Cultural Evo

The Beijing International School Shunyi, designed by Perkins & Will, echoes features of the typical Chinese courtyard house – procession to the entrance, using one section of the structure to frame another, screening parts of the building from direct view, and creating loggias and courtyards. The school's Modernist roots are also palpable – and may strike a chord with the many American baby boomers who walked the corridors of the K-12 facilities that Perkins & Will built across America in the 1950s and '60s.

The firm has a long-term commitment to building a practice in China. To root itself more deeply there, Perkins & Will became registered as a Wholly Owned Foreign Enterprise (WOFE) in China in June 2000, rather than opening a representative office or starting a joint venture with a Chinese firm.

This gives the firm more control over design and construction documents and allows it to accept payments in Chinese currency.

WOFE status requires registration with local and federal governments in China, as well as a cash investment (which varies according to size of firm). Taxes vary depending on location, so the firm established its government relations office in Shenzhen, which is in a Special Economic Zone; the main design office is in Shanghai, and a third office recently opened in Beijing.

"The whole process took us about eight months," says Ron Vitale, AIA, China Regional Director of Perkins & Will, who splits his time between the firm's Park Avenue offices and China. As he explains, designing in China requires persistence, personal presence, and patience.

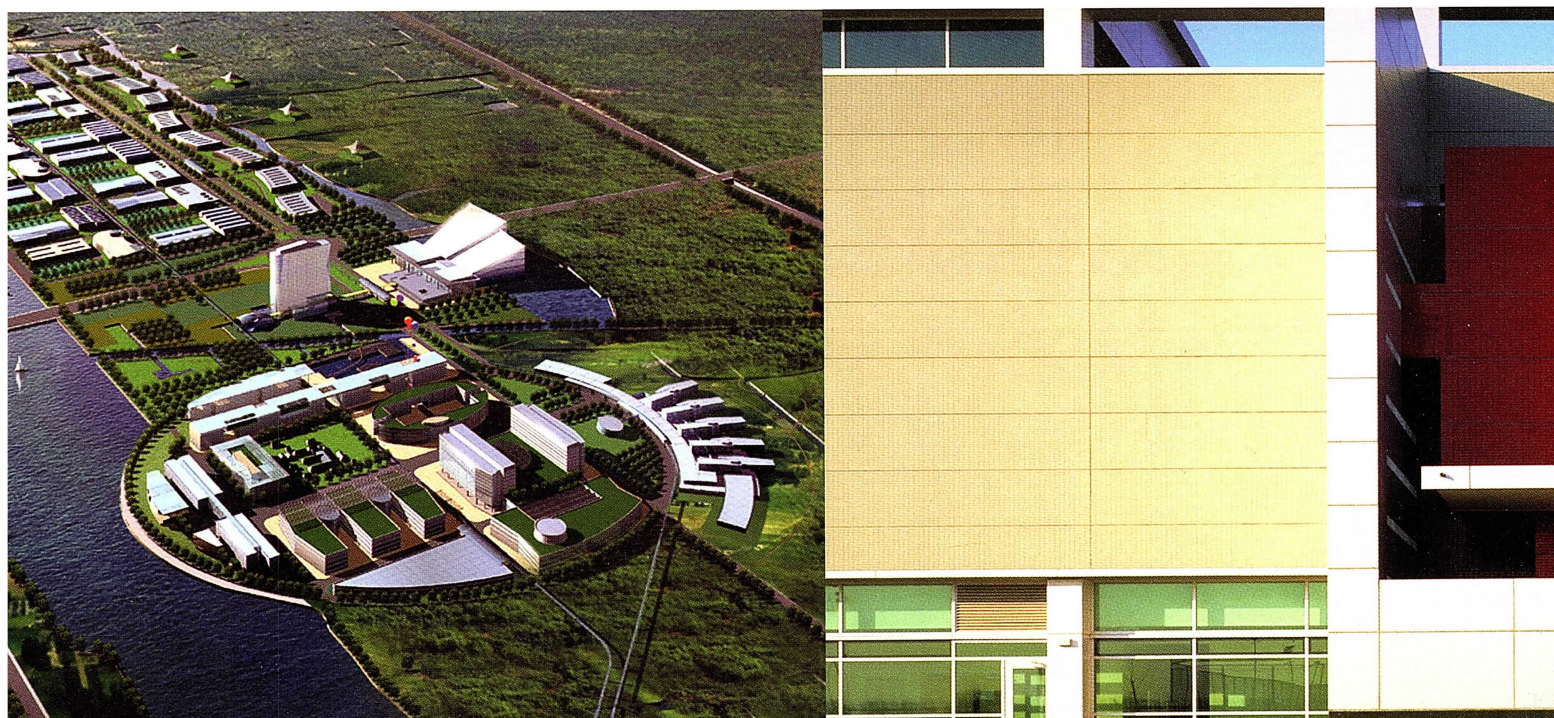
While working on the Beijing International School Shunyi, Vitale was amazed to find 3,000 construction workers who had built spartan housing on the site before the project started. The presence of so many workers changed designs – Vitale substituted poured-in-place concrete for pre-cast panels that were initially planned, and introduced tilework to take full advantage of the labor available. The speed of the work impressed him as much as the number of workers – the 550,000-square-foot project was built in 12 months.

Starting work in China in 1996, Perkins & Will soon realized the timing was right to develop a major business there. The country was beginning to launch a long-term drive to modernize, and intends to build many schools and hospitals. This "mirrors our core experience and practice," says Vitale.

As this huge building initiative progresses and with its entry into the World Trade Organization, China also has allowed foreign investors roles previously restricted to Chinese entities. Other developments such as the 2008 Olympics in Beijing are pushing architecture ahead.

Developing a business in China means understanding not only the language, but also the subtext. "We have bilingual staff in the U.S. and China, so direct communication is not an issue – it's the non-direct communication that is the challenge. Direct translation from Chinese to English will only give me 50 percent of the information – the other 50 percent is subtext," explains Vitale, adding, "That requires an inherent understanding of the Chinese language and culture."

Perkins & Will staff members who were born or have



ution: Building a Practice in China

For Perkins & Will, understanding the culture is key.

By Thomas D. Sullivan

lived a long time in China provide a cultural interpretation to understand clients and how to do business, he says. Their understanding of the culture is key to translating the cultural context — as well as reflecting local sensibilities.

Yuheng Shang, AIA, Chief Representative in the firm's Shanghai office, stresses having colleagues who understand Chinese culture from the inside. "Bi-lingual and bi-culture staffs are extremely important," he states, adding, "out of the two, bi-culture is more important, because it can overcome the language barrier."

In meetings with Chinese clients, Vitale sees his Shanghai colleague Grace Chen — an architect who also sometimes translates for him — smile whenever she hears a request for a "distinctive landmark building." She and Vitale have

heard the phrase before. Clients in China tend to ask for architectural features that will make a statement — an urge that has spawned a significant number of Sim City-like high-rises there.

"There is a greater openness and freedom" in proposing designs to clients in China than in most places where the firm works, Vitale says. "China's been a great petri dish of design. Clients encourage new ideas." He notes that the buildings the firm designed in China have caught the eye of American clients, leading to commissions in the United States.

Vitale explains a challenge U.S. architecture firms face in China: the fees of local design firms "tend to be one-fifth, if not lower, than ours." Since the scope of services his firm can offer are much greater, he notes that, "Once our clients go

through the process with us, they do see the added value."

Both Vitale and Yuheng Shang are pleased with the evolution of their China work. "Because of our local presence, we have the ability to expand our scope of services, increasing our involvement and oversight throughout the design and construction process," Vitale says. Technology helps, too, through a secure computer network that saves CAD files twice daily. The time difference allows staff in Shanghai and New York to work on a project continuously.

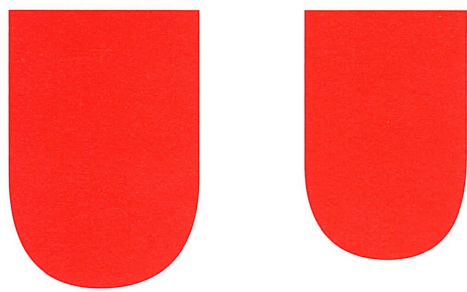
Ultimately, the human element dominates. "How do you control the quality of a project?" Vitale asks. "Be there." Yuheng Shang offers this counsel: "Patience, patience, patience."

Thomas D. Sullivan is an architecture and design writer in New York. He was formerly the architecture critic of *The Washington Times*.

The competition-winning master plan for the Shanghai International Medical Zone (SIMZ) includes 40 million square feet of medical and research facilities on a 1,335.5-acre site (bottom left)
The very contemporary Beijing Inter-national School Shunyi echoes a traditional Chinese courtyard house complete with brightly colored screen walls and landscaped courtyards (center)
The 90,000-square-foot Shanghai-Jahwa Research Laboratory incorporates sustainable design with the building program for cosmetic research and exhibitions (bottom right)



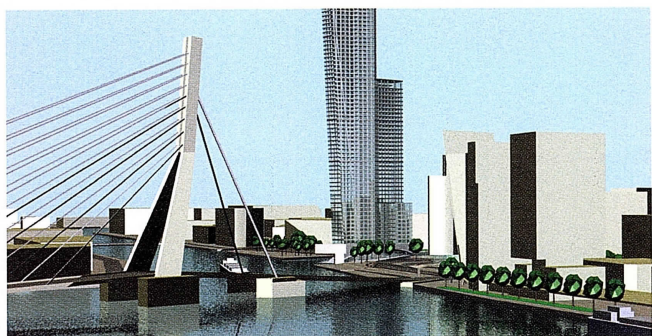
Building



in the Netherlands



**Rietveld Architects Changes
Rotterdam's Skyline**
By Sara Moss



RIETVELD ARCHITECTS

Margaret Rietveld doesn't like to think of herself as the design partner of Rietveld Architects LLP, the New York City-based design firm she started with husband Rijk in 1994.

Some might think that she makes the aesthetic decisions, while Rijk manages the projects, but that's not so, says Rietveld, explaining that she and her husband share responsibilities and often think more like a single person. "We finish each other's thoughts," she says.

While they are a small firm (only 15 employees), with a single office in midtown Manhattan, Rietveld Architects is designing and managing a high visibility project in Rotterdam, a city well known for its cutting-edge architecture. The team is building a tower in the city's Kop van Zuid redevelopment, a building that will be flanked by works by Rem Koolhaas, Renzo Piano, Norman Foster, UN Studio's Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, and others. So how did a small New York City firm come to design what could be one of the tallest buildings in the Netherlands?

Margaret met Rijk, who is Dutch, while working at the Amsterdam office of Herman Hertzberger. An American (from Virginia), she lived and worked in Europe for five years before returning to the U.S. Though their focus is beginning to shift back to the U.S., most of the couple's projects, in fact, are in the Netherlands, starting in 1994 with the Equinox Building built for Bouwfonds Vastgoed, one of the Netherlands' largest developers.

One successful project led to another. Bouwfonds Vastgoed was building a project in Rotterdam's Kop van Zuid, a mixed-use waterfront redevelopment, and had rights to develop the last parcel of waterfront along the Maas River. Zoning decreed that the site be developed as a tower, and Rietveld Architects was chosen to design it.

Maastower has gone through several iterations in response to the changing size and program. The first design was a mixed-use (office and housing) building with a 30-story tower split vertically by use: housing on the water, offices on the street. The two pieces could be built separately, and the construction phased to respond to market need.

The next year, the client decided that the Maastower's height should increase to 37 stories, and the program change to all office space. In 2000, the height rose to 62 stories, spurred by Rotterdam's urban planners' move toward the "super high-rise." With this came a structural reworking, as well as consideration of the building's special relationship with the water – the foundation sits in it. This meant that it would need to be designed to withstand a possible (though improbable) collision with water freight traffic.

Enter: Recession

In 2001, a recession hit. The Kop van Zuid redevelopment suffered; projects in the works were not allowed to advance until leases were signed. In May of 2002, the Dutch government's priorities shifted, and resources were redirected to social programs, not architecture.

Political focus aside, the most striking difference between practicing in the U.S. and in the Netherlands is the level of public discourse about design. Questioning program, even for an office tower, is much more acceptable. "In the Netherlands, the clients expect that," says Rietveld.

It can also make great demands on architects. Each municipality in the Netherlands has the equivalent of a fine arts commission, usually made up of architects. Rietveld has learned to expect tough questions, and prepares for them.

She has learned to choose her battles. "It's very important to not let a project get overcooked," she says. Between the efforts to achieve consensus on the Maastower's changing parameters, they have made sure that their basic design concepts – integrating the building with the city through breaking down its mass and using transparency – survive.

The firm is concerned with context – how a building will fit into its (usually urban) setting, both formally and programmatically. "We like to be able to see through part of the building," says Rietveld. Glass not only makes the form seem lighter, but also provides a visual link to its surroundings.

The ground, too, is crucial, and in many projects is used to provide a program differing from that of the building above. The Maastower will literally sit on the water, which can lap at the base. The tower gestures towards the river, leaning out over its edge.

Building a tower in the Netherlands presents special problems. The Dutch requirement that a building occupant be seated within 4.2 meters (approx. 14 feet) from daylight means that the footprint must be smaller than those of American buildings; this limits the width and height of a tower.

Pros and Cons

Working abroad also has its challenges. While the couple's European work experience (and certainly, Rijk Rietveld's Dutch background) gives them an advantage, they have no office in the Netherlands, only one in New York. They are taxed on worldwide income, says Rietveld, and encounter issues that larger firms usually tackle with the help of a law firm. Then there's the matter of the exchange rate – one can lose money on a job because of timing.

There are advantages. Fee structures are more prescribed, which, Rietveld says, can be positive; there's no price war, so firms tend to be chosen on the basis of design quality. European developers also have a longer rate of return than American counterparts, who need to earn their investments back more quickly. European clients have more incentive to incorporate green design, since energy is much more expensive. As a result, the firm is able to lead projects in which the environment is a crucial part of the design.

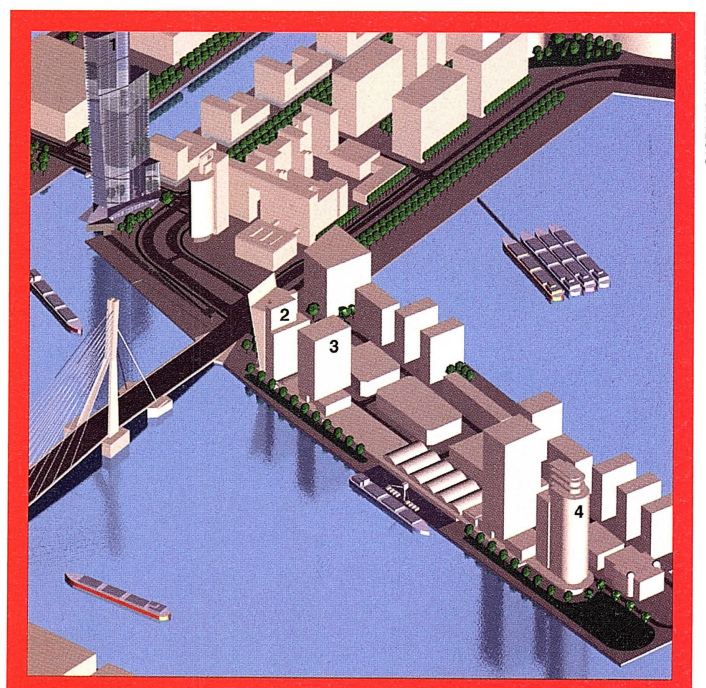
For now, Maastower is still at 235 meters, waiting for the Koolhaas project to go ahead. According to Rietveld, the Rotterdam government wants only one large project in development at a time on the Kop van Zuid. Will the Maastower be a new super high-rise, or will it be scaled back down? "We don't really see that the height will be dealt a blow," says Rietveld, citing other architects' projects in development in the Netherlands that would rise even higher. "Building tall," she says, "is still a human aspiration."

Sara Moss, a former assistant editor at *Architecture* magazine, studied at Columbia University where she earned a master's degree in architecture. She is working on the Fulton Street Transit Center.

View of Maastower from the water (opposite page) All around the Maastower from every angle (below left) Along the Rotterdam waterfront: 1: Maastower, Rietveld Architects 2: KPN Tower, Renzo Piano 3: De Rotterdam Woningen, Rem Koolhaas/OMA 4: World Port Center, Foster & Partners (below)



RIETVELD ARCHITECTS



RIETVELD ARCHITECTS

Peaceful Waters

By Bonnie A. Harken, AIA

NEW YORK

Bonnie A. Harken, AIA, is President of Nautilus International Development Consulting. As former President of New Amsterdam Development Consultants, Harken and Robert D. Yaro, President of the Regional Plan Association, organized and led the New Amsterdam Waterfront Exchange.



NEW YORK CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Last February, the American delegation of the New Amsterdam Waterfront Exchange explored historic and new waterfront developments in Amsterdam. Two months later, the Dutch delegation visited waterfronts on the Hudson and East Rivers in New York.

Why undertake an exchange of expertise about waterfront redevelopment between New York and Amsterdam? Both cities share illustrious histories as global centers of maritime trade. Both now share the challenge of reshaping large, discarded industrial waterfront sites to meet the needs of 21st century urbanism and international commerce.

The Waterfront Exchange between the two cities was originally created with the Regional Plan Association. The hope was to create an international dialogue about how key waterfronts could have a tremendous impact on the future of both cities' historic centers and changing urban edges. Twenty-three high-level New York and Dutch public officials, developers, architects, urban planners, designers, and other waterfront experts participated.

In Amsterdam, the workshops focused on a new redevelopment frontier along the north bank of the IJ River across from the historic downtown. Amsterdam Noord's 620-acre, 3.1-mile-long zone is still occupied by industrial and maritime activity; however, rising real estate prices in the old center and changing needs have already begun to attract modern industries and creative uses. Along with a demand for housing, these have generated an interest in redeveloping the area with new businesses, recreation, and cultural facilities, and in providing new transportation links.

In New York, the delegates explored the Lower East River waterfront, where decades-long deadlocks have begun to ease. The workshop sites included Governors Island and the Brooklyn waterfront. The hope is to create innovative mixed-use redevelopments that reposition these waterfront areas within the context of the Lower East River including Lower Manhattan. There is the potential for a constellation of commercial activities, residential communities, and dramatic open spaces linked by

water, and the opportunity to reconnect adjacent communities both to the waterfront and to one another.

As the 12 New York and 11 Dutch workshop participants boarded boats, toured former factories, visited construction sites, and pored over maps, the cross-national dialogue began to emerge. The New Yorkers taught the Dutch about serendipity. The Dutch gave new meaning to the word consensus. Conversations flowed about the changing patterns of global trade and "left-behind" populations.

The dialogue climaxed with a presentation of findings by the Dutch delegation at New York's City Hall on the final evening moderated by Josh Sirefman, Chief Operating Officer of the NYC Economic Development Corporation, which shares responsibility for many of the sites. Here are some of their ideas for the Lower East River.

Piers 6 – 12:

This is a place for new housing, modern maritime uses, water-related recreation, and creative businesses blossoming in new low rise/high density, multi-tasking buildings in scale with nearby Carroll Gardens.

Amsterdam

South Brooklyn Marine Terminal (SBMT):

Extend the planning zone from SBMT to the Brooklyn Army Terminal and develop the area into an “inland harbor” intermodal redistribution hub for the metropolitan area. Consolidate container freight port functions into a state-of-the-art terminal in Sunset Park, where deep-water channels and intermodal connections are already available.

Governors Island:

As the front door to New York, and in keeping with its distinguished role in historic events such as the first summit between the U.S. and Russia in 1988, Governors Island should serve as the signature meeting place for the region.

Dutch Treat

The shifting course of the public and private sectors in each city became a fascinating subtext. As the most densely populated country in Europe, planners in the Netherlands are masters of land utilization. Impressive large-scale development has taken place recently on a series of artificial peninsulas in Amsterdam known as the Eastern Docklands. The area went into decline in the 1970s after container port activities shifted the harbor further to the west. Today, the area’s 217 acres are home to 1.3 million square feet of commercial space and about 8,000 dwelling units of which close to half are affordable housing.

Memorable new architecture on Amsterdam’s waterfront includes MVRDV’s colorful Silodam and Renzo Piano’s NEMO (Metropolis Science and Technology Center). Architecture like this is part of a shift in the balance of public and private sector roles. On the Eastern Docklands, initial public master planning mandated site clearance and controlled private development. However, private developers and non-profit housing associations ultimately developed the site, overseen by Amsterdam’s physical planning department.

But nothing in Amsterdam rivals the integration of commercial and residential development with public open spaces, art, and urban amenities of Battery Park City (BPC) – carved from a desolate 92-acre landfill site. The New York exchange began here with a welcome by Amanda M. Burden, AICP, Chair of the New York City Planning Commission, and Vice President of Urban Design during BPC’s formative years in the 1980s. On a walking tour, Timothy S. Carey, President and CEO of Battery Park City Authority, emphasized the importance of environ-

mentally balanced development as demonstrated by Solaire. Designed by Cesar Pelli & Associates Architects, it is BPC’s first building to give form to its new residential environmental guidelines.

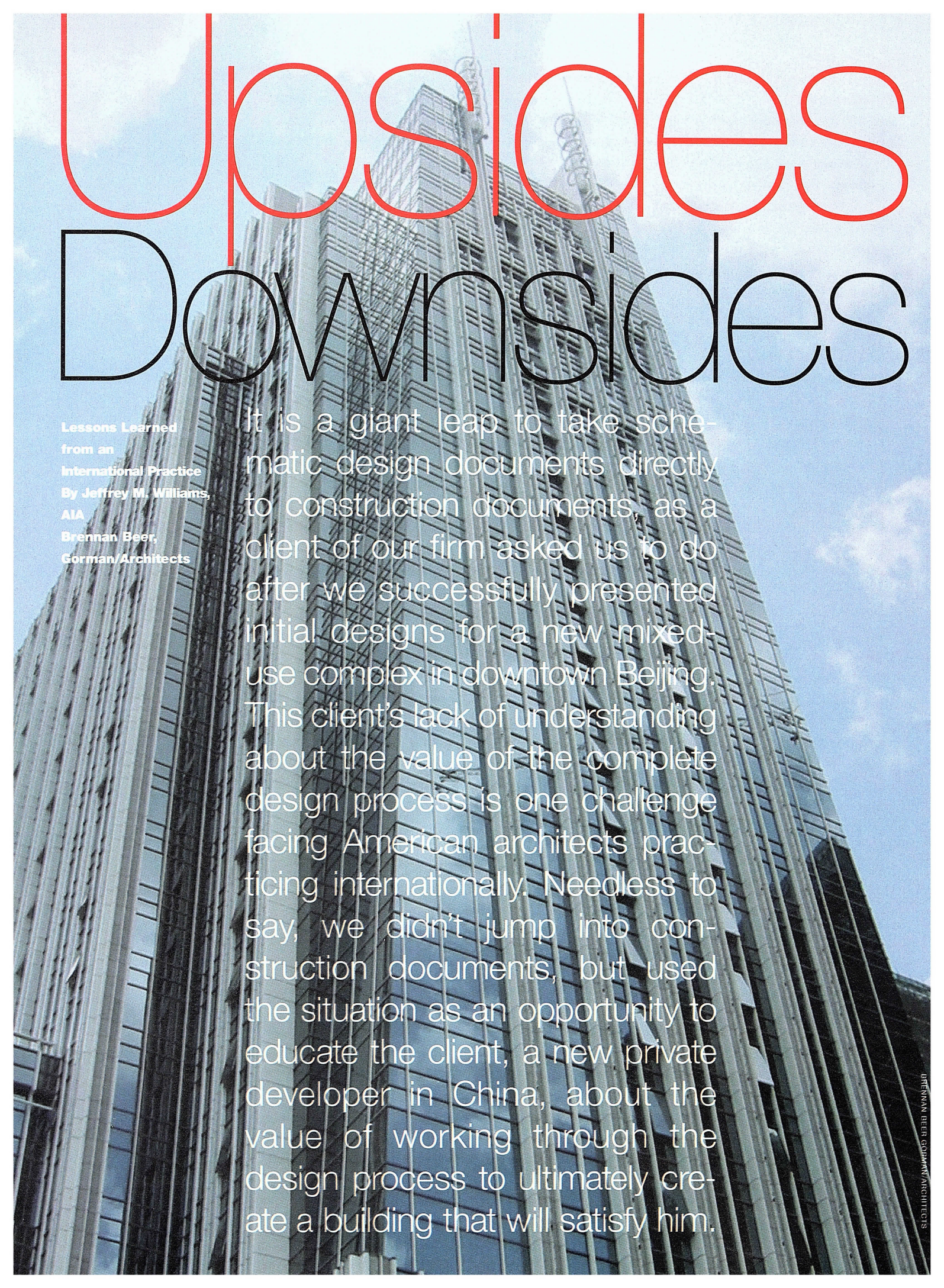
New York can heighten its prominence as a global city by continuing to reinvent itself as a modern seaport with an abundant mix of activities. Why not find new ways to juxtapose port activities with jobs in emerging economic markets and housing for urban pioneers? Why not create compact port facilities nearer to population centers and use waterways for the distribution of regionally consumed goods? Why not accomplish all this with the most pioneering and inspiring architecture?

If we meet the challenges of reshaping key waterfront sites – through combined public and private commitment to innovation and visionary planning – our future waterways will be showcases of New York’s leadership in global commerce and urban vitality.

Fort Jay on Governors Island is poised to play a vital role in the renewal of New York Harbor and Lower Manhattan (top left) The colorful Silodam apartment complex designed by MVRDV (below)



BONNIE HARKEN



Upsides Downsides

**Lessons Learned
from an
International Practice**
By Jeffrey M. Williams,
AIA
Brennan Beer,
Gorman/Architects

It is a giant leap to take schematic design documents directly to construction documents, as a client of our firm asked us to do after we successfully presented initial designs for a new mixed-use complex in downtown Beijing. This client's lack of understanding about the value of the complete design process is one challenge facing American architects practicing internationally. Needless to say, we didn't jump into construction documents, but used the situation as an opportunity to educate the client, a new private developer in China, about the value of working through the design process to ultimately create a building that will satisfy him.

Getting to Work

When opening an international office, we have used a consistent set of guidelines. These include: evaluating the overall business environment in the region; the short- and long-term potential for work; and the availability of project types with which we have experience. Traditionally, an international office is evaluated after a year, looking at both the profitability of new relationships as well as the potential for the future.

Working with the right team is critical – from client to consultants – but choosing the right people in a new region or market may seem daunting. When working with new clients, it is essential to learn what companies have done in the past and, more importantly, whether their goals and objectives align with ours. Outside the U.S., we assume the role of design architect, teaming with local architects who understand the relevant codes, business culture, and politics. When putting together a design team, we recommend that our clients hire consultants who know how to work effectively on the individual project type. And sourcing as much of the material as possible from within the country saves time as well as import duties and tax fees.

Recent projects include the just completed Times Financial Centre in Shenzhen, China. The client was a private developer committed to the established budget and schedule who kept the project moving quickly without sacrificing quality.

More typically in China, however, potential clients lack experience and tend to establish unrealistic deadlines they themselves don't meet. Government officials and clients are not always clear about the length of time involved and details of the building approvals process, which can delay a project almost indefinitely.

Dubai offers a far more transparent, straightforward system. Most often, designers work with client representatives who can define the project scope and assure a nearly negligible governmental approval process. Sydney, Australia, on the other hand, has very strict zoning regulations and a clearly articulated process similar to the U.S.

They Speak English There, Don't They?

You would think that opening a Sydney office would be simpler than working in Beijing and Hong Kong. But while Australia is comparable to the U.S. in many ways, we soon discovered the differences.

"In the U.S., you must be a registered architect to stamp drawings to submit for building approval," notes Nadia Biski, an Associate with our firm and a Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) registered architect. "In Australia, a draftsman can submit drawings to council for approval. However, you must be a registered architect to administer a building contract, unlike the U.S. where any of a number of professionals may have that role."

The subtle linguistic differences between Australia and the U.S., where "mates" are friends and "g'day" is hello, have their architectural equivalents. "Variations" are change orders, "briefs" are programs, and a "program" is a schedule. These are simple matters, but important for seamless communication between international colleagues.

I Love New York?

Generally, people all over the world see New York as the center of new ideas and believe that coming from here offers cachet. Currently



BRENNAN BEER GORMAN/ARCHITECTS



PENINSULA BANGKOK

working on an interiors project in Dubai, Biski recalls, "A New York designer definitely holds a level of prestige within the industry. Our client specifically sought out designers from New York."

This prestige has its downside. Some potential clients assume they would not be able to afford the fees of a New York-based firm. Our role is to convince clients of the value that comes with our global expertise.

Difficult Decisions

It is critical to constantly monitor the economic, cultural, and political climate in the countries in which you have offices. We opened our Hong Kong office in 1991 and it prospered for many years. However, when the severe economic downturn struck in mid-1997, we had to take a whole new look at our operation.

We officially closed the Hong Kong office in 1999, recalling the staff to New York. But we made frequent business development trips throughout Asia which ultimately led to opening new offices in Beijing and Sydney.

Maintaining an international practice offers a firm economic diversity. When the American economy slumped in the early 1990s, our work in Asia helped to sustain the firm through large-scale projects.

Just as important as economics, however, are the exciting opportunities that come with working with global clients, international designers and consultants, and the chance to explore the world.

Jeffrey M. Williams, AIA, is a partner with Brennan Beer Gorman/Architects / Brennan Beer Gorman Monk/Interiors, and currently directs all of the firm's Asian projects from its New York headquarters.

Times Financial Centre, Shenzhen: 28-story tower includes offices for a major Chinese bank, a banking hall, retail space, and three levels of below-grade parking (left) Mixed-use Tower, Dubai: 60-story, 125,000-square-meter tower features a hotel, offices, and retail shops (top left) Peninsula Bangkok, Thailand: 40-story hotel designed in a "W"-shape so that all 370 guestrooms have a view of the Chaophraya River (top right)

A Tale of

In the center of Jerusalem, an imposing building – with a design said to have been inspired by King Solomon's Temple, which was destroyed in 587 BC – will be transformed into a new museum for the 21st century.

2Synce

Under the direction of New York-based Arthur Rosenblatt, FAIA, principal of RKK&G, Museums and Cultural Facilities Consultants, the Hechal Shlomo, originally built in 1958 as the seat of the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem, is to become the Museum of Jewish Life. The museum proposes to bring Judaism to life through explorations of different Jewish communities and topics such as the Sabbath, the Jewish home and life cycles, and the city of Jerusalem. According to Rosenblatt, "Hechal Shlomo is a singular opportunity to tell a 'story' in a compelling way, and I look forward to working with cutting-edge Israeli digital designers and new interactive technologies to exhibit this extraordinary collection."

The new museum will have the capacity to exhibit the more than 5,000 ceremonial objects donated to Hechal Shlomo by Sir Isaac Wolfson, who funded the construction of the building as well as that of the adjacent Great Synagogue, built in 1982. Due to the current space constraints, the collection remains a hidden treasure – with only a fraction of Sir Isaac's great international collection on view at any given time. "What is so appealing is the magnitude of the Wolfson Collection and its scope, with over 3,000 years

of both secular and liturgical Jewish history," says Rosenblatt.

"I first became interested in designing museums when I visited the 'new' Museum of Modern Art (designed by Edward Durrell Stone and Philip Goodwin) in 1939 when it first opened on West 53rd Street. It was a very thrilling sight for a very young kid," Rosenblatt says. Before winning the commission from the Hechal Shlomo Organization and the Jerusalem Fund, Rosenblatt has served in the past as founding director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and as vice president and vice director of architecture and planning for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He was a member of the National Museum Service Board during the Clinton years, and is the author of *Building Type Basics for Museums*, (Wiley, 2000).

Due to the stringent landmark codes in Jerusalem, there will not be many opportunities to modify the building's exterior, which is clad in typical Jerusalem stone. However, there are fewer restrictions on the interior. Rosenblatt's plan includes modernizing the 50,000-square-foot building to adapt the space for cultural exhibitions and the crowds of visitors.

Once completed, the museum will hold seven floors with four main exhibition galleries, classroom facilities, a library,

auditorium, museum shop, and a restaurant with panoramic views. The existing Padua Synagogue, with an interior transplanted from Italy, has been carefully maintained and will require little restoration; it will be given a dedicated access and continue to function independently as a synagogue. The Jerusalem Foundation is currently seeking funding for the project, which may end up costing more than \$40 million and take some seven years to complete (though it is hoped the first wing will be open to the public in three years).

Rosenblatt's work on an earlier synagogue project no doubt impressed his Jerusalem clients. In 2000, the Chevre Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue in Oswiecim, Poland, completed in 1930, was restored to its pre-World War II condition and opened to the public. The most remarkable aspect of this modest one-story stucco-stone structure with high-arched windows and soft yellow walls is that it miraculously survived the Nazis (who used it as a munitions depot) and then the Communist regime when so many others did not. Its interior however, suffered a different fate and new synagogue furniture was built to replicate what was destroyed. Today, it once again serves as a house of prayer, contemplation, and learning, primarily for people who visit

Auschwitz, a few miles away.

The Center was funded by the New York based Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation, headed by businessman-philanthropist Fred Schwartz. With additional space in an adjacent house, the Center now houses permanent exhibits, a library, and archives that illustrate the vibrant Jewish life in Oswiecim and other towns that dotted Eastern Europe. It also documents the Holocaust that put an end to it. "I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to work on Jewish-related projects and to have the chance to make a difference," Rosenblatt says.

Unlike many architectural powerhouses that have outposts overseas, small firms like RKK&G, with no satellite offices, partner with local firms. To Rosenblatt, who has also worked on two museum projects in Puerto Rico, one of the challenges and rewards of going global is finding and partnering with local architectural firms that know how to do more than convert feet into meters. With guidance from Polish governmental and lay leaders, the firm, with the participation of Robert Kupiec, AIA, chose Ryszard Swietek as a project partner, a selection Rosenblatt calls "superb."

For a project to succeed, the partnering firm must reliably translate technical information, ably recommend local building

googles



RRK&G

materials, and have the savvy to work with local planners, government agencies, city councils, and mayors. Partnering firms must be fluent in the latest computer technologies so they can transmit detailed information and be in constant communication.

Still, nothing takes the place of face-to-face meetings. And as the firm's chief rainmaker, it's a good thing Rosenblatt loves to travel abroad.

Linda G. Miller is a freelance writer. She most recently served as director of communications at the Municipal Art Society.

RRK&G



RADEK KURZAJ



STATE MUSEUM IN OSWIECIM

Aerial rendering of the proposed Hechal Shlomo complex with the Museum of Jewish Life and the Great Synagogue of Jerusalem (top) Rendering of interactive exhibition gallery at the Hechal Shlomo Museum of Jewish Life (center) The restored Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue in Oswiecim, Poland (bottom left) The synagogue in Oswiecim as it appeared in 1941 (bottom right)

China currently embraces its own version of capitalism mixed with communism,” says Lee Harris Pomeroy, FAIA, principal of Lee Harris Pomeroy Architects (LHPA).

“This challenges us to keep up with a country evolving quickly with its own style and nation-building ambitions. Their rush to Western-style modernization further challenges architects to preserve traditional cultural identity, even when the Chinese themselves may fail to fully appreciate its value.”

Pomeroy spent eight years sowing the seeds for several large commercial and residential projects now underway. Many large Chinese projects are public-private partnerships that blur the distinctions between public and Western-style entrepreneurial projects. “The Chinese approach each project with skill and care,” he notes, “but they have to know you and like you and like your design before anything will get built.” Pomeroy finds Chinese building standards to be at least as high as in the U.S., sometimes higher. In most living spaces, for example, southern exposures and cross ventilation are mandated, and room dimensions and ceiling heights are carefully controlled.

A deeply felt spirituality must also be honored, Pomeroy says. “Everything there has layers of meaning. A master plan we designed for a large apartment complex includes a green ‘river’ of plantings running through it to invoke the sense of water and of fluid movement. A geomancer – a *feng shui* master who oversees spiritual considerations – is often part of the team.”

Geomancers notwithstanding, LHPA chooses what projects to pursue very carefully. “Chinese fees are so low it is impossible for us to compete for many jobs – we don’t even try. We have found, however, that on certain important projects they are willing to pay almost-Western fees for first-rate Western design. Even then, we only contract for the concept and preliminary design phases – the parts we are best able to provide and control – and the parts they want from Western architects. The remainder is handled by Chinese architectural and engineering firms.”

The firm is currently working on projects in Tianjin, Shanghai, and on the resort island of Hainan in the South China Sea.

TEDA International Convention Center, Tianjin

An hour south of Beijing, construction has begun on a new cultural and entertainment center that will be the linchpin of the fast-growing Tianjin Economic Development Area (TEDA). A prosperous coastal city of ten million people, Tianjin is China’s second-largest center of finance and international trade.

The 900,000-square-foot TEDA Convention Center will anchor a larger development that includes a sports stadium, restaurants, hotels, shops, outdoor exhibition space, leisure facilities, and a train station.

The curved two-level convention center is distinguished by a unique roof structure. “The design was inspired by the traditional Chinese fan that gave it its meaning, structure, and form,” Pomeroy



East meets Blurring the

says. Supporting the roof are steel trusses suspended by cables attached to masts rising nearly 115 feet above the roof. This allows clear spans under a dramatic form to provide flexible exhibition space.

As LHPA project architect Richard Foley, AIA, explains, “The curved spine, with its glass walls and skylights, becomes a ‘boulevard’ for visitors, and it makes it easier to segment the building entrances to accommodate multiple conferences, each with its own identity.”

The office worked with Weidlinger Associates and The Tianjin Architects and Consulting Engineers on the design. The one-year construction schedule is on target for December completion – hardly a surprise with 4,500 workers living on site, working 12-hour shifts 24 hours a day. (First, a dormitory-style housing project was built next to the site; then they started to build the building.)

The SARS scare had a dramatic effect on the firm’s work in China, and completely shut down personal visits for about five months. “Fortunately, the convention center project was in good shape,” Pomeroy says. “We had already wrapped up the most



LHPA



LHPA

West Lines

**Lee Harris Pomeroy Breaks
New Ground
By Sydney LeBlanc**

important details in extensive personal meetings. Thanks to e-mail, we were able to exchange messages and drawings with our Chinese associates during the most vulnerable times."

Ning Fa Olympic Center, Housing, and Mixed Use Developments, Tianjin

Working for the Ning Fa Development Company, the firm is designing several projects on axis with the central Tianjin Lookout Tower, a civic landmark. One is a mixed-use development with a cylindrical 300,000-square-foot, 30-story office tower, a curved 260-unit apartment tower, and a triangular retail center. The bold geometric shapes relate to the giant scale of the 2008 Beijing Olympics facilities being readied on an adjacent site.

In the Nan Hu (Lake South) Wei-Nan-Wa Scenery District of Tianjin, LHPA designed a master plan for a 1,200-acre complex

with a large lake. The development contains high and low density housing in six neighborhoods. A landscaped greenbelt – with shopping, offices, medical and sports facilities, and parking – anchors the southern edge of the site.

New Jinling Holiday Resort, Hainan

On the island of Hainan – the Hawaii of China – in the South China Sea, LHPA is creating a new waterfront hotel complex with 400 rooms, a 150,000-square-foot conference center, a 300-unit apartment complex, and retail spaces in the five-tower development.

According to project architect Barry Berg, AIA, the new resort sits between a mountain range and the sea, which the Chinese consider especially fortuitous. "*Feng shui* principles recognize good will coming from the mountain and flowing toward the sea," he says. "We designed a horseshoe-shaped complex that opens to the mountains to capture the good will."

Westgate Village, Shanghai

Shanghai is a dense, hectic metropolis with 13 million people and a critical housing shortage. At Westgate Village, the firm is designing a mini-city with 1,000 apartments just outside the old city.

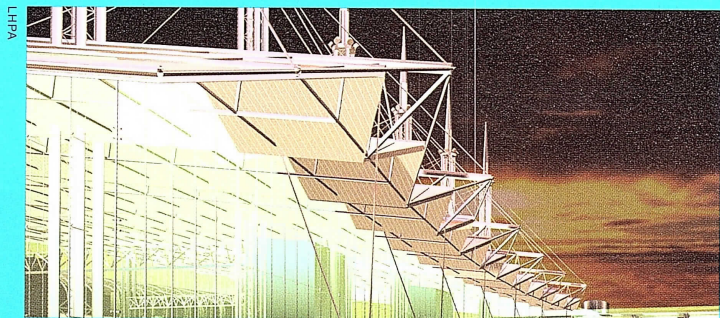
Sited on 12 acres, there will be two curved high-rise structures and two smaller rectangular buildings connected by bridges. In addition to the apartments, the complex includes 200,000 square feet of retail space, parking for 1,000 cars, and a clubhouse for residents. A greenbelt running through the site maintains the connection to nature.

Going Forward

The outbreak of SARS did cause negotiations for several other projects to be put on hold, but that work is now starting up again as well.

On the home front, Pomeroy's office is part of the international team, including Nicolas Grimshaw and Partners and Arup, that has been commissioned to design the new Fulton Street Transit Center in Lower Manhattan.

Sydney LeBlanc is the author of *The Architecture Traveler*. Her work has also appeared in the *New York Times*.



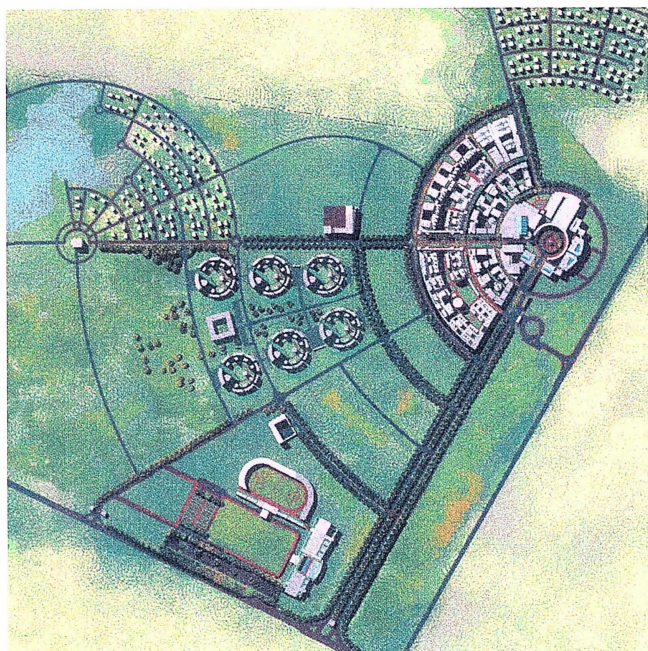
LHPA

**Jinling Holiday Resort on the island of Hainan in the South China Sea (top)
The fan-shaped TEDA International Convention Center in Tianjin (bottom left)
Entrance to TEDA convention center (bottom right)**

Into Africa

Davis Brody Bond
to a new level in

DAVIS BRODY BOND



After living in Ghana for four years, Max Bond, FAIA, returned to New York in 1968, and made it a regular practice to employ young African architects at Bond Ryder Architects, and later at Davis Brody Bond (DBB). Architect Vernon Mwamuka worked at Bond Ryder during the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe, later returning to Zimbabwe to start his own firm, Mwamuka, Mercuri & Associates (MMA). In the early 1990s, he invited DBB to work with him and MMA partner Eugenio Mercuri on a master plan – the firm had won a competition to design the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. DBB signed on as lead master plan architect.

Bond was no stranger to doing business in Africa. His

work in Ghana included designing a library in Bolgatanga. He has also served as an “external examiner” at a university in Nigeria. Working on the master plan for the university offered Bond the opportunity to apply the lessons he had learned from working in Africa decades earlier.

“It is important to get agreements on currency and review all local laws that apply,”

Bond notes. DBB was very careful when negotiating agreements for the NUST project, and fees were paid in dollars. Bond says the university was an excellent client – the Vice-Chancellor would only authorize a phase of work when the funds were available.

“It is also important to associate with a local architect with whom cultures and work habits are shared,”

Bond continues. “We made a significant effort to understand the construction industry with the goal of using as many local craftsmen and as much local material as possible for both cultural and economic reasons.”

Politically, DBB understood how important the new university was for Zimbabwe. The government had established an excellent secondary public school system, but there were not enough spaces for graduates in the country's one existing university. According to Bond, “It was more difficult to be admitted into the only Zimbabwean university than it

was to American or British universities. There was a ‘brain drain’ and the country was losing talented young people.” Adding to the impetus was the general feeling that the liberation of South Africa was imminent, and Zimbabwe needed to build its intellectual capital.

Design Priorities

The new university, to be built in Bulawayo, the country's second largest city, was expected to meet international standards, so university administrators and architects visited universities in the U.S. (MIT, Stanford) as well as the U.K. The Ministry of Education spent a great deal of time determining the budget and timetable for building NUST. “Though the original intention was to complete the campus in 10 years, we proposed a phased development,” says Bond. The first building

takes higher education Zimbabwe.

By Kristen Richards



EUGINO MERCURI/MMA



EUGINO MERCURI/MMA

was divided into four parts to house administrative space, classrooms, student services, and the library so the university could move on site quickly and then expand outward.

Designing for Bulawayo's temperate climate and gentle terrain was vital to an environmental and economically sound program. The design team worked in close collaboration with mechanical and structural engineers from Arup's Zimbabwean office to reduce energy consumption and operating costs. The modest scale of the buildings (nothing higher than four stories and 200 feet in length) offers natural ventilation and lighting throughout.

The master plan and pre-schematic design included other sustainable techniques such as shading, passive solar energy, thermal mass, and cooling through high narrow courtyards.

Water is a scarce commodity in Zimbabwe, so the campus program included a pond that collects rainwater and gray water for re-use in campus irrigation.

Style Counts

Architectural aesthetics were another issue.

"Because there were no indigenous models for a university of science and technology, we sought to develop several themes to relate the buildings to the locality as well as to the presence of both modern and traditional African culture,"

Bond explains. "We sought to limit the size and height of the buildings to reflect something of the scale of existing local buildings, and developed plan forms based on those in traditional Zimbabwean architecture. The curved courtyard and forms in the master plan take their cue from 'Great Zimbabwe' – an ancient complex. On the other hand, the mechanical systems, laboratories, and workshops meet the highest technical standards."

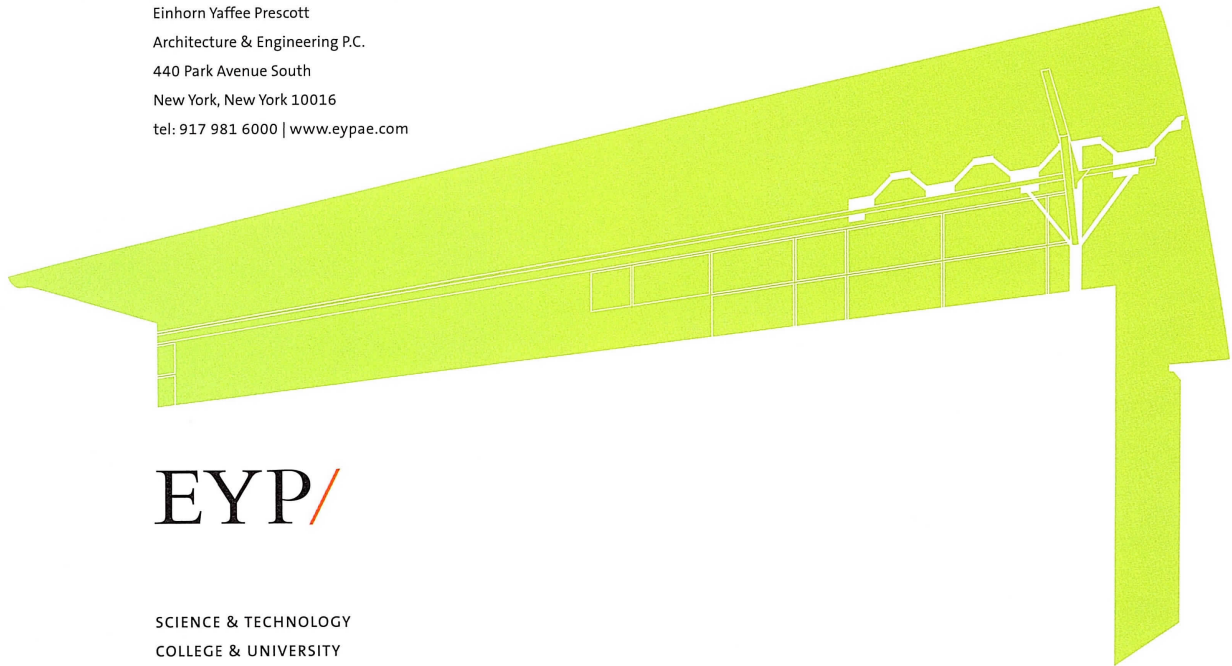
The campus is designed primarily for pedestrians. The main pedestrian boulevard links the administrative center to the academic buildings and student and faculty housing. A separate ceremonial route is used for graduation and ceremonial processions (and accommodates cars). A variety of outdoor sheltered spaces for teaching and studying and parcels of commercial

space along the pedestrian boulevard enliven the campus.

The Phase 1 academic buildings alone comprise more than 1.2 million square feet of highly specialized facilities such as laboratories, workshops, classrooms, and faculty offices. The campus has been in use since 1999, but additional construction has been delayed by Zimbabwe's financial difficulties. Notes Bond: "The founding Vice-Chancellor Dr. Makhurane coined the phrase 'NUST is a must.' His goal has been met in spite of adversity."

Site plan: National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe (left) Administration building (center) Interior: Faculty of Commerce (right)

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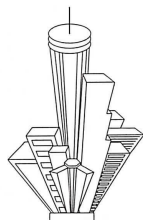
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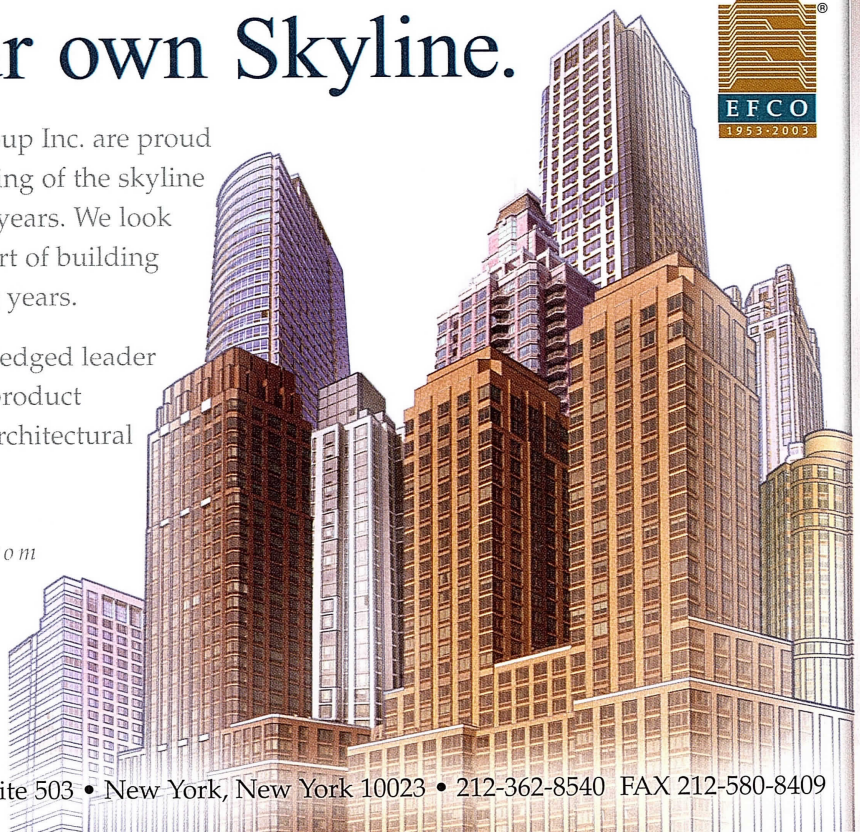
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Outside View

Americans in Britain

By Hugh Pearman

How long ago it seems – the arrival of the American architects. It was the 1980s, Britain was stoking up an economic boom, and the one thing that we wanted very badly was fast-track construction expertise for a new breed of grandiose office block. We were told it was possible to make such buildings without scaffolding, and that the Americans knew how. But we were nervous. Would they take us over?

You have to remember that architecture in the U.K. at that time was pretty much a closed shop. With rare exceptions (including the odd factory by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and Roche Dinkeloo, and the grand Edwardian palace of London's Selfridges department store, in which Daniel Burnham had a hand) architecture in Britain was done by Brits alone.

It wasn't all a matter of speed-built office blocks, though that was what transfixed us. SOM had a creditable entry for the original jinxed competition to extend the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square – a competition abandoned, restarted with a new brief, and eventually won (and built) by Venturi, Rauch, and Scott Brown. Venturi et al had a tough time of it by their own account. Small wonder: that was during the period when architectural taste in Britain was massively influenced by the views of Prince Charles and his advisors, who came and went with such bewildering speed that they became known as the "In and Out Club."

Things were frothy. We got a slice of North America in the form of the massive Canary Wharf office complex. Developed by Olympia and York to take advantage of tax and planning breaks available to help redevelop this previously derelict docks area, it was master planned by SOM and Koetter Kim. With its central tower by Cesar

Pelli and other buildings by Kohn Pedersen Fox, Pei Cobb Freed, and SOM (again), it was unlike anything we had ever seen. Pelli and Pei Cobb Freed were still designing in broadly modern mode, but SOM and KPF went for full historicist rig. Those were weird times.

After this, a big economic recession calmed everybody down. A new kind of puritan Modernism arrived. The big American commercial practices – everyone from Gensler to HOK – all set up offices in London, and swiftly went native. Architecture in London is these days an international affair, and the mix of nationalities working in the offices is pretty much the same whether they happen to be British- or American-owned.

In fact we don't even really think about the American invasion any more. The fact that our most sensitive intelligence-gathering center, the huge new rotunda of the GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) building in Cheltenham, England, is designed by Gensler raises no more eyebrows than the fact that Frank Gehry has designed a cancer support center in Dundee, Scotland, or that Rafael Viñoly is building a theater in Leicester, England. We even send some of our people – Lord Foster and Sir Nicholas Grimshaw among them – over to you. Though not very many, so far. Winning a commission in the States for a British architect is still hard going. As for rapid construction – well, we know how to do that now, thanks. What we could use now is a streamlined planning approvals system. Any ideas?

Hugh Pearman is the architecture and design critic of *The Sunday Times*, London, and author of *Contemporary World Architecture* published by Phaidon. A frequently updated selection of his writing is online at his web magazine, Gabion (hughpearman.com).

Gensler: GCHQ ("the Doughnut"), Cheltenham (left) Rafael Viñoly Architects: Leicester Theatre and Performing Arts Complex (right)



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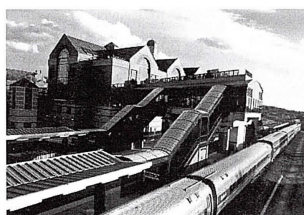
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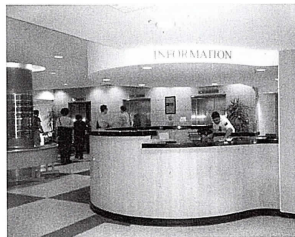
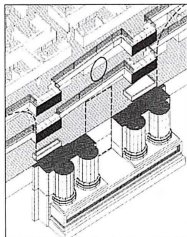
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50-Year Watch

United Nations Headquarters

By Fred Bernstein

The United Nations should begin giving tours of its upper floors. Otherwise, preservationists may imagine them to be something they're not. By now, it's well known that the United Nations is planning two major construction projects. First, the United Nations Development Corporation (UNDC), the agency chartered by the city and state to provide the international body with office space, will build a 900,000-square-foot tower immediately south of its existing complex. (The site, at First Avenue and 42nd Street, holds a neglected playground and a Queens-Midtown Tunnel air vent). Once that building is complete, the U.N. will empty and renovate its 50-year-old headquarters: the 39-story Secretariat, the scoop-roofed General Assembly, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, and a conference building overlooking the East River. Lovers of mid-century Modernism are already worried. After all, the U.N. – designed by a team that included Wallace Harrison and such superstars as Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer – is an icon of the International Style. It is also New York's answer to the Hilton hotels that lent glamour to cities like Istanbul and Athens in the 1950s. The formula: A sleek tower bracketed by low-rise buildings, served by a circular driveway with a fountain in its center. But unlike the hotels, which have had to upgrade to stay in business, the U.N. has left things pretty much alone. Richard Meier, who (along with Kevin Roche, Fumihiko Maki, and Norman Foster) is competing to design the new U.N. tower, toured the complex recently, and remarked that he was amazed to see it was “a perfectly preserved period piece.” That same sense of wonder pervaded Todd Eberle's photos of the building's mid-century details, published in *Vanity Fair* this year. But to some of the U.N.'s employees, the *Vanity Fair* spread was more a source of puzzlement than of pride. To them, the building is disastrously outmoded, and nostalgia could stand in the way of needed renovations. Roofs leak, there's no adequate sprinkler system, and the air conditioning strains. With asbestos everywhere, minor renovations have been postponed, leaving spaces drab and poorly configured. The 32nd floor is typical – offices feel jerry-rigged, and the center hallway, though hundreds of feet above Manhattan, resembles a hospital basement. By contrast, the tower's exterior, with its white marble ends and green glass sides, is still a stunner. It's possible to imagine someone like Toshiko Mori – who appreciates the achievements of her Modernist forebears but has the self-assurance to envision a 21st-century architecture – rethinking the interiors in a way that realizes the building's promise. She, or someone of her stature, ought to have that chance. The public spaces are another story. With their Chagall windows, Leger murals, and Norman Rockwell mosaic, the ground floor rooms have become so familiar over 50 years that they deserve to be preserved for history, if not architecture's sake. If the past is any guide, the United Nations will make its plans in secret. The U.N. and the UNDC have refused to



KRISTEN RICHARDS

comment on the current competition. But that secrecy may work against the U.N. Preservationists who haven't been beyond the building's lobby may cry desecration when the office floors are gutted. And though the U.N. answers to no one – least of all local preservation groups – it ought to get New Yorkers who care about architecture behind it. It could start by giving tours of the 32nd floor.

Fred Bernstein, an *Oculus* contributing editor, studied architecture at Princeton University, and has written about design for more than 15 years; he also contributes to the *New York Times*, *Metropolitan Home*, and *Blueprint*.

The United Nations Secretariat (top) A George Nelson floorlamp doesn't enliven a makeshift workspace (bottom)



FRED BERNSTEIN

The New York Archite

As New York architects discover flourishing overseas markets for their services, they are finding they have as much to learn from their host countries as they have to teach.

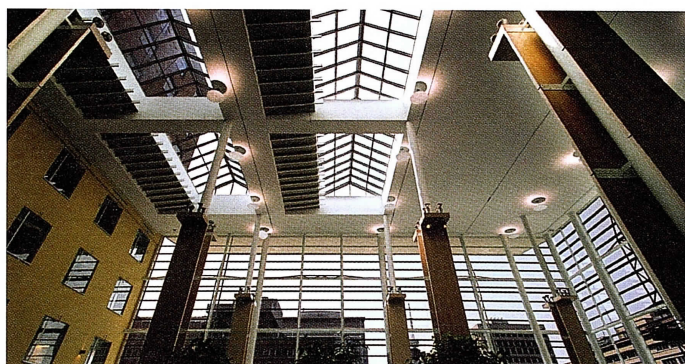
By Roger Yee

New York architects have been welcomed overseas ever since the global economy began to burgeon in the 1970s. After all, the Big Apple has been one of America's centers of architecture since the days of Richard Morris Hunt, a founder of the AIA. Yet the reasons why its architects work abroad, the ways they serve clients overseas, and the impact of foreign work on their practices vary from firm to firm. The following observations by fellow New Yorkers offer useful insights.

What lures a New York architect overseas? Like the launch of countless individual firms, many overseas practices seem blessed by chance: the right firm in the right place at the right time.

"It started when I attended a business conference in 1980 and heard a speaker tell the audience, 'If you're not global by 1990, half of you in this room will be out of business,'" recalls A. Eugene Kohn, FAIA, a co-founder, principal, and chairman of Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF). "When we learned that Goldman Sachs was building a new London headquarters in 1981, we traveled to London, interviewed for the job, and got it. We started the design here in New York and associated with a London firm, putting our people in its office."

KPF's overseas drive picked up speed. Shortly after winning the Goldman Sachs commission, the firm secured assignments for the Frankfurt headquarters of DG Bank and two office towers at London's Canary Wharf. Successful as KPF was in the mid-1980s, Kohn and fellow co-founders William Pedersen, FAIA, and Sheldon Fox, FAIA, were happily surprised by their swift acceptance overseas, which led to opening offices in London, Tokyo, and Hong Kong.



HOK

Whom do you know in Tokyo?

More common is the story of the architect who follows a long-term, domestic client offshore. It's easy to see why a trusted architect would be invited by a client to provide proven design services in unproven settings. This is how Swanke Hayden Connell Architects (SHCA) developed its overseas practice.

"Our firm was principally involved in serving the financial services industry in the 1980s," observes Richard Hayden, FAIA, a partner of SHCA. "When the financial sector expanded globally, our client base of multinationals like Lehman Brothers, Citibank, and American Express took us to London. This marked our first major step in expanding geographically. We opened our London office 17 years ago, and employ 100 people there now." Today, SHCA also operates in Paris and Istanbul.

But the journey overseas can be detoured by such obstacles as unfamiliarity with foreign markets, logistics problems, and uncompleted projects. Any architect pursuing clients in New York can imagine the complications of the chase in a foreign city. False moves are inevitable when you're far from home.

Peter Samton, FAIA, a partner of Gruzen Samton, believes his firm's involvement in a mixed-use, multi-phase project, the Shanghai Racquet Club, has made worthwhile a circuitous odyssey to China. En route, Gruzen Samton faced a winning design for a competition that went nowhere and unpaid invoices for a supposedly sound project. Then the firm placed second in yet another competition – but made connections that led to the Racquet Club.

If getting access to the right people is mandatory in New York, so is making the right connections ("guangxi" in China) overseas. The prize for Samton and his colleagues is that their combined sports club and 1,000-unit condominium gives Shanghai's young professionals a fresh alternative to standard, Soviet-style housing. "Sales started slowly," Samton admits. "However, all the units in the first phase have been sold." Gruzen Samton is designing the project in New York and preparing contract documents in leased space at a New York firm's Shanghai office, in collaboration with a local design institute.



GRUZEN SAMTON

ct Abroad

Good Practices:

Doing Business Overseas

Want respect? Get out of town.

While the name on your door says “New York architect” to you, it should also say “local architect” to your host country’s clients. So states Ken Drucker, AIA, design director in the New York office of Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK), the St. Louis-based firm with foreign offices in London, Berlin, Mexico City, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. Foreign clients need architects who understand local regulations and conditions, along with international concepts in design and technology. How a firm organizes itself to operate overseas is critical to client satisfaction.

“Our philosophy is to be a local firm that makes full use of our global assets,” Drucker explains. “We launch a new overseas office with senior American professionals who carefully train a staff of foreign nationals to take over most if not all of the operations.” So in London, HOK’s largest general practice office with 200 people, it employs 12 Americans, and in Hong Kong, the staff of 40 includes three Americans, a pattern repeated by other American firms.

Maintaining quality and consistency across borders is a continuous concern, because most overseas offices enjoy considerable latitude in developing business. To reinforce training in its culture and practices, HOK uses the Internet to post best practices, define project deliverables, and share project data. HOK sends teams to review design documents for very large projects before they go out.

“Europe and Asia treat us with greater respect,” Kohn notes. “As a result, their architects participate in the political life that shapes the built environment, as we’ve seen with major architects like Norman Foster and Kenzo Tange.” Clients in various overseas markets also care more about environmental design, quality construction, and energy consumption than their New York counterparts because they can’t afford to waste anything, Hayden indicates. “This doesn’t prevent architects from fighting over everything,” he adds. “But the construction industry is not at odds with the architect and the owner, because they all share common social values.”

Overseas work isn’t necessarily easier or more profitable, of course. Much of the benefit stems from witnessing how architecture is created in other cultures. “The influence goes back and forth,” Hayden concludes. “Our overseas clients value our ability to design large, complex, and technologically sophisticated projects. The fact that we’re equally interested in their cultures is noticed – and much appreciated.”

Roger Yee is an editor of books on architecture and interior design for Visual Reference Publications and a consultant to organizations in the design community.



SHINKENCHIKU SHA



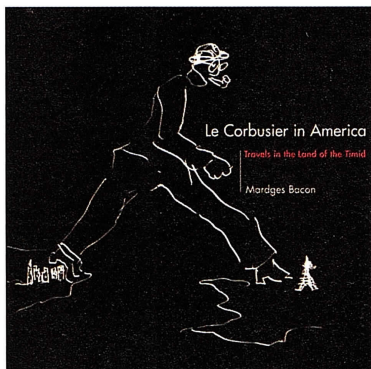
MEHMET ACAS

Gruzen Samton (Design Architect, Apartments): Shanghai Racquet Club and Apartments; HLW, Executive Architect and Design Architect for the Racquet Club (bottom left) HOK: University Health Network, Toronto (top left) Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (Design Architect): Roppongi Hills, Tokyo; Mori Building Architects and Engineers, Associate Architect (top right) Swanke Hayden Connell Architects: Is Bank Headquarters Complex, Istanbul (above)

Correction: In the Summer 2003 Good Practices: Transitions, the firms cited for recent leadership changes should have included Perkins & Will rather than Perkins Eastman, whose six senior partners are celebrating 20 years together this year.

In Print +

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Le Corbusier drawing, pieton de Princeton (Princeton pedestrian), December 4, 1935, Princeton University Library

Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid, by Mardges Bacon. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003. \$29.95 (paper).

Le Corbusier arrived in New York for the first time on October 21, 1935. Before leaving for Mexico City on

January 16, 1936, he visited or lectured at Princeton, Harvard, Yale, MIT, Vassar, Bowdoin, Columbia, Wesleyan, the University of Wisconsin, Cranbrook Academy, and at museums including the Arts Club of Chicago, the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, MoMA, the Philadelphia Art Alliance, and the Municipal Arts Society of Baltimore.

The visit was an emotional one for him, as the aftermath of World War I had triggered a growing interest in things American among European artists and intellectuals. Le Corbusier decided to come over and see for himself, and perhaps pick up a commission or two by way of establishing an American beachhead for his practice.

He was ultimately disappointed, not because of the quality of what he saw but because the polite reception he was given never led to any projects. Several of the schools, chiefly Princeton under head of design Jean Labatut, received him warmly. Elsewhere the reception was cool – Beaux Arts tradition was still strong and modern

functionalism didn't come into its own in the U.S. until the late 1940s.

On returning home, Corbu wrote *When the Cathedrals Were White: Travels in the Land of the Timid*. He admired what he saw as the power of mechanization to solve social ills but was distressed at not seeing it used to greater effect. Author Mardges Bacon in her new book *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid*, argues that *Cathedrals* marks “a dramatic shift in his internal development: the quest of a second machine age. At the Ford Factory and in large cities Le Corbusier encountered the possibilities of unprecedented power, technology and organization,” in which he saw vast benefits to advancing the social, cultural, and technological content of architecture.

The 400-plus pages of Bacon's book focus on those crucial 10 weeks that Le Corbusier spent in the U.S. It is meticulously researched and leaves no personal or professional stone unturned (of the 400 pages, no fewer than 74 are footnotes and references). We learn, for example: Corbusier had a deep interest in African and African American culture, and knew Josephine Baker and Louis Armstrong.

He was a tireless networker and had an unerring eye for well-connected potential patrons and champions. He befriended the American-born philanthropist Princess Edmond de Polignac (heiress to the Singer Manufacturing Company fortune) and the well-to-do American writer Marguerite Tjader Harris, who asked him to design a house in

Switzerland and accompanied him throughout his America trip. He knew Henry-Russell Hitchcock (Vassar), Philip Johnson, Joseph Hudnut (Columbia and later Harvard), MoMA's Alfred Barr, and many others, including Douglas Haskell, critic for the *New Republic* and later editor of *Architectural Forum*, and A. Lawrence Kocher, architect and editor of *Architectural Record* (*Record* was to publish Le Corbusier's work regularly and championed European Modernism).

He lectured equipped with a large easel with newsprint on which he sketched liberally while he talked (many of his sketches are reproduced in color).

He liked his creature comforts. On his visit to Chicago he reportedly asked for – and received – the overnight services of a lady of easy virtue.

The *New York Times* ran a story on November 3, 1935 under the headline “Le Corbusier Scans Gotham's Towers; The French Architect, on a Tour, Finds the City Violently Alive, a Wilderness of Experiment Toward a New Order.” The story shows a frontal shot of the recently completed RCA building in Rockefeller Center, a rendering of Corbu's City of the Future, and a snapshot of Corbu gazing raptly at (presumably) the Manhattan scene.

Le Corbusier was to visit the U.S. several times more. He designed the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard in 1959 and was in Philadelphia in 1961 to receive the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects. But it was during those crucial 10

weeks in 1935 that Le Corbusier shifted his spotlight, as author Bacon points out, away from “the machine inspired volumes and taut [Mies-like] surfaces of the 1920s toward more massive facades incorporating such regional and vernacular elements as stone walls and the *brise-soleil*.”

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA



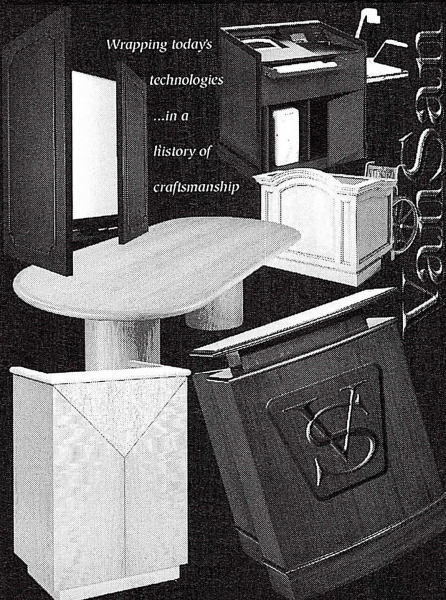
Click Here: www.designboom.com

For many designers a well-stocked personal reference library is a life-long work-in-progress. Now it gets a tremendous boost from www.designboom.com. This Milan-based website is the home of Birgit Lohmann's inspired editorial effort to exploit the global connective opportunities of the Internet and not merely imitate a design mag in backlit form. The three-year-old design webzine traverses international borders to serve up a compendium of first-rate historical and contemporary design and design theory. With associates Massimo Mini and Luca Trazzi, the selections featured in designboom have a decidedly Italian sensitivity to good design – it is easy to believe its claim to be the foremost European design e-zine. It is not merely a parking lot for sexy euro-zone designs (and what would be bad about that?).

The site features international sources of excellent industrial design, biographies, architecture, graphic design, interviews, and design related fields. Where but designboom can you purchase vintage Mikli eyewear, browse Gio Ponti's biography, discover the photographs of Eikoh Hosoe, and bookmark a nifty scroll bar of favorite designers in “/portraits” while you wait for your CAD file to regenerate? The site offers you the opportunity to refresh your memory of the venerable George Nakashima and catch up with Susan Kara (for the challenged pc user, she is the design chick that gave the Macintosh many lovable icons such as the trashcan and the bomb). If there is an imbalance in this assemblage, it is in the paltry number of noteworthy women, though credit is due for including more than Zaha Hadid in the biographies. Keep an eye out for design competitions such as the just-closed call for entries to 100% Folding Chair Design and WC Water Concept (bathroom fixtures). Whatever your design interest, designboom is a necessary volume on your virtual library shelf.

Margaret Rietveld, AIA

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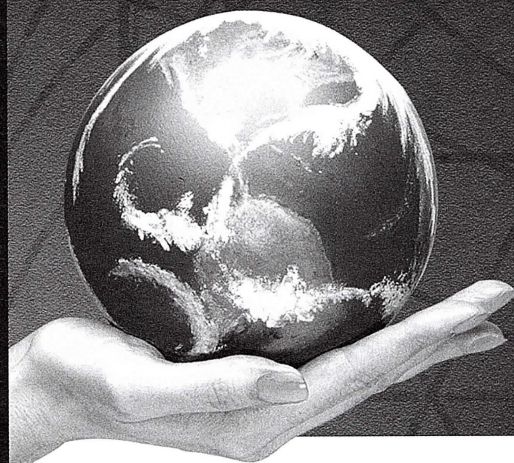
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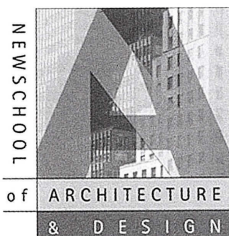
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"Bring it on home to me..." Sam Cooke

**"But then who doesn't (like to have) the last word."
(from "Marking" by Philip Schultz in *The Holy Worm
of Praise*)**

The city that never sleeps has a disproportionate share of people who stay up all night inventing phrases like "24/7" and designing buildings in Shanghai, Sebastopol, and San Sebastián. But what about the here and now? How does the city billed as the world's second home come home to take root? "Whatever exists in the world, some portion of it exists in New York," writes photographer Chester Higgins, Jr. in his *City Secrets* description of Awash, an Ethiopian restaurant on Amsterdam Avenue and 106th Street. New Yorkers, new and recent, adopt, adapt, and rearrange restaurants, streetscapes, buildings, open space, and the waterfront. At the end of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, the omnipresent Marco Polo concludes: "I will put together, piece by piece, the perfect city, made of fragments mixed with the rest, of instants separated by intervals, of signals one sends out, not knowing who receives them."

Each re-created New York, like each re-named Venice in Calvino's book, is partly recognizable to those old enough to remember what has been lost, or with the time to see what is newly gained. For example, Norval White in the most recent, fourth, edition of the *AIA Guide to New York City* talks of the historically changing width of Greenwich Street, and the experimental light rail system that rode above its narrow passage in the 1870s. Who knew?

Other global centers send their innovators and innovations to our city. Think of the globetrotting, Olympian "dream team" of Santiago Calatrava, Norman Foster, Daniel Libeskind, Renzo Piano, and Rafael Viñoly. But when architects create and writers concoct other cities, somehow New York is seen dimly through the reflection. Barcelona, for one, almost became New York's *doppelgänger*. Maybe it is the new New York. In *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell writes of streets dimly lit for fear of air raids: "From the little windows in the observatory one could see for miles around – vista after vista of tall slender buildings, glass domes and fantastic curly roofs with brilliant green and copper tiles; over to eastward the glittering pale blue sea – the first glimpse of the sea that I had had since coming to Spain. And the whole huge town of a million people was locked in a sort of violent inertia, a nightmare of noise without movement."

Mary and James Haight note in their *Walks in Picasso's Barcelona* that "Gaudí's first and only municipal commission for the city was for street lamps on the lower Ramblas and their companions in the Plaça



MICHAEL WALDINGER

Reial. Gaudí received the municipal appointment as a result of a lengthy memorandum, dated June 1878, concerning the 'urbanistic importance of street lights.'" Some 125 years later, the City of New York has a heightened interest in street furniture and street lamps. So, when the *New York Times* magazine section calls Barcelona "the vanguard capital of Europe" and "a laboratory of taste," there are those who would repeat the Catalan folk saying quoted by Robert Hughes in his non-fiction history, *Barcelona*: "menjar be i cagar fort / I no tingues por de la mort" (Eat well, shit strongly, and you will have no fear of death).

What does Grant's Tomb refract of the Parca Guëll? What does design-build owe to Gaudí, who evidently would cross the street to challenge potential donors to the Sagrada Família to contribute more? What lessons can the Olympics NYC2012 planners learn from more recent Catalanian experience? Does globalization have its critics, even amongst those designing the bastions of international finance and multinational communications?

These rhetorical questions or others like them are answered with wit and sass in Oren Safdie's play "Private Jokes / Public Places," a riotous exploration of the cultural differences between and among architects of different generations, different genders, and different genomes. As Gaudí, now nearing canonization, said: "The architect must not speak in vague terms."

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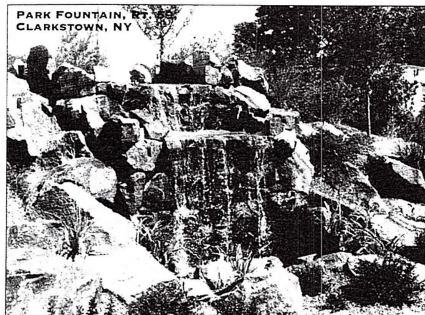
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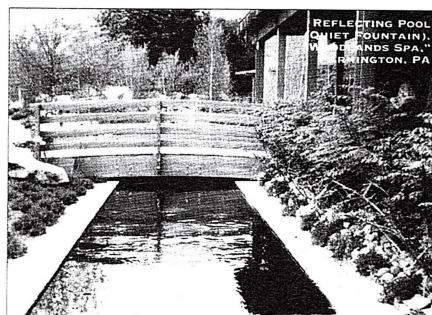
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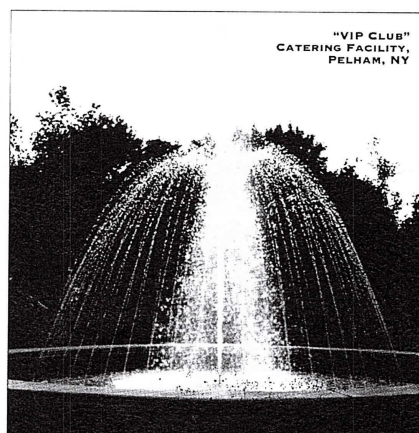
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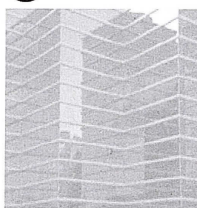


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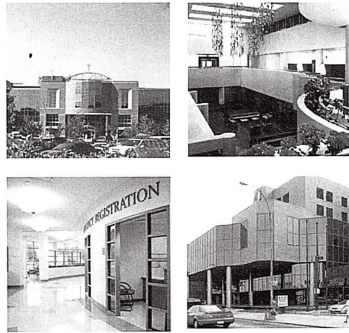
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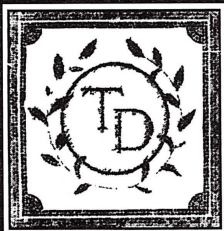
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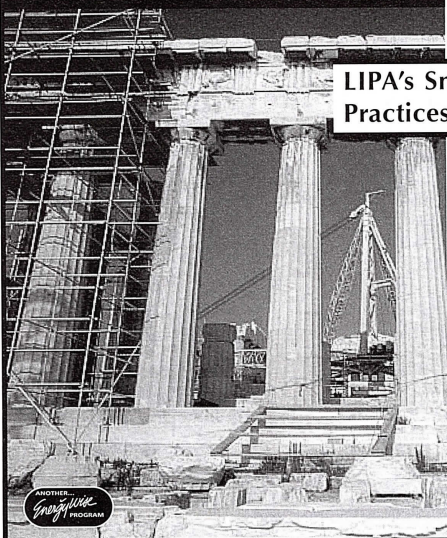
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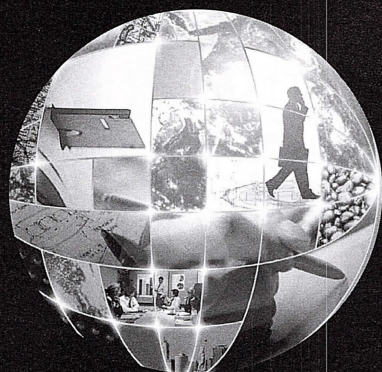
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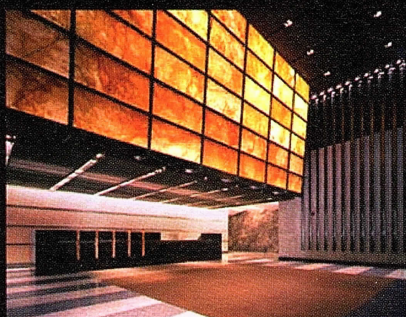
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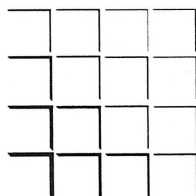
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