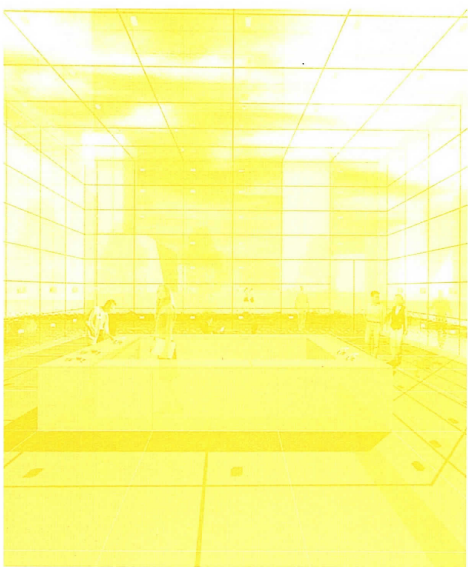
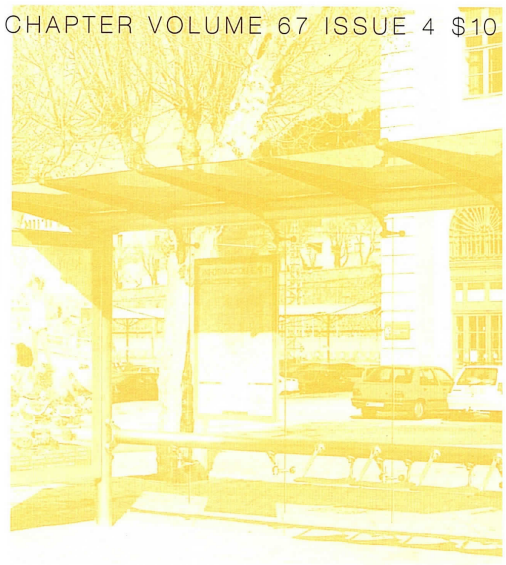
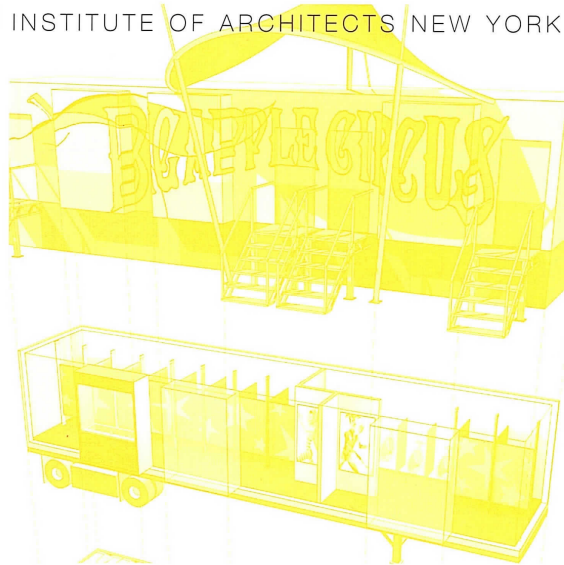


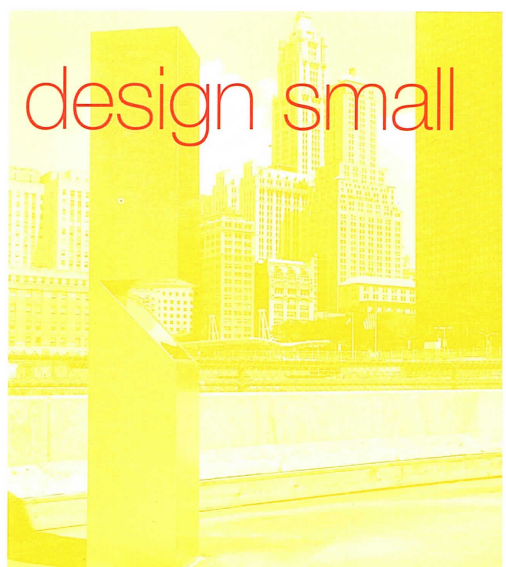
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PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS NEW YORK CHAPTER VOLUME 67 ISSUE 4 \$10



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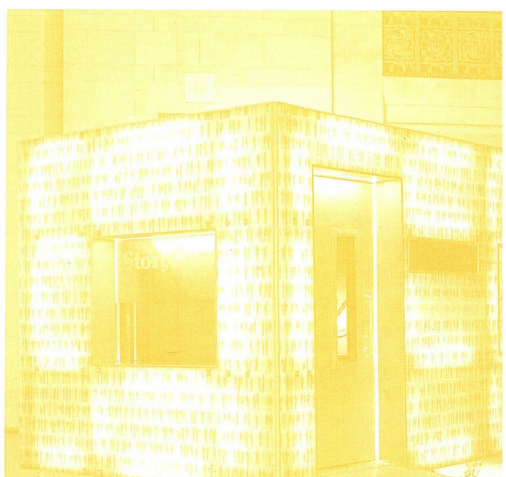
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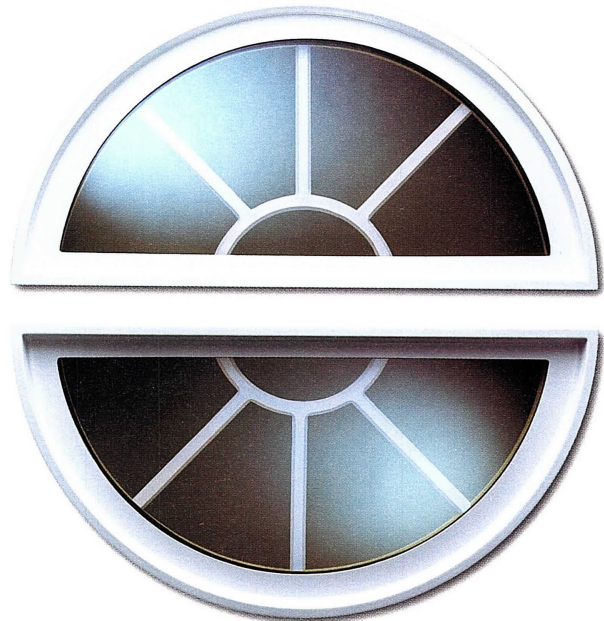
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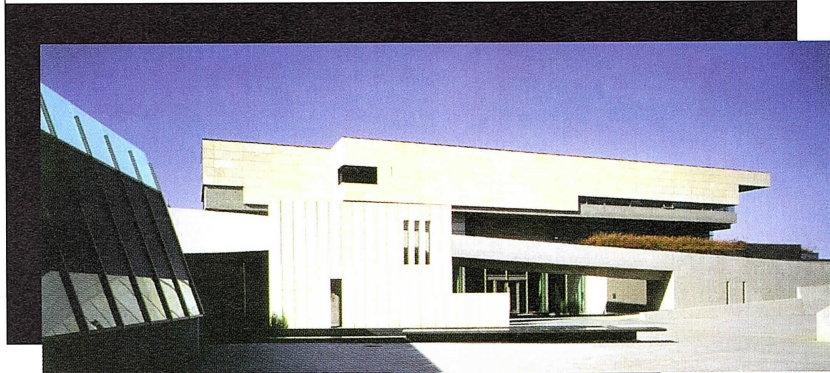


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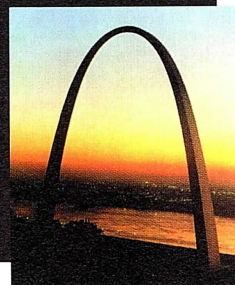
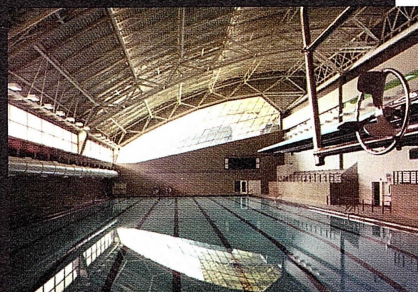
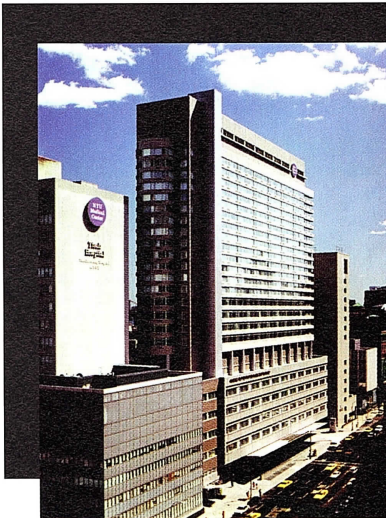
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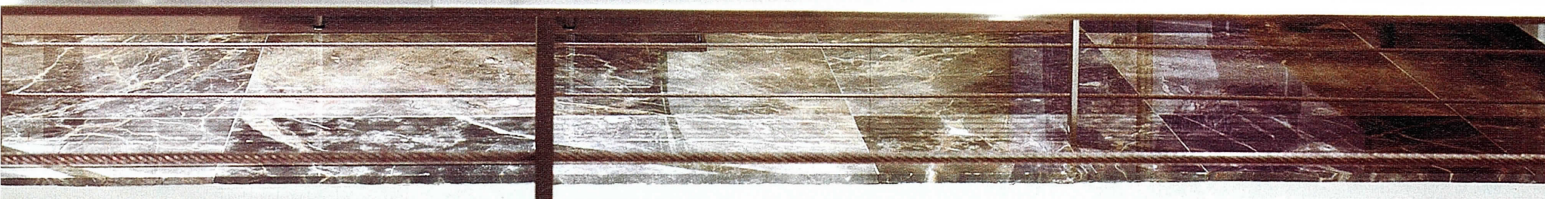
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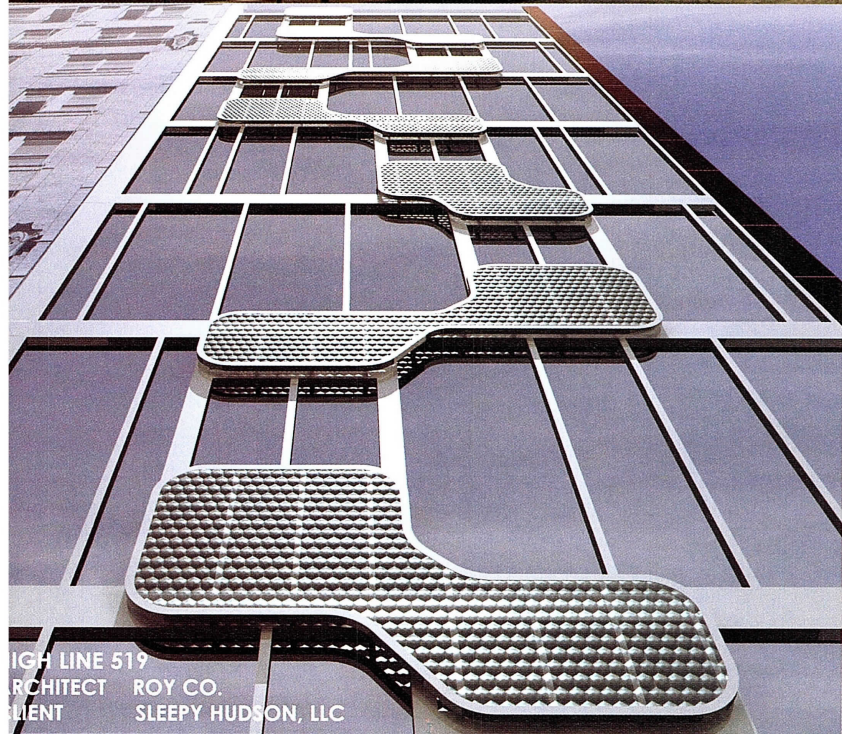
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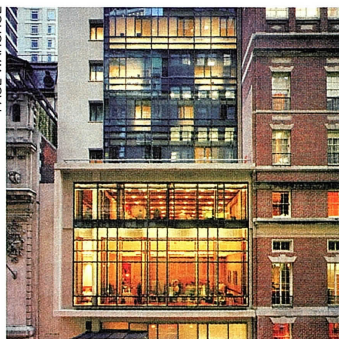
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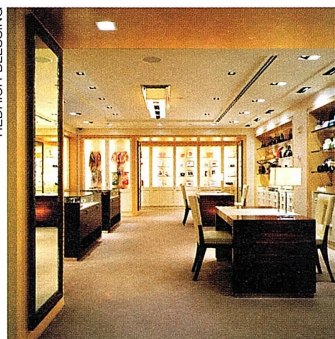
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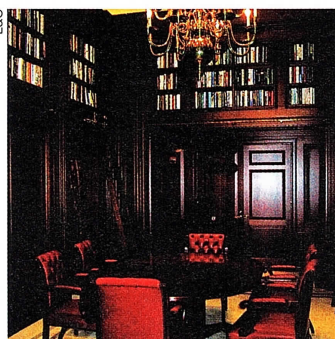
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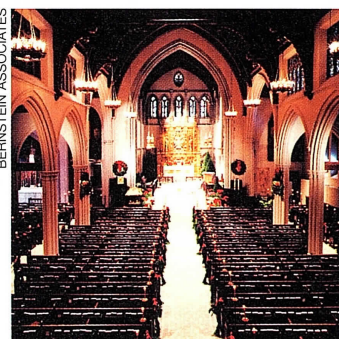
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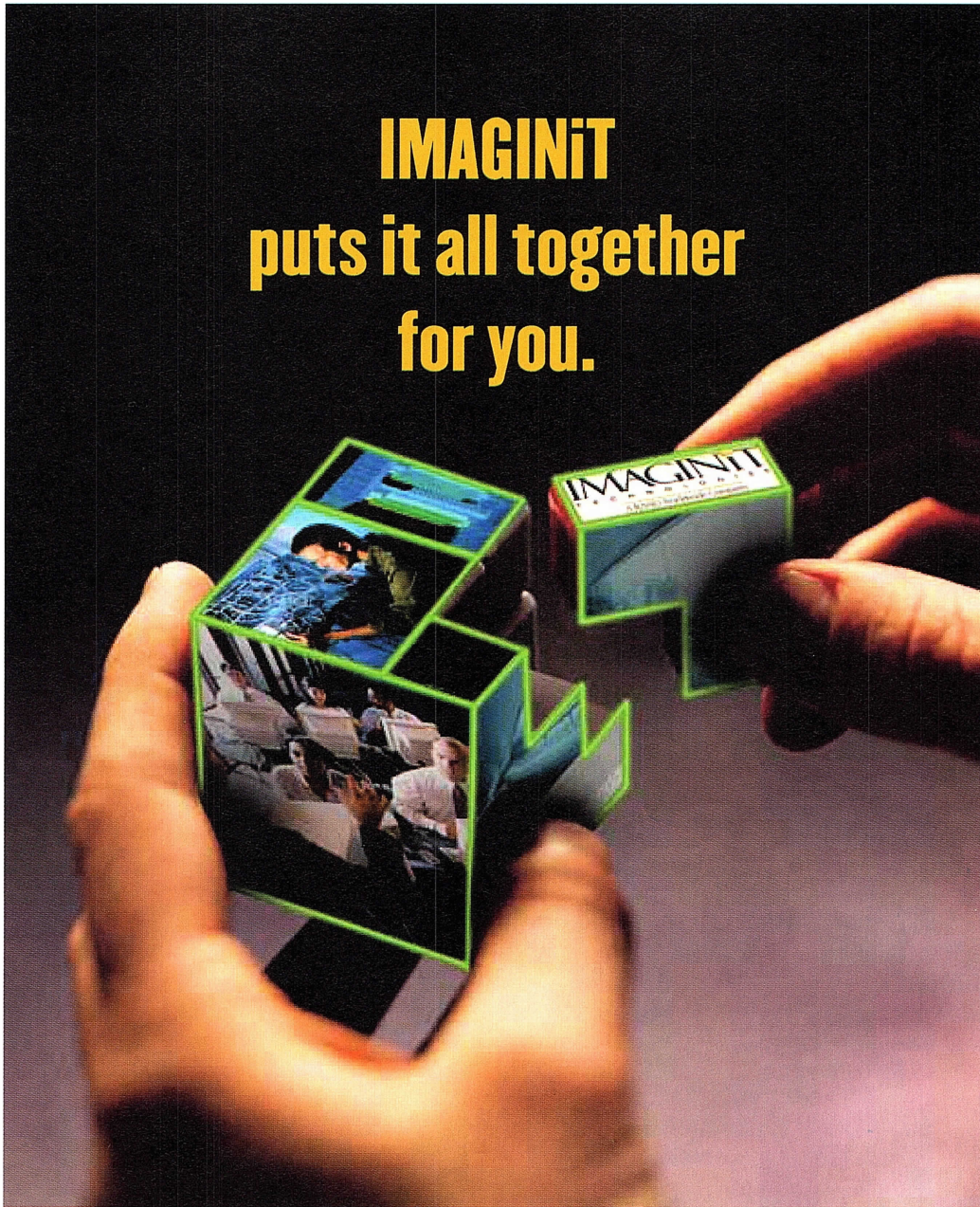
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# Size Matters

First Words  
Letter from the President

This summer, my husband and I rented a sporty little convertible and had visions of zipping along, only to be disappointed when brake problems necessitated the car's replacement with a large, ostentatious SUV. We immediately realized we were as out of place in that vehicle as we would be in a mansion on steroids. Small is at a premium nowadays, when McMansions and other grossly oversized things are oversold and overrated. In the 1950s, a family of four lived in an 800-square-foot house, while today they occupy 2,200 square feet or more. As our population grows and the world gets smaller, small things well executed and made available to large segments of the population are essential. We can't merely rely on rocketing energy prices to get the public to appreciate the value of "small."

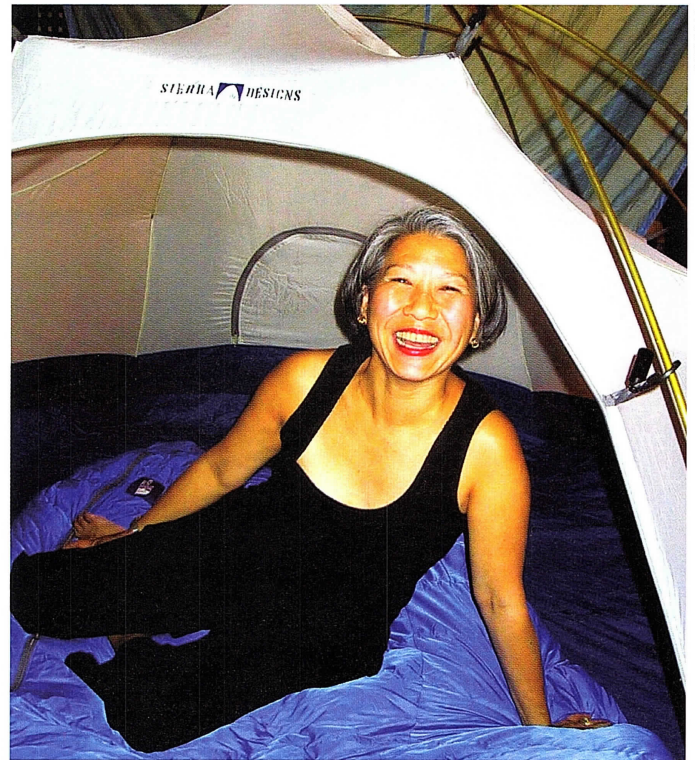
This issue explores things small that serve many, either through mass manufacture or repetitive use. Hotel rooms, newsstands, and taxicabs have typically been utilitarian, while boats and planes have usually exhibited expert compact design. Good design extends beyond the jewel-like retail store or vacation house. We need to find it on the streets, as in Barcelona, where Gaudi-inspired street furniture – light fixtures and benches – enhances the public realm. As design professionals, we need to change the public's expectations of intimate, yet commonplace surroundings.

Small things can be small in size, but large in physical comfort and psychological impact. The door handle that welcomes and the chair back that supports come to mind. In both instances, the function is as important as the appearance. Often the smaller things are, the more they must accomplish.

Small is frequently valued as compact and efficient, but it can also be versatile and strong. Design of anything small must be extraordinarily well considered and detailed. With mass production, small-scale things are accessible to many – cell phones, PDAs, and iPods. We expect high power and adaptability to be packed into these small devices. Thoughtful design of small space focuses the designer's attention. Comfort, lighting, and personal affirmation in intimate spaces can transform the experience; compare a capsule hotel unit to a single room occupancy bunk.

Even space travel must balance the functional and the spiritual. A friend at NASA who worked on the design of the international space station noted in his research that the Russians had little storage, but large windows, while the Americans had ample storage but small windows. This, as I understood it, was a balancing act between the need for compartmentalized storage, a secure cocoon, and primarily functional viewing. I thought about boat design, where storage and functional items are sculpted into the furniture and form the shape of interior space. Cozy, functional, structural.

Fascination with miniatures dates back to the classical Chinese



CHARLES

President in her favorite small tent

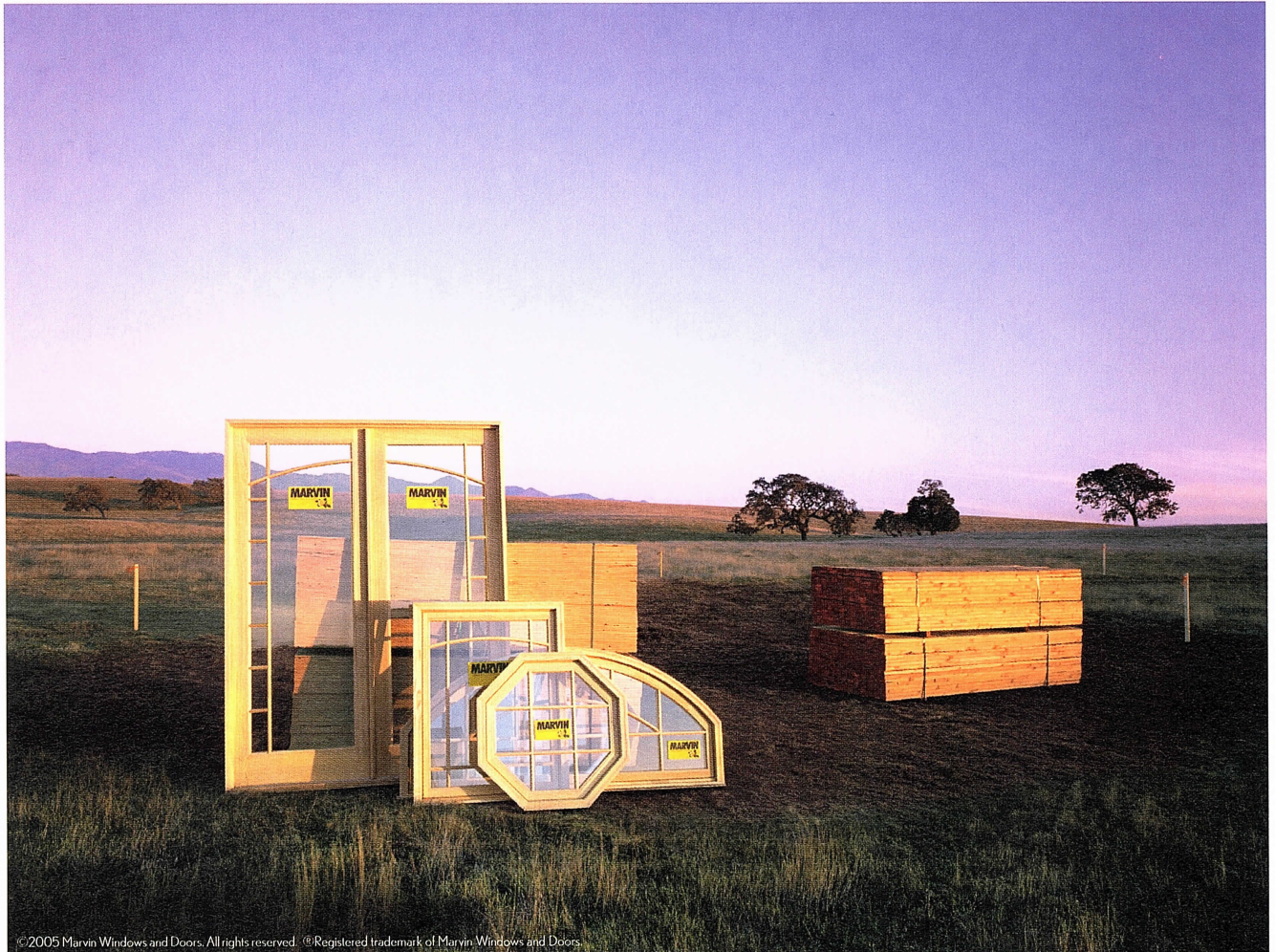
gardens of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and the Rajasthani paintings of the Mughal Dynasty from the 16th to the 18th centuries, where miniaturization was "real" and seen as a refuge from the world. These small spaces and images were symbolic and potent. Are our expectations for public space and private space different? As architects, we are familiar with the power of the model and the imagination it stimulates.

Charles and Ray Eames inspired us to solve problems by looking at a design at the scale of detail and then at the scale of context, to see things in different ways. New York City is large and expansive – the only way we can perceive it as a whole is to view it small. In the early 1990s when the City engaged Rafael Viñoly Architects to renovate the Queens Museum, we updated the Panorama, a model of the entire city dating from the 1964-65 World's Fair. In the 1960s, Robert Moses used this 9,335-square-foot model to envision major changes to the city and to win public support. Its small scale represented big ideas. Let's see how today's big visions for small spaces, places, and things inform the future.

Susan Chin, FAIA, President  
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# Think small?

A Word from the Editor

Think small in a big city and you'll be eaten alive. At least that's what I was warned so many years ago when I decided to move to New York. There is nothing small about this city. But its greatness is in its details – a welcome bench when one has been walking for hours, pavement patterns, reflections of façades in façades, a petunia-filled planter in place of a Jersey barrier.

For this issue of *Oculus*, thinking “small” was a big task: how to define small in architectural terms. Do we limit our coverage to projects that don't exceed a certain square footage? That seemed a bit small-minded. Instead the

focus is on small places, small spaces, and small things – buildings, interiors, and objects.

You'll also find an engaging exchange between a reader and the author of “Stars vs. Commodities” (*Oculus*, Summer 2005). In “So Says...,” Roberta Washington, AIA, has her say about being a minority architect heading a small firm in a big city. Jeanne Claire van Ryzin of the *Austin American-Statesman* offers an “Outside View” of her city, where Bilbao dreams have been downsized and several New York architects have won – and lost – some primo projects. “50-Year Watch” has its eye on Philip Johnson's only synagogue, where “whatever his motives, his architecture is pure.” “Good Practices” highlights several initiatives for architects to put their practice where their hearts are. “In Print+” examines a large tome about a certain “Prince Giuliani,” and a tiny (and quite humorous) book by an architect/cartoonist who imagines phone booths designed by famous architects. Also offered are short takes on new books about the Rural Studio post-Sambo, and Michael Graves's everyday objects. “Click Here” delves into the web site of the 1% Solution: a place for pro bono design.

In researching this issue about all things small, I encountered many bad jokes and trite quotes. But how could there be an issue such as this that doesn't include perhaps the most famous: “God is in the details” (Mies van der Rohe).

Kristen Richards  
[kristen@aiany.org](mailto:kristen@aiany.org)



Editor made small on big brick couch in Chattanooga

K&G PANIC GRAPHICS





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# Sound-Off!

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

In "Stars vs. Commodities" (*Oculus*, Summer 2005), Stanley Stark's list of five

major events prompting the phenomenon of the rise of star architects omits at least three events. One is the extraordinary quality of design opportunities and public appreciation in other countries, particularly Spain, England, and France, which help to produce

extraordinary buildings. In France, an appreciation of architecture and design is taught to all students in public schools. For example, every high school graduate in Paris knows who Le Corbusier and Christian de Portzamparc are – try that in the U.S. with Frank Gehry's name. That produces stars and star architecture opportunities.

The second, at least in New York: City Planning Chair Amanda Burden has been an extraordinary champion of great architects and architecture and is almost single-handedly elevating the quality of design in this city for projects which undergo public review. This has also led to many "younger," talented, local architects (Smith-Miller Hawkinson, Cetra/Ruddy, Richard Cook, SHoP, Audrey Matlock, etc.) getting more opportunities.

Lastly, several recent buildings here (Richard Meier, Winka Dubbeldam) have begun to convince our retrogressive New York residential developers that great design does not have to be unprofitable. Some major local developers are now hiring European "star" architects for as-of-right projects, because they want a building that creates buzz and helps sales.

I truly believe this is a golden age of architecture and we should embrace the "star" architecture movement. It will benefit the profession by raising the standards of design that developers seek and it will produce buildings that will enlighten and inform the residents of the City.

Michael Parley  
Development Consulting Services, Inc.  
New York, NY



I appreciate Michael Parley's observations but I believe he is misunderstanding the main point of my piece, which is about how the power of celebrity and the attitudes associated with entertainment culture are influencing the architectural design profession.

There have always been design stars and patronage, whether those patrons are individuals or institutions. I agree that individuals matter and that committed public servants can make a difference, whether they do it alone or in concert with others (such as our Chapter President). In fact, the arena for patronage has expanded dramatically. There is a lot of fresh money chasing highly visible opportunities for good works and social validation, which has fueled the market for designers with celebrity status.

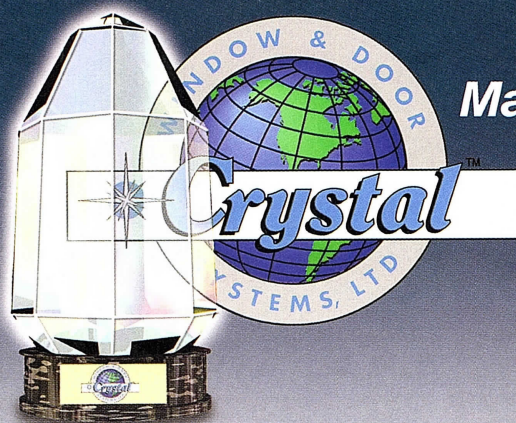
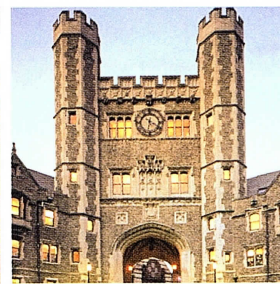
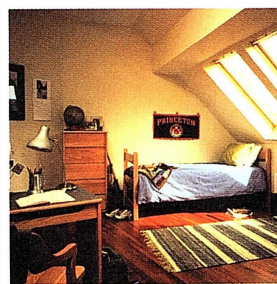
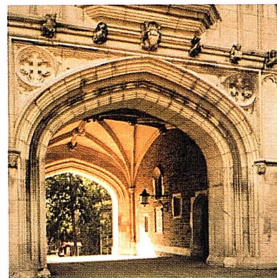
I applaud the use of official patronage to nurture young and emerging talent. It is a creative way of growing and sustaining the profession. On the other hand, while stars are definitely a part of the system, I do not agree with the idea that we should be in their thrall. The hyper-attentive media environment and the nature of celebrity have begun to exert a strong influence on a client's approach to design. Celebrity offers to clients the attributes of a brand name: the assurance of a guaranteed level of design quality; the certainty that the selection of the designer will receive significant media attention. High design delivered by famous designers used to be regarded as a potentially risky choice (consider the careers of Wright and Kahn). Now that celebrity is viewed as a positive and powerfully enhancing attribute, it has become the safe choice, independent of the outcome. I believe this obsession with celebrity will continue to distort the profession and offer diminishing returns to the built environment.

Stanley Stark, FAIA  
Managing Partner  
HLW International LLP  
New York, NY





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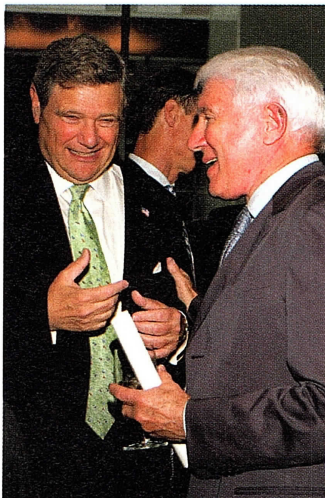
# Center Highlights

Center for Architecture

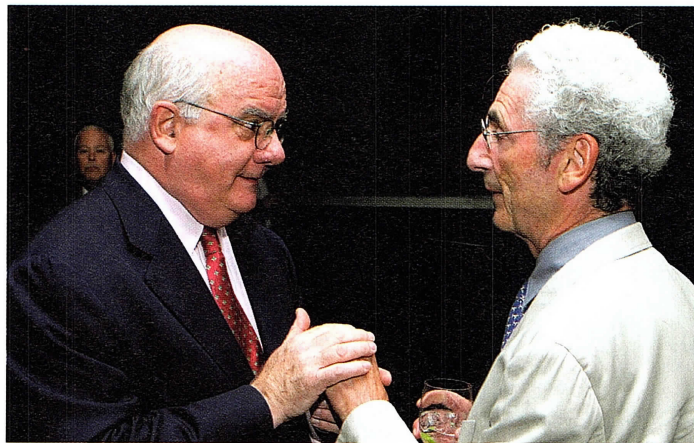


Center for Architecture's Capital Campaign Close-Out Party at the Museum of Modern Art, June 29, 2005

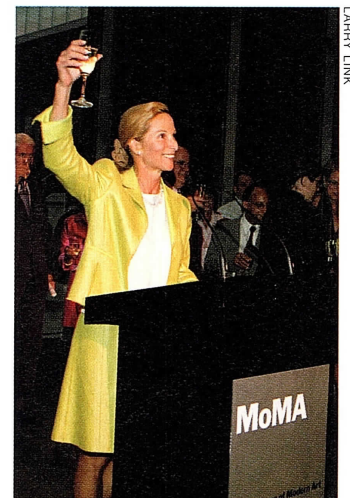
LARRY LINK



LARRY LINK



LARRY LINK



LARRY LINK

**Top:** The crowds at the Capital Campaign Close-Out Party  
**Middle:** Walter Hunt Jr., FAIA, and Rolf Ohlhausen, FAIA **Above:** Jerry Speyer, Vice Chairman, the Museum of Modern Art and President, Tishman Speyer Properties, with Eugene Kohn, FAIA, Capital Campaign Co-Chair



LARRY LINK

**Bottom Left:** AIA New York Chapter President Susan Chin, FAIA, with President-Elect Mark Strauss, FAIA, and Vice President for Public Outreach Joan Blumenfeld, FAIA **Above:** Amanda M. Burden, Hon. AIA NY, Department of City Planning Director, toasts the Center for Architecture



## 23rd Annual Art Commission Awards for Excellence in Design Light Up the Center

Center for Architecture



PAM CHINN

The crowd attending the July 18 opening of the 23rd Annual Art Commission Awards exhibition was greeted on the Center's sidewalk with a 3/4-scale model of the winning entry in the CityLights Design Competition, designed by Thomas Phiher and Partners, Werner Sobek, Office for Visual Interaction, dbx, and Transsolar. Installation was half the fun; (l-r): Christoph Timm, Thomas Phiher and Partners; Kerry Carnahan, NYC Dept. of Design and Construction; Peter D'Amico, NYC Dept. of Transportation; Joseph Sevene, Thomas Phiher and Partners; and construction crew



ANNIE KURTIN

Art Commission Awards exhibition opening and panel discussion (l-r): Leonard Lopate, Laurie Hawkinson, Vito Acconci, Alice Aycock, Inigo Mangiano-Ovalle, Michael Van Valkenburgh



ANNIE KURTIN

Celebrating at the Art Commission Awards exhibition opening (l-r): Rick Bell, FAIA, AIA NY Chapter Executive Director; Kate Vernez, Assistant to the City Manager for Governmental Relations in Santa Monica, California; Pam O'Connor, Mayor of Santa Monica; and Laurie Hawkinson, Smith-Miller + Hawkinson, who received an award for the Reconstruction of Louise Nevelson Plaza on Liberty Street in Lower Manhattan



NINA ASHKENAZI

The AIA New York Chapter 2005 Honors Committee enjoys a tour of Michael Arad's new Mini Cooper. Arad, AIA, won the car at the 2005 AIA National Convention in Las Vegas; (l-r): Rick Bell, FAIA; David Burney, AIA; Audrey Matlock, AIA; Peter Schubert, AIA; Angelo Monaco; Michael Arad, AIA; and Susan Chin, FAIA



TOMAS RIEHLE © STIFTUNG INSEL, HOMBROICH

On view at the Center for Architecture through December 31, 2005: "Field Experiments in art-architecture-landscape: Hombroich spaceplacelab"; pictured: Hohe Galerie/High Gallery, Erwin Heerich, architect (1983)



PAM CHINN

UCLA Summer class on the City Art steps with Rick Bell, FAIA, and AIA New York State President Barbara Mishara, AIA





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Photographer: James Wilkins



# So Says... Roberta



MEGUME TOGO/ROBERTA WASHINGTON ARCHITECTS

Roberta Washington, AIA, LEED, founded Roberta Washington Architects, P.C. in 1983. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Howard University and a Master of Science in Architecture degree in Hospital Design from Columbia University. Prior to starting her own firm, she ran a provincial design studio in Mozambique. She is a past president of the National Organization of Minority Architects, past chair of the New York State Board of Architecture, and for six years was the housing and land-use chair for Central Harlem's Community Planning Board. Her firm's primary work includes health and educational facilities and affordable housing projects in the New York region. Oculus had a difficult time catching up with Washington – she was out of town much of the time working on an environmental magnet school in New Haven, CT, and an elementary school in Mt. Vernon, NY – so this interview was conducted via e-mail.

**Kristen Richards:** You established your business 22 years ago. What challenges did you have to overcome starting out as an African-American woman in what was (still is?) a white male-dominated profession?

**Roberta Washington:** I think I started the firm in the first place because I did not see a way for a black professional in the period of the 1970s and early 80s to grow and advance within the other firms. At the time, women were starting to be more prominent in the profession, but there were still few blacks. Starting out, I had the regular challenges of practice and a few others.

I remember my first meeting at a hospital after being selected by a state agency to design a new dialysis center. The long board room

table was full of white males who ran the program. While I was still being introduced, one doctor asked the state project manager, "But who is the architect for the project?"

"She is," the project manager responded to the doctor.

"You mean she works FOR the architect?" one doctor tried to correct him.

"No, she IS the architect," the project manager countered and the doctor reluctantly gave up.

By the end of the project, the doctors were fans. But to get there meant that I had to look past comments made in ignorance and do the work that I knew how to do.

**KR** Is it easier for up-and-coming "Roberta Washington's" today? What's changed/not changed?

**RW** In the last 10 years, New York firms in general have become much more racially diverse, although black partners are still rare. While many qualified black architects start their firms because they perceive that there is still a glass ceiling, other black architects – and women – start their own firms for the same reasons that anyone else does – they want the independence, the chance to express themselves, and the ability to control their own destiny.

Out of the 1,400 black architects in the country, about 190 are women. Out of the 60+ black-owned firms in New York City, black women now head or are partners in at least 10 – 10 firms more than when I started. So I think that is progress.

**KR** What, if any, are major changes – good and bad – you've witnessed/experienced in the profession?

**RW** Major changes are hard to come by in this profession except for changes in technology. One important change is the advent and acceptance of "green building" or environmentally sensitive design, which has been a long time in coming and is a positive change. Another change related to technology is the now universal use of computers and CAD, which I sometimes believe is a mixed blessing.

**KR** What would you like to see change the most?

**RW** Probably, the method by which architects compete to get work. All the free design work that goes into responding to some RFP's is crazy.

I would also like to see some city agencies change how they classify architectural firms. Not so long ago I was told by a large city agency that we were pre-qualified to only do work up to \$3 million and that we



# Washington, AIA

were too small for the \$3 million to \$300 million category. You can be small and do designs worth more than \$3 million, as we have.

**KR** Do you think of yourself as a small or medium size firm?  
How many on your staff?

**RW** I think of my firm as small. In New York City, where so many firms have more than 50 or even 100 people, a firm of 10 is small. When we are working on large projects with other firms we sometimes grow to 16.

**KR** On what basis do you perceive the plum private sector commissions are assigned in New York City?

**RW** I think that private sector commissions are, to some degree, based on having personal or professional connections or being known by those in a position to influence the selection process. Most small and minority firms lack those connections.

Only if there is a deliberate effort by a developer or owner to make sure that other than the biggest and best known architects are given a chance can the result be different. And a few developers have started to do that.

**KR** What about the public sector?

**RW** Most of our work has been in the public and not-for-profit sector: dozens of projects for the homeless and – more recently – residential projects for moderate income buyers, a few airport projects, library renovations, and several educational projects.

Being small also limits participation on some projects. Sometimes joining with other small firms has allowed us to function on a bigger plane. We have been associated or joint venture architects with large firms on much bigger projects.

**KR** Do you go along with that basis? If not, what would you change?

**RW** To a large degree, the public work selection process is based on making work accessible to black and other minority firms as part of a formula – requiring 10% minority or 5% women on a project – for instance. These programs stem from the recognition that a history of discrimination has created a class of professionals without equal access to work, but it does not necessarily improve the fortune of the black architect. While the intent is to assure participation and experience in city and state projects, there is little opportunity to use this experience on projects for the same agency

as either the sole or lead firm. There should be a concerted effort to count those firms who have done several projects as a minority to “graduate” to their own projects.

**KR** Your “practice philosophy” is “Architecture is where art meets reality.” Would you explain that a bit more?

**RW** The architect can create something of beauty – or something that makes its users feel some of the same feelings a piece of art might inspire – serenity and calmness, vitality or excitement, but the challenge is to do this in spite of demanding programs, budget restraints, shortened deadlines, and, sometimes, bureaucratic hassles.

**KR** Do you believe that architectural works should reflect the national, racial, gender, or regional attributes of a firm’s chief designer, in terms of form, material, and ornament?

**RW** A designer’s approach is often informed by the person’s background and their experience and by what influences they choose to accept as appropriate for design. Race, gender, and region are legitimate influences on our lives and our design. These factors have an effect on American music and art. Why not architecture? Afro-centric architecture and design associated with forms, textures, colors, and significant elements from Africa or the African-American experience is a path some black architects have chosen to explore.

**KR** Who and/or what inspired you to become an architect?  
Who/what inspires you now?

**RW** I was inspired by an architect I met in the eighth grade. He saw architecture as a way to affect people’s lives – for the better. I am inspired by the work of architects whose vision is sometimes off the beaten path like Frank Lloyd Wright or Frank Gehry. By all of the women who made architecture of their own – like those I met in the old Alliance of Women in Architecture. By the lives of black New York architects like Vertner Tandy, John Louis Wilson, Ifill & Johnson who created in spite of racism – as well as the lives of black women in architecture like that of Beverly Greene who practiced in New York in the 1950s.

**KR** This issue of Oculus focuses on small places/spaces/things. What is your favorite “small” space or place in New York?

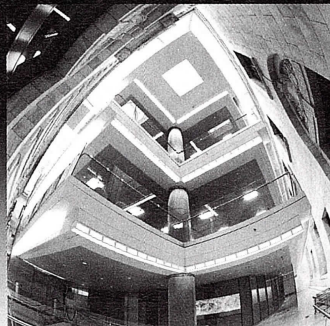
**RW** It’s a group of wooden 19th-century houses known as Sylvan Terrace in Washington Heights. They are so unexpected – like something out of a time capsule.



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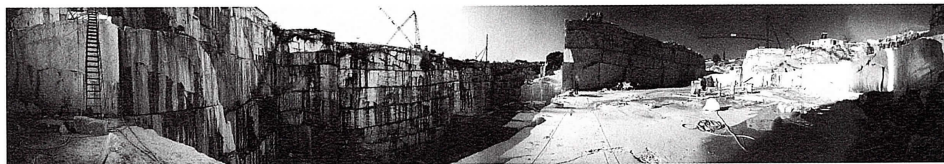
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# THINK BIG design small

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Small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises.

Demosthenes (384 - 322 B.C.)

How small is small? It was an intriguing question when considering what to present in this issue. Some things were quite obvious – a small hotel, retail space, gallery, loft. But this big city is made up of so many small things: street furniture, façade details, taxicabs, quiet memorials. Each is a thread in the urban fabric that can add to or detract from the quality of our urban life. And each exerts an impact far greater than its size would suggest.

That architects are taking a hand in designing details such as streetlights, newsstands, trashcans, security bollards – even mobile restrooms – bodes well for all of us.

By the same token, small projects can often be opportunities for architects to think big.

For a small firm, small projects can be the first step to bigger things: a storefront that could lead to a citywide retail roll-out; the chance to give a talented intern the reins; a high-profile competition win that creates a buzz.

And what of large firms and large projects? Given the opportunity to focus on detail, technology, and creativity could revolutionize not just how skyscrapers look, but how they respond to their environments. Given a patch of land to build large – but where tree roots cannot be harmed – there rises a complex that touches the earth lightly. Given a void, bridges can be built.

The following projects and objects are based on context – not size. Good design, no matter what the scale, requires exacting attention to every detail, no matter how small. There is so much more to be explored.

Kristen Richards

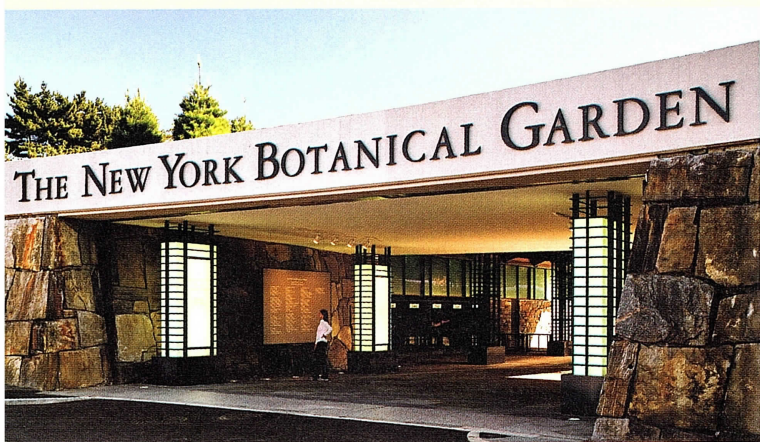


# How Does

Even after more than 40 years of practice in New York, Hugh Hardy, FAIA, is a stealth architect. One day, you're sitting in a terrific theater (say, the Joyce, with its perfect sightlines); weeks or months later, you discover that Hugh Hardy designed it. Or you'll pass a perfectly crafted addition to the cityscape – say, the entrance to 770 Broadway (near Astor Place); weeks or months later, you learn that Hugh Hardy designed it. Hardy's buildings arrive without fanfare, and even after they're finished, critics tend to overlook them. It doesn't help that, with his superb renovations of Radio City, Central Synagogue, and the New Victory Theater, Hardy is perceived by some as simply a restoration architect – as if renovating public buildings doesn't involve (at least) as many design decisions as building from the ground up.

Hardy's Leon Levy Visitor Center at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) is an extraordinarily graceful addition to an institution that has known graceful architecture before (its 1902 Enid Haupt Conservatory is a masterpiece). Hardy began working with the NYBG as a master planner in 1990; eventually, he was hired to design the 27,500-square-foot visitor center, which cost about \$21 million. (He

part nursery, part gift shop. On the left is one of the most graceful dining rooms in the city. Their roofs, which have been called gull-wing, are more like the bending branches of garden arbors. Columns supporting the roofs are embraced by steel versions of trellises. Underfoot, the bluestone pavers are four inches thick; Hardy credits Gregory Long with insisting on materials that would outlive the project creators. The complex is so inviting that Long said some visitors now arrive for lunch, shopping, and coffee without ever stepping into the



New York Botanical Garden Visitor Center main entrance

began the project at Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, but formed a new firm, H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture, in 2004.)

The 250-acre garden's west gate, adjacent to a parking lot and Fordham University, wasn't much more than a tunnel through the earth berm bordering the garden. Gregory Long, president of NYBG, envisioned an arrival sequence featuring not just ticket windows and information booths, but a gift shop selling plants from on-site greenhouses, a bookstore, and a stylish café. All of it had to be squeezed in between the earth berm and an important conifer garden, and Hardy's foundation couldn't get anywhere near the specimen trees' roots.

Hardy (with H3's Gabriel Hernandez and Jonathan Strauss) responded not with a single volume but with a cluster of curved-roof structures that line up gently on either side of a new, 450-foot bluestone pathway. On the right is an indoor-outdoor emporium that is



Above: Cafe interior Below: Dining terrace and cafe



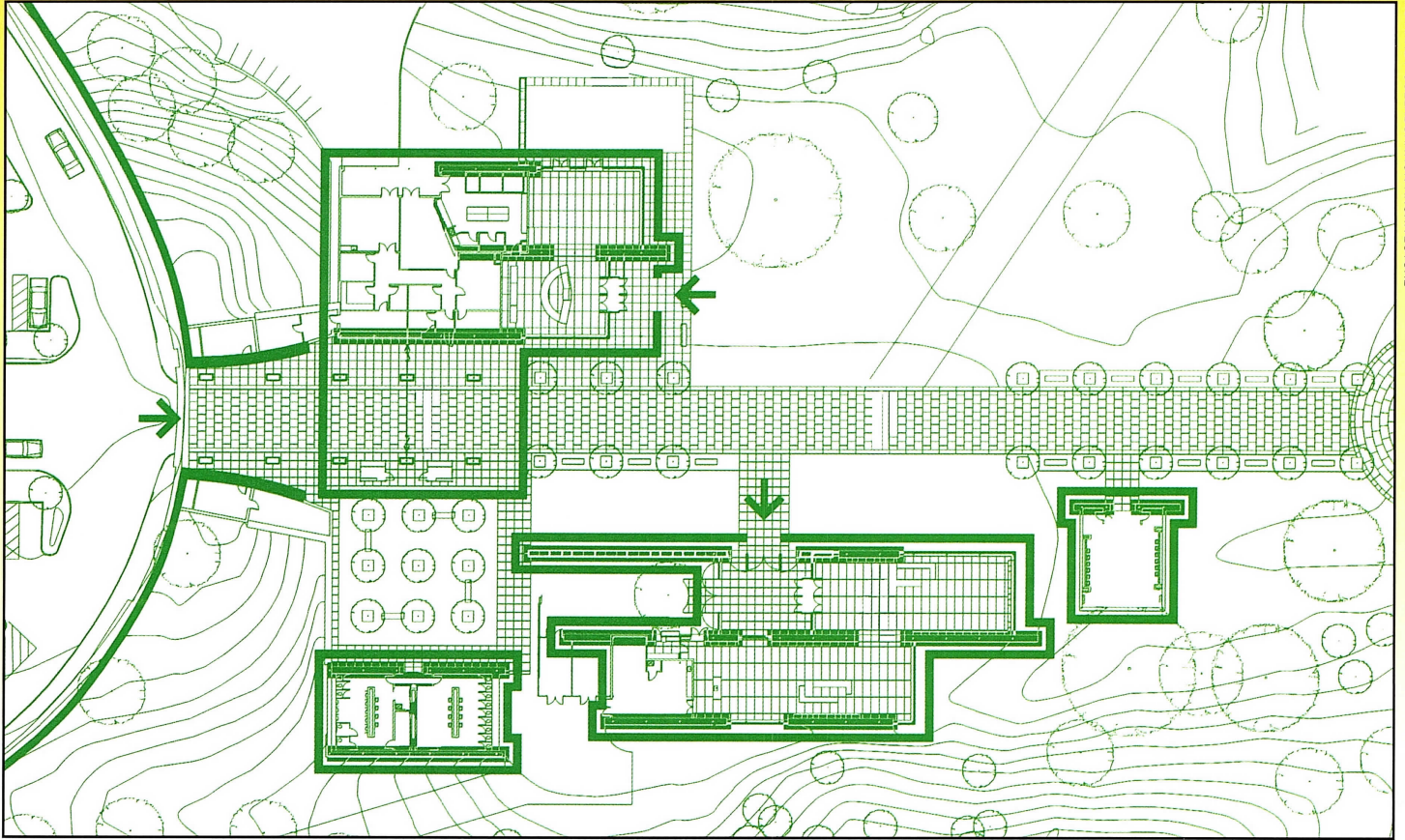
garden itself. Since the building opened, retail sales have increased 40%, and onsite membership applications 16%, according to a spokesman for the NYBG.

Several years ago, the NYBG won a major urban planning victory when it forced Fordham University to stop building a huge broadcast tower that would be visible from almost every point in the garden (it was relocated). Hardy's elegant collection of buildings is urban planning victory number two.



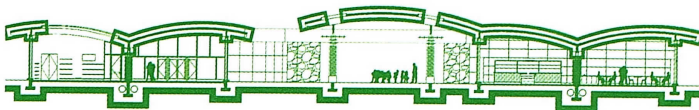
# Your Garden Grow?

H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture plants a cluster of small, graceful buildings in the New York Botanical Garden  
By Fred Bernstein



H3 HARDY COLLABORATION ARCHITECTURE

Above: Site plan Below: Section



H3 HARDY COLLABORATION ARCHITECTURE

Fred Bernstein, an *Oculus* contributing editor, has written about design for more than 15 years. He also contributes to the *New York Times*, *Metropolitan Home*, and *Blueprint*.



ROBERT BENSON

Path beneath the loggia leads to a reflecting pool



ROBERT BENSON

Outdoor portion of the Shop in the Garden



# Bridging an Urban Canyon

Macrae-Gibson Architects builds bridges across an enormous courtyard to bring a smaller, more human scale to a large Bronx high school

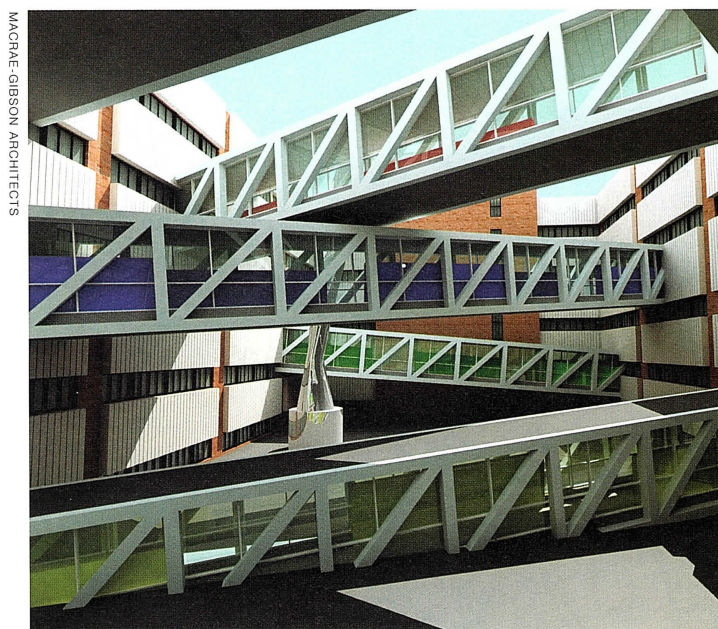
By Kristen Richards

Truman High School was built in 1973 as part of the Northeast Bronx Education Park, a five-school complex within the Corbusian towers of New York's Co-op City. The seven-story, Neo-Brutalist, brick-and-concrete school serves almost 3,000 students. Macrae-Gibson Architects is leading a \$20 million renovation and modernization of the school and other parts of the campus.

Gavin Macrae-Gibson, AIA, calls the original, 528,000-square-foot school building "Le Corbusier's La Tourette lobotomized" and says the campus as a whole "poses the question of how to adequately respond to the pseudo-rationalism of extreme repetition." Nowhere is the problem more acute than in the central courtyard – a 50,000-square-foot rectangle, forbidding and inaccessible from all sides, except by maintenance staff.

"The school is not only an enormous, alienating building, but in practical terms it is tortuous just to get from one side to the other," says Macrae-Gibson. It's no wonder. Double-loaded corridors stretch 850 feet around the building on every floor. Getting to program areas on different floors on opposite sides of the building is time-consuming and disorienting.

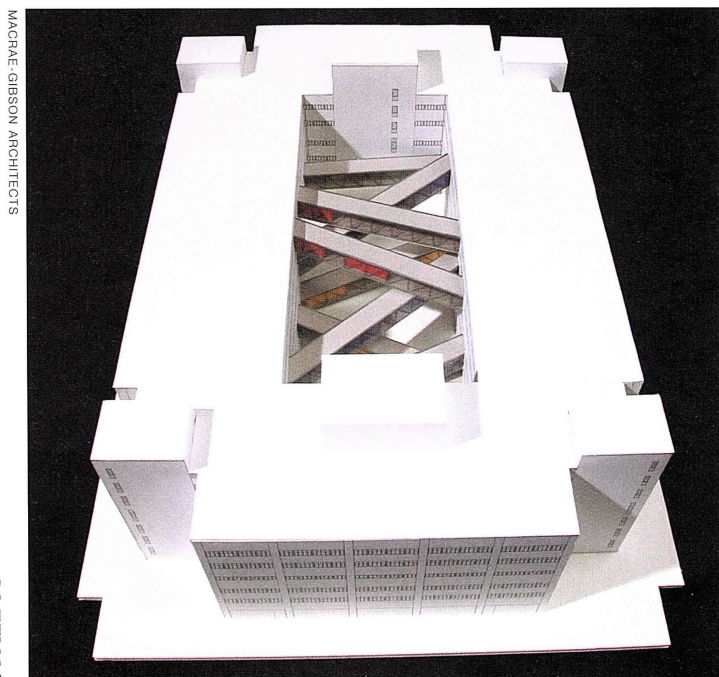
To create access across the building from floor to floor, Macrae-Gibson has designed eight ramped bridge-corridors that crisscross the courtyard. The bridges (136 to 177 feet long) create a series of "shortcuts" that bring daylight – and a sense of orientation – into the school corridors. Relocating student lockers to the bridges frees up 4,000 square feet of space throughout the building, which can be used for seven new (and much-needed) classrooms.



Above: Detail of courtyard bridges Below: Detail rendering with Brancusi-like courtyard sculpture



Also "populating" the once-vacant courtyard is a five-story-high chromed-steel object, designed by Macrae-Gibson, which rises between the bridges. Its polished surface will further enliven the views into the courtyard with distorted, fun house mirror-like reflections. Most importantly for the school, says Macrae-Gibson, "the bridges make this courtyard into a space of belonging; we want to bring a new kind of connectedness to this over-large, intimidating space – to make it more human."



Model of bridges in the Truman High School courtyard



# A Light Touch

Small building makes big statement atop Boston's Big Dig

By Stephen Yablon, AIA

Small Places

Wanted: a small pavilion with state-of-the-art media technology to evoke sky and water on a tight Boston site straddling the Big Dig. The search for the architect began with Island Alliance, a non-profit organization established to develop the new Rose Kennedy Greenway, assisted by the Boston Society of Architects. The two groups launched a national competition for the design of a visitors center to be known as the Boston Harbor Park Pavilion.

The \$3 million, 2,400-square-foot pavilion, expected to open in 2007, will include an information desk, bookstore, café, public restrooms, and advanced media technology for exhibits on the Boston Harbor Islands National Park. The location is a narrow site several feet above the newly constructed underground Central Artery known as the Big Dig.

To evoke the Harbor Islands environment, with its elemental simplicity of sky, water, and small rocky islands, we proposed an "island

within this floor slab, which also acts as a thermal mass. The low-E double glass skin, which includes a fritted outer layer and an 18-inch air space, insulates during the winter and, aided by operable vents at the top and bottom of the walls, provides natural ventilation during the summer. The shallow pool bordering the pavilion will help cool the air being drawn into the double glass wall. Locating the displays within the perimeter wall and placing mechanical systems and restrooms within a freestanding stone form help create a single generous space.

Despite its small size the simple glass pavilion will gain in monumentality as it is seen against the diverse scales and styles of the surrounding buildings and the vigorous Greenway design. The minimal glass-and-steel form with embedded media technology set on an abstract stone "island" appears as a shimmering icon of the Harbor Islands setting during the day. At night, the changing LCD screens suggest reflections of the stars, moon, and city on the water.



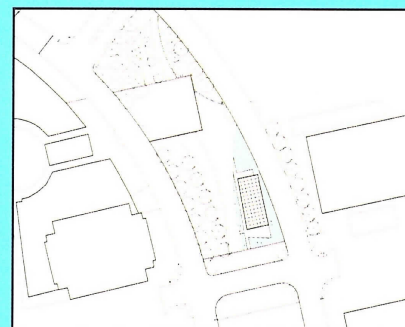
STEPHEN YABLON ARCHITECT

**Above: Boston Harbor Park Pavilion: a glass-and-steel "island pavilion" Below: Site plan: the visitors pavilion occupies the triangular blue slice on the Boston Greenway Section: the freestanding stone form within the pavilion houses restrooms and mechanical systems**

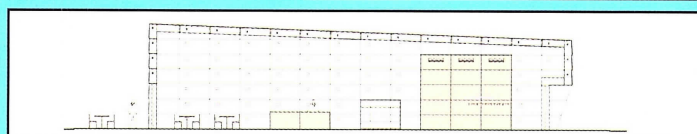
pavilion" composed of a lightweight glass-and-steel structure located on a stone platform and surrounded by a 1/4-inch-deep pool of water. Suspended within the double-glass skin of the roof and walls are double-sided LCD screens displaying information on the Harbor Islands. The textured and fritted glass skin diffuses light, reduces heat gain, and creates a "watery" view of the city.

The building's systems and planning were driven by the underlying Central Artery tunnel, energy efficiency, and the small site. The lightweight structural framing system and slab-on-grade tackle the limited depth available for foundations due to the highway roof slab below. Radiant heating and cooling as well as ductwork are to be located

Stephen Yablon, AIA, is principal of Stephen Yablon Architect, a 10-person firm based in New York City. Yablon was selected first place winner. The SYA design team included Yablon, Jr Gang Chi, and Brian Hare.



STEPHEN YABLON ARCHITECT





# Good Conections

It took great effort to make small but visually key details work for 7 World Trade Center façade  
By Carl Galioto, FAIA

Using detail to express design concepts calls for a thorough understanding of the selected materials and systems, of building performance requirements, of construction sequencing, and of the cost implications of detailing decisions. The art of detailing is completely scalable: designing a kitchen countertop or the curtain wall of a high-rise building requires the same approach.

In designing the new 7 World Trade Center, the Skidmore, Owings & Merrill team sought a building that is simple and unified at both the urban and the human scale. Marking the northern entry to the World Trade Center complex, the building rises from a parallelogram-shaped plan to form a 741-foot-tall crystalline tower with crisp transitions. The building enclosure expresses the form with a matrix of unitized panels whose vertical orientation is relieved by recessed, patterned, and reflective stainless steel spandrel panels.

Unitized curtain walls are typically composed of panels that span one floor height and are anchored at the floor slab and then are joined at the sill at a stack joint where construction tolerances and movements are accommodated. Achieving the desired glass overlap at the spandrel called for resolving two issues: location of the stack joint and thermal performance of a continuous insulated glass unit.

One large, low-iron insulating glass unit per panel could not accommodate movement against the inside face of the glass, as

SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL



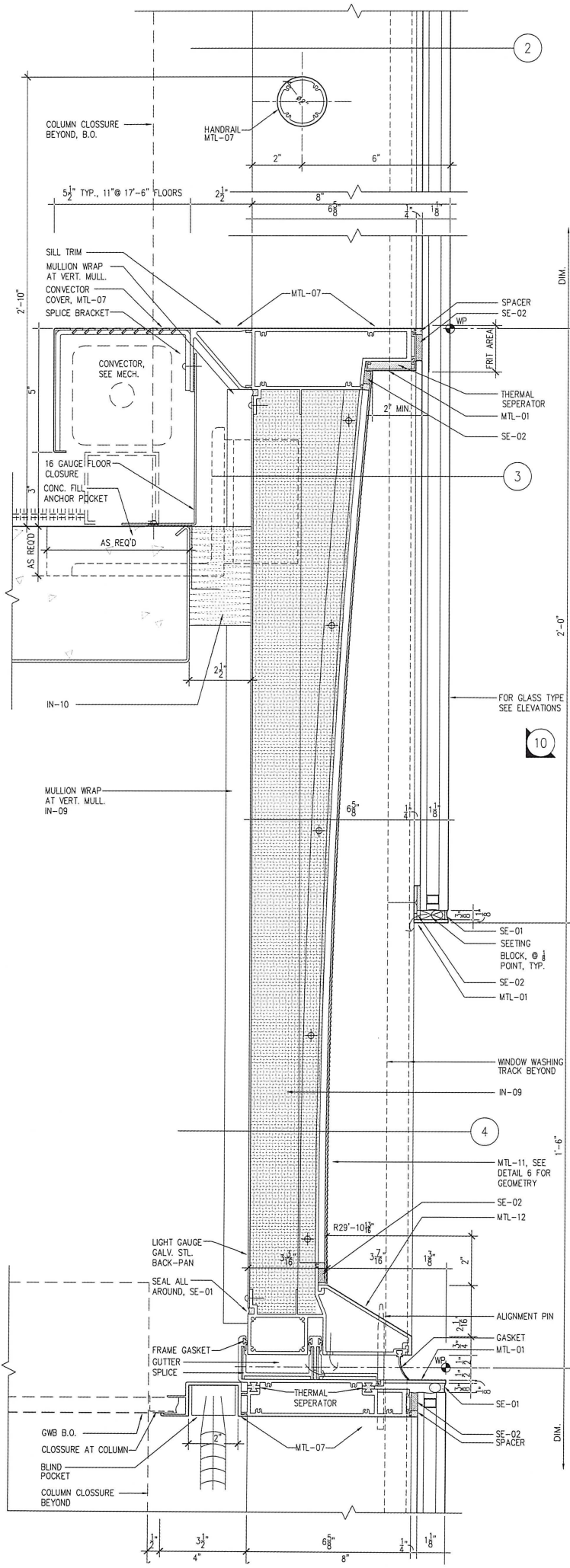
any changes might cause a failure in the primary weather seal. An alternate location for the stack joint was required. By locating the stack joint at the head, we eliminated the problem of differential panel movement across the face of the glass and were able to ensure a complete seal against the interior glass face.

The second major concern was the probability of thermal transfer from the overlapped edge of the glass into the interior space. This detail is not commonly used for just this reason, but we believed that it was both feasible and important visually to make it work. We did a thermal analysis to explore this condition and found that, while the inside face of the glass would indeed be cool in the winter, it would not cause condensation. We also realized that overall heat loss could be mitigated by the mass of insulation at the spandrel panel.

Replacing preconceived notions with a meticulous look into material qualities, the physics of building systems, and alternatives to common construction practices ended up overcoming the two great challenges posed by the design of this enclosure. It also proved how often a great focus of effort is needed on a small but visually critical component of a building.

**Left: Rendering shows how the glass panels extend about halfway down the spandrel, with an air gap in between; the glass is hinged only at the 2-inch frits at the top and bottom of the section. Opposite right: Typical curtain wall section at spandrel**





Component	U-factor		Width		Minimum Int. Temperature	
	[BTU/h.ft <sup>2</sup> .°F]	[W/m <sup>2</sup> .K]	[in]	[mm]	[°F]	[°C]
Sill edge	0.39	2.21	2.5	63.5	37.3	2.9
Sill	1.58	8.96	2.00	51.0		
Spandrel	0.07	0.39	36.5	927		
Ceiling Transom	1.40	7.94	5.63	143		
Ceiling Transom edge	0.38	2.16	2.5	63.5		

In the following, the THERM model is presented graphically in terms of INPUT: model geometry and finite element mesh and OUTPUT: isotherms and temperature distribution.

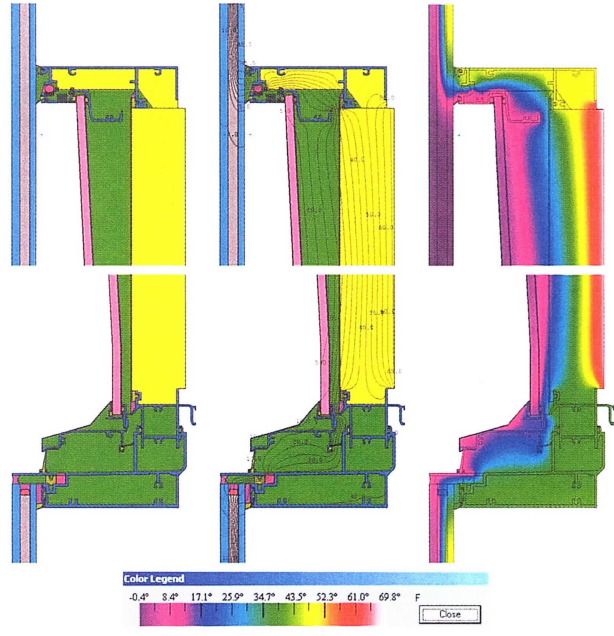


Figure 5 - Transom - Spandrel: Model Geometry, Isotherms and Temperature Distribution  
Exterior 0°F, Interior 70°F.

**Curtainwall temperature distribution analysis at spandrel; far right section illustrates how the insulation prevents the heat from within the building escaping through the glass curtainwall**

Carl Galioto, FAIA, is the Partner-in-Charge of SOM's firm-wide Technical Group of approximately 200 architects. He has worked on projects such as the Freedom Tower, 7 World Trade Center, Times Square Tower, Terminal 4 at JFK International Airport, and restoration of the building enclosures for Lever House and the Cadet Chapel at the United States Air Force Academy.



7 World Trade Center

DAVID SUNDBERG/ESTO



# One for the Road

**Ronnette Riley Architect**  
**designs a small – but necessary**  
**– space for the Big Apple Circus**  
**By Sara Moss**

For Ronnette Riley, FAIA, whose first project was a \$40,000 apartment renovation in Manhattan, small projects are valuable and at times preferable to larger ones, since they often require more creativity to come up with solutions. They also provide variety for an office with many long-term projects. Small projects can also lead to larger commissions, and often present an opportunity for training junior members of the firm.

Designing a new restroom trailer for the Big Apple Circus offered many of these advantages, while presenting design team – led by Riley and project architect (and full-time intern) Andrew Thomas – with several constraints: a small budget, restricted space, and the need to be mobile. But that, argues Riley, is when architecture gets interesting. Her office had \$200,000 to design a trailer 40 feet long, 96 inches wide, and eight and a half feet high. The circus needed a facility

that circus-goers could pass through quickly, as intermissions are brief. It also needed to travel easily from city to city and fit into Big Apple's space at Lincoln Center, as well as parking lots and ground lots up and down the East Coast.

The solution was to create roomy stalls and increase the width for circulation by using pop-out trough sinks that collapse into the trailer for travel. Riley was careful to pay attention to sightlines, obscuring the entry views inside the bathrooms through careful space planning. Entry and exit is through separate doors to further speed passage through the facility.

"They wanted their trailer to be representative of their circus," says Riley, adding that she wished to add cachet to their home base of New York City through use of innovative materials. Sinks and counters are stainless steel, and the floor is blue, sprayed-on polyurethane (coordinating with the circus's red, blue, and yellow palette). Stall doors are red resin in a three-layer sandwich; the third layer has large stars cut out. The doors' slight translucency offers clues as to whether the stall is occupied. (The trailer is also in compliance with New York City's new Restroom Equity bill.)

Bold graphics are superimposed on the metal trailer's exterior; these will change every year with each circus season's theme. A half of a big top is attached to the trailer's roof, linking it visually with the other circus structures; it had to be, and indeed is, designed to be assembled by two employees in one hour. Other technical requirements include flexible plumbing fittings so the pop-out sinks can be locked in place, detachable stairs, and shock-absorbent lights – everything is clamped down when the trailer is on the road.

The Big Apple Circus bathrooms will be ready to roll this fall.

Sara Moss [writes about architecture and design.](#)

ANDREW THOMAS/RONNETTE RILEY ARCHITECT



**Exploded axonometric of  
restroom trailer**



# Small Pond Makes Big Splash

Lindy Roy takes on a small Times Square hotel and a sliver of a building in Chelsea

By Fred Bernstein

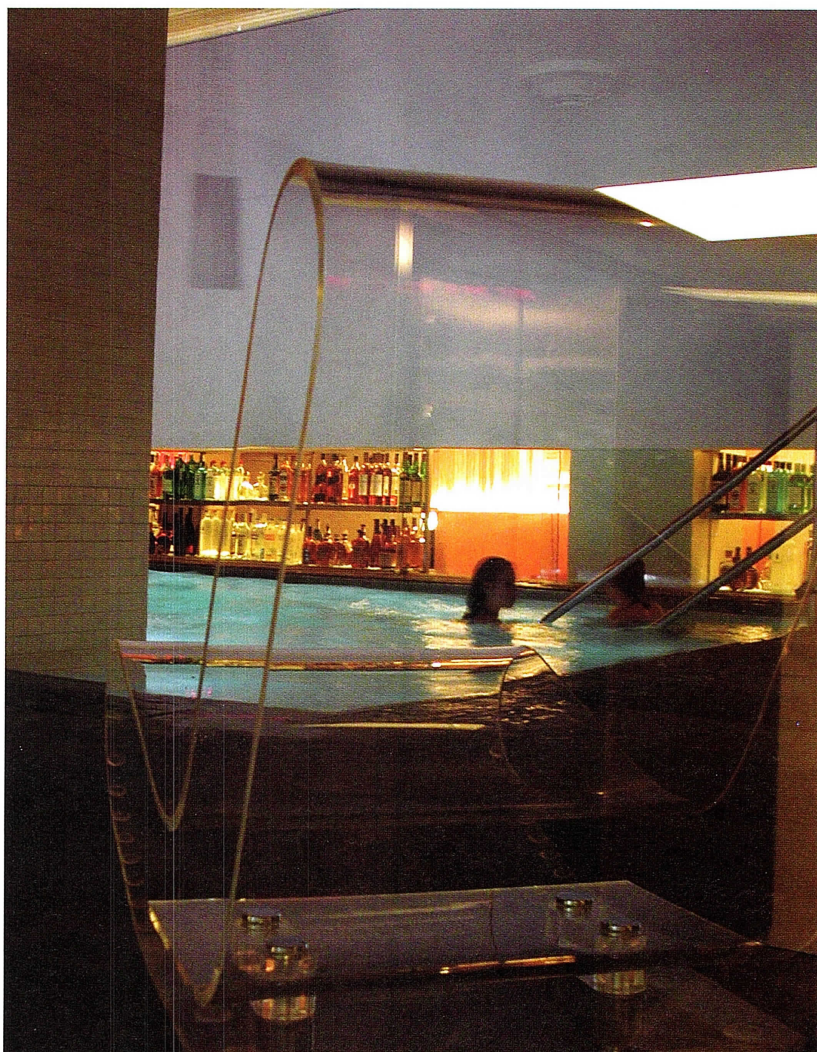
Small Spaces

The pool in the lobby of the Hotel QT, near Times Square, is only 14 feet wide, 21 feet long, and less than four feet deep, but architect Lindy Roy used it to make a big impact. It was Roy's idea to place the pool adjacent to the bar, where it would become the hottest place in town for 20-somethings to get wet in the wee hours. Thanks to Roy's ingenuity – and persistence in the face of value engineering – the pool has become the hotel's selling point. It's also become a selling point for Roy, an architect who has had a large impact despite a small body of work.

Roy has long been a standout among New York's 40-something architects (with Winka Dubbeldam, SHoP, and ARO among her cohorts). Like SHoP, she attracted attention with a summer installation in the courtyard of PS 1. Her piece, constructed for less than \$50,000, included oscillating fans and hammock-like sunbeds. People, she says, "loved the idea that you could lie down in a public space."

Roy is brainy, but what comes across even more strongly is her sense of fun. Her unbuilt projects include a heli-skiing resort, meant for a remote site in Alaska. Heli-skiing is fun, of course, but it's also a serious – that is, dangerous – business. She designed a building with a single long counter that serves at one end as air traffic control, the other end as a bar, to emphasize both aspects. "As you fly in, you see guys with drinks, and other guys with headphones," she says. Who knows if it will ever get built – the client has now enrolled in architecture school, no doubt after seeing how much fun Roy is having.

Her newest project, High Line 519 (a condo building on West 23 Street), proves the point that fun, for Roy, doesn't mean frilly. The site is a 25-foot-wide lot adjacent to the High Line. Given the tight site, the developer was not going to allow her to carve away any salable square footage for mere architectural effect. So Roy found a way to give depth to the façade within a zone that is all of four inches deep. The zone contains a curvy panel of quilted, perforated stainless steel – it serves as a balustrade when the building's sliding glass doors are open, but it's also a signal that, even in oh-so-serious Manhattan, a building can be playful.



KRISTEN RICHARDS

Hotel QT lobby pool and bar



ROY CO.

Rendering of the High Line 519, an 11-story condominium on West 23 Street



# Lessons from a Small Store

Design Laboratories designs a Washington Heights service center for new immigrants

By Thomas D. Sullivan



The bold storefront "Q" is part of Qnect's new corporate branding

Many recent immigrants have an intense desire to stay connected to their former homes. Companies such as Qnect (formerly known as Quisqueyana) provide connection services to help them to stay in touch – international phone service to call relatives and friends, electronic money transfers, shipping packages. When Karen Frome, AIA, and David Ruff of Design Laboratories got the chance to design one small storefront for such a firm, located on West 181 Street, they discovered the complexities under the surface of a seemingly simple project.

Qnect hired Design Laboratories to create a pilot store for its chain. While the space is only 750 square feet, this project could lead to much more work down the road redesigning Qnect's many locations in the U.S. and Madrid. Frome explains that the decision is on hold while Qnect adjusts its business to comply with new anti-terrorism laws regarding money transfers and other requirements.

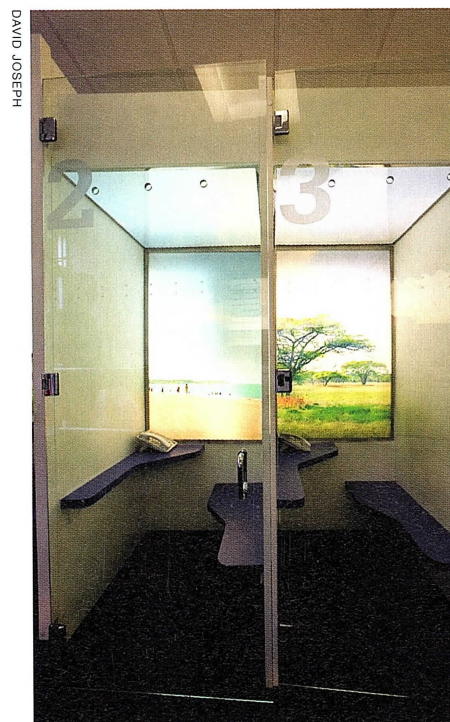
The design needs to support "a very familial atmosphere" for customers who wouldn't necessarily feel at home in an anonymous branch of some vast corporate bank, maintains partner Ruff. So Design Laboratories placed large, backlit photographs of the Dominican Republic (birthplace of many of Qnect's Latin American

cliente) in the space. While it's helpful that the store remind customers of home, Frome explains, there's also "an issue of trust" – people depend on Qnect to deliver sizable sums of money to people far away – so the space "can't feel shifty," or fly-by-night.

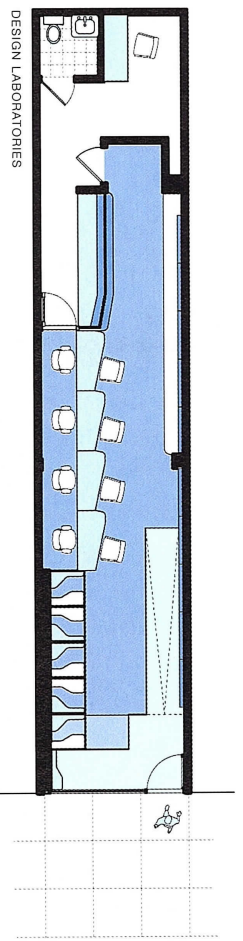
So customers need to feel secure, and the staff must be able to keep an eye on things (unfortunately, some connection service locations have been used as drop-off points by drug dealers). So the doors of the phone booths are transparent glass, creating, in the words of a Design Laboratories press release "privacy in public."

Frome and Ruff designed custom-built furniture to make the most of the narrow space, balancing function and the need to have customers and staff mix comfortably. They also integrated Qnect's new corporate branding into the design, notably the huge "Q" featured on the storefront.

Thomas D. Sullivan, formerly the architecture critic of the *Washington Times*, is a freelance writer and *Oculus* contributing editor.



Transparent phone booth doors create privacy in public



**Architect, Graphics/Signage:**

**Design Laboratories LLC**

**General Contractor: AJS**

**Construction**

**Furniture: Steelcase**

**Carpet: Patcraft Commercial**



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# What's the Big Plan?

Small-scale creations express big design ideas By Anne Rieselbach

From materiality to creative programming and design, it takes enormous talent to carry a concept beyond mere function to an exceptional level architecture using severely modest means. That was the challenge facing entrants to the Architectural League's 2005 New York Designs lecture series. The series "What's the Big Idea?" was created in 2003 to recognize innovative, New York City-built work. This year the focus was on small-scale architectural projects that managed to express big design ideas with humble means.

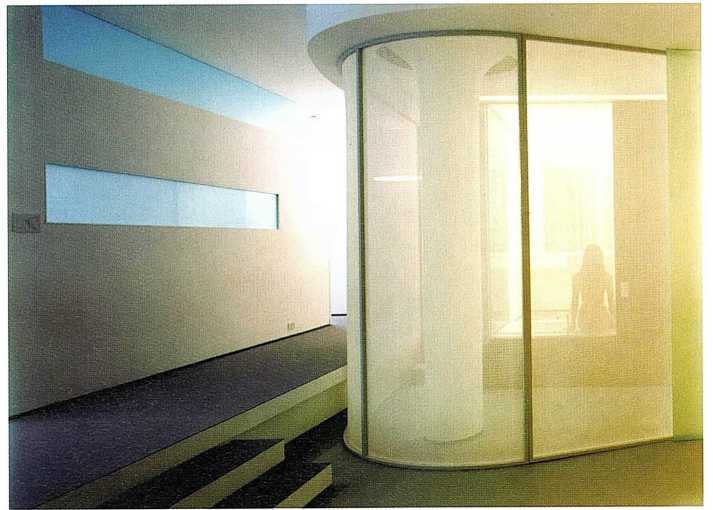
The selected work ranged in scale from a compact self-contained handicapped-accessible washbasin and storage fixture to a small performing arts center. It showed that neither scale nor budget need constrain the potential for singular, expressive design. For several projects, this meant a limited construction palette, typically employing one unique material to express spatial moves and emphasize design details. Flexibility of use was another shared design trait, often producing an expanded program within a minimal space by means of design elements with shared or multiple functions.

Each of these projects has shown how skillful use of a single design idea can imbue even the smallest of projects with a memorable presence.

Anne Rieselbach is program director of the Architectural League.

**What's the Big Idea organizing committee, including of Lise Anne Couture, Asymptote; Kathryn Dean, Dean/Wolf Architects; Susan Rodriguez, FAIA, Polshek Partnership; William S. Ryall, Jr., AIA, Ryall Porter Architects; and Joel Sanders, Joel Sanders Architect, shaped the theme and juried the submissions.**

GREGORY GOODE



**EOA/Elmslie Osler Architect, New York, NY**

## **Gillett/Klinkowstein Residence**

Throughout the loft there are moments of unpredictable experiences, but it is the 80-square-foot bath that best combines the layering of physical materials with the almost ghostly infiltration of light. The scheme creates a heightened sense of intimacy, allowing the bather to both observe and be observed.

CHARLES MASTERS



**kOnyk architecture, Brooklyn, NY**

## **Malin + Goetz**

The new flagship skincare store in Chelsea includes a pure glacial-white Corian box inserted into the 10- by 60-foot raw space of a roofed-over former alleyway between two tall buildings. The highly finished 9- by 16-foot "container" boutique plays against the rough brick shell.

DANA CUPKOVÁ-MYERS



**DCm-STUDIO/Dana Cupková-Myers, Schroon Lake, NY, and artist Martin Myers Sandra Gering Gallery**

The small, 600-square-foot Chelsea gallery is not a generic "white cube." The ceiling planes, which fold onto the columns, and a removable wall appear as an art installation themselves, and light the space on the periphery of the viewer's vision, emphasizing the importance of the walls as a "container for art."





FRANK OUDEMAN

**Leeser Architecture, Brooklyn, NY**

**New York Loft**

The domestic space of a 1,700-square-foot downtown loft is organized into highly compact, rigorously engineered, and open zones for living. Two surfaces form a series of storage cabinets and a sleeping/lounging platform.



URED ARCHITECTURE

**Ured Architecture, New York, NY**

**59E59 Theaters**

The big idea for the small, 11,000-square-foot non-profit theater (housing three theaters) squeezed between two masonry high-rises is a shimmering glass-and-aluminum façade with a grated stairway behind. The glazed theatrical curtainwall creates a vertical public promenade at the street frontage, animated by the movements of theater-goers.



MICHAEL MORAN

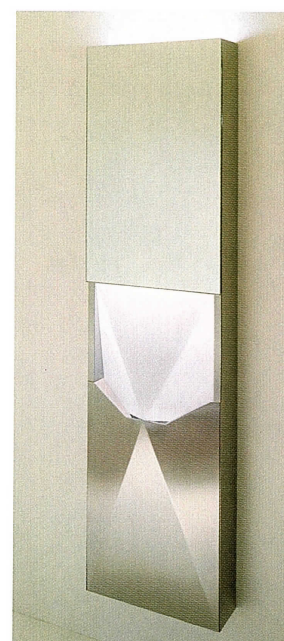
**Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis/LTL, New York, NY**

**Tides Restaurant**

This 20-seat restaurant occupies a tiny, 420-square-foot room whose ceiling is higher than the room is wide. To distract from the potential claustrophobia of the space, the ceiling, consisting of 120,000 bamboo skewers embedded in back-lit acoustical panels, is the dominant feature.



MICHAEL MORAN



MICHAEL MORAN

**Morris Sato Studio, New York, NY**

**j-Lu™**

The j-Lu™ washbasin prototype is designed for a diminutive New York City bathroom. The patented design serves doubly as an accessible lavatory for the disabled, and, in its closed position, as an abstract luminaire. New commercial versions are currently being developed for production with a major international manufacturer.



# Street Smarts

Good design hits the streets when public-private partnerships team up with New York architects for everything from trash cans to carousels

By Richard Staub

CEMUSA



**Grimshaw/Cemusa: Bus Shelter, Madrid, Spain**

New York's streetscape could dramatically change over the next three years as a new street furniture program is put into action in all five boroughs. In September, Cemusa, a Spanish-based company that designs, installs, and maintains street furniture and advertising kiosks around the world, was selected to negotiate a contract to introduce 3,300 bus shelters, 330 news stands, and 20 toilets throughout the city. The New York office of Grimshaw will design the pieces, with all manufacturing done in New York.

Cemusa competed with J.C. Decaux and Van Wagner, also major players in combining street furniture with public advertising programs, for a contract that is expected to bring the City of New York approximately \$1 billion over 20 years. Each of the firms selected a leading New York architectural office to design the structures, with the winner required to have them up and running three years after an agreement is signed.

This is the third attempt by New York City to create a street furniture program – the first two were under the Dinkins and Giuliani administrations – and given Mayor Bloomberg's avowed interest in quality of life and the arts, it seems likely to go ahead. In the meantime, New York architects have produced or are now designing street and park furniture ranging from benches and kiosks to street lights and trash receptacles that are sure to transform New York's street life.

JCDECAUX NORTH AMERICA



**Robert A. M. Stern Architects/JCDecaux North America: Chicago Bus Shelter**



The clients are public or private corporations and not-for-profits such as The Battery Conservancy, Battery Park City Authority, Bryant Park Restoration Corporation, and the 34th Street Partnership that collaborate with public agencies to revitalize parks, neighborhoods, and commercial districts. What they have in common are leaders, many of them women, with a vision of how good design can improve public space – along with private funding.

Of course, good design means different things to different people. The results of various programs and competitions range from Thomas Phifer and Partners' streamlined street light, the winning entry in the CityLights Design Competition sponsored by the NYC Department of



H3 HARDY COLLABORATION ARCHITECTURE



IGNACIO CIOCCCHINO

**Top: H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture/34th Street Partnership: Public Toilet Right: H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture/Cityscapes Institute: Trash Receptacle Above: 34th Street Partnership/Business Improvement District: Information Cart**

Design and Construction, to Robert A. M. Stern Architects' historicist bus shelters and news stands for the streets of Chicago. Whatever the style, they all have to meet stringent testing and requirements prior to approval and production. And they often serve needs beyond pure utility, from reclaiming forsaken parks and streets to providing buildings with an additional perimeter of security.

### Passing the Test

As a combined entity, the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation and the 34th Street Partnership have the most complete program of street and park furniture in the city. The program's first test came in the early

1980s when Bryant Park and the public spaces around New York Public Library at 42nd Street were the territory of the homeless and drug dealers. The private corporation created by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund commissioned a master plan to reclaim the two-block space. The plan included a more open park landscape by the Olin Partnership, public events, food venues, and furniture that would keep drawing the public back to the park. The program was an overwhelming success and became the prototype for later efforts.

According to Daniel Biederman, who heads both the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation and the 34th Street Partnership, "When it came to street furniture, Hugh Hardy, FAIA, got what we were trying to do." Principal of H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture, Hardy designed food kiosks, a hip restaurant, and news stands in a style that melded comfortably with the Beaux Arts landmark. A historicist approach was also key to the success of the 34th Street Partnership Business Improvement District (BID), whose goal was to spruce up that area's image and continue to draw tourists, shoppers, and business people to one of the most well traveled areas of the city. Stretching west from Park Avenue to Tenth Avenue and north from 31st Street to 36th Street, it includes Macy's, the Empire State Building, Madison Square Garden, and the city's main post office.

Biederman established the BID's design direction by testing both modern and historicist prototypes with the public. The historicist versions won, which means Art Deco-inspired forms and detailing can be found in everything from street planting rails and trash receptacles to information kiosks and street lights, which all share the same dark green color.

While he again turned to Hardy for the newsstands and toilet that can be found at Greeley and Harold Squares, Biederman brought the rest of the furniture program in-house because of the variety of pieces needed. He hired Ignacio Ciocchino, an industrial designer, to take the design lead and instituted a Streetscape Group that includes representatives from all of the 34th Street Partnership's departments: design, retail, security, public events, and general oversight. The group meets weekly to brainstorm new ideas for furniture, discuss trends, report back on what works in other cities in both the U. S. and abroad, and overhaul existing pieces that need tweaking. The district has its own maintenance crews who try out all of the designs for efficiency and durability before they go into production.

### Serenity and Security

The park furniture designed by Weisz + Yoes for The Battery fills a different need. The Battery consists of 23 acres of historic parkland and monuments at the southern tip of Manhattan and is separate from Battery Park City. As part of Saratoga Associates' long-term master plan to rejuvenate The Battery, Warrie Price, the president of the Battery Conservancy, commissioned Weisz + Yoes to design bench-



FORMS+SURFACES



es that would define the pathways that meander through The Bosque, a tree-filled portion of the park. Price wanted the benches to merge with the dappled shade, so the designers created seats out of thin, slightly separated slats running front to back that add another patterned layer. The thin black metal backs allow the viewer's eye to see more of the plantings than the bench. Two oval food kiosks, clad in the same pattern of slats, are about to open. And ready for construction is a Tatlin-goes-to-the-marina carousel that features a spiral roof covered with marine forms, translucent dolphins for riding by artist Barbara Broughel, and music and film projections that will offer a deep sea atmosphere.

If Weisz + Yoes's furniture is designed to be one with nature, the bollards and benches designed by Rogers Marvel Architects for Manhattan's Financial District come the closest to combining sculpture, utility, and security. Following 9/11, city officials had quarantined the district from vehicular traffic with a maze of metal stanchions and Jersey barriers that frustrated pedestrian flow. The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation funded a program of security architecture designed by Rogers Marvel that would provide safety while opening the flow of foot traffic.

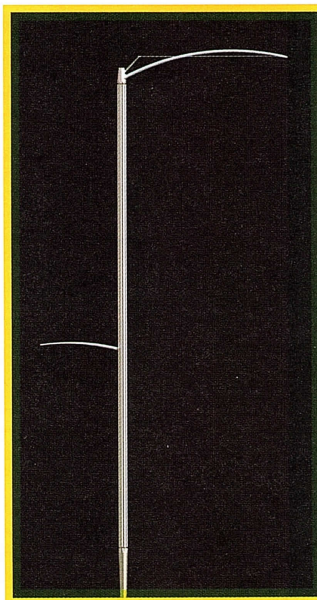
Bringing to mind the late Scott Burton's art furniture, the firm's contemporary "NoGo Barriers" take the opposite tack from H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture. Made of welded plate bronze, these compact blocks seemingly have been twisted or had edges sliced away. According to a Rogers Marvel brochure, "The NoGo is actually one shape, fabricated in two mirrored left and right forms. Multiples of the shapes are arranged and syncopated to maximize pedestrian access while providing the necessary force protection." It's not unusual to see them used as seating or an ad hoc table. The firm has also created a bench using the same NoGo vocabulary.

Under a contract with the Battery Park City Authority, Rogers Marvel designed street furniture for the World Financial Center – bus shelters, trash cans, bollards, and planters – that act as covert terrorist deterrents. For example the bus shelter, which consists of a long glass bench with a "floating" seat and glass canopy, has a paved area in front which gives way should a heavy vehicle barrel over it – a kind of hidden moat. The glass bench was designed with the assistance of James Carpenter Design Associates.

### Letting Technology Lead

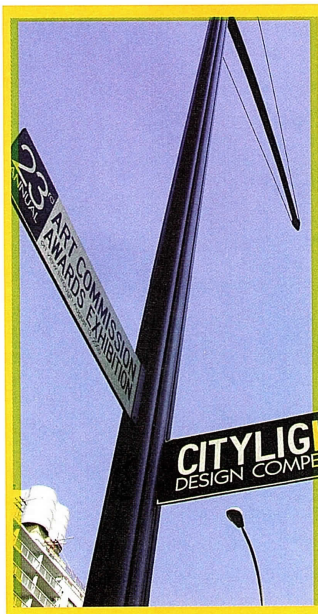
Thomas Phifer and Partners' winning entry in NYC Department of Design and Construction's streetlight

D&B



**Above: Thomas Phifer and Partners: Streetlight: First Prize in CityLights Design Competition for NYC Department of Design and Construction and Department of Transportation Below: 3/4-scale model outside the Center for Architecture**

KRISTEN RICHARDS



competition introduced a new application of LED technology. Says Thomas Phifer, AIA, "Every aspect of our design was a response to some deficit we perceived in the current Cobra Hood design. Instead of a single sodium fixture, we used 35 LEDs, which have a long life and can be individually directed so that the light isn't focused only on the roadway. The fluted column makes it easier to insert signage or attach a street light, and the conduits are easily accessible beneath the base hood." While any design that goes into mass production has to be thoroughly tested, city streetlights have to meet both local and federal standards that cover everything from the distance between fixtures to the direction and strength of the light. Production of the streetlights will begin soon and Phifer expects to see them in use in Lower Manhattan or around Lincoln Center.

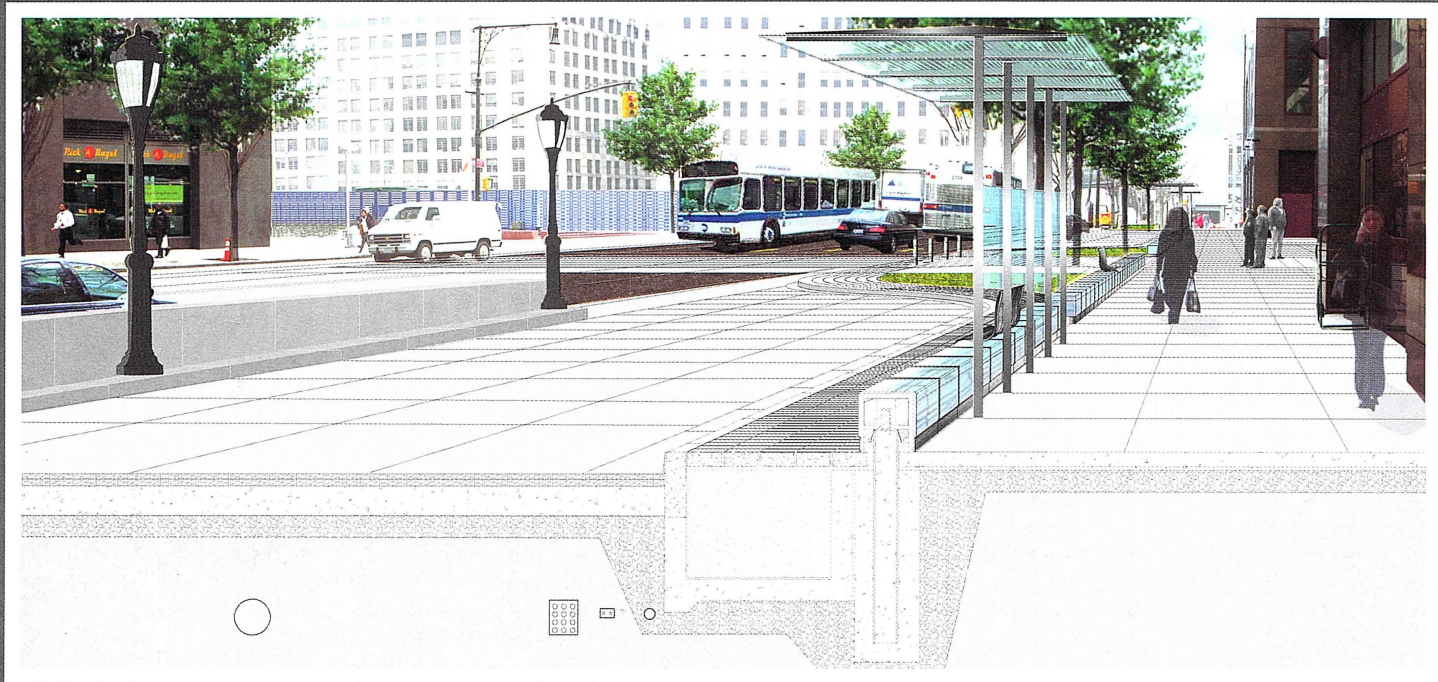
### After-life

In some cases, these designs will see a life beyond the streets of New York. Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, founder of the Central Park Conservancy and founder and chair of Cityscape Institute, together with John Reddick, president of the institute, hired John Fontillas, AIA, of H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture to design new trash receptacles and street lights for the often neglected northern, Harlem end of Central Park. The trash receptacle was a success with both residents and trash collectors and is now available in the Forms+Surfaces product catalog. Modest royalties are part of the deal, and other designers have spoken of similar opportunities that are on the table.

Design approaches to street and park furniture vary. Claire Weisz, AIA, of Weisz + Yoes, points to the great changes in scale between the vastness of the city and the relative smallness of the forms. "I always look at the relationship between landscape and architecture, understanding that these pieces have to hold up against very different forms." Jonathan Marvel, AIA, of Rogers Marvel Architects, approaches outdoor environments as great rooms that require furnishing just as interiors do.

The ongoing challenge with any outdoor furniture program is maintenance. Brenda Levin, formerly of the City Planning Commission and the 2012 Olympics Committee, says, "You're constructing a mini-building on the sidewalk with real visual and physical impact. If there's one scratch or piece of graffiti, it depresses the value of the surrounding environment. Advertisers will stay away from poorly maintained bus shelters because they don't enhance their message."





Top: Rogers Marvel Architects/Battery Park City Authority/James Carpenter Design Associates: World Financial Center Bus Shelter Above: Rogers Marvel Architects/Lower Manhattan Development Corporation: NoGo Barrier

Successful programs, large and small, are showing the effectiveness of furniture design in upgrading and securing every kind of public space – neighborhoods, business districts, plazas, and parks. We'll be watching to see, assuming New York's program for bus shelters, news stands, and toilets moves forward, how much richer our public environment can become.

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



Weisz + Yoes Studio/The Battery Conservancy: Battery Bosque Kiosk



Top: Weisz + Yoes Studio/The Battery Conservancy: Battery Park Carousel Above: Weisz + Yoes Studio/The Battery Conservancy: Battery Bosque Park Bench



# Redesigning the New York Taxi

KEN SMITH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

The Design Trust for Public Space calls on experts to reconsider the taxi: what do we want and how do we get there?

By Chelsea Mauldin

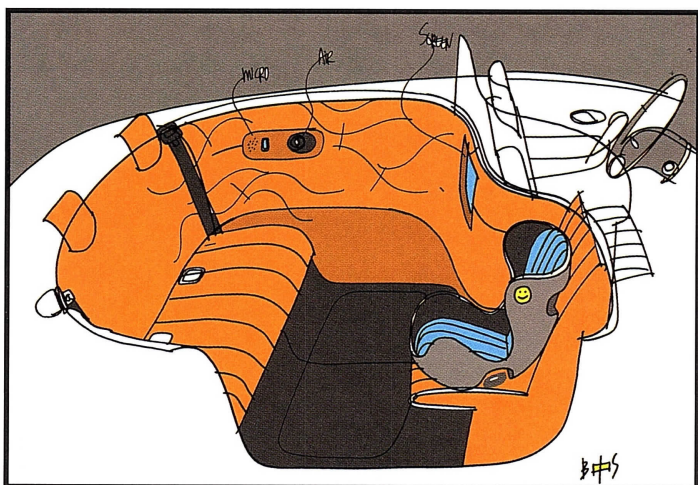




As the New York City taxi approaches its one hundredth birthday in 2007, the question of how to improve the city's notoriously contentious mode of transportation was a challenge recently tossed in the lap of the Design Trust for Public Space. Like all Design Trust programs, "Designing the Taxi" is a collaborative effort, a public/private partnership to improve civic space in New York City.

The Design Trust invited some 60 fleet owners, cab drivers, landscape architects, urban planners, vehicle and industrial designers, graphic artists, medallion holders, and representatives of the Taxi & Limousine Commission and other city agencies to take part in two half-day workshops at Parsons The New School for Design. The aim was to turn out innovative – but feasible – ideas for "Designing the Taxi."

Spearheading the activities were Design Trust Executive Director Deborah Marton; Parsons dean Paul Goldberger; Paul Herzan, president of the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum; and Andrew Salkin, First Deputy Commissioner of the NYC Taxi and Limousine



BIRSEL + SECK

**Birsel + Seck: Re-imagining the cab interior with safety in mind; the front passenger seat is reversed to make room for a fold-down children's car seat**



ANTENNA DESIGN NEW YORK INC.

**Opposite page: Ken Smith Landscape Architect: The Green Taxi proposal imagines compact, fuel-efficient vehicles using dedicated taxi lanes**  
**Above: Antenna Design New York Inc.: A redesigned partition increases visibility while integrating a host of features, from a power outlet and reading light to an information display with real-time map, tip calculator, and more**



TRUCK PRODUCT ARCHITECTURE

**TRUCK Product Architecture: The STRETChfence concept turns a typical park fence into inexpensive and indestructible urban furniture – perfect for taxi drivers' one-hour relief stands**

Commission. Questions on the agenda at the May 2005 event included "How could the cab be more functional?" and "What features of the sidewalk could be altered to improve taxi usage?" – followed by a call to define the ideal taxi of the future.

The "Designing the Taxi" forum also sought to pinpoint ways in which the cab contributed to New Yorkers' urban experience. John Reddick, president of the Cityscape Institute, said, "I do think of the cab as this mythic New York chariot. Visually it's ever present." Added Fred Dust, a designer at IDEO, "The cab is a real icon. We need to recognize that you don't revamp an icon without considering the emotional component."

How could the cab be more functional? What features of the sidewalk could be altered to improve taxi usage?

The result – last June, 17 members of the workshop showed preliminary designs and a range of other proposals. Moderator Kurt Andersen, of WNYC's Studio 360, led three panel discussions. Topics: the taxi in the public realm, improvements to the vehicle itself, and ways to improve cab service. Proposals included the following:

- Redesigns of the rooftop indicator light and interior partition
- Cashless payment
- Cell phone hailing
- Cab-only lanes
- Built-in children's car seats

The Design Trust released the findings this November. These are intended to launch discussions with New York's taxi industry and regulatory agencies with a view to transforming the findings into concrete results.

Chelsea Mauldin is deputy director of the Design Trust for Public Space.

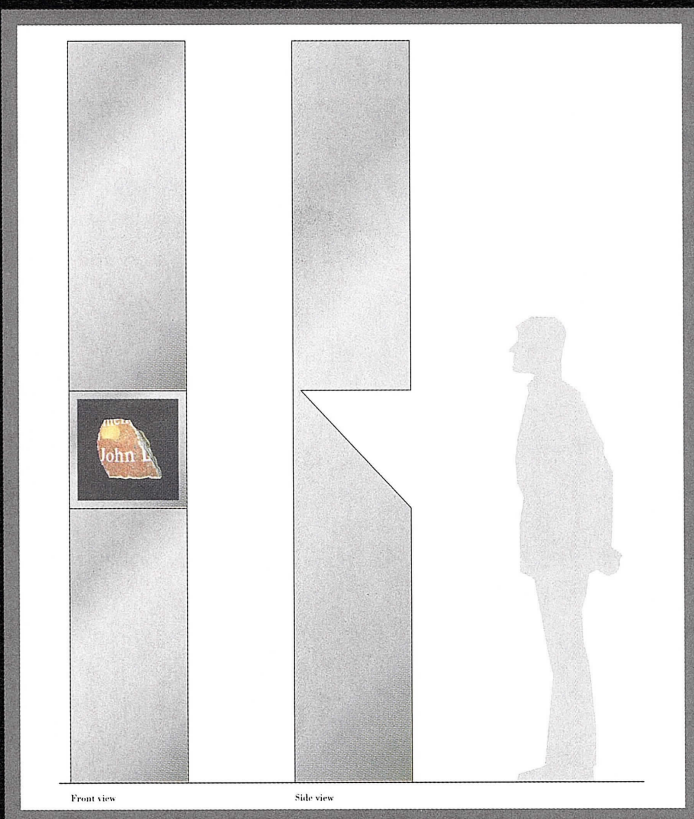


# A Memorial to a Memorial

**Pentagram and Port Authority architects design a small but powerful temporary memorial to the 1993 WTC bombing**

**By Linda G. Miller**

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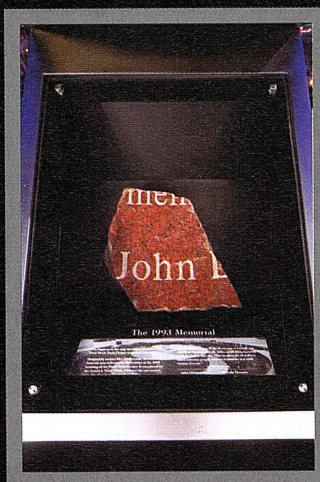


"We approached the memorial as a reliquary – a container to store and display a precious object, a relic," says Hanley, who experienced the 1993 and 2001 attacks firsthand. "The memorial experience occurs within the personal, intimate scale of the pylon set against the backdrop of the site and the historic events that took place there."

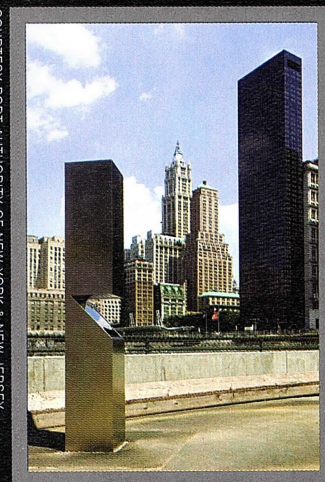
The new memorial rests in a secure and peaceful space among flowers, ceremonial wreaths, and other mementoes in the family viewing area located in the southeast end of the World Trade Center site off Liberty Street; it can only be accessed by families of the victims of the attacks and invited guests. The pylon will serve as a temporary memorial until the completion of "Reflecting Absence," the permanent memorial. But for now, like a sentinel, the pylon looks northwest to where the towers once stood.

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

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COURTESY PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY



**Left: Detail of wedge containing fragment from the original memorial; the inscription bears the victims' names and the history of the original memorial Right: Temporary 1993 World Trade Center Memorial**

## Design Team

**Port Authority of New York & New Jersey:** Donald Fram, AIA (Chief Architect), Jacqueline Hanley, AIA (Senior Architect), Cesar Silva (Project Manager), John Kamocsai (Structural Engineer), Hector Alimario (Electrical Engineer)

**Pentagram:** Michael Gericke (Principal-in-Charge), Don Bilodeau (Designer)

**Domingo Gonzalez Associates:** Domingo Gonzalez (Principal-in-Charge of Design), Anne Cheney (Lighting Designer)

**Fabricator:** Milgo/Bufkin

**Contractor:** Yonkers Contracting

The original memorial to the victims of the February 26, 1993, bombing of the World Trade Center was a granite fountain in the Austin J. Tobin Plaza. The memorial was placed directly above the parking garage where the bomb exploded, taking six lives and injuring more than a thousand. It was commissioned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PA), and designed by sculptor Elyn Zimmerman. After September 11, 2001, all that remained was a jagged piece of stone with the inscription "John D" – a fraction of a name, a fragment of the memorial.

"In some ways," says PA senior architect Jacqueline Hanley, AIA, "you can tell the whole story of the attacks on the World Trade Center with that shard of stone." On February 26, 2005, the 12th anniversary of the bombing, the shard returned to the World Trade Center site.

The victims' families asked the PA to find a way to preserve and display the shard and make it accessible to them. The PA architectural team worked in tandem with Pentagram on the design of a temporary memorial. The firm had previously designed the environmental graphics and wayfinding for the PA's temporary WTC PATH Station, as well as the information panels affixed to the viewing fence around Ground Zero. Pentagram presented several designs of varying shapes and sizes to the PA team. A 9 1/2-foot-high by 1 1/2-foot-square stainless steel pylon – the same proportion as the original Twin Towers – was selected and then approved by the families. In essence, it is a simple, dignified container, with a wedge cut-out housing the stone shard and an inscription plaque.



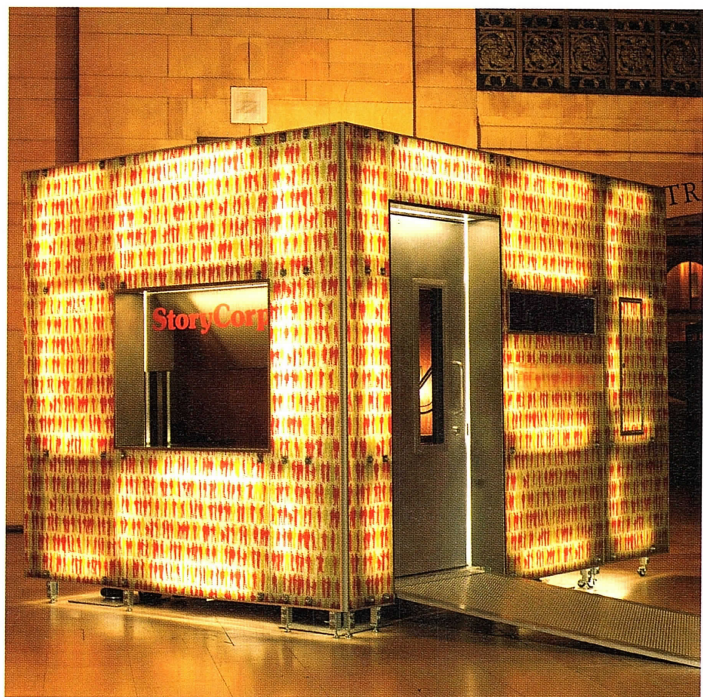
# Small Talk

It takes smart design to persuade busy New Yorkers to climb into StoryCorps' tiny spaces and record their life's stories

By Roger Yee

Remember mother's warning about talking to strangers? Two intriguing miniature buildings, recently erected at New York City's Grand Central Station and the World Trade Center PATH Station, are persuading New Yorkers to come inside, overcome their inhibitions, and do just that. The structures, designed by architects Eric Liftin of MESH Architectures and Michael Shuman of MASdesign, graphic designer David Reinhurt, and interactive media specialist Jake Barton, have been created for StoryCorps, a project conceived by David Isay, award-winning National Public Radio documentary producer, to inspire ordinary Americans to record what they consider to be meaningful moments in their lives as oral histories with family members and friends.

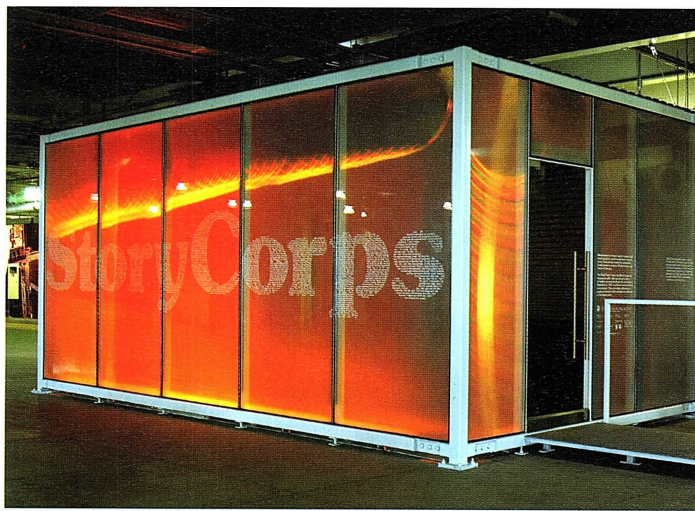
Patterned after the legendary Folklore Project produced for the Works Projects Administration from 1936-1940, StoryCorps invites Americans to sit down and conduct a broadcast-quality, 40-minute oral history interview with a trained facilitator who helps assemble a list of questions and handles all technical aspects of the recording. Participants take home a CD of their interview, and another is archived – with their permission – at the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center.



StoryCorps booth at Grand Central Station

The program for each StoryBooth, a freestanding structure enclosing a soundproof recording booth, required an intricate blend of architecture and technology to serve as the recording booth, public facility for intake and dialogue, interactive display to explain the concept, and recognizable icon for StoryCorps. Not surprisingly, the task of locating each StoryBooth within a transportation hub also

reflected the pressures of urban life, since each host site repeatedly sought assurances that the little structures did not introduce fire, structural, or security hazards. "We approached the design of the StoryBooths as prototypes," recalls Liftin. "That meant devising a kit of parts that would be attractive, compact, structurally sound, inexpensive, easy to assemble, and easy to move."



StoryCorps booth at the World Trade Center PATH Station

The initial result is a glowing, 9x12x10-foot enclosure for Grand Central Station employing a steel frame, wall panels of polycarbonate plastic with honeycomb cores that display colorful, backlit silhouettes of people in crowds, and a floor of aluminum grating, along with lighting and other electrical components. At the World Trade Center site, the overall StoryBooth is larger at 20x20x10 feet, reflecting the need to create a tranquil setting within its unfinished surroundings. This StoryBooth is professional in appearance, sheathing itself in composite panels of polycarbonate sandwiched between glass, and transmitting a low-level glow from red LEDs along the floor. All components were prefabricated for quick assembly on site. Despite their high-tech imagery, the StoryBooths enclose residential-style interiors, featuring a table, chairs, and table lamp in each recording booth. "It's like a space mission," notes Shuman. "You incorporate only what you absolutely need to do the job."

Most of the nation will be reached by two mobile StoryBooths packaged into Airstream trailers. The two installed in Manhattan have caught on with New Yorkers. Could it be that residents of the nation's largest city are naturally drawn to compact but well designed spaces? Or does living in close quarters give everyone stories to tell? StoryCorps is ready to hear from you.

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





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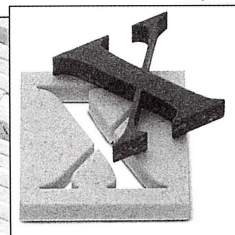
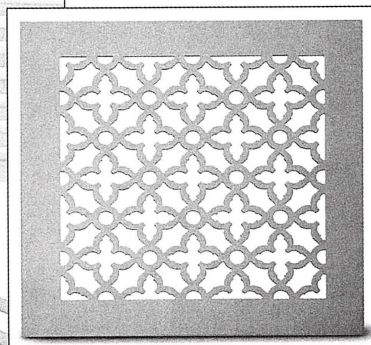
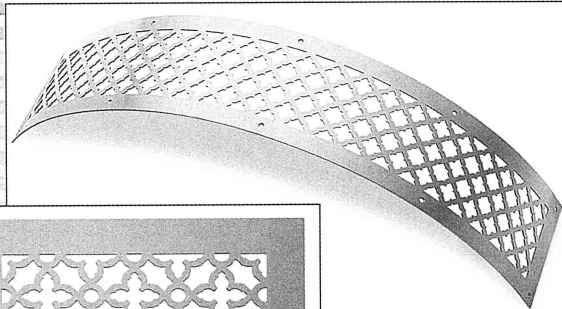
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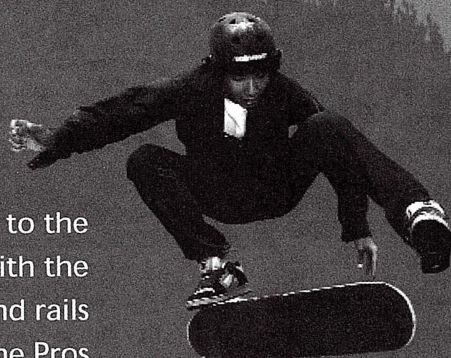
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# Smarts take over as Austin's Bilbao ambitions fizzle

## Outside View

Jeanne Claire van Ryzin  
Austin American-Statesman

Like many other New Economy cities, Austin dreamed big during the high tech boom. Texas's capital city hungered for new architecturally savvy arts facilities that would give the laid-back, liberal college city a more sophisticated edge. Austin had "Bilbao dreams" – or at least the kind of fantasies that fed grandiose projects such as the \$950 million Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Museum once destined for the Lower Manhattan waterfront.

First came plans for a \$63 million Austin Museum of Art by New York's Richard Gluckman, AIA. At 144,000 square feet, the cool, cerebral building on a prime downtown block aimed to be five times

So what can Austin look forward to? It's a tragedy to miss out on art facilities designed by the likes of architects Gluckman and Holl. But rather than end up with less, Austin has emerged with what could be called a smarter type of more.

Working well with what's already there is the essence of the adaptive reuse approach taken by Stan Haas, FAIA, and Michael Guarino of TeamHaas Architects of Austin. Chosen to replace SOM on a new, scaled-back version of the Long Center, TeamHaas's design calls for reusing 45% of the existing structure while recycling much of the original material. A 290-foot steel perimeter support ring will remain – a

reminder of the building's original profile, and of Austin's modern architectural history. And of the 37 million pounds of material removed from the building, more than 80% has been recycled. The final price tag? The two-venue facility will cost a very affordable \$67 million – just \$278 per square foot.

And then this summer, more adaptive reuse good news: Arthouse, a statewide contemporary arts organization based in Austin, selected Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis – clever New York-based masters of the small urban redo – to renovate its historic building.

Austin's Bilbao-scale ambitions have been replaced by a smart reworking of what already exists.



TEAMHAAS ARCHITECTS

**Above: TeamHaas Architects: The new Long Center for the Performing Arts will incorporate the 290-foot steel perimeter support ring of the 1958 Palmer Auditorium Below: Palmer Auditorium today**

larger than the museum's existing digs. Then supporters of Zachary Scott Theatre Center envisioned a \$15 million venue by Steven Holl (also of New York). Next came plans to replace Austin's 1950s modernist civic auditorium with the dazzling \$125 million, 288,000-square-foot Long Center for the Performing Arts designed by Chicago-based Leigh Breslau, AIA, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

The four-venue facility, on a pivotal riverside site with a sweeping view of downtown, would be the architectural proof that Austin – and not its biggest resident, the mighty University of Texas – could house the city's creative class.

But then came the dot-com bust and the post-9/11 economic downturn. Fundraising fizzled to a stop.

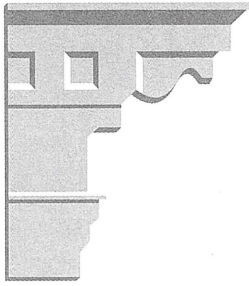
As a result, museum leaders permanently shelved the Gluckman design, Zachary Scott Theatre froze its project indefinitely, and Long Center officials scrambled to radically downsize their project.



TEAMHAAS ARCHITECTS

Jeanne Claire van Ryzin is the arts and architecture critic for the *Austin American-Statesman*. Among other publications, she has written for *Architecture*, *Texas Architect*, *dwel*, *Art Papers*, and the *New York Times*.





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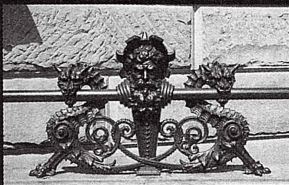
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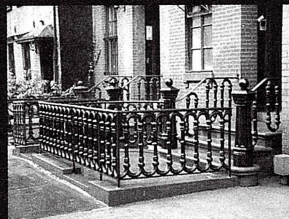
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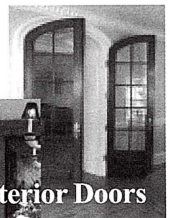
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# 50-Year Watch

**Kneses Tifereth Israel,  
Port Chester, NY,  
by Philip Johnson, 1956  
By Fred Bernstein**

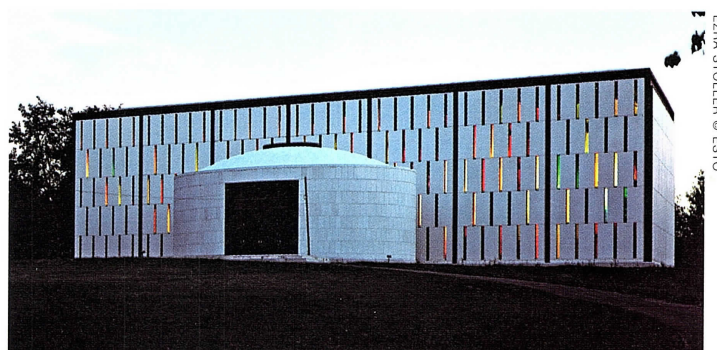
Virtually every obituary for Philip Johnson mentioned that, to atone for his dalliances with Nazism in the 1930s, Johnson designed a synagogue, Kneses Tifereth Israel in Port Chester, New York, for free. Robert Stern, FAIA, in a laudatory essay in *Architectural Record*, wrote that Johnson “gave up his fee because he was so grateful for the support the congregants of that synagogue showed him.”

The real story, however, is a bit more complicated. According to Robert Walker, a third-generation member of the congregation, Johnson designed the synagogue at the suggestion of Albert A. List, an industrialist and influential Jewish philanthropist. Johnson was hungry for commissions, and List was interested in hiring Johnson – but not until the architect eliminated the taint of anti-Semitism. “In order to get any work from Mr. List, Mr. List insisted that Johnson do a synagogue,” Walker says.

Luckily, Johnson had an unbuilt design for a church in Greenwich, and Kneses Tifereth Israel was looking for a building. The synagogue's rabbi at the time, Joseph Speiser, loved Johnson's design, and raised the necessary funds. The building was unveiled in 1956.

The strategy for getting in List's good graces apparently worked. The art museum at Brown University, the Albert and Vera List Art Building, was completed in 1971; its architect was Philip Johnson.

And what of the synagogue? Johnson wrote that he loved the



1  
EZRA STOLLER © ESTO

**Johnson grafted a capsule-shaped vestibule onto the front of the Kneses Tifereth Israel synagogue**

Johnson's colored windows are so narrow that they required no frames – sheets of glass are simply inserted into window surrounds. The effect, as the sun moves through the sky activating colors in succession, is dramatic.

But there's an even more dramatic feature. Overhead, a canopy appears to float over the sanctuary. Light from skylights, peeking over the canopy, makes the real roof disappear. Johnson used a similar effect (clearly derived from John Soane's breakfast room in London) in his guesthouse in New Canaan, but on a less impressive scale.

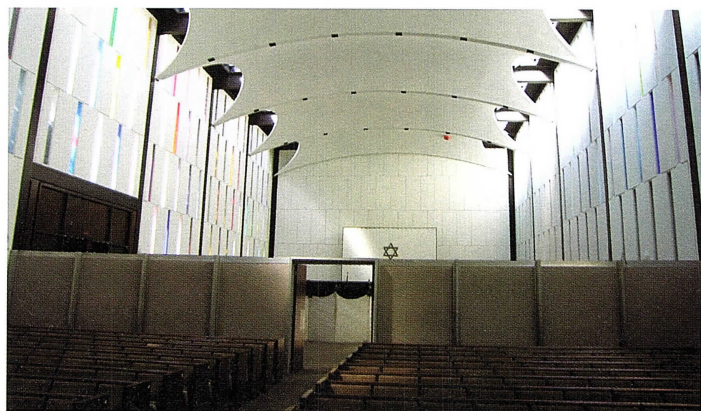
According to Kenneth Leitner, who was the congregation's rabbi until this year, functional problems make appreciating the building's aesthetics difficult. “To be inside is to experience a sense of weightlessness,” Rabbi Leitner wrote in an e-mail. “However, the environmental factors, the heat or cold, the echo and reverberation of any sound from any place in the room,” bring you back to earth. The president of the congregation, David Heiser, says the building is inflexible. Because it is basically one large room (about 50 by 140, and 40 feet high), it is appropriate to the large gatherings on important holidays, and not much else.

According to Walker, Johnson insisted that the building not be altered without his approval, which was rarely forthcoming. Johnson's steadfastness – and the congregation's financial troubles – have ensured that the building looks almost as it did 50 years ago.

Now that Johnson is gone, the congregation is less constrained, and Heiser says that a committee is considering alterations. “We have fantasized about making the building more user-friendly,” he says, adding, “It is a bit of a white elephant.” One possibility is adding a mezzanine with enclosed spaces that could be used for gatherings not requiring the full sanctuary space.

The congregation's desires are understandable. But any proposal that would diminish the power of the soaring interior should be off the table. Whatever Johnson's motives, his architecture, in this case, was pure.

Fred Bernstein, an *Oculus* contributing editor, has written about design for more than 15 years. He also contributes to the *New York Times*, *Metropolitan Home*, and *Blueprint*.



JOHN MORRIS DIXON, FAIA

**The cinderblock walls are punctuated by 286 vertical slits with inserted strips of colored glass; a canopy appears to float over the sanctuary**

challenge of designing a synagogue, because there were few expectations. “The Southern Baptist church, for example, must have a colonial steeple,” he wrote. “The Jewish temple merely has to be beautiful.” The one he designed is beautiful. From the outside, it is little more than a white box. But its plain stone walls are punctuated by 286 vertical slits, in which Johnson inserted strips of colored glass. The corners of the building are exposed I-beams, comparable to those of Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House. Johnson created a Miesian box with walls that recall Le Corbusier's chapel at Ronchamp. The building may be his effort to marry the two masters.



# Small Spaces, Big Hearts

Programs that spotlight the humanitarian face of architecture

By Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, AIA



**Architecture for Humanity New York is developing a series of projects for The Point, the Bronx-based community center**

Many architects find their way into the profession out of a call to service, with compassion directing their talent and vision to ameliorate the impact of the built environment on society. The landscape of humanitarian architecture touches projects, organizations, and initiatives at many scales. It's not just for the UNDP and the Rural Studio anymore.

A logical first leap to a humanitarian architecture is in the notion of "shelter," which the Common Ground Community evocatively brings to bear in a series of residences for the homeless. Concerned as much with architecture as with humanity, the organization redevelops historic properties as affordable housing, like the Times Square Hotel at 43rd Street and Eighth Avenue. With the Architectural League, Common Ground launched an international competition to develop innovative prototypes for transitional housing. Winning entries were exhibited at the Urban Center this year ([www.commonground.org](http://www.commonground.org)).

Architecture for Humanity, the brainchild of one sometime New Yorker, Cameron Sinclair, has impacted the world. "If I hadn't come to New York, Architecture for Humanity would not have started. Growing up I watched the city change both socially and economically. From rioting in Tompkin's Square Park to the gentrification of Manhattan to the Disney-fication of 42nd Street. By the time New York was being declared a 'clean city' I was in architecture school focusing on issues of housing the displaced." Recent endeavors by Architecture for Humanity include

community centers in India, schools and civic buildings in Sri Lanka, and a sports and HIV/AIDS outreach facility in South Africa. Through competitions and donation solicitations, the organization has been able to tackle problems as diverse as mobile hospital units in Africa, post-earthquake preservation of Bam, Iran, and most recently, aid in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina ([www.architectureforhumanity.org](http://www.architectureforhumanity.org)).

Humanitarian work at the scale of schools or communities in New York is paralleled by the city's capacity to act as a megaphone. Good works here tend to be heard around the world. Public Architecture, a not-for-profit public interest architecture group, launched 1% Solution ([www.theonepercent.org](http://www.theonepercent.org)) from the Center for Architecture, challenging the architectural profession "to take a more systematic approach to *pro bono* service." According to Executive Director John Cary, a small contribution has big results. "Our program encourages architecture firms to pledge one percent of their billable hours to the public good through *pro bono* work – a mere 20 hours per person per year that collectively could add up to a total of more than 5,000,000 hours annually."

The Robin Hood Foundation's enthusiasm for "children's" architecture forms the basis of a groundbreaking initiative. Through design investigation by several of New York's architectural luminaries, 31 schools in some of New York's poorest neighborhoods redefine the meaning of a place to learn by hosting state-of-the-art, well-stocked libraries. As the new Director of the Library Initiative, I appreciate





PETER MAUSS/ESTO, COURTESY OF THE ROBIN HOOD FOUNDATION

**Robin Hood library at PS 192 by Gluckman Mayner Architects**

**Participating architects in Robin Hood Foundation's L!brary Initiative** 1100 Architect Bennett Lowry Corporation Deborah Berke Architect Dean Wolf Architects della valle + bernheimer design Gluckman Mayner Architects Alexander Gorlin Architect Helfand Myerberg Guggenheimer Architects Leroy Street Studio Richard H. Lewis Architect Marpillero Pollak Architects Ronnette Riley Architect Rockwell Group Rogers Marvel Architects Tsao & McKown Weiss/Manfredi Architects Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates



MARY HALVORSON, COURTESY OF HESTER STREET COLLABORATIVE

**A musical garden: kinetic wish sculptures and mosaic wishing rings by Hester Street Collaborative and the students of MS 131**

Robin Hood's commitment to bringing excellent design to children who might not otherwise experience it daily. The participating architects worked with graphic designers from Pentagram and a host of artists to develop a unique visual signature for each school. The architects were each given a problem to solve, involving themselves in conversation with each other as well as with the schools and communities. Twenty-five new libraries are scheduled to open in the fall of 2006 ([www.robinhood.org](http://www.robinhood.org)).

Community design and collaboration find another great champion in the Hester Street Collaborative ([www.hesterstreet.org](http://www.hesterstreet.org)), a not-for-profit offshoot of Leroy Street Studio, founded by Marc Turkel, AIA, and Morgan Hare. Its philosophy, "...that you get people involved in making things and they take ownership," inspired community-based design-build projects at M.S. 131, across the street from their office on the Lower East Side. Hester Street's Executive Director Annie Frederick created a design-build curriculum for the students, grades five through eight. The kids spent a year learning design from artists and architects, and then did a built installation: a series of kinetic wish sculptures and mosaic wishing rings adorning the façade of their school. The school has turned into a magnet program for the arts, and the community has developed a sense of its own voice as spoken through its children.



SANJIVE VAIDYA, RA

**La Casita's centerpiece: a portable computer workstation designed for children by Sanjive Vaidya and colleagues**

Sanjive Vaidya, RA, of the Brooklyn firm Vaidya Stoltz Architects, describes a defining experience building a workroom for the children of La Casita, a residential program for homeless women with children. Along with a multidisciplinary group of colleagues, the architect sourced computer donations, gifts from Pepsi, and construction assistance. "We were a small group of volunteers. Our project was to take a rather severe room in the building and turn it into a bright, fun, and tech-savvy place for the children to get their first introduction to computers."

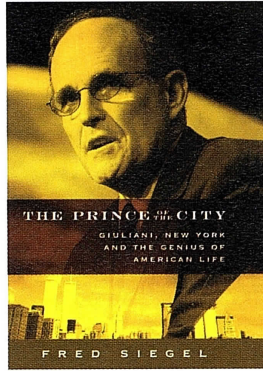
Anooradha Siddiqi, AIA, is a former Assistant Professor at the Wentworth Institute of Technology and is currently Director of L!brary and External Initiatives at the Robin Hood Foundation.



# The Prince Formerly Known as Mayor In Print +

**The Prince of the City: Giuliani, New York, and the Genius of American Life, by Fred Siegel. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005. 408 pages, hardcover. \$26.95**

A comparison between Rudolph Giuliani and Lorenzo the Magnificent, Niccolò Machiavelli's *beau idéal*, starts the preface to Fred Siegel's *The Prince of the City: Giuliani, New York, and the Genius of American Life*: "Giuliani was New York's Prince. He recalled the city to an older set of virtues of work, enterprise, individual obligation, and self-discipline... Even Giuliani's favorite aphorism, 'I'd rather be respected than loved,' is a play on Machiavelli's 'it is better to be feared than loved.'" In his autobiographical *Chronicles*, Bob Dylan notes: "Most of what Machiavelli said made sense, but certain things stick out wrong – like when he offers the wisdom that it's better to be feared than loved, it kind of makes you wonder if Machiavelli was thinking big." *The Prince of the City* describes Mayor Giuliani's notoriously short temper and limited need for sleep, but it certainly does not accuse him of making small plans.



Why should all architects and planners read a book in which architects are mentioned but once? Is it for the title metaphor? Did Giuliani learn everything he needed to know about governance in Machiavelli's *The Prince*, written 500 years ago?

In Siegel's history we read much about mayoral politics, and learn that Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia hated lawyers – "semi-colon boys" – and "loved architects and engineers." The book only tangentially refers to the City's major development projects. It alludes to the debate over the Jets Stadium only to direct criticism towards Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's Yankee Stadium debacle is noted merely in the context of the mayor's working relationship with Council Speaker Peter F. Vallone. It is a failure of omission that the genius loci of the city politic is not described as being based on location. Yet housing policy, at least the wholesale sell-off of in rem properties, is discussed at length. And the book catalogues criticism of the emergency command center built on the 23rd floor of 7 World Trade Center – a location that most architects and engineers found absurd.

Siegel deftly describes Giuliani's Gotham as "a dense and dirty metropolis built on an island of narrow streets and tall buildings," but neglects to mention the two-term mayor's considerable legacy of new courthouses, cultural facilities, ambulance garages, libraries, police stations, and prisons. Nor is there a word about Mayor Giuliani's creation of the NYC Department of Design & Construction, the largest municipal public works agency since the 1930s.

So we read this compelling book for its deft analysis of municipal finance, organizational management, electoral politics, and urban life in an age marked by a resurgence of terrorism. Not for nothing, architectural perspective and military engineering were simultaneously honed during the Italian Renaissance. Yet apart from a digression on the importance of fortresses, there is also but one reference to architects (i.e. the "trouble to the architect" if the foundations are done after the building) in Machiavelli's book.

The photo on the dust cover is of Lower Manhattan, taken before September 11. It reminds us that Mayor Giuliani's legacy is inextricably linked to the buildings of the World Trade Center and the lives lost there. Giuliani's 9/11 leadership looms large over the man whom Siegel dubs "America's Mayor." It will be interesting to read the sequel.

Rick Bell, FAIA

## Ode to Small

**Phone Booths by Famous Architects. Text and renderings by Steve Schaecher. San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2004. \$17.95.**

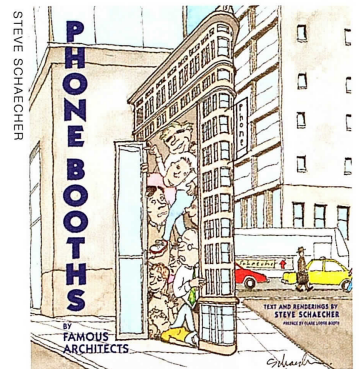
Few spaces, except perhaps a "bed" in one of those Tokyo hotels where guests are shoe-horned into a space the size of a Pullman bed, were smaller and tighter than a phone booth. There

was a time a generation ago when undergraduates on a spree competed to see how many of them could squeeze into a single booth.

It's a different world now. The cell phone has made a virtual phone booth of anywhere. And the enclosed phone booth has given way to the open-air wall-attached payphone fixture, where security and low maintenance supposedly make up for the lack of privacy.

None of this discouraged Indiana-born architect Steve Schaecher from creating a series of 30 annotated tongue-in-cheek cartoons tracing an imaginary series of "phone" booths as architects through history might have conceived them.

For example, he shows a small, delicate pavilion in the style of Palladio, with a tiny pedimented columned portico. He points out that the "grapevines of Italian wineries were found to have vibratory properties that allowed communication à la string and cup." The villas, he argues, were used as the terminals to this pseudo-telephonic system of connected grapevines. "Aside from fruitfly interference," he adds, "the system worked well."





Gothic too had its “phone” booths. Schaecher’s sketch shows a small structure in what looks like Early English style, equipped with a series of varied-sized bells. Used by one person at a time, the bells were reportedly used to convey messages through a medieval version of Morse code. The bad news: “uncontrollable eavesdropping and gradual hatred for continuous bell-ringing led to the destruction of these auditory treasures.”

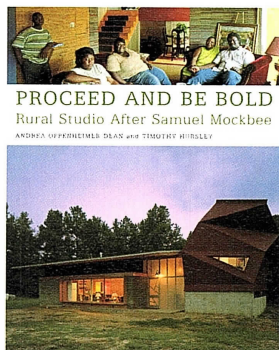
Other architects, ancient and modern, credited with designing obviously phony phone booths, include Calatrava, Hadid, Bernini, Lutyens, Burnham – he of “make no small plans” fame, Wright, Mies, Frei Otto, Jahn, and Robert Stern, along with assorted Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans.

A nostalgic preface (titled “The Silence of the Booths: What We Are Losing by Using Cell Phones”) and attributed to one Clare Loose Booth [sic], laments the passing of these icons of urban texture. They provided room for superheroes to change out of street clothes, shelter from snow and wind, cover for secret agents, loose change for panhandlers, and safe haven from crazy birds in Hitchcock’s film *The Birds*.

Two earlier volumes, *Mobile Homes by Famous Architects* (2002) and *Outhouses by Famous Architects* (2000), by the same author and publisher, mine the same thematic lode.

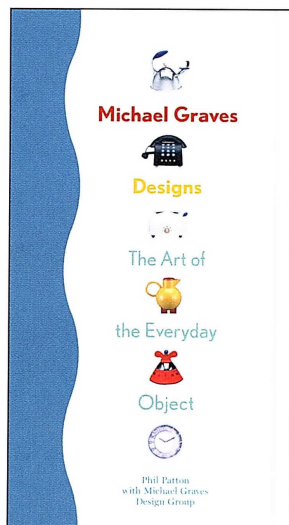
**Proceed and Be Bold: Rural Studio after Samuel Mockbee, by Andrea Oppenheimer Dean and Timothy Hursley. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005. \$30.**

Photographer Hursley included plenty of people, a welcome event since people were at the core of the late Sambo’s muse (he died in 2001 at 58). Dean, an architectural journalist, provides a lucid, sensible complement to the images.



**Michael Graves Designs: The Art of the Everyday Object, by Phil Patton with Michael Graves Design Group. New York: Melcher Media, 2004. \$24.95. Graphics by Pentagram**

“[Graves’s] architecture makes the user’s experience the most important concern – a rarity in the field,” contends the introduction. “More radically, Graves has brought the same generous democratic spirit to household objects as common as forks....” Starting around 1980, he has developed a parallel practice, and this oddly shaped volume (six inches wide by 12 inches tall) gives a lavish, attractively appointed purview of lounge chairs (for Sunar), mantel clocks, teakettles, oil cans, and demitasses (all for Alessi), peppermills



(for Twerigi), and bathroom fixtures (for three German companies – Duravit, Dornbracht, and Hoesch). Graves has also designed packaging and telephones for Target, watches, and Chinese checker games.

At the opposite end of the scale, Graves designed the scaffolding for the Washington Monument, 555 feet of temporary structure the public liked as much as the critics.

All of this comes with an informative, direct commentary that links the individual objects to Graves’s populist outlook.

Reviews (except *The Prince*) by [Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA](#)

**Click Here:** [www.theonepercent.org](http://www.theonepercent.org)

The 1% Solution is a good candidate for the juxtaposition of Small Things/Big Ideas. It is the name of a web site, [www.theonepercent.org](http://www.theonepercent.org), where you can register for potential jobs that pay you nothing at all for the pleasure of designing something really worthwhile. Zero fee being the absolutely “small thing,” the “big idea” is for architects to “formalize their commitment to the public good” through *pro bono* work. Click on this site and the menu “Pledge” to register your firm. Presumably, you will then be able to access resources and receive institutional support otherwise difficult to find. The nature of the aid and how it is obtained is not entirely clear. However, this is probably due to the nascent quality of an effort launched as recently as March 2005 and still gathering pledges.

There are close to 20,000 pledged hours and counting. John Cary, executive director of Public Architecture, secured a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to create the web site. Using the legal and medical professions as models for *pro bono* work and two examples, Community Design Collaborative of Philadelphia and Robin Hood Foundation of NY Library Initiative, 1% Solution suggests that firms, not individuals, donate 20 hours per year, per employee to *pro bono* work. The “Participants” menu raises the profile of architects already involved in *pro bono* work through descriptions provided by the listed firms. The work of Schemata Workshop in Seattle is a good example and raises the ancillary issue of the need for a network of consultants and contractors also willing to work *pro bono*.

At this point if you are a red-state type continue reading. Blue-state types: you are already working *pro bono* for all kinds of projects and should sign up. Lawyers are encouraged by the ABA to donate 2.5% or 50 hours because, if my lawyer is any example, they bill hourly at three times the rate of architectural principals. Alas, pooling firm hours aside, a medium-size firm of 15 people should donate a minimum of 300 hours, or 7.5 weeks of one architect, which bodes at best a renovation of a small community center. Compared to large firms, small and medium-size firms will be at a disadvantage to donate hours and stay profitable. Nevertheless, Cary believes “this is a program that has special appeal for small to midsize firms, like my own.” And no surprise that he “spoke...with two of the largest firms in the country” on the launch date of the site.

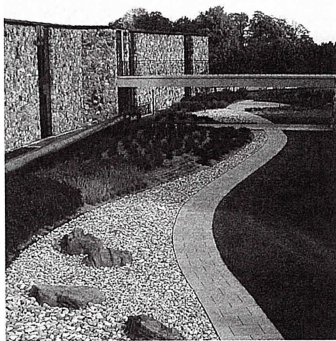
Margaret Rietveld, AIA



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# Supermodels

## Last Words

**Rick Bell, FAIA**

**Executive Director**

**AIA New York Chapter**

**Thus the miniscule, a narrow gate, opens up an entire world... Miniature is one of the refuges of greatness.**

Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space*

**As soon as great size has been created there is often a strenuous attempt to attain smallness within bigness.**

E.F. Schumacher in *Small is Beautiful*

**As usual in life, one size does not fit all.**

Jane Jacobs in *Dark Age Ahead*

There are supermodels, and there are supermodels. The Empire State Building Observatory is on the 86th floor, a thousand feet and a long wait above Fifth Avenue. New Yorkers know, however, that at "The Panorama" at the Queens Museum in Flushing Meadows Park, the Empire State Building is 15 inches tall, part of a 1:1,200 supermodel built by Lester Associates for the New York City Pavilion of the 1964 World's Fair, where it was a popular visitor attraction and planning tool. Fairgoers took an eight-minute ride that simulated views from a helicopter 3,000 to 20,000 feet above the City's 800,000 individual buildings along with its parks and highways. Today, there is a glass walkway highlighting the 1992 Panorama update – unfortunately the most recent.

There are other observatories and city models around the world. In Berlin, one can sit atop the telecommunications tower at Alexanderplatz or visit the city model at the architecture center. In London, the Millennium Wheel gives an unparalleled city view, but one can also see the new 1:1,500 Central London Model at the Building Centre's NLA (New London Architecture) space on Store Street. How does the perspective gained from viewing an actual city or scale model differ from use of satellite photos or computer-generated projections such as those of Michael Kwartler's SIM Center? There are the obvious questions of access, accuracy, completeness, and mutability, but computerized public information exchange is winning out for planning purposes.

Models can be literary: Toblerone triangular chocolate towers in Arundhati Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Lemuel Gulliver visits the metropolis, Mildendo, Swift's satirical take on London's pettiness. From his six-foot height, the gawky interloper looms at the equivalent of 72 feet tall (1:12) over the Lilliputian megapolis. Gulliver, Godzilla, Clifford, and King Kong come to realize that it is not easy living in a small world, after all.

Is that why our society tolerates the demolition of historic structures to make way for out-scale houses? Is it our culture of excess or grade inflation that favors coffee shops where small is called "Tall" and the medium is the massive "Grande?" We know that super-sizing meals leads to indigestion and obesity. And architectural steroids cre-



JULIE DERMANSKY

## Bell beside the Panorama

ate mega-structures that block light and air for others, delineating floor plates that preclude building occupants from seeing the weather or sensing the time of day.

Models and renderings help. Buildings can become smaller than originally planned through analysis of context. For example, the painter and architect Domenikos Theotokopoulos – his friends called him El Greco for short – described in 1609 his View and Plan of Toledo: "I found I had to put the hospital of Don Juan Tavera in the form of a model, because not only did it nearly cover the gate of Visagra, but also its dome rose so that it dominated the town." Similarly, the CityLights competition-winning street lamp by Tom Phifer is a maquette, a model three-quarters the height of the new sculptural and contemporary design. With the LED luminaires 36, or is it 48 feet high, one still has a sense that the scale will be appropriate.

"Three-quarter scale" is virtually patented by Disney's Imaginaires, with whole neighborhoods built at 75% traditional size. Do children of all ages feel more comfortable moving through landscapes in which they feel larger than life? Such evocative and nostalgic buildings are but a reflection of our society, and should appear with the warning "objects in the mirror are closer than they appear."

"The first thing I've got to do," said Alice to herself, during her Adventures in Wonderland, "is to grow to my right size again." Buildings and neighborhoods should be right-sized, whether through design guidelines, zoning and code restrictions, or the common-sense dictates of the marketplace, logic, and proportion. Up-zoning makes sense where transportation infrastructure provides mobility and accessibility. This is the case in most places in New York City, but not everywhere. Which neighborhoods need up-zoning? Go ask Jane Jacobs, I think she'll know.



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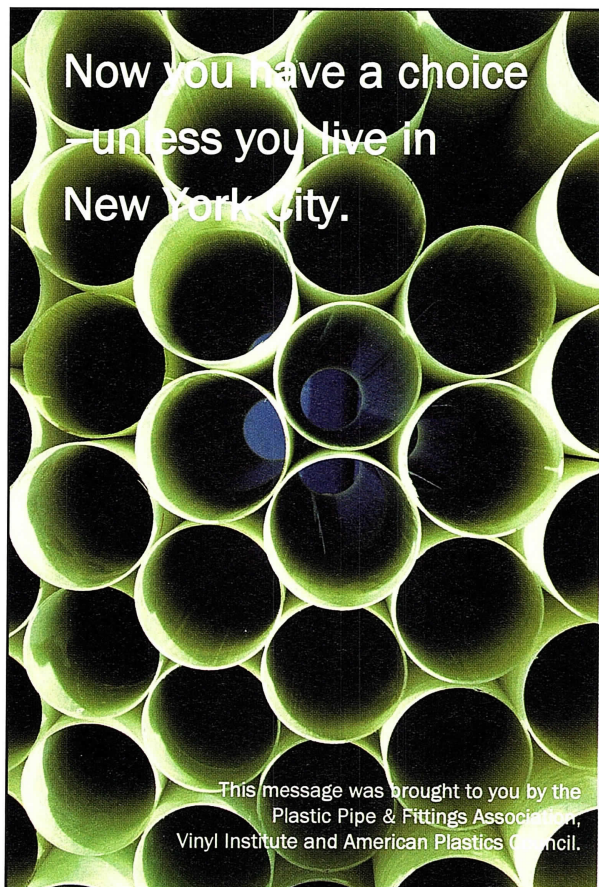


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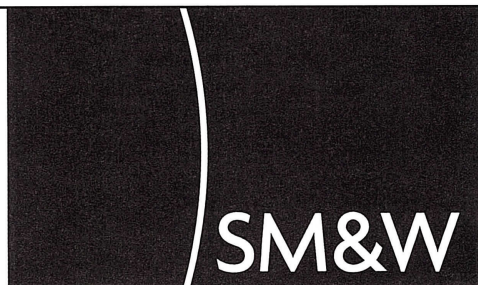
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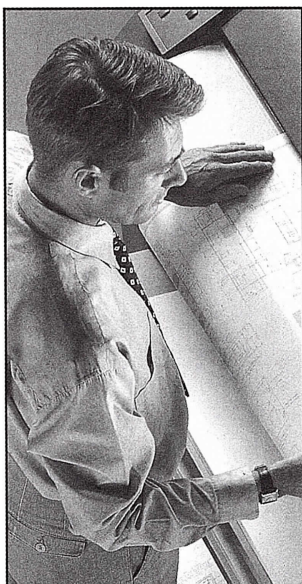
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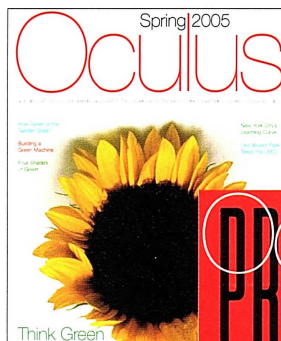
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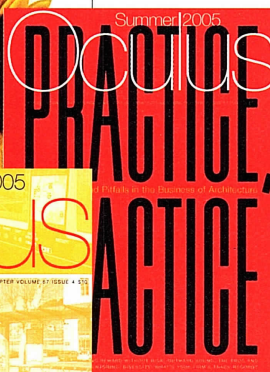
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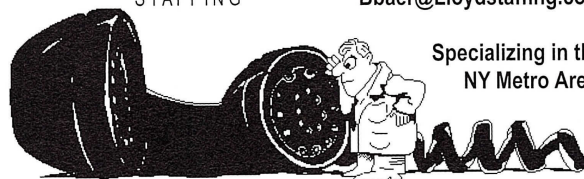
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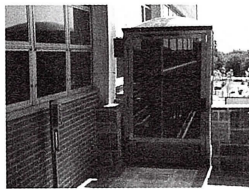
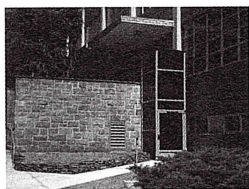
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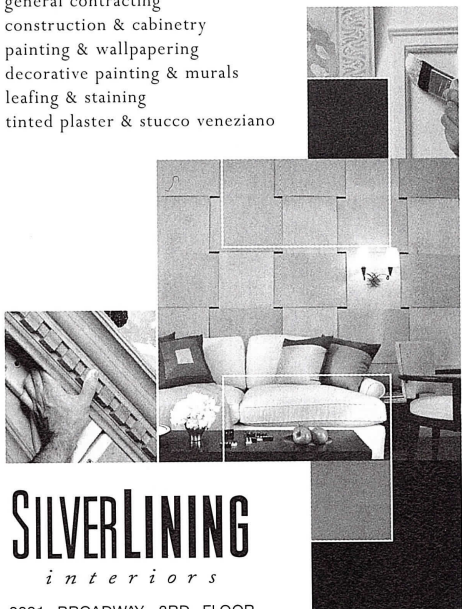
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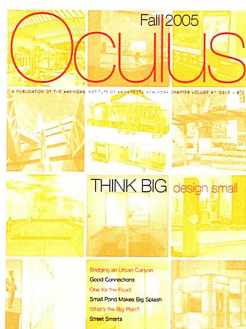


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