

Winter 2005/06

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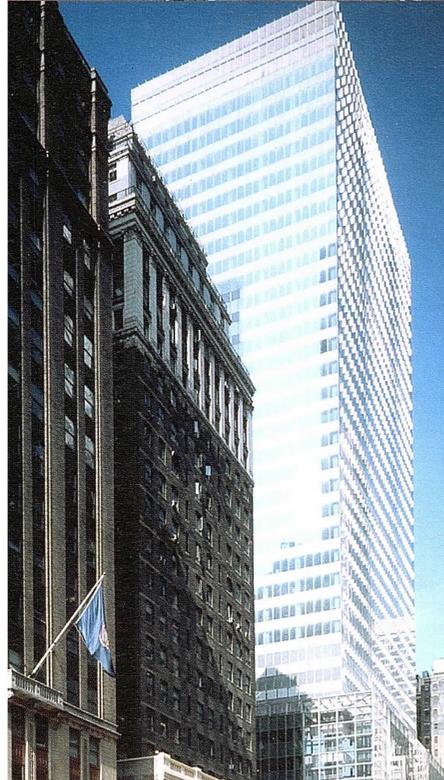
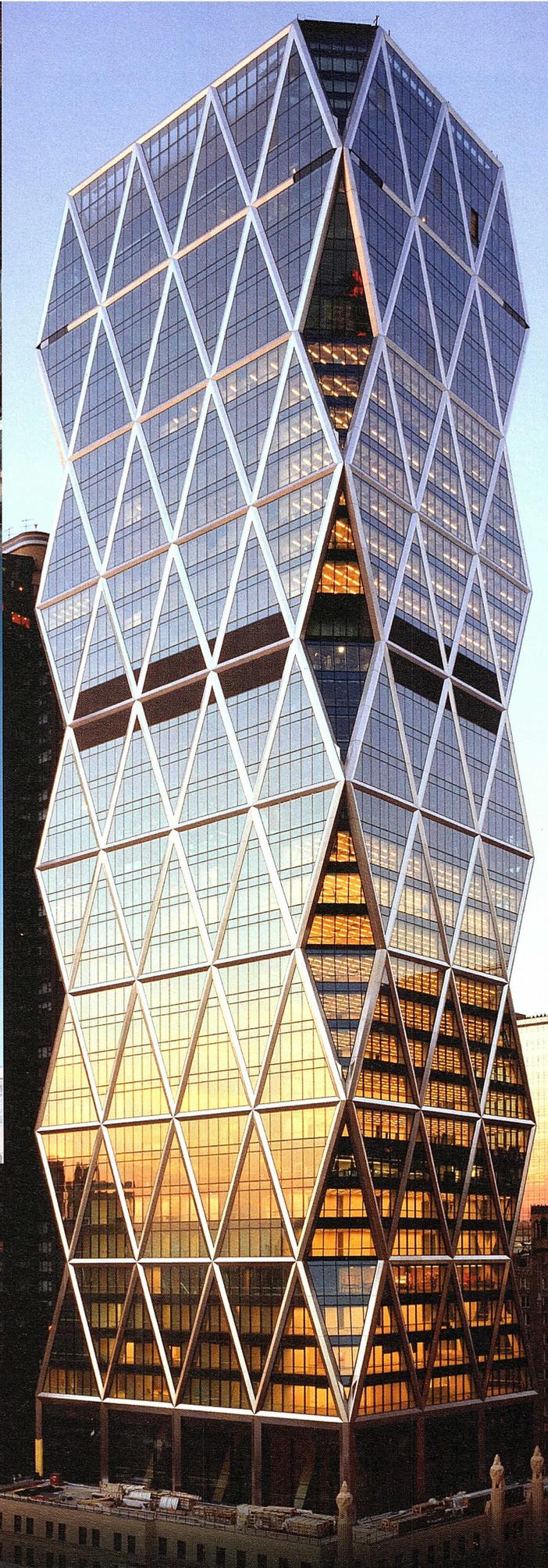
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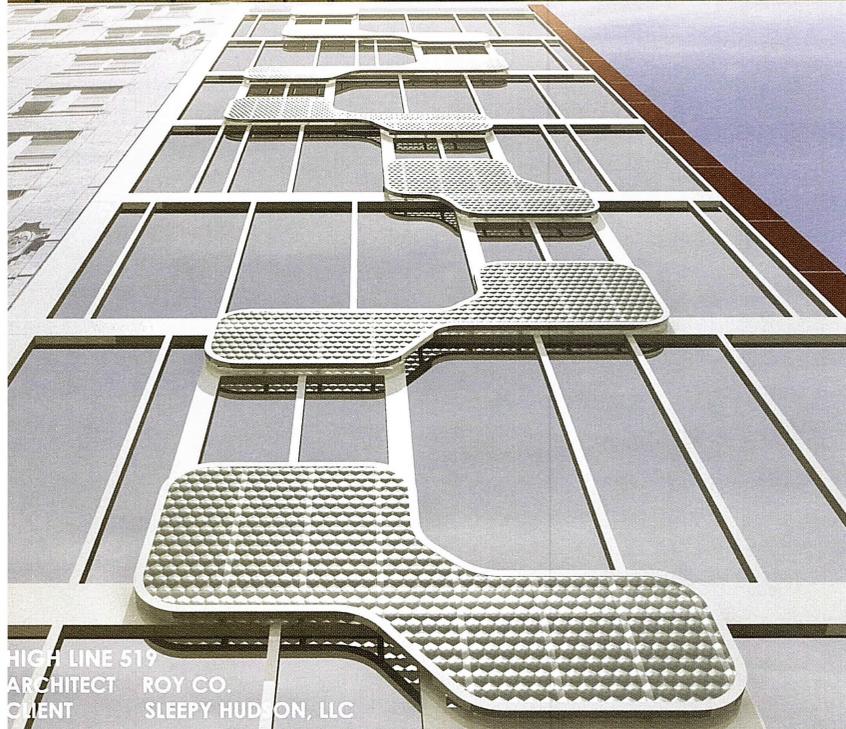
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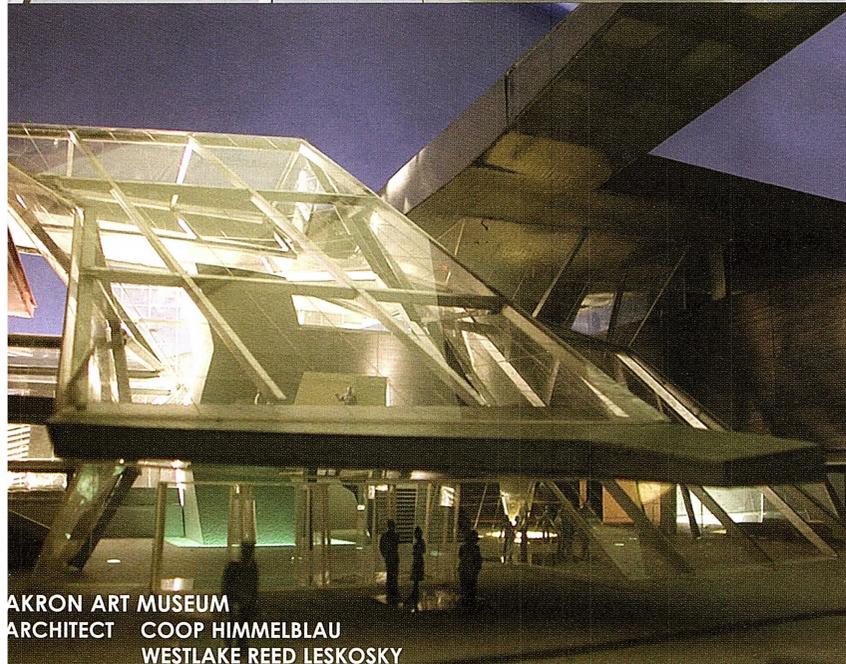
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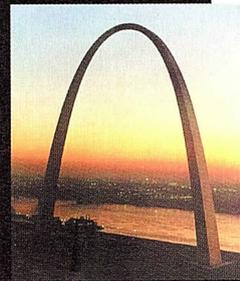


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Moss, Richard Staub, Thomas D.
Sullivan, Roger Yee

Copy Editor
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Art Director
James Colgan

Design Consultant
Pentagram, New York
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Publisher
Dawson Publications, Inc.

eOCULUS
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Jessica Sheridan, Assoc. AIA
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and Operations
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ppuchalski@aiany.org

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Special Events
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kjaeger@aiany.org

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info@aiany.org

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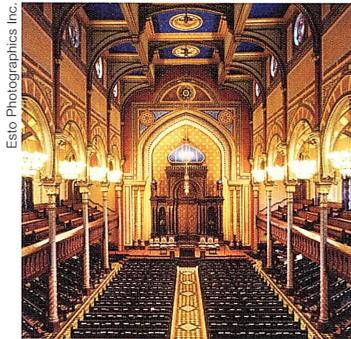
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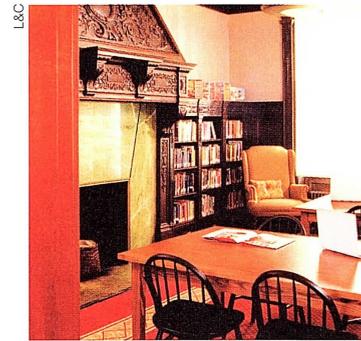
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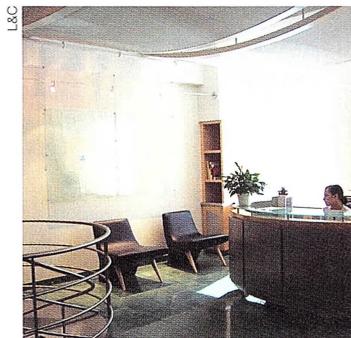
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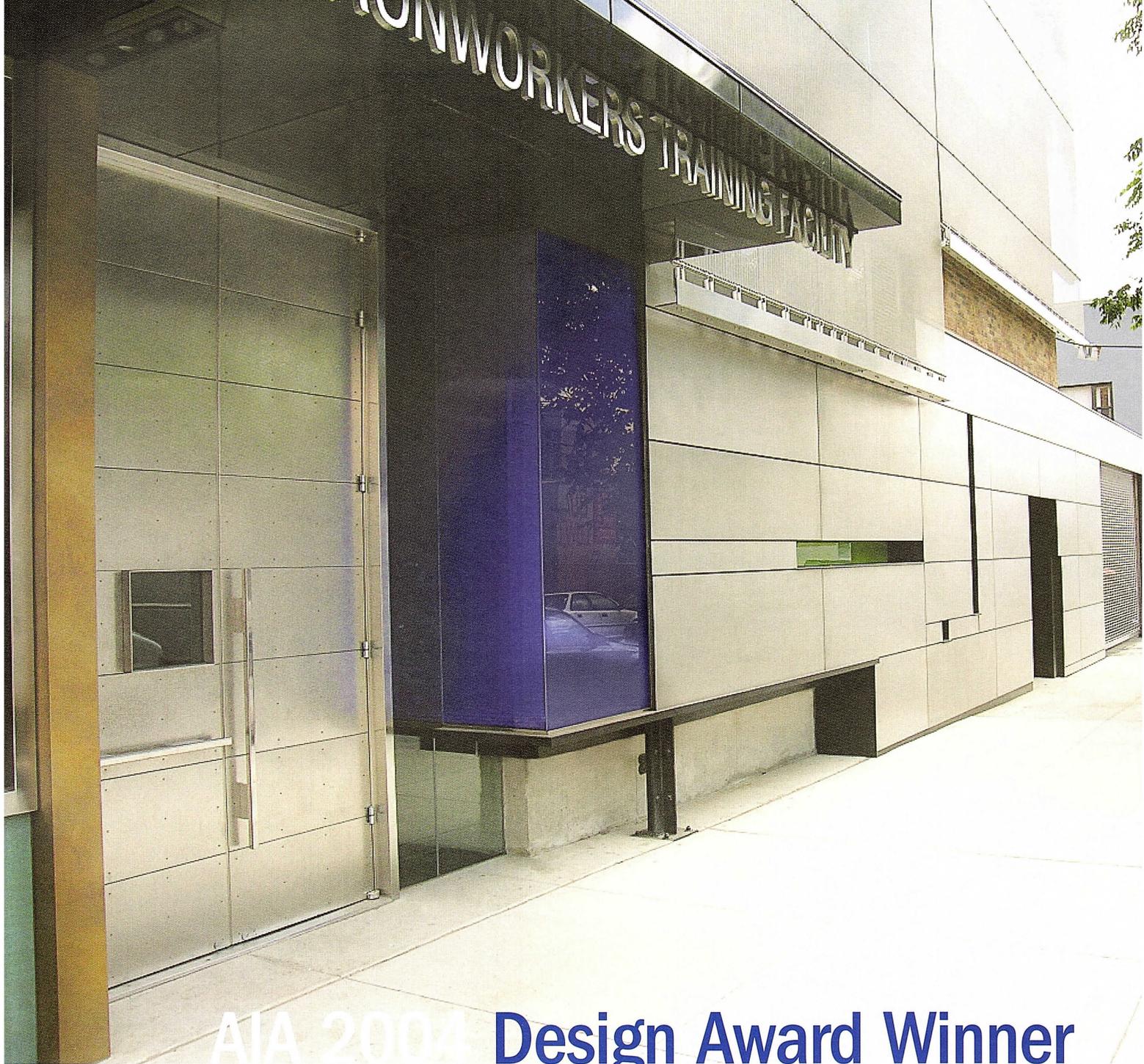
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AIA 2004 Design Award Winner



Architect: Daniel Goldner Architects
Photo: ©2004 David Joseph

The new, state-of-the-art **Ironworker's Training Facility** in Long Island City, NY is a big winner – not only as a showcase for the talent and skill of the union members who helped build it, but for its architect, Daniel Goldner Architects, whose work recently won the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter 2004 Design Award.

While the facility's **form** has been recognized as achieving the highest aspirations of the design profession, perhaps its **function** – as a place where ironworkers develop the skills to help realize those design aspirations – is its greatest achievement.

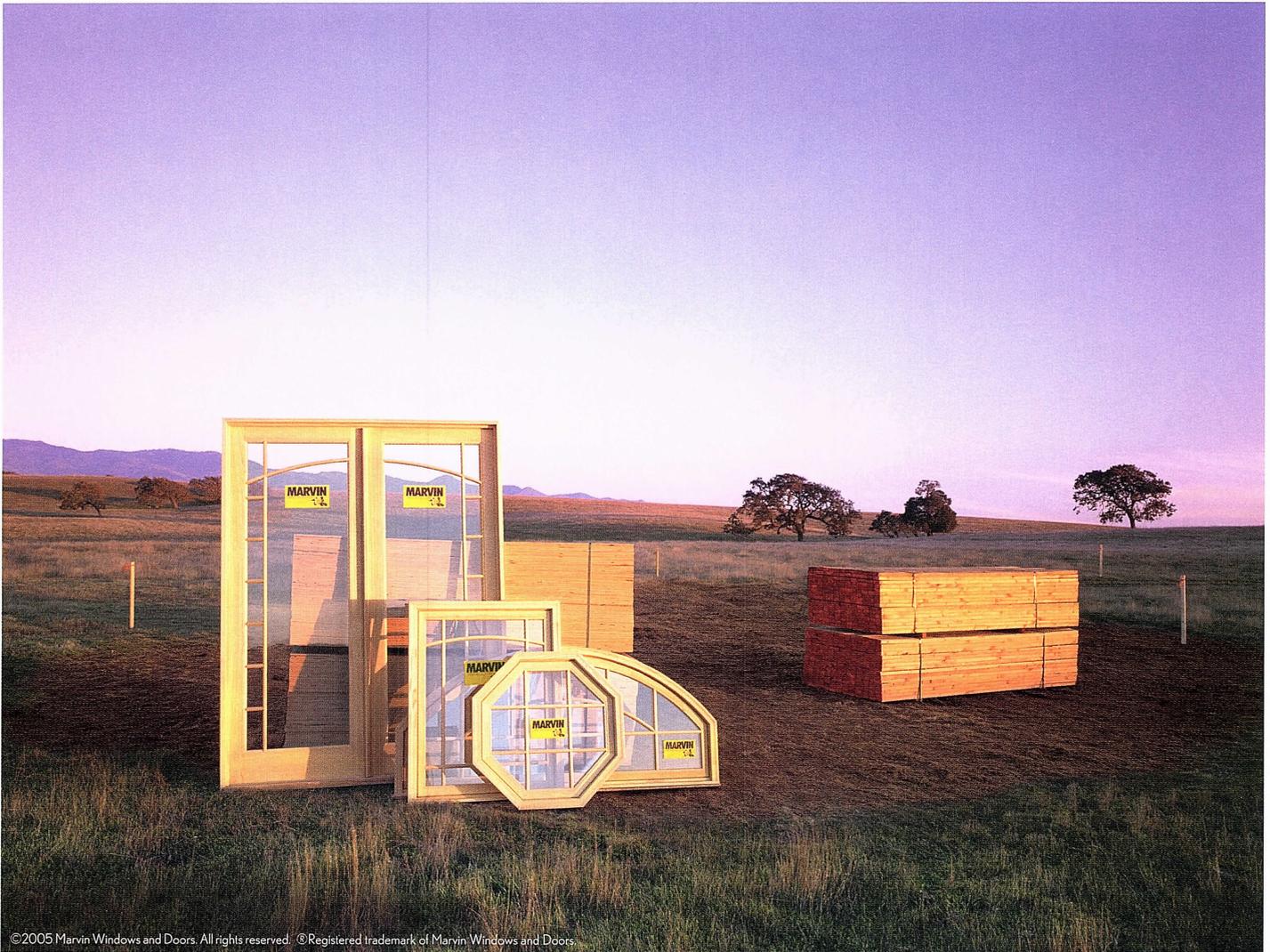
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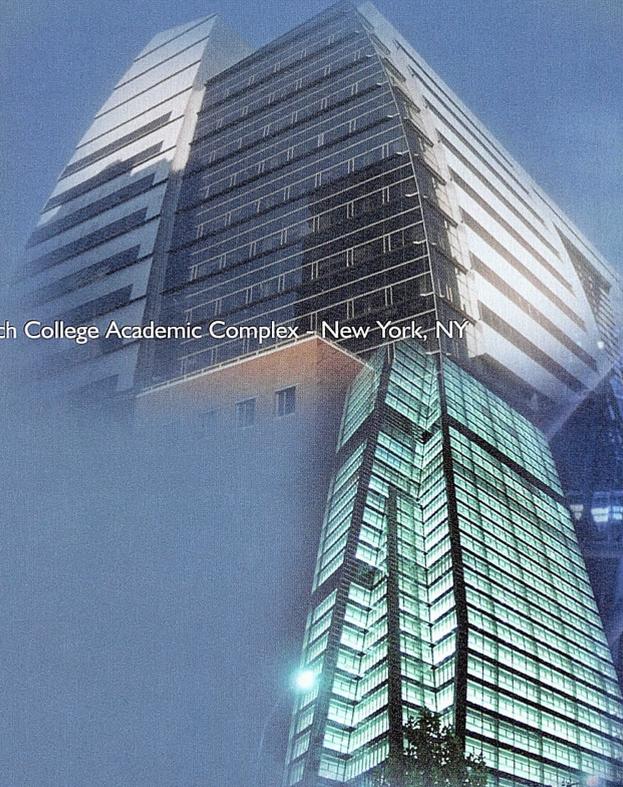
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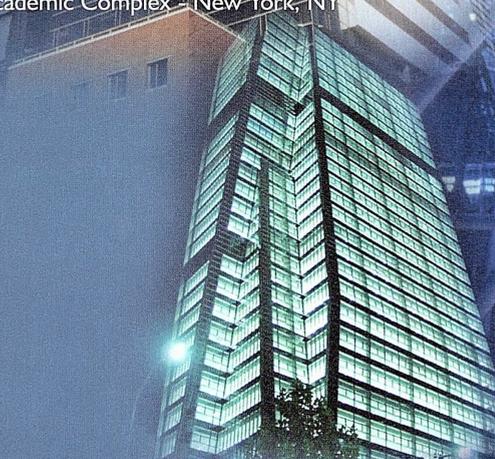
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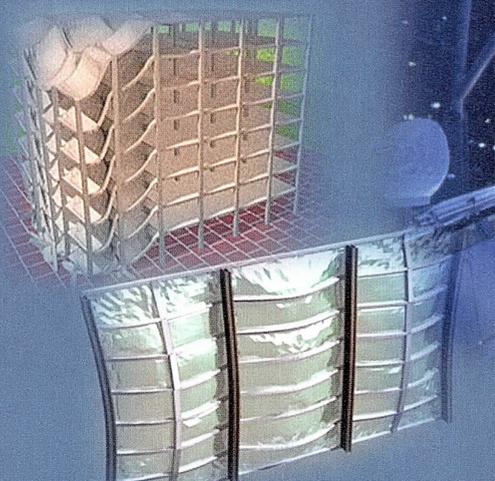
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STRENGTH BY DESIGN

It's a PR World: The Power of Press and Publication

First Words
Letter from Two Presidents

The journalist Alex Marshall once stated, "If you want to be noticed, you need to be in the *New York Times* or the *New Yorker*." This is because these publications convey "value and endorsement" to the general public. In this era of instant communications, one might ask if this statement is still true, especially for young professionals, who may be more likely to get their information about the world from the Comedy Channel's "Daily Show," and their information about the design professions from blogs such as gutter.curbed.com, missrepresentation.com, or citycomfortsblog.com.

The AIA New York Chapter's *Oculus* is aptly named—it is an aperture that shines light on a particular spot. We reach thousands of architects and design professionals on topical issues of the built environment and the profession. In this publication, the profession talks to itself, but that's not enough.

How does an architect get noticed today? What are we trying to achieve through publication and whom are we trying to reach? Architects typically assume that if they are in the press, they are getting publicity (presumably good), but unless it's their own monograph, it comes with a value judgment by a reporter or critic. Every reporter comes with his or her own perspective of what's newsworthy about a project. Public officials know it is not possible to control the message and therefore look at any issue as if it might appear as the next day's *NY Post* headline. Similarly, design professionals have begun to fear what might be said by the "guttersniper."

Once you get noticed, there must be substance to back it up. Are most of the writers educated in what they are reviewing? The challenge of explaining and critiquing the built environment is its multi-dimensional and functional nature. In this age of the nanosecond of attention, the message about a project needs to be clear and compelling to capture the audience. The 2005 Housing Awards jury admitted to thinking there were not many entries deserving of awards until they looked deeper at the social and economic goals to be achieved, combined with the functional and aesthetic value. The result was that the jury gave nine awards and five citations.

As we enter 2006, a year that the AIA New York Chapter has themed "Architecture as Public Policy," how do we actively engage the public in the debate about the built environment through what they read? It should be substance – over surface and style – that influences decision makers and policy makers in the civic realm and generates enthusiasm and pride in our citizens.

This year, we will look to strengthen the voice of the profession on issues where the design of the public realm is at stake. No matter what medium one chooses to convey the message, it is through this interaction with the public that we must boldly lift our voices to proclaim, "Design does matter! Design is public policy."

Susan Chin, FAIA, and Mark E. Strauss, FAIA



KRISTEN RICHARDS

Chin passes the presidential hat to Strauss

I feel so blessed that I had a chance to experience the unbounded energy and enthusiasm that Susan Chin, FAIA, brought to the AIA New York Chapter in 2005, as reflected by her theme: "Architecture: Bringing Cultures Together." Fortunately, I was able to bask in the success of programs such as "Mexico Now," "City Art," and the Hombroich exhibition. As 2006 President, I look forward to continuing some of the programs that she began, such as the New Practices Roundtable, and initiating a new series of quarterly programs that will examine "Architecture as Public Policy." I am also pleased that we have created the new board position of Immediate Past President, so that Susan will continue to serve as both a resource and a friend on the board. We will not let her get away so easily.

Mark Strauss, FAIA

This has been another extraordinary year for the Chapter at the Center, which continues to be a hive of activity. As the first public architect to serve as President, I am pleased that Mark Strauss, FAIA, as 2006 President, plans to focus the Chapter on the public realm and seek ways to connect architects with civic issues, to work with public officials on planning, architecture, infrastructure, and the built environment, and to engage New Yorkers in the debate. Working with Mark has filled this past year with enthusiasm, good humor, and good ideas. I wish him success and I look forward to a rich and inspiring year!

Susan Chin, FAIA

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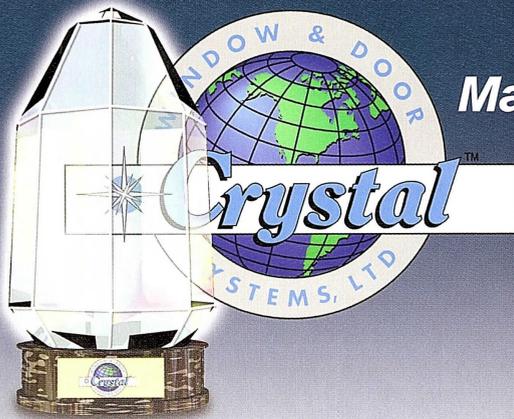
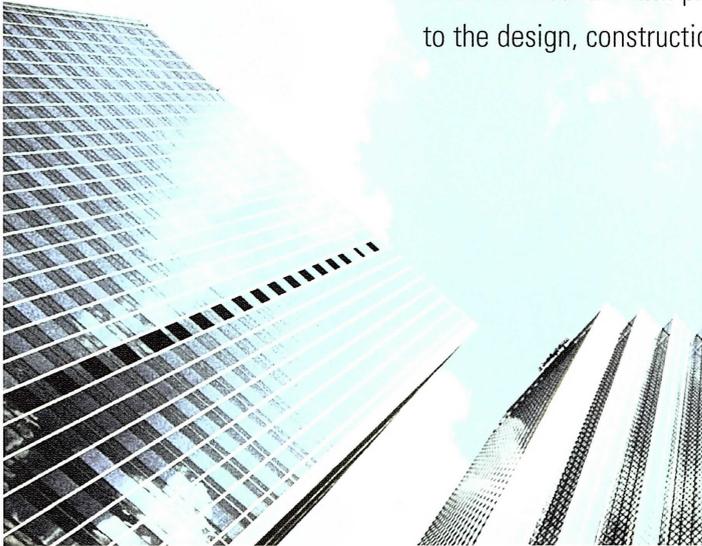
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Is image everything?

A Word from the Editor

We are an image-based society. That's nothing new, especially when it comes to architecture. What has changed? The Internet has given architecture a global audience like it has never had before. The field has become something of an international fashion sport: "Look-at-me-I'm-the-tallest-skinniest-shiniest-greenest!" And let's not forget the now-ubiquitous term "starchitect."

Where does that leave the small or young firms whose buildings may not be an "-est" of anything, but are notable for any number of other not-so-sexy reasons? And what of mid-size and larger firms which are not or have never been personality-based; many suffer from the same kind of attention deficit. Would that *Oculus* had enough pages to include every architect and project that merits notice. The features in this issue explore the questions of – and offer some answers to – the who-what-why-where-how architects get attention in this media-saturated (and media-savvy) world.

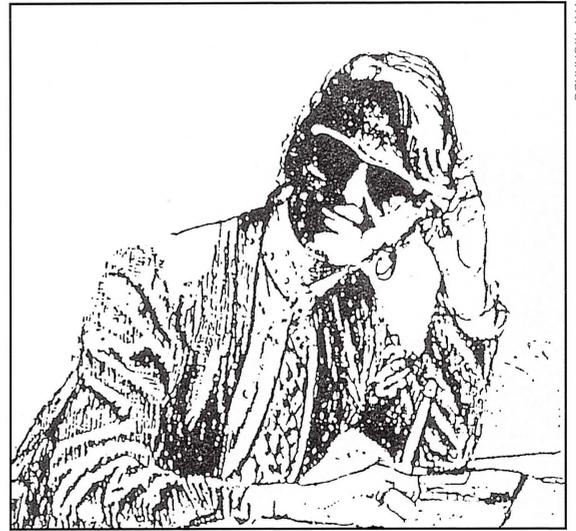
How better to start a dialogue about getting noticed than with "So Says..." which offers a double-edged take on the architectural publishing scene by Robert Ivy, FAIA, *Architectural Record's* editor-in-chief, and himself a former practitioner. For "Outside View," Sheri Olson, FAIA, writes her own epitaph as the former architecture critic for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*: dismissed for being critical. "Good Practices" presents some nuts-and-bolts tactics for small firms to get and leverage media attention. "45-Year Watch" ventures to three apartment towers in Newark designed by none other than Mies van der Rohe. "In Print+" reviews books about iconic buildings and an iconic architect, along with a website powered by Swiss good taste and intelligent content. Finally, architourism takes some interesting turns in "Last Words."

Go forth, get attention, get ink – and hope that your name is always spelled correctly.

Kristen Richards
kristen@aiany.org

Clarification: In the Fall 2005 *Oculus*, "Lessons from a Small Store," pg. 34, the statement "some connection service locations have been used as drop-off points for drug dealers" did not mean to imply Qnect locations, but rather other such service suppliers. In no way did *Oculus* or the writer intend to impugn the integrity of Qnect.

Correction: Also in the Fall 2005 issue, "Street Smarts," pg. 38, the name of 34th Street Partnership Director of Industrial Design, Ignacio Ciochini, was misspelled.



Editor in ink

FAV RICHARDS

Center Highlights

Center for Architecture

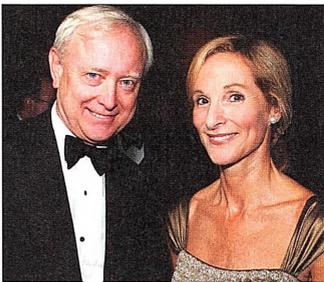
2005 Heritage Ball

On Thursday, October 6, the AIA New York Chapter and the Center for Architecture Foundation honored leading New Yorkers at the annual Heritage Ball. The sold-out benefit gala, held at Pier 60, Chelsea Piers, recognized the contributions of outstanding individuals and organizations to the physical, cultural, and civic environment of New York. Nearly 1,300 leaders from the architecture, design, construction, and real estate community attended. This year's honorees were: Amanda Burden, Hon. AIA NY; J. Max Bond, Jr., FAIA; Frank Scieme, Hon. AIA NY; and The New York Restoration Project, founded by Bette Midler. "...and a great time was had by all!"

LARRY LINK



Sequins and black ties soaked up the October sunset



LARRY LINK

Amanda Burden, Hon. AIA NY with Randy Bourscheidt, President, Alliance for the Arts

LARRY LINK

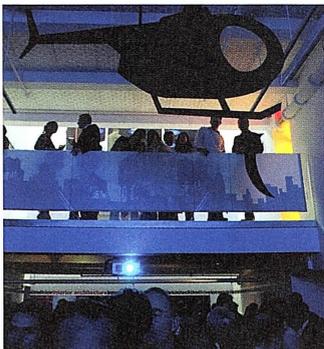


Scholarship award recipient Diane Reid, candidate, Masters of Urban Design, City College of New York, with scholarship designee J. Max Bond, Jr., FAIA

LARRY LINK



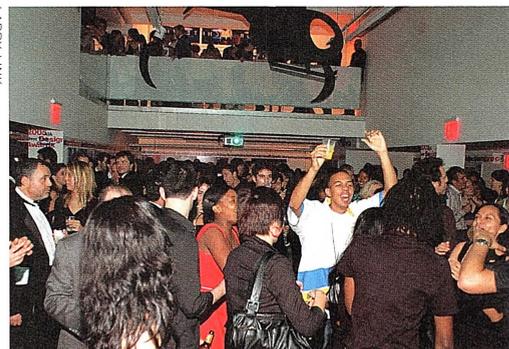
Heritage Ball dinner chair Richard Tomasetti, Hon. AIA, and Susan Chin, FAIA, share a humorous moment at the podium



LARRY LINK

The Party@theCenter was a moonlit Gotham designed by Audrey Matlock Architects

LARRY LINK



Following Heritage Ball at Chelsea Piers, crowds of all ages flocked to the annual Party@theCenter for dancing and fun

LARRY LINK



2005 Heritage Ball Honorees Frank Scieme, Hon. AIA NY, and Bette Midler, with New York Restoration Project's Executive Director Julia Erickson (center)

Around the Center



ANNIE KURTIN

On September 21, in conjunction with the “9 Schools of Architecture Expo(sed)” exhibition, the Center hosted a Deans Roundtable – a vigorous discussion with deans from nine area schools moderated by Susan Szenasy, Editor-in-Chief, Metropolis Magazine



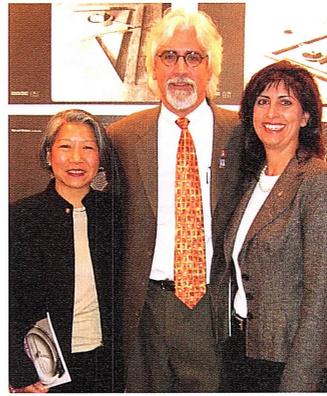
NINA ASHEKENAZI

AIA NY Chapter Associate Director, Katherine Bojsza, Assoc. AIA (second from right) with AIA Student (AIAS) representatives at the September 26 program on the transition from architecture school to the profession



HERMANN FELDHAUSS

Susan Chin, FAIA, and “Insel Hombroich spaceplacelab” curator and contributing designer Barbara Hoidn, with Tilmann Lonnes and Johannes Nordmann (Heads of Cultural Department and Planning Department for the Rhein-County Neuss government), artist Oliver Kruse, and co-curator Wilfried Wang



ANNIE KURTIN

AIA NY Chapter President Susan Chin, FAIA, with 2007 AIA National President RK Stewart, FAIA, and Andrea Cohen-Goehring, AIA, LEED, Chair, National Practice Management Knowledge Community at the Getting to Great Conference October 26 - 28



MAKRAND BHOOTI, ASSOC. AIA

Frank Gehry, FAIA, seated before a presentation on the redevelopment of Atlantic Yards. The event, hosted by the AIA NY Chapter’s Planning and Urban Design Committee, drew hundreds of people to the Center on November 22



MICHAEL DIVITO

Peter Budieri, AIA, Chair of the AIA NY Chapter’s Design Awards Committee (right), with Simon Speak and Jessica Goadec of Haworth, the lead sponsor of the 2005 Design Awards, at the awards exhibition opening on October 6, the last day of Architecture Week 2005

Center for Architecture Foundation

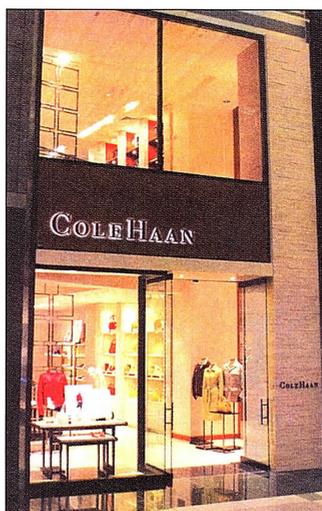
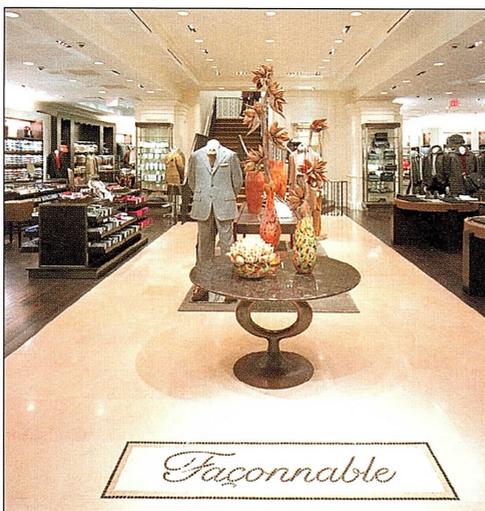
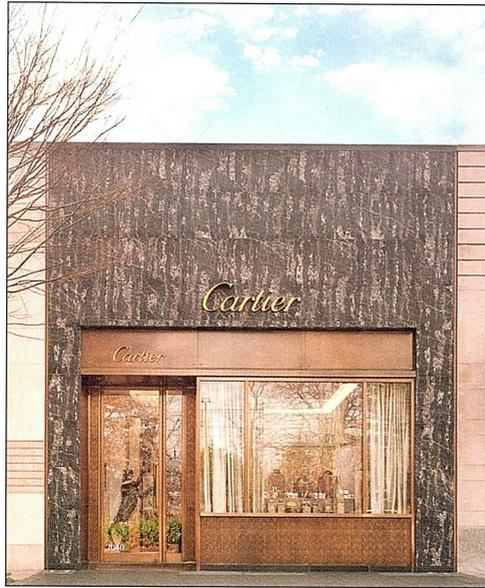


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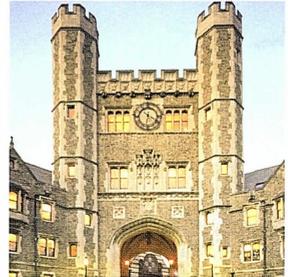
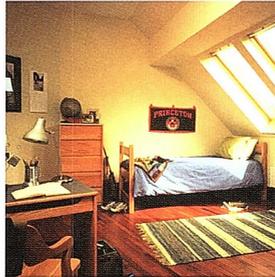
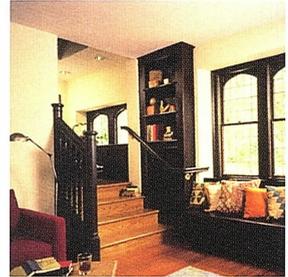
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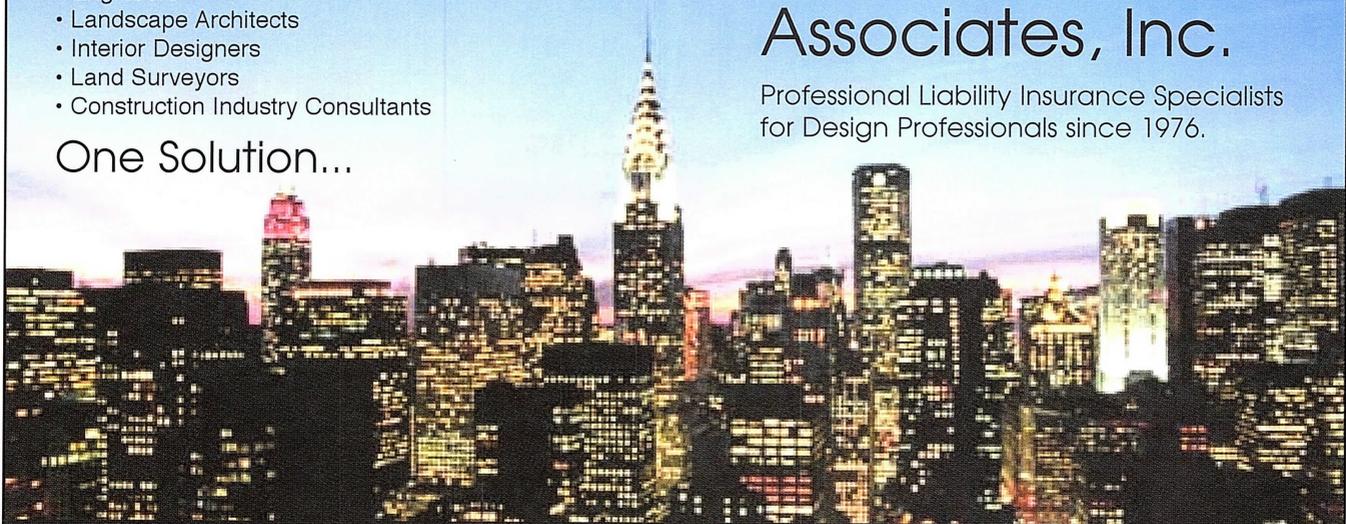
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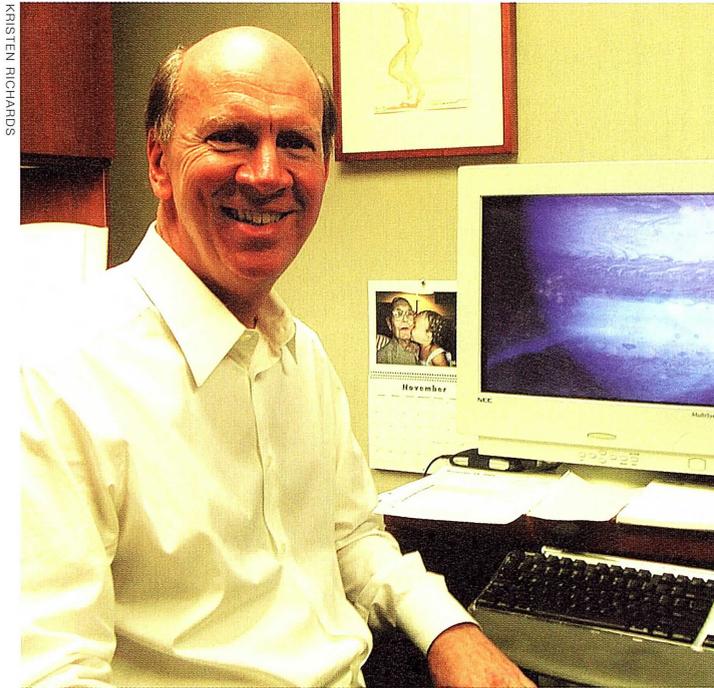
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So Says... Robert



Before joining *Architectural Record* as editor-in-chief in 1996, Robert Ivy, FAIA, led a dual life as both an architect and an architectural writer. In 2002 and 2004, Ivy served as the Commissioner of the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale for architecture. He is also Vice-President & Editorial Director for 14 McGraw-Hill Construction publications. *Oculus* was lucky to find him not only in town, but sitting down – with a few minutes to share his thoughts about the changing architectural publishing scene, criticism, and what a great job he has.

Kristen Richards: Tell me a little bit about your life as an architect – what you did and where – and what made you change?

Robert Ivy: I always had parallel careers. I was both a writer and an architect. I wanted to be a writer from an early age. After I got my English degree, I served in the Navy, and then I got an architecture degree from Tulane. I graduated architecture school in 1976 – a time that was very difficult to get a job. This was during a depression, and it was a horrible moment to enter the market. I ended up in Greenville, Mississippi, employed by Matt Virden, a wonderful architect who was a really forward thinking guy. I subsequently moved back to my hometown [Columbus, Mississippi], where I became a partner in the largest firm in the state.

The whole experience made me really respect what architects do. I am very humble as a writer, and always have been, in approaching the architectural process, because I know how complex and demanding and difficult it is.

KR How did the switch from architecture to editorial happen?

RI I had a book contract, a lot of writing for periodicals, and I knew I either had to put up or shut up. I'd done the dual thing for long enough – 15 years plus – and it was time to make a choice. I spent about three years as a “consulting architect,” winding down the existing contracts I had, finding a buyer for my work for the remainder of those contracts – all that messy stuff that you have to do. By 1996, I was completely out of that world. I then became the editor of *Architectural Record*.

KR What changes are going on in the publishing scene – good and bad?

RI Challenging is the word right now. All publishing is challenged for a variety of reasons. Readership, viewership, audiences are shifting and the whole division between electronic and print publishing is occurring even as we speak, and advertising that supports that publishing is changing at an extraordinary rate. It's a transitional moment. We still like print and need it because it's large-scale, tangible. What we're looking for now, I think, is greater critical judgment, points of view, people to help us sift through the mass of data that we're confronted with.

KR What of criticism and analysis?

RI Good “criticism” has an analytical component in which it dissects, deconstructs, looks at the surrounding context, much the same way that we do when we're looking at design work itself. At the least it examines carefully, then applies judgment to what it sees. That's much, much harder to do and there really aren't very many people who do it skillfully.

KR Is there a lack of critical training?

RI I don't know that you have to study architectural criticism to be an architectural critic. Clear thinking, good writing, a knowledge of criticism itself as a pursuit and what others have done really do help inform criticism.

The second issue, though, is how the publishing industry is handling criticism. When critics have written negative things, they've been challenged by their publishers and, in many cases, they have moved, migrated to become real estate writers, lifestyle commentators. That's not to say that there's not validity, value, and something worthwhile in having archi-

Ivy, FAIA

ecture and urban planning written about from a lifestyle perspective.

We've seen an explosion in interest in the field and a lot of people writing in a variety of settings about the topic. It's just not that very specialized thing that you and I just described, which is the dedicated architectural critic.

KR What about the change in how the public perceives architecture since 9/11, since Katrina?

RI Years ago, Herbert Muschamp was writing about that very fact – that the public was more knowledgeable or at least more interested in architecture, even before the disasters or the tragedies occurred.

KR Do you think it goes back to Bilbao?

RI It's about that time when architecture became a "star sport" in this iteration. Obviously Wright and others have garnered public interest, but in this round it centers on Frank Gehry and the whole explosion that occurred around Bilbao. You can say what you will, good and bad, about that entire star phenomenon, but that was building. Then 9/11 occurred. People looked to architecture to help answer a question and fill a void. It's been very positive for architecture. Katrina only compounds that, but it's a much more complex problem.

KR What changes would you like to see in the media in terms of architecture?

RI I would like to see more informed criticism. I'd like to see stories always list the architect, talk about what was involved and the complexity that was required to make something that's so wonderful. Most media compress the story down to its bare bones, which doesn't leave room for the real story of how a project was made.

We've also seen an explosion of shelter books and magazines that write about buildings; some are excellent like *Dwell*. We now see building projects included in travel magazines. There's architectural tourism, so that whole world now looks at buildings. One really positive thing has been another explosion and that's electronically, where anybody's free to say what they think. Witness gutter.curbed.com.

KR What is the difference between designing and building and creating an issue of an architectural magazine?

RI Actually, I use my skills as architect every day. A magazine is a really complex, dynamic thing, not at all unlike the practice. As an architect, you're often called at 10 a.m. in the morning by a contractor who is irate and blaming you for some enormous omis-

sion. What you have to do is retain your calm, canvass the situation, and immediately go to the documents. So you go stand in a ditch with a group of people scratching their heads and cussing and spitting on the ground all around you, making you out to be the biggest idiot in the western hemisphere, and you look at the documents and realize it really wasn't a problem after all, they haven't understood what was intended. If you're able to create calm in the middle of chaos, you can examine the data and listen to the what-ifs, then plot a course, and sometimes you're wrong.

That happens here. So I would say calm in the middle of a storm, because a magazine is a storm. If there's a big difference in my work life, it's that the pace of magazine is much quicker than a building. You make a monthly magazine in 30 days, and there are 10,000 decisions to be made quickly – you can't ponder. That's the biggest difference.

KR How has the existence of "Arch Record Two" on the web changed the contents of *Architectural Record*?

RI When I was a kid, *Record* was the big corporate magazine and in certain ways it still is. Our thought was that with the website we could build a community for younger architects. That worked, but we found that the younger architects were just as interested, if not more so, in being in print so we put them in the magazine. We discover people we did not know, we find out about work, and it regularly informs our content. It's been a two-way street and a really good one, too.

KR Does *Record* miss having enlivening editorial competition from the likes of *Progressive Architecture* and *Architecture*?

RI Oh sure. I'm still asked why we killed *PA*. Of course *Record* had nothing to do with it. We all miss it. We all miss the vibrancy that *Architecture*, our immediate competitor, has enjoyed. We're all concerned that architectural publications can't garner more support. We miss having opposing points of view, various voices for our whole community.

KR Is being editor of *Record* the best job in the world?

RI [LAUGHTER] I'll say for me it's the best job. I'm still an architect, but communicate with my peer group, with my friends, and listen to them and then make a publication that we hope reflects their interests. It also allows me to see architecture around the world every day of the year – and I get to write. I love every minute of it, and it's also really, really hard. We have to cover so much we can't be frivolous about what we're doing. It's *Record*, it's where you're going to go look for what was done.

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Getting Noticed

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Can you recall the first time you saw your name in the media? The first time your firm's website went "live?" Your first e-mail? Do you remember the first time you heard the word "starchitect?"

How did architects get editorial attention way back when? Telephone, fax, FedEx, and what we now affectionately call "snail-mail." When I started my editorial life at *Interiors* magazine in 1989, that was pretty much all we had.

Around 1992, I hooked up to the Internet – well, a 14k modem and AOL, but it was a start. I had e-mail! Problem was, not many other people did. By the mid-1990s, much of the industry was connected, albeit mostly via modems (that were up to a whopping 28k by then). *Interiors* and at-the-time sister publication *Architecture* installed a T1 line. Everything began to move faster: queries to and from editors were responded to almost instantly, fact-checking became a breeze – and that was long before Google. Images arrived on zip disks instead of 4 x 5 transparencies, endless credit lists arrived on floppy disks or via e-mail and didn't have to be re-typed, and freelancers could e-mail article copy from home.

What didn't change? While a few of the monthly design trade publications launched websites, they weren't much more than static tables of contents of current print issues and buttons linking to subscription order forms and advertisers. Architects still wanted to see their work in the pages of *Interiors* – and *Architecture*, *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, *Metropolis*, *Contract*, and others.

Fast forward a decade. What has changed? Not much – and everything. Architects still want to see their work in the pages of trade magazines – although there are fewer of them. But their websites are now bursting with instant information and interactivity.

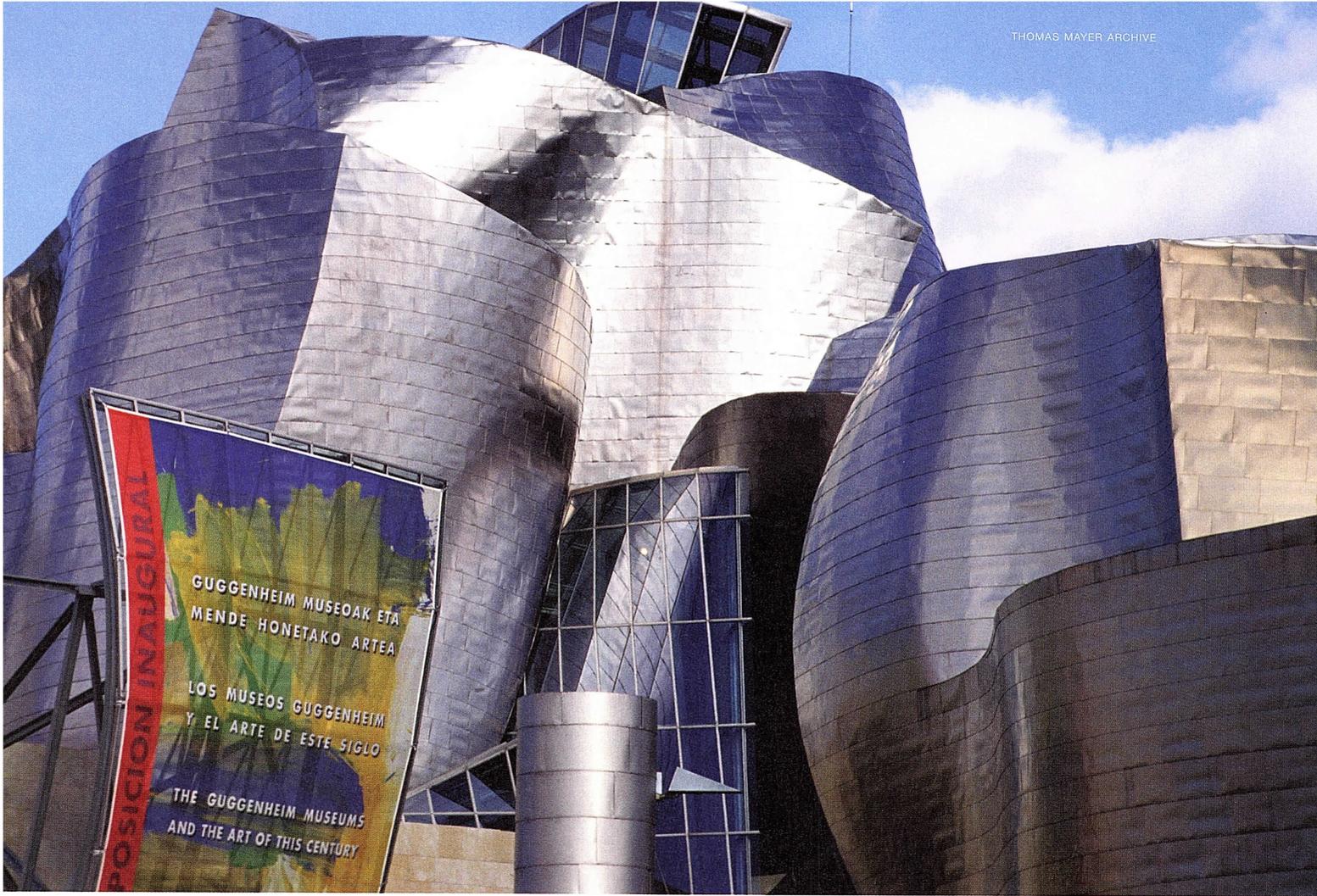
Architectural webzines and blogs have become genres unto themselves. Webzines, for the most part, follow print magazines' rules: accuracy and reportage (but, some argue, not enough criticism). Blogs, on the other hand, are individual voices that can say anything – and do. Some are quite thoughtful; others are humorous, gossipy, and even spiteful.

Is mainstream media paying attention to architecture and architects? Yes, although not to the extent that many would like to see. The dailies relegate most projects to the real estate or business sections. Weeklies and monthlies glom onto the glamorous. Dedicated architecture critics are, lamentably, few and far between.

But there does seem to be a shift – Bilbao, 9/11, and Hurricane Katrina notwithstanding. I've seen it happening over the past few years (the last four as editor of ArchNewsNow.com). While most projects remain in the real estate and business pages, more and more are mentioning the architecture firms involved, and even discussing a project's impact on its surroundings. Unfortunately, I see this more often in foreign reports.

But architects and architecture are beginning to get more attention here, in part because architects are taking steps themselves to generate good press. As the old saw goes, any press is good press.

Kristen Richards



The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank Gehry is an excellent example of a building that started not one but two trends (but not a style): (1) architecture as magnet for tourism and civic renewal; (2) architecture as sculpture that was statically indeterminate before CATIA.

What came first – the architect or the media?

Big Bang Theories of Architectural Trendsetting

By Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA

To clear up one point from the start: the architecture you see in the media is not where architecture is today: it's where it was four, five years ago, because that's when the building was in the architect's head – an embryonic form still undergoing functional, stylistic, and environmental influences. What you see in the media today is history. The Big Bang took place five years earlier.

Where does this leave us? Without architects there is no architecture. A concept must be born in the designer's mind and become a real building before any of the trendsetters can get to work

When is a trend a trend? When is it a fad? When is it style?

Fads in architecture are an impossibility. Architecture, unlike cuisine and hemlines, has a shelf life of generations. You can not turn an architectural trend around every season.

I define trends in architecture as the general direction taken by buildings over a span of years. Buildings express a superficial similarity of form, texture, color, and scale that in fact conceals totally differing function, technology, or program. Frank Gehry's designs, with their High Tech High Baroque metal exteriors, are a trend. So are many works by Santiago Calatrava when they express structure with greater audacity than a purist might think strictly necessary. And every city in the world wants to be Bilbao.

Style in architecture is a more profound phenomenon. Its roots are social, cultural, or religious – witness Medieval Gothic, Academic

Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Modernism, Postmodernism. A new style is often triggered by a seminal published text in turn triggered by the times. Examples are Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, the works of Vitruvius, Palladio, and Alberti, Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture*, and, for a brief awkward spell, Jacques Derrida. Those works were the doctrinal base for a generation or more of styles.

The media have little to do with the propagation of style except inasmuch as a style often emerges first as a trend and thus feeds for the media's hunger for the new and the dramatic.

Today's trendsetters

Professional magazines. The top magazines have an inside track to the leaders of the most innovative architectural firms, and thus are able to spot trends in embryonic form. But typically they wait until occupancy before showing the building in print or online. At this point, students begin to adopt in their studio work what they see in the journals, while those architects who feel clients expect them to follow trends begin to lean toward the newly published forms. Within a semester (at the schools) and years later (among the firms), a trend emerges.

Critics. Commonly attached to newspapers or weekly magazines, sometimes regular contributors to an architectural journal, critics often spot trends before their less well connected colleagues. The top critics are able to see the trends behind the façade. Others, sadly, fall into the trap described by Somerset Maugham in his 1936 novel *The Moon and Sixpence*: "I will allow that the critic who has not a practical knowledge of technique is seldom able to say anything on the subject of real value."

Photographers. Architectural photographers are the front line of trendsetting as most magazine and newspaper readers end up seeing architecture only through the photographer's eyes.

Picture books, whether single firm monographs or fancy so-called "style books" (French Chateau Style, African Style, Vermont Peasant Style) spin out trends. The "style" books don't set trends (least of all styles) so much as propagate trends when they are already on their way up the bell curve. The danger, especially in residential work, is that clients often have a way of pointing to the picture of a project and telling their architect: "I want one of those."

National newsweeklies and the major dailies help disseminate trends through their choice of which buildings and architects to feature in their usually brief reports. Their vast readership allows the good writers and editors to shape the public's ability to understand current architecture.

Film is far-reaching and universal, but a trendsetter? Hardly. As a timelessly false characterization of the architect, a film has yet to beat "The Fountainhead," with the architect characterized as a pigheaded genius-hero. Other films have had architect heroes, and an oddball slant on the idea of "architect." One is, at this writing, under production at Sony Pictures starring David Hasselhoff and Adam Sandler as New York City architects. (The film uses several dummied up covers of *Oculus* as props.)

Individual architects have been known to generate trends but not styles. Rem Koolhaas (OMA) stands for a brash way of dealing with traditional contexts, preferring to create his own context, often outscaled, such as at the multimode transit center at Lille and the outsized central library for Seattle. This may launch a "down-with-context" trend, but

you can hardly call it a style. Equally, Archigram triggered a trend to put technology to work to drive architectural form, though few of their concepts have been built. The same is true of Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes and tensegrity structures. Blobs, folds, and boxes, much in vogue these days in the schools and bright emerging firms may be a trend, but as creators of a style they are equally non-starters.

Online. The growing habit, especially among Gen Y designers, to blog during and after working hours and swap ideas on form, technique, and the relative talents of their elders, may soon make bloggers into powerful trendsetters. Stay tuned.

Competitions. High-profile design competitions have the power to set trends, sometimes even a style, through media exposure. John Mead Howells's winning scheme for the Chicago Tribune Tower (1934) beat out designs by Gropius and Eliel Saarinen to give neoGothic a new lease on life. It's too early to judge the trendsetting impact of the World Trade Center plan competition, with its tug of war between memory, security, and ROI, but chances are that other cities will keep a sharp eye on what finally is built on those hallowed 16 acres.

Is any trend new under the sun?

The recent brouhaha over the alleged copying by a well-known architect of a school design by the architect's former student shows the subtle line between copying a form or detail, adapting it, or being inspired by it. Is imitation in architecture the most sincere form of flattery? As Witold Rybczynski wrote in the September 14, 2005, issue of *Slate*, "Whatever the merits of the claim, the [lawsuit] raises a broader issue, one that is particularly relevant in an age in which 'starchitect' buildings have become the norm: How important should artistic authorship be in the world of architecture?"

The media don't hesitate to publicize buildings, above all those by tastemaker architects, knowing that in doing so they offer up an object ripe for rip-off. But isn't all design a form of copying? Who can claim to be totally original? As Kevin Browne, a student in my City College class, wrote in an assignment: "By definition, styles such as Romanesque, neoGothic, or Deconstructionist are not so much an invitation to copy but 'platforms for reinvention,'...these styles represent a historical context and there is nothing wrong with analyzing and sometimes mimicking them to...create new architecture...."

And Michael Graves commented in *Trace*, a publication of the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at the University of Maryland:

"Our culture is based on the new. What is new today does get old, and so we all have our 15 minutes...and I have used most of mine. And other people are in the zenith of theirs, and they don't realize if they continue to do their buildings and express their ideas...they too will be used up by the media. Every Thursday morning the media writers have got to have something new."

Today innovation is the name of the game, played by architects but constantly prodded by the media – innovation that the media will turn into trends, for that is their stock-in-trade.

That's the Big Bang, and the pot of gold is at the end of the rainbow.

Stephen Kliment, FAIA, is a journalist, critic, and editor, and former chairman of the Oculus advisory board.

The Death and Life of Print Publishing

Is it shrinking or growing?

By Thomas D. Sullivan

Architecture lives in three dimensions, but people often see it in two. Until fairly recently, those two dimensions were ink and paper. Increasingly, the computer screen is a window on the architectural world.

Does this development change how architecture is seen? Is there a difference in the way architects, allied professionals, and the general public keep up with architecture?

Certainly computers have changed how architects find information about their field, says Norbert Young, FAIA, president of McGraw-Hill Construction. He cites widespread broadband access and the ability to get information 24/7 as “key drivers” of this trend. Young adds that architects use print publications in tandem with electronic resources to get the information they need.

Julie Lasky, editor of *ID* magazine, says that, for the general public, major newspapers such as the *New York Times* are the main source of architectural information. That coverage is “fractured,” she says – for example, architecture gets covered with the arts (as well as in real estate and home sections), while articles on zoning appear with metropolitan news.

Architecture magazines, Lasky notes, have not flourished of late. She cites *Dwell* as an excellent example of a publication for a general audience, adding, “there’s plenty of room for more” magazines. She says that there are many architecture magazines in Europe; the relative paucity of U.S. architecture titles is due to a “complicated history” involving publishers’ policies and advertising.

Diana Darling, publisher of *The Architect’s Newspaper*, sees her publication, launched in November 2003, as fitting into a niche between online sources and magazines. The paper is “easy to read,” which helps when “people don’t have a long attention span.” Darling mentions a phenomenon that’s overlooked in appraisals of the media: Readers will get two publications that overlap in some ways because, with certain subjects, “you can miss it in one and catch it in another.”

For writer and consultant (and former editor of *Architecture*) C.C. Sullivan, the choice of medium – print or online – depends on the task. For example, regarding design, he notes, “If you’re looking for ideas, there’s no more enjoyable, time-effective method than looking through a magazine.” On the other hand, for specialized information about plumbing, one can search the Internet.

Sullivan says that the availability of information on the Internet has made it possible for non-professionals to become “much better educated” about aspects of design. Whereas previously people who wanted more technical information had to search in libraries or get their hands on hard-to-find catalogs, now they can search online. There are, Sullivan notes, some drawbacks: much of the information is not relevant or perfectly accurate. Nonetheless, those who can manage to sift information available online can learn quite a bit, he says. There are commercial opportunities online, Sullivan says, for

architects to access detailed information about “hot, new, emerging areas” – for example, the design of biotech labs.

As for magazines, since advertisers are now simultaneously buying ad space in a range of media, Sullivan believes that buyers will prefer to make “one good bet” in each medium. This leads to markets with one dominant publication and assorted niche titles.

As the ranks of architecture magazines thin, *ID*’s Lasky detects a shift – for architecture firms, monographs are gaining importance; she considers monographs a “necessary benchmark,” providing a mix of self-promotion and education for firms. Lasky cites a telling feature of the monograph: it provides readers “enough pictures to get a sense of scale” of a building – photographic coverage that a newspaper article usually won’t provide.

As websites gain capacity to present images and video, one can speculate about the promise of presenting architecture dynamically online. As for current architecture websites, C.C. Sullivan likes archipedia.com, greatbuildings.com, and galinsky.com. Lasky says she hasn’t yet seen a remarkable architecture site, but remarks that editors of print journals are kept on their toes by the challenges that web-based publications offer.

Sullivan sees a less spectacular web opportunity for architects: providing highly searchable data for clients, describing the kinds of buildings the firm does and the markets it serves. Some small- and medium-sized architecture firms, Sullivan says, have seized this opportunity – “that’s the way architects are kicking ass today – presenting a new face on the Internet.”

None of those *Oculus* interviewed believe that print publications will disappear. Lasky notes, “radio never died.” She underlines an enduring virtue of print – it “stabilizes information...you can put it on a shelf.” And, barring disaster, it will remain on that shelf for years, while a website may or may not be available in a year or two.

Darling notes that print has another kind of staying power: surveys indicate that people will spend an average of nine minutes reading content on a website. *The Architect’s Newspaper* did a study that found that readers spend an average of 30 to 45 minutes with the publication.

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

A look at the fast-changing world of architectural media

By Richard Staub

Publish or Perish?

There's nothing like the prestige of having a project featured in a national architecture or interior design publication. For both principals and staff it's personally satisfying, brings recognition to the firm, and contributes to the conversation on architecture. It can also lead to new work. But architects are realizing that it is a tight buyer's market. There are fewer national magazines devoted to design and their coverage is now global. As a result there are that many fewer pages available to feature the many submissions that editors receive.

So what are the alternatives? It depends on the firm's goals. Some architects view getting published in a design magazine as a way to get work. Unfortunately, many clients don't read architecture magazines – but do read periodicals in their own field. So one alternative is to aim for facilities, real estate, and building construction magazines, both those that take an overview and those targeted to specific building types. Getting published in general and business periodicals like *Time*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *BusinessWeek* are often at the top of a firm's wish list but very unlikely to happen. That's usually design star territory.

There are online vehicles that feature projects and welcome more general discussions of design and building issues, including ArchNewsNow.com, which is edited and published by the editor of *Oculus*; ArchitectureWeek.com; and the online version of *Architectural Record*, which features more projects than appear in the print edition.

The value of being published in print or online is the implicit testimonial that comes from a respected source selecting it. But with current page limits, an editor's rejection note certainly doesn't mean a project is without merit. Consider also that the writer doesn't always convey the information and messages about a project that a firm feels are important. A firm may want to take matters into its own hands and get the word out directly. An article bylined by a partner or an interview on a business management or technical topic can be as effective as a published building.

While design magazines still carry a lot of weight with architects, print just doesn't have the hold it once did.

If a firm is going to promote a project or its skill in a building type, however, it should consider what its audience will want to hear. Clients are leery of mailings that smack of self-promotion. Sending out a regular postcard that features a new project with pertinent information is fine, especially if the type is readable and the card is well designed. But newsletters whose sole purpose is to talk about what the firm has been up to are likely to be tossed. Clients are more likely to read and save mailings that offer insights on their issues. This is true whether the piece is printed or electronic.

While design magazines still carry a lot of weight with architects, print just doesn't have the hold it once did. Still to be fully explored is electronic publishing. At present, many firms' e-newsletters, like their websites, are simply electronic versions of what's in print. What would happen if a firm started its own blog, with a mix of insights, office news, and project updates that could give a client an insight into the life of the firm? Are there other kinds of e-vehicles that a firm could originate to let clients understand the firm's design value? All of this is to be determined. But certainly the days of publish or perish are over.

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

In considering a monograph, or vanity press, the question for a design firm may well be: To have or have not? These books, sometimes up to, or more than, 200 pages, with beautiful photography and careful graphic design, are expensive to produce and require significant time and labor by the firm to acquire rights, generate appropriate text, review and approve credits, and secure client permission, among other tasks. And all of that before it's submitted to the publishing company. What exactly is a monograph? What is its value to the firm and to clients? When should a firm consider stepping up to the plate? And what are the costs?

A monograph, by definition, is about one architect or one building type. Raul Barreneche, a New York writer and critic, says that a monograph used to cover a specific period of work in a firm's history and oeuvre, covering a time span, such as *Kohn Pedersen Fox, Architecture and Urbanism, 1986-1992*. "These books are becoming rarer," he adds, though they are still produced. Barreneche says, "The scope of books is expanding to include a single project type of theme." He cites as an example *FDA in Irvine: Zimmer Gunsul Frasca*, published by Edizioni Press, for which he wrote the introductory essay.

Anthony Iannacci, publisher of Edizioni Press, comments, "We put together a unique team – author, graphic designer – for each of our

media consultant to A/E firms, a monograph should be considered as "another layer of communication" between the firm and its clients. "Clients want to understand their architect," he says. "Sometimes a monograph gives them the perspective they're looking for." Caldwell says the decision whether or not to produce a monograph should be weighed in the context of other communication tools including a website, publicity, collateral, and speaking engagements. He reinforces that it does not substitute for building a nurturing relationship with the client, but rather is a tool to support that endeavor.

Caldwell adds, "One is always trying to figure out what makes sense for a given situation. If there is a need to communicate the totality of the practice, then a monograph can be a useful tool because it can summarize that practice." He cites an example of a hypothetical firm pursuing a church project. "Here you also wish to communicate the stability and capability of the practice, and leaving a monograph could be very effective in doing just that in a neat and tidy manner. On the other hand, a developer, who may not give an architect more than 10 minutes of his time, would not necessarily be impressed by such a volume." A key point, urges Caldwell, is understanding the marketing environment in which a given firm operates. Does your competition have a monograph? Without one, a firm can appear to be lacking

Vanity

Monographs are striking and have visual sex appeal. Is one right for your firm?

books. And each volume is edited and designed differently, nothing formulaic; at the same time, we help the architects we work with avoid becoming writers, editors, graphic designers, and art directors."

What is the impact of such a book? "To the uninitiated, a vanity book, which is often what a monograph actually is – that is, a book paid for by the firm – may look like any other book," says Barreneche, "but it still lends cachet." He adds that a monograph has an author's name; thus its approach is more editorial than marketing. "We speak different languages," he says. "The overall impact of the volume can be positive and impressive." But he advises that monograph publishers have markedly different approaches, "Well-known and well-regarded publishers like Rizzoli and Monacelli would only publish a book they believe will sell, whereas other vanity presses publish titles based mostly on the willingness of architects to contribute toward the cost of producing the book. Both have their value."

According to Kenneth Caldwell, an Oakland, California-based

when compared to the other firms competing for a job.

The issue of cost is a significant one. Any monograph will, at the very least, require a substantial investment of time and overhead on the part of the firm. Some offices go the route of paying their way to acquire a monograph. One firm recently contracted \$55,000 with a publisher; this amount will eventually produce a 9 1/2 x 13, four-color, 100-page book, and the architect will receive 2,000 copies.

Undeniably, monographs are costly. "It's tough to do at this scale," says Kevin Lippert, publisher of Princeton Architectural Press, speaking of the economics in publishing these books. "They're generally very expensive to produce and the market is very small." Lippert explains that some monographs are paid for by the architect, while others are paid fully by the publisher. He quickly adds that Princeton does not accept paid-for offers from architectural firms. "Most fall somewhere between these two poles," he says. But the architect often pays for photography, provides graphic design, or buys advance copies.

To get around financial roadblocks, while still producing a substantive and visually engaging product, Princeton has sometimes received assistant funding. As an example, Lippert cited a grant from The Graham Foundation, which enabled the publisher to promote the work of young architects who otherwise would not have the means to publish on their own. One such book, a 192-page volume published in 2003, reviews the work of New York-based Architecture Research Office (ARO).

And what of the content of these books? Are they substantive? Sara Hart, senior editor of *Architectural Record*, says, "Monographs are marketing tools, not criticism or scholarship. They're particularly useful for architects who want to promote themselves as creative design firms, rather than workhorse production ones." Hart, who has written introductory essays for several volumes, comments that monographs now serve multiple purposes. "Architects use them to promote their specialties, such as hospitality, retail, or healthcare. Still others use them to commemorate a milestone or anniversary."

When should a firm consider doing a monograph? Some use them to initially document their history as well as record single projects. Kohn Pedersen Fox is an example. Since its founding in 1976, the New York-based firm has published multiple volumes through

buildings and best-known architects in the world, would make for a substantive story. "We would use the book to show how MEP systems are integrated into buildings and contribute to great architecture and creative thinking." Meyers envisions a monograph could help "clients and friends understand the evolution of green design through telling the history of the company, beginning with the 1982 Enerplex building in Princeton, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill."

Here are some key considerations to evaluate before undertaking the effort of producing a monograph: What is significant about your work? In a column for *Contract*, Caldwell advised firms to form an in-house committee to have final say in the project. This committee in turn would oversee the goal for the monograph, as well as its message, photography, and budget.

Ultimately, timing and delivery are crucial to the success of the project. "Monographs are expensive, but when well done, they're worth it," says Hart. "I recommend shopping around before picking a publisher. You want a publisher who will deliver the book when

Fare

By John E.T. van Duyl

several publishers. Gale La Cava, their director of marketing, says monographs are "wonderful things to send out to potential or existing clients. Clients find them valuable and KPF uses them frequently instead of brochures; they're also used as gifts." KPF has published titles with Birkhauser, Edizioni, Images, and Rizzoli in both collective volumes, e.g. *The First 22 Years*, and on specific projects such as Baruch College in New York.

By contrast, Flack + Kurtz, the global MEP engineering firm, doesn't have a monograph – yet. But it is considering doing one. According to President Randy J. Meyers, such a book would be used to tell a significant story. "We're hoping to elevate the importance of how building systems make the built environment a productive and healthy place to be." The firm's work is typically hidden from the public's view, so glamorous photography of HVAC and other systems is usually not documented. However, the interest in the subject, as well as the fact the firm designs systems for some of the most complex



STANLEY STARK

promised. Excessive delays will make the product appear dated. An architect doesn't want to have to explain that the most recent projects in his or her book are four years old, for instance." Even if you intend to produce one every five years, each one needs to have a respectable shelf life.

To succeed, the monograph needs to be more than a collection of projects. As Caldwell wisely concludes, "You also need a story to tell."

What's yours?

John E.T. van Duyl is a media consultant to the architectural, engineering, and design professions with offices in Kensington, California, and Salisbury, Connecticut.

The Right Picture

Finding and working with an architectural photographer
By Sara Moss

ELLIOTT KAUFMAN



Elliott Kaufman: Hoboken Light Rail Terminal by FXFOWLE Architects (2004)

Some argue that a building isn't complete until it's photographed. Architects who are striking out on their own may be unprepared to deal with the process of selecting and working with an architectural photographer. It helps to know what to expect.

Choosing a Photographer

One way to find a photographer is through word-of-mouth. Also, look in magazines and books to find images and photographers you like. You may want to work with more than one, for logistical or stylistic reasons.

Most photographers and photo agencies have websites with samples of their work. "Having a website makes such a difference these days because potential clients can look you up on the web immediately," says photographer Michael Moran. But websites don't

always tell the full story. Photographer Elliott Kaufman advises meeting with a photographer to get an idea of his or her working process and communication style. "It's all about the relationship you have with your client," says Kaufman.



Paul Warchol: Bellevue Art Museum, Steven Holl Architects (2001)

Consider why your office needs photographs: for use on your website, submittal to magazines, for competition and awards submissions, or, eventually, for a monograph. If you choose a photographer wisely, you can build a lasting relationship that will help you get published, document and maintain archives of your work, and get more projects.

Investing in Photography

Choosing a photographer goes beyond style and compatibility. Good photography costs money – be prepared to spend. It's worth the investment, says Gavin Macrae-Gibson, AIA, principal of Macrae-Gibson Architects, who points out that projects may be changed or eventually even demolished.

Fee structures vary, and can run from several hundred to several

thousand dollars, depending on the photographer and the scope of the contract. Some photographers charge a day rate plus expenses, which include travel, assistants, film, and processing; if the weather is bad, an extra day (or days) may be necessary. Others will charge a flat fee for a specified number of shots. When the shoot is done digitally, there is a "capture" fee for the post-production work. Retouching is sometimes necessary, either for exposure compensation, to remove background "noise," or, sometimes, to add landscaping that has not grown in yet.

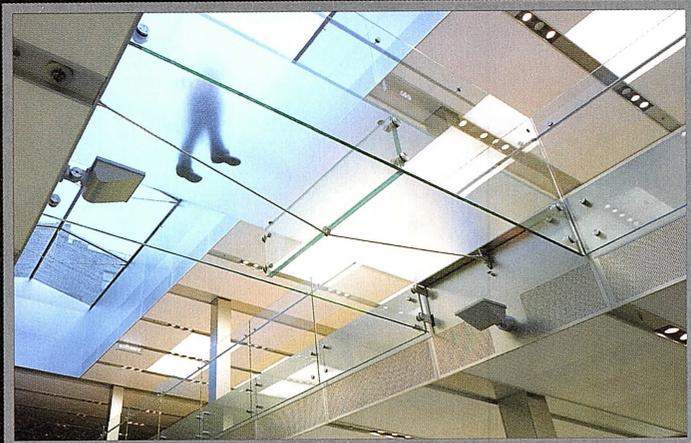
If costs seem prohibitive, consider splitting the cost of the shoot with the client, contractor, engineer, or other project team members. It is, according to Kaufman, "the best case scenario," providing financial support for an extensive shoot that also benefits from the architect's creative input.

Erica Stoller, director of photo agency and archive Esto Photographics (and daughter of the late Ezra Stoller – widely considered the "grandfather" of architectural photography), suggests that if multiple parties are contributing to a shoot there should be one representative dealing with the photographer or agency. She also recommends thinking about what direction you'd like your firm to go in, and spending more money on photography for those types of projects.

Usage

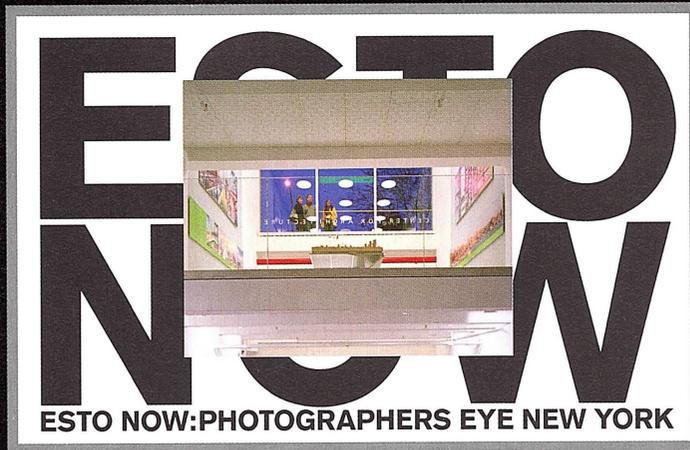
Also factored into the fee structures are usage rights – who owns them, what reproduction venues they cover, etc. – and these should be spelled out very clearly up front. Using images to promote your firm in brochures, websites, and awards submittals tends not to involve additional fees. Where architects sometimes get into trouble is when they release images to third parties (magazines, manufacturers, book publishers) for commercial use without the photographer's permission. Kaufman and Stoller both advise it's best to refer third-party users directly to the photographer or photo agency to negotiate usage fees and obtain images.

If you are teaming up with others for the shoot, be sure to determine what each party will be using the photographs for. "It's easier to negotiate beforehand," says photographer Paul Warchol. And since the dialogue concerning usage is ongoing, choosing a photographer who you can communicate clearly with is very important.



PETER AARON/ESTO

Peter Aaron/Esto: Apple Store SoHo by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson and Ronnette Riley Architect (2002)



PETER AARON/ESTO (PHOTO):
PENTAGRAM (DESIGN)

The exhibition "ESTO NOW: Photographers Eye New York" is on view at the Center for Architecture through March 4, 2006

Magazines

"Some architects say, 'if I can't get it into *Architectural Record* it's not worth doing,'" says Stoller, who adds that space in magazines is limited and thinks that shouldn't be a reason not to get a project photographed. She points out that there are local magazines worth getting into that can get the attention of the general public, and perhaps lead to more work.

Stoller suggests that architects send photographs to one magazine at a time to avoid uncomfortable situations (two magazines interested in the same project at the same time). She also recommends that since photographers usually have relationships with magazine editors, architects should listen to the photographer's opinion as to which magazines should be sent images.

Fewer magazines are commissioning shoots these days. The type of magazine that you are targeting may favor a specific look. "The look for shelter magazines is highly specific, highly styled," says Macrae-Gibson. Some photographers, like Warchol, shoot for both trade and shelter magazines; others may concentrate on one type.

Preparation

Before the shoot, you should provide the photographer with drawings, and information on design intent, as well as a sense of what kind of shots you will need. Kaufman, when meeting with an architect/firm for the first time, will examine progress shots of the building's construction, plans, and descriptions, all to get an idea of the building. If possible, he will visit the building in advance in order to look at the spatial configuration and lighting.

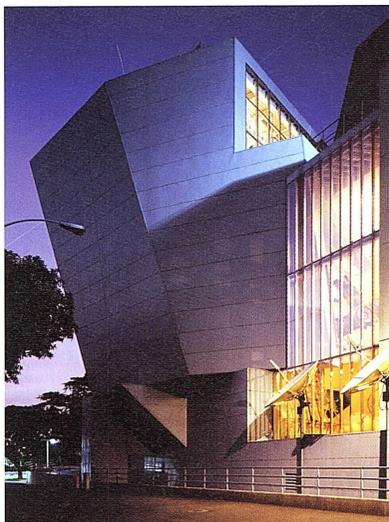
Ask the photographer what shots are best. "A good photographer is able to see the story," says Macrae-Gibson. It's important, also, to understand that it is a series of shots. "Architects see four images published, and they want four images. That's not really how it works," says Stoller, explaining that editors and art directors need a longer sequence of images to choose from.

In addition, there are logistical aspects of the shoot to consider – the building may need cleaning, or access may need to be arranged for the photographer and assistants. The owner/occupants need to be informed in order to plan for any possible interruption. "I've

showed up at shoots to find that my client's key didn't fit the door, or to find alarmed tenants who weren't expecting us," says Moran.

The Shoot Itself

Architects' involvement in the actual shoot varies. Macrae-Gibson attends shoots of his firm's work, feeling that it is important to participate in the "dialogue on visual content." Some architects are present for the majority of the shoot and interested in the details, while others



MICHAEL MORAN

Michael Moran: California Aerospace Museum by Frank Gehry and Associates (1986)

are more hands-off. "I like it best when people walk with me in the beginning," says Warchol. They then leave and return later in the day, to review Polaroids or digital files. Moran advises architects to "show up on time, with something to work on (a laptop, drawings to red-line) while I set up the shots." He requests that architects not bring their cameras. "It's distracting and I feel like they are not paying attention to the work I am doing."

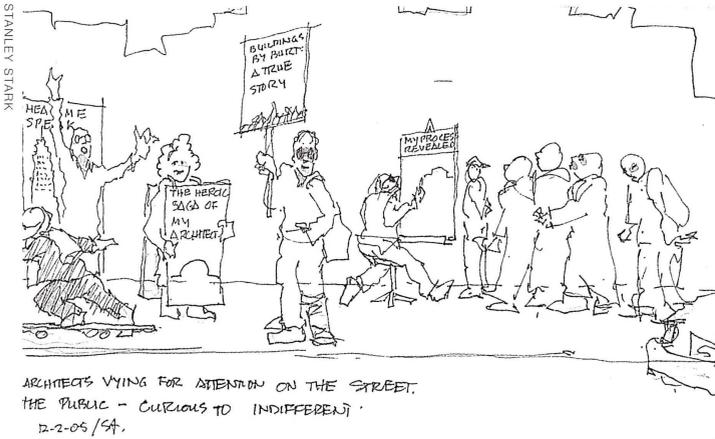
Your attitude can be important, too. If your finished project didn't live up to your expectations, don't share your disappointment with the photographer, Warchol advises. "I need to become enthusiastic about the building," he says. "When an architect tells me what was value engineered out, it's not helpful."

The American Society of Media Photographers pamphlet "Working With an Architectural Photographer" is available at www.asmp.org.

Sara Moss writes about architecture and design.

The ins and outs of authentic publicity

By Joan Capelin,
Hon. AIA,
Hon. AIA NYS,
Fellow PRS



You can't win fame; you earn it. You don't get all those honors and awards by being lucky; that's a myth. They come after very hard work and years of building your reputation.

There are dozens of ways for architects to become well known, perhaps esteemed, without having an immediately publishable project.

If you get famous without achieving something, you've probably committed a crime. In today's journalism, "What's gone wrong?" sells far more papers than "What's working?" Only the sports pages root for the home team.

Time was when the work came to the architect. Without branding. Without advertising. Without publicity (well, that could be argued). Just good solid family connections and a modicum of luck.

In the late 1970s, all that changed. The Feds decreed that professionals of all stripes were free to seek work from people they didn't know, just like any other business. Once design firms rushed into the marketplace, everyone else had no choice but to do the same. Competition heated up.

But not every firm has great work or even current work. How can a new firm compete, with no portfolio to show? For that mat-

ter, how can a long-standing firm do so, if there's nothing current to provide visibility? How does anyone stand a chance, when the so-called starchitects have so skewed the public perception of the profession that you can't get choice work unless your last name is Gehry, Stern, or Viñoly?

Architects are justifiably proud of their projects, into which they have poured their heart, talent, and time. They've been roughed up by the client, the builder, the program manager, and the city agencies, even by the community. Would it be too much to ask for a design or newsstand magazine to publish the work?

Actually, yes. One reason is that it has never been the editor's job to promote your project for you. More to the point, like the mega-lotteries, the number of magazine pages may be rising as the economy recovers, but many deferred, publishable projects are coming on line, so the chances for your efforts to get covered are not improving. Even the other sections of the magazine – practice, technology, book reviews, and letters to the editor – are stuffed.

Fame Principle 1: Redefine "accomplishment," as in "helping the design community to prevail."

This article provides stories about how fame finds people who place themselves in its path. The first anecdote is about the Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, then a client of mine and still a regional firm in Oregon with a reputation that was strictly west of the Rockies. ZGF's reputation-making Justice Center was occupied, and the citizens had come to accept Portland's first downtown mixed-use tower. Things were

picking up speed – until ZGF hit a dry spell: all its work was in process, with nothing to show.

At the same time, the nation's design community had gone into shock. Insurance rates had risen sky-high. Pay the premiums, and any profit would vanish. Risk going bare and court dire consequences. Robert Packard, Assoc. AIA, managing partner of ZGF recalls, "We couldn't talk about our designs; we had nothing to show. And I was preoccupied by this insurance thing's assault on our stability. You challenged us to show equal leadership in firm management by finding ways that ZGF could help the entire industry remedy this destructive situation."

ZGF joined with local lawyers and accountants to explain to business and civic leaders the far-reaching economic consequences of this destabilizing insurance situation: that is, construction would simply stop and firms would fold.

Packard didn't restrict his perspective to Oregon; his advocacy of project insurance galvanized the professions, brought ZGF attention and credibility, attracted local and then national media coverage, and brought about extensive new connections. And, it enabled the firm to renegotiate its contracts with its clients, an important bonus.

Fame Principle 2: If you don't ask, you don't get.

A few years back, Michael Avramides ran a flourishing community housing practice. When word of an opportunity to design, *pro bono*, an 890-square-foot Ben & Jerry's "partnership" on 125th Street reached him, Avramides got the

I'm nobody!
Who are you?

assignment from the startled owner, who almost didn't expect anyone would step forth. The scoop shop was staffed by residents from a nearby shelter who worked there for the training and sense of purpose.

Although Avramides wasn't concerned, as his consultant I was hesitant to tell the world – especially his clients – that he was designing for free. Good things started happening immediately. Ben and Jerry themselves traveled from Vermont for the mid-summer opening. Opening day, crowds came for the special events and free ice cream, served by “celebrity scoopers,” including some Avramides clients.

National media turned up, too. Kids and ice cream is a good photo op, and Los Angeles was in flames that same month. Every network, every New York daily, and *People* magazine carried interviews and pictures of the store, the workers, and especially the owner, with his arm around his beaming, if somewhat embarrassed, architect. *Metropolitan Home* celebrated Avramides's good heart (so much for my instincts about his charitable gesture). Success derived from a great story, not about the prescribed and humble architecture, but about the selfless architect.

Fame Principle 3: Get caught doing good deeds.

Charles Linn, FAIA, in addition to his long history as an editor and special projects organizer within *Architectural Record*, was part of the team that annually presented extraordinary discussions about architecture and ethics at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. “Choose something you know about, and have

a passion for, and get out there and do something about it,” Linn exhorts. “Get known! People do have to know you are doing something.”

In other words, if Bob Packard had just said his fill at that businessmen's luncheon and sat down, if Mike Avramides had just sketched out the store and gone back to his office, or if Charles Linn had sent out an announcement of the program – their service to their community, client base, and profession would not have been as effective and influential. Inspire others to similar engagement and inevitably you bring attention to your own service.

Don't enter every competition that comes along. Besides the expense and emotional toll, your chances of getting visibility and useful connections are far greater if, say, you lobby actively to change a law that hampers your community's ability to build, as Russ Davidson, FAIA, has done. Become truly expert in some facet of architecture and lecture. Raise the level of architectural literacy in the U.S. That will cut through the cacophony of the marketplace “so dominated,” as Stanley Stark, FAIA, says, “by celebrity and entertainment values.”

Or, run for office. I remember standing on a windy street corner to hawk the candidacy of the late architect John Boogaerts, FAIA, when he decided to run for Congress. Then someone got in my face: “What makes you think that an architect – an architect! – could ever be an asset to the House and to the

neighborhood?” What a moment of truth for someone who has spent her career telling people about the value of good design!

Boogaerts didn't win the seat, but he had moxie that ultimately catapulted his architectural career. A decade later, Richard Swett, FAIA, parlayed his excellent training and connections into a term in Washington and then service in Denmark as our Ambassador. If he never designed a building, Swett's advocacy earned him important visibility.

Fame Principle 4: It all comes down to access.

Long ago I realized that there are only three things you want from astute public relations: visibility, credibility, and access. I have already pointed out that you do not need built work to be visible or credible. But how do you get access? By getting curious about what other people know – among them, the client base.

Michael Farewell, FAIA, actually achieved all three in a way that bespeaks creativity and professionalism. Invited to address the New Jersey State League of Municipalities on cultural entities and economic development – a great audience, if you design civic structures – Farewell wondered how arts institutions around the state viewed his topic. What things might really get done, or not, and why? He hit the road, interviewing New Jersey museum and theater directors in person. This research added color as well as authority to his remarks. His speech was well

promoted, well received, and reported – and he now has access to these influential citizens and officials.

Fame Principle 5:

“Accomplishment” depends on your own perspective.

A young architect earnestly asked for my advice. He had restored the lobby of a Queens apartment building and wanted to get it published. Usually people come to me with entire buildings to promote; still, I talked him through the drill, wondering if it were irresponsible to raise his expectations. The lobby may have become more distinctive, but would an editor find it consequential?

Clearly, he felt empowered. He produced his package – design statement, storyline, pictures and captions, plans, fact sheet, binder – went the rounds, and landed up with coverage in *Oculus*, *New York Construction News*, a couple of the real estate publications, and one of the design magazines. They appreciated his well-prepared presentation and took him seriously.

This final anecdote is not meant to rev up every young practitioner or new office; rather, it's to point out that if you think you're good and that what you do is good, it probably is worthy of attention, somewhere.

Final Fame Principle: Follow your star boldly – then use the results wisely.

Joan Capelin, president of Capelin Communications and author of *Communication by Design*, salutes poet Emily Dickinson, whose poem provided the title to this article.

A More Perfect Union

Good architecture requires a partnership between client and firm and that starts with marketing

By Steve Gifford, AIA, and Linda Crites

The architectural industry abounds with capable firms seeking to win distinctive commissions. Consistent winners are those who have special attributes and who have identified and worked with clients whose needs match those attributes.

Achieving real market differentiation is difficult. It requires a firm to identify its true strengths while critically evaluating its culture, structure, and priorities. David Koren, director of marketing of Gensler's Northeast region, suggests firms should ask themselves: "Where are you and where do you want to go? What are you good at? What do you specialize in? Who are your competitors? Can you find a space where no one can compete with you?"

Differentiation requires leaders to honestly evaluate the firm's capabilities and achievements. By identifying their strongest architectural skills, the firm can target the clients who need their expertise. Medical institutions can find the best lab planners, residential developers the strongest high-rise experts, and universities the leading library designers. Strong partnerships form when clients with a specific need find firms with that capability, all without sacrificing design.

Firms that define and stick to their niche will find themselves able to transcend market sectors. Capitalizing on his ability to create "experiences," David Rockwell, who had established a reputation in hospitality, was able to break into the tough healthcare market. In *Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irrelevant* (Harvard Business School Press, 2005), authors W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne use empirical evidence collected from 108 companies to show how unconventional differentiation accounts for significant revenue and profit.

Get inside the client's mind

Market differentiation is also a fascinating way to look inside the minds of your client, prospective client, and competitor. Is the client concerned about conserving financial resources, worried about attracting the best employees, making a name for him or herself, living within beauty, saving the earth? The firm that can answer these questions about its clients and then identify and shape insights related to them are those that will win distinctive commissions.

The easiest way to identify and shape those insights is by having access to information about your clients. Peruse their websites, read articles about them, and, most importantly, pick up the phone. "The most successful marketing is face to face. Relationship marketing works," remarks Sharyn Yorio, president, Sustainable Marketing, Inc. and president of the New Jersey chapter of the Society for Marketing Professional Services. Yorio believes that many firms don't check in with clients, or past clients, as much as they think they do. Given the 80/20 rule (80% of your business comes from 20% of your clients), it makes sense to stay in touch.

It is the client's perspective, not the firm's, that should drive market differentiation efforts. Differentiation is about demonstrating the ways in which the firm is better than everyone else in areas the client

most values. "You have to understand what your competitors are saying," says marketing consultant Nancy Kleppel, who works with Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects. She conducted a comparative analysis of websites for one architectural client and found that they all looked the same. "You should understand very clearly where you fit. If you're in the middle, you should push yourself to one of the extremes so you have a clear message to communicate," she suggests.

Inside assets

Many firms have potential marketers on staff – without realizing it. Every employee, be they firm leaders, senior staff, or interns, should understand the firm's marketing goals and be comfortable articulating them. The newest employees are some of the best sources of human resource talent and new work – how do they speak about the firm and their role in it? "Everyone needs to be the best marketer they can. My job is to make sure the same message is understood at all company levels," says Gensler's Koren.

Hillier Architecture redesigned its website almost three years ago using an approach that focused on staff, since they are the ones who come up with inspirational design and programming notions. The homepage engages viewers with questions such as, "Can a staircase make coming to work more fun?," "Can school design help kids get better test scores?," "Can architecture help save the environment?" and offers answers that highlight architecture's place in the world. The homepage, which won a gold medal from Entablature in 2004, is updated regularly.

Clear targets

Particularly for firms with limited budgets, targeted marketing is the only approach that makes sense. Marketing consultant Yorio consistently sees small firms make the expensive mistake of going after a large, ill-defined group of clients. "Instead of doing good planning, they go back to the old shotgun method," she observes.

Yorio says that every effort, whether public relations, direct mail, awards, or proposal submissions, should be vetted against a firm's narrow targets. The general media is becoming much savvier about design. They want design and architecture stories, but from sources who speak about particular trends or changes. They seek sources who have niches: do you know about tall buildings, public schools, innovative building materials, global style trends? They respond to "tip sheets," which list experts, their areas of knowledge, and contact information.

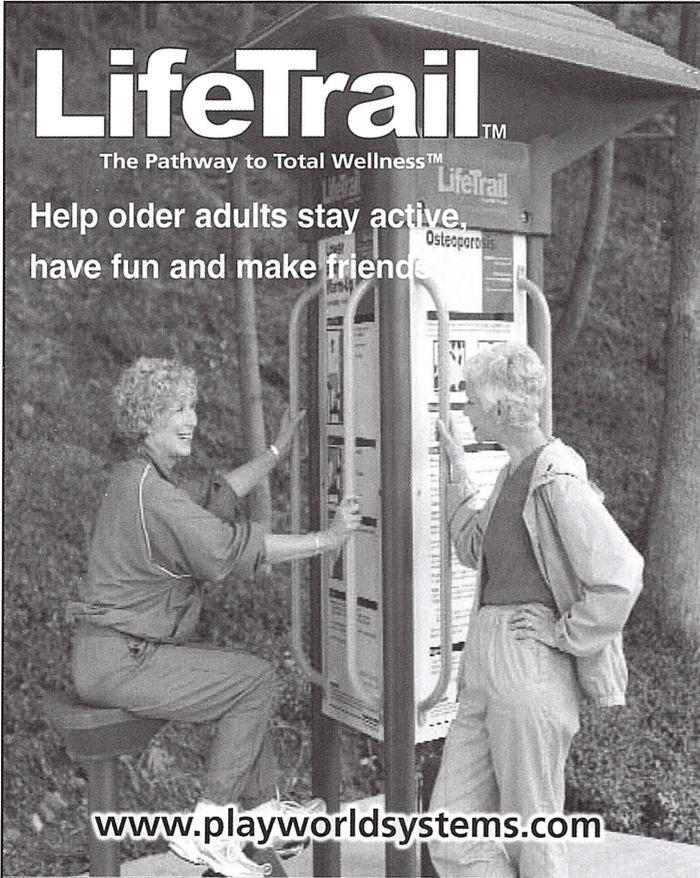
Naturally, architecture must live up to its marketing promises. The firm should achieve client expectations – even exceed them. After all, architects have fewer options than other professions in dealing with dashed expectations. "A doctor can bury his mistakes but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines," Frank Lloyd Wright once observed.

Steve Gifford, AIA, is managing principal of Hillier Architecture's New York office. Linda Crites is assistant manager for marketing communications.

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The window on the left
was built in the 1930s.
The one on the right, last week.
Or was that vice versa?

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Talking into the Wind

The architecture
blogosphere:
future or fallacy?
By Nic Musolino

Mainstream Media (MSM) is dead! Long live, etc.! This is an interesting enough debate when you are in the realm of the punditocracy, but is a bit more poignant when one peruses the increasingly barren landscape of architectural journals, magazines, and the like. The MSAP (Mainstream Architectural Press) may well be dying, but I'm not in any hurry to hasten it off.

The question is whether this decline could be considered a lemonade-making moment for alternate modes of critical discourse. *The Architect's Newspaper* is certainly worried, and devoted a November issue to the future of criticism.

The praises and criticisms of blogs have been hashed out many times already: more voices, less rigor; immediate but unedited; impassioned yet overly partisan. None of these comments are exclusive to blogging, and have been leveled at various media forms in their history. In many ways, the evolution of blogs as a media is entirely unexceptional.

What may be unique and empowering, however, is the relevance of Twain's crack about not picking fights with those who buy ink by the barrel. The challenges of what is always called "niche publishing" revolve around distribution and presumed fealty to the limited advertising sources that underwrite such efforts.

Blogs circumvent this with instantaneous worldwide reach and an ability to write as much (or as little) as is editorially necessary – with

little concern about advertising support. This has resulted in a surprising amount of regular editorial output, with a refreshing range of viewpoints.

Blogs are clearly legitimate competition for traditional media – a distinction that becomes harder as television-, newspaper-, and magazine-based journalists start blogs and as bloggers are crossing over in the opposite direction. Competition and commingling is more evi-

dent in niche areas, where audiences are fractured, but tend to be committed, and where the vicissitudes of profit-driven publishing have limited the number of outlets.

But that doesn't mean that this new paradigm has upended what may have traditionally been seen as a conflict in architectural publishing. Few blogs garner any revenue, and most operate at a loss. Whereas this may provide maximum editorial freedom, it also relegates blog production to a sideline effort for most, a model that is likely untenable over the long term.

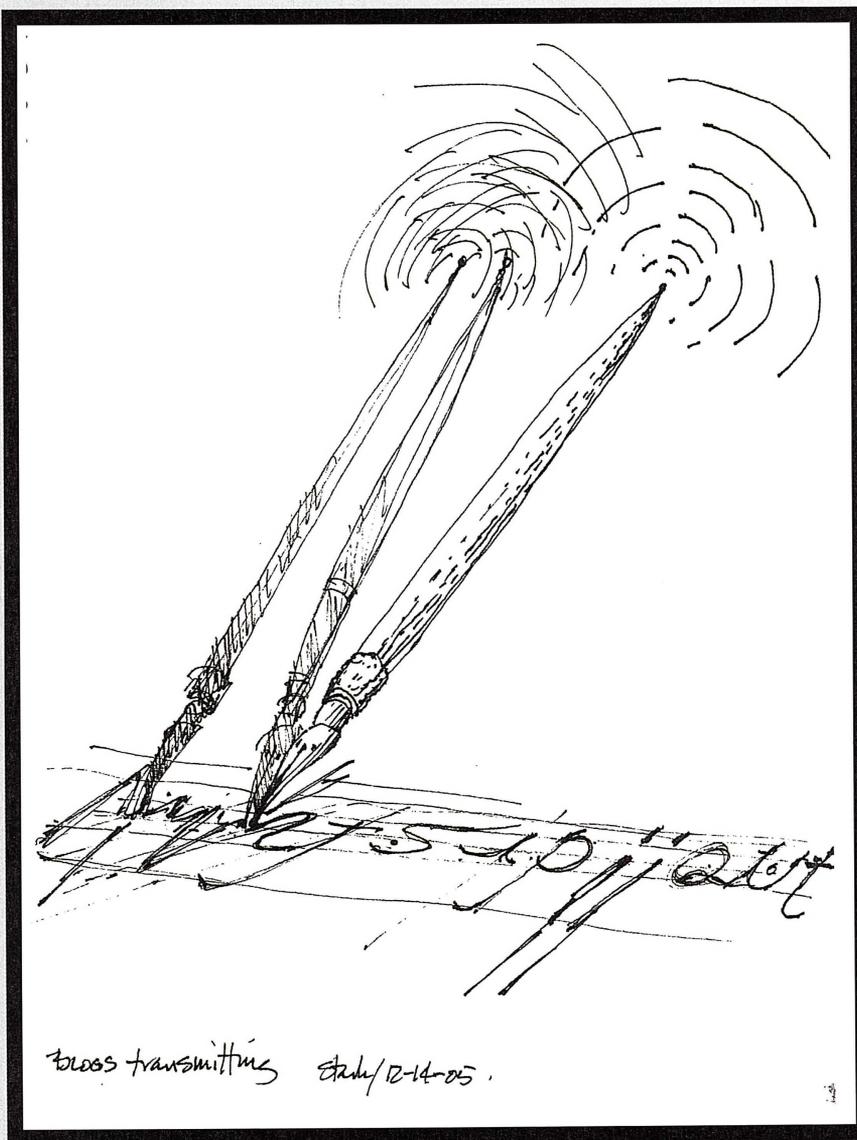
All the same, blogs focused on architecture, design, and urban issues are flourishing. The most successful exploit the unique advantages the unique medium presents: the ability to have a narrow focus but unlimited

scope (and no pressure for a fixed publishing schedule).

The Roundup

The Box Tank (www.theboxtank.com) focuses commentary on big box store development, with a specific stance *vis-à-vis* Wal-Mart. Run

STANLEY STARK



by local practicing architects Emily Andersen and Geoff DeOld, it analyzes the practical reality of land development in “fly-over” country without kowtowing to mandates of mass merchandisers. Though they have a much broader focus (geographically) than most local bloggers, their particular issue will be of more interest to local readers over the next few years, as Wal-Mart continues its campaign to enter the local market.

Dave Marston’s [Transfer](http://www.usemenow.com/web-log) (www.usemenow.com/web-log) is best known for a particular obsession, which is the relentless documentation of barriers, spikes, or other forms of what is euphemistically called “seating control” (on the site, it is simply the “anti-sit”). Initially it seems to be a quixotic rant, but the scale of the collection transforms it into a taxonomy of anti-urban control gestures (spiked railings, planters) that indict the meanness with which much of our supposedly liberal urban oasis is controlled.

[Curbed](http://www.curbed.com) (www.curbed.com) is by far the best known, and most successful, demonstrating how clever commentary need not be antithetical to revenue. Harnessing a topic of wide interest (real estate) that is being transformed by the immediacy and pervasiveness of the Internet, Curbed does not surrender any of its snark even as it garners ad dollars from the very targets of its wit. The real estate section of a newspaper, typically seen as a gloss of press releases pasted on the front of lucrative listings, here becomes gleefully inverted, providing incisive commentary on the excesses of the current housing bubble. And it may well be transforming how real estate is sold, since it’s the only media source that openly challenges the aggressive bluster of property owners looking for exploitative sales or rentals. A recently added feature, “the Price-Chopper,” shames listings that are egregious even by New York’s standards.

Though Curbed was well known within publishing circles due to the day job of its publisher, Lockhart Steele (also known as the managing editor of Gawker.com, the doyenne of New York blogs), it became far more relevant to the architecture community with the launch of [The Gutter](http://gutter.curbed.com) (gutter.curbed.com), which bills itself as “ill-mannered commentary on the architectural arts,” and succeeds on that front more often than not. Focusing more on personality and gossip than buildings may be a critically lazy stance, but it is also wildly successful.

Taking a slightly friendlier stance, albeit with a similar tone, is Unbeige (mediabistro.com/UnBeige). Nominally a generalist design blog, Unbeige has featured a decidedly architectural slant, given editor Eva Hagberg’s pedigree as an up-and-coming design journalist. Rounding out the journalist-cum-blogger set is Lisa Chamberlain (seen frequently in the real estate pages of the Gray Lady), who recently launched [Polis](http://nycenviroins.blogspot.com) (nycenviroins.blogspot.com), chronicling “The built, the virtual, the bizarre, the wonderful.” Further up the “MSM” food chain is the online arm of the *New York Observer’s* excellent [The Real Estate](http://www.observer.com/therealestate) (www.observer.com/therealestate), which still manages to break more stories about development than any other source in the city.

The most recent entry is also the first to follow a start-up/brand extension model. Josh Rubin (publisher of the widely-read “Cool Hunting”) tapped architect Chad Smith to helm [Tropolism](http://www.tropolism.com) (www.tropolism.com), which is amalgam of the best aspects of the blogs list. Equal parts enthusiasm and snark, with a healthy dose of high-gloss images, it works to celebrate the best of current design without abandoning a sense of critical rigor or healthy self-deprecation.

Writing an article about blogging for a print publication calls to mind the weakness of any “trend” article. Between preparation and printing, more names will be added, and perhaps some will disappear. A number of credible, if occasional, voices are already excluded. But most all the sites on this list have helpful links to the wider network of interesting and unique resources.

The next step of development will look very much like the evolution of any new medium: expansion, consolidation, co-optation, and perhaps even institutionalization. Straddling a moment where print journalism seems to be stumbling badly, it is a proverbial worst-of-times/best-of-time moment, and the conventional way to end a piece like this would be the prototypical regret for lost favorites and optimism for an uncharted future. But I don’t have time for that – I’ve got a blog post I need to finish.

[Nic Musolino](http://www.missrepresentation.com) is the publisher of www.missrepresentation.com (a blog, yes), and recently collaborated with Alexander Gelman to edit *Infiltrate: The Front Lines of the New York Design Scene* (DAP, 2005).

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A Critic's Choice

DAMIEN DONCK FOR NEWSWEEK



Newsweek's Cathleen McGuigan speaks out on the public's need to know

OCULUS: As architecture critic at *Newsweek*, what inspires you to write about architecture?

MCGUIGAN: Putting the word about design in front of readers. This is something that somebody like me can do in a tiny way to get people to think. People feel remarkably helpless in the environment that surrounds them. If you talk about a movie, everybody's a critic, and they know how to think about a movie. But people don't know how to think about architecture.

OCULUS: Who is your reader?

MCGUIGAN: I write for a national news magazine where the main purpose is not architecture and design, it's not even the arts, it's news. So we do not cover architectural events in anything like the depth of even a luxury feature magazine like *Vanity Fair* or *W*, certainly not like the shelter magazines and obviously not like the professional magazines. Our audience is the general reader. We decide what to

cover by what they really, really need to know to be culturally literate. Our readers are a broad cross-section. We have a circulation of over three million. Some read certain parts of the magazine. Some read it from start to finish. They're a general, interested, educated reader. But they're not a design audience.

OCULUS: What is your objective?

MCGUIGAN: People take what's offered to them, whether it's buying a house off the rack or whatever. I wrote a piece about the market for new houses that got a tremendous amount of attention. So if I can get two or three ideas in a piece, with something to wrap your head around that's clear, then I feel like I've done what I can. But I have to have something more to say than "this is just a pretty building and I like it."

OCULUS: How do you decide what they're going to read next week?

MCGUIGAN: I get a lot of my leads from other publications, from the firms, from projects. We do projects that are of national significance. We're much more likely to do cultural projects. Recently, I've done the de Young Museum in San Francisco and the High Museum in Atlanta. I think in terms of trends in architecture, if it's a new direction. We cover certain key architects as figures, where their fame has pre-

ceded them. We try to explain why certain star architects are stars – or even if indeed they should be stars.

OCULUS: Have you ever made a name for an architect through *Newsweek*?

MCGUIGAN: I wouldn't say so. But yes, I have a lot of influence by what I pick, but that's because we do so little, so the picks stand out. The fact that we do so little bothers me. I'd like to do a lot more. But at this point, I need to give my editors and the readers the Leonardo di Caprios of architects. And I'm competing for space with mass culture.

OCULUS: Do you compete inside *Newsweek*?

MCGUIGAN: Yes. Because architecture is regarded as an art – one of the visual arts,

They're a general, interested, educated reader.

along with painting and photography and so on. There's such a new interest in design – so I keep arguing that younger readers, whom all the magazines these days covet, are much more design literate. But in the end, I'm in a general interest news magazine, and there is competition for space.

I generally don't write features. I write about something that's about to happen, about to open, about what's on people's radar. For example, Renzo Piano, who has six museums opening

in the U.S. in the next two years; this is the first (his addition to the Richard Meier-designed High Museum in Atlanta).

OCULUS: How did you cover the Ground Zero story?

MCGUIGAN: My editors saw it as an ongoing news story; they were interested in what was going to go in the place of the Twin Towers almost immediately. It was a chance to do an unfolding story of the struggle between all the different constituents. And it could be written as a real design news story, the different stages of competition. It was fascinating. There was all this intrigue. But I couldn't do all that some of my colleagues could do, who have a daily paper to put stories in.

OCULUS: How many words do you get?

MCGUIGAN: It's not so much the words, it's the number of stories. I don't get a lot of space. I've learned to cram it with information. If I get in one architecture story a month, that's pretty good. I also occasionally do book reviews and write about other matters.

OCULUS: Do you set trends?

MCGUIGAN: I like to be first, and my editors really care about being first. We did the first Zaha Hadid in Cincinnati piece among the big publica-

tions. I'm not just trying to say good building thumbs up, bad building thumbs down. I'm trying to say this is an important project by a really interesting architect or architectural firm, and here's why we should care and why we should be interested, and here's what's different about it, here's the ground that's been broken, here's why it matters.

OCULUS: What about Bilbao?

MCGUIGAN: I was the first, I think, general interest critic to write about Bilbao before it opened. I scooped *Architectural Record* actually, by a couple of weeks.

OCULUS: How critical is photography to people's understanding of architecture?

MCGUIGAN: Icon-like photographs can make a building. There's the really famous Julius Shulman photograph of the Pierre Konig Case Study House with the glass box extending out over the abyss of Los Angeles, yellow lights, 1950s ladies in their full skirts, but nobody would recognize that house from the photo. It's literally a small corner of the house

Then there's the Rem Koolhaas house outside Paris. A woman is about to dive in the pool that's on the roof, and the Eiffel Tower is in the background. Well, trust me, it's a little house, it doesn't look anything like that on the street. You can't see the pool.

The most brilliant iconic photo of recent times was the picture of Bilbao that the *New York Times Magazine* put on the cover. It was looking down a street of 19th-century buildings with only a partial view of the Gehry museum. You could-

n't even see the whole building. It was a brave kind of picture to choose.

OCULUS: Can the media help in developing a more discriminating client?

MCGUIGAN: Media publicity has some of that effect. But the most sophisticated clients have their own reasons for picking their architect. Think of Bilbao – the huge attention that it got. In that sense, sure, the media is really powerful. But at the end

Icon-like photographs can make a building.

of the day they don't have a lot to do with the selection of architects.

OCULUS: How does PR help firms get publicity?

MCGUIGAN: I find that some firms have really aggressive marketing outlets, key marketing people inside or outside, or they hire firms. They get a certain kind of attention.

OCULUS: So do clients.

MCGUIGAN: Yes. For example, the Museum of Modern Art did an exhaustive publicity campaign for the new building by Taniguchi that began well before the building opened, and included taking journalists to see his buildings in Japan. They took two dozen journalists to Japan, twice.

OCULUS: As junkets?

MCGUIGAN: There's lots of junketeering. I'm not allowed to take junkets. Nobody from the *New York Times* takes them. But there are many who do. *Newsweek* allowed me to go on one of the trips [to Japan], but the magazine paid all my expenses, not MoMA. I under-

stood the minute I saw Taniguchi's museums there why he was hired. Not that they could ever build that level of quality here.

OCULUS: Is an owner such as MoMA essentially paying for an article?

MCGUIGAN: No. But did everybody who went on the trip produce an article? You bet.

OCULUS: What triggered your interest in architecture?

MCGUIGAN: I came from the art world. I first got into it because architects were so much nicer to talk to than artists. Because architects have to know how to pitch. They have to know how to be social – it's a social art.

OCULUS: How would you assess the 80 or 85 percent of buildings put up in America that are never published? They may be efficient to operate, and clean, the circulation works, they were finished on budget, on schedule. But they're ignored.

MCGUIGAN: Of the modern buildings in America that I know about, 85 percent are completely mediocre. I could rail against it, but it seems to me part of this educational function is training people to think for themselves about what really makes something good.

OCULUS: Is the public qualified to make design and planning decisions?

MCGUIGAN: When the six World Trade Center plans by Beyer Blinder Belle were undergoing public review, the more cynical amongst us predicted

that the process of choosing a project and a designer was doomed to failure. But there was that moment when the first six schemes were rejected. And I went to one of those "Imagine New York" charrettes. I found them incredibly moving.

I would sit at tables with these people doing charrettes. That they'd even shown up was amazing. They had trace paper and markers. Now, they had ideas. And they could talk the lingo. They were self-select-

ed. They cared about it. They didn't have any special education or design background. They were New Yorkers. And it said to me that there are people out there who really care about design.

OCULUS: Do you see your role as a critic or a journalist?

MCGUIGAN: Certain critics are there to talk the professional talk with each other, and that's necessary. The part I do is to try to make readers feel like they could actually be knowledgeably engaged in the process. It's not about whether or not they're going to pick this designer or that. But in some way they will begin to react to something, to learn to trust some basic criteria.

Cathleen McGuigan is a senior editor and architecture critic at *Newsweek*. A graduate of Brown University, she is a former Loeb Fellow at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University.

Interview by **Susan Chin, FAIA**, and **Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA**

Mediating Architecture: A Talk with András Szántó



András Szántó earned a doctorate in sociology from Columbia University, analyzing changes in New York's arts community. His writings in the U.S. and his native Hungary have explored cultural mediation, policy, and economics. He has performed research at the Media Studies Center and directed the National Arts Journalism Program. Meeting recently at the St. Regis Hotel with writer Bill Millard, he discussed the challenges facing arts journalism. Here are some highlights.

Bill Millard: What constitutes good art and architecture writing?

András Szántó: It's like pornography: you know it when you see it, and it's hard to define. A couple of years ago we did a survey of critics, and we asked, "What do you emphasize when you're writing criticism and reviews? Do you emphasize describing the work, theorizing about the work, contextualizing it, writing well, or judging?" Now, if you look at the dictionary, probably any definition of criticism is going to have the word "judging" in there. And yet, to our great consternation, judging turned out to be the least popular element.

Today, when Modernism is a thing of the past, and a plurality of values has taken hold, the judging part has become pretty problematic. Other than one's intuitive and impressionistic response to the work, on the basis of what system of ideas or hierarchy of values are you exercising that judgment, if and when we have spent the last 20 to 25 years deconstructing the idea that there is a hierarchy of values?

I think architecture has a saving grace: you are talking about utilitarian objects that need to function. There is a kind of baseline. Can you circulate through this building? Does it offer shelter? Does it live

up to modern expectations of sustainability? Does it complement the skyline, the neighborhood? In architecture it's a little easier to say what good criticism is, because it's easier to arrive at certain values that are not contested.

Thinking about architecture draws tremendous energy from this whole new way of looking at buildings based on their sustainability. Although we have had to say goodbye to the idea of Modernist progress, we now have this whole new metric where in fact it is possible to say that Building A is better than Building B. You now have recourse to a fairly objective and sharable system of discourse. That is going to give a big shot in the arm to architecture criticism, just as it's given a big shot in the arm to architecture.

BM Are there qualities in other realms of art criticism where you would find useful criteria that don't apply in architecture criticism?

AS There is an enormous domain of critical discourse specific to the performing arts: the whole idea of interpretation of masterworks. Predominantly, classical music criticism is an exercise in evaluating the performance of classic texts. That happens to give [critics] their own sort of bedrock foundation. Even though they too suffer from this postmodern malaise, at least if you hear a virtuoso Rachmaninoff's Third, you know you've heard a virtuoso

Some of the most egregious cases of hypertheoretical writing happen to be about architecture, which I consider a great irony.

Rachmaninoff's Third. There's a history of realizations of the same performance, all of which are now available on recordings, and it is possible that somebody may say, "Well, that performance was bombastic," or "That performance wasn't Russian enough."

That is not there for architecture in the same way. Every work – one hopes – is something new. Maybe in church construction you could say that a certain Gothic cathedral was a more perfect manifestation of the idea of the Gothic, and maybe at the high point of Modernism that certain Mies buildings were more virtuosic embodiments of the idea of Modernism. But, on the whole, we don't think of architecture that way. There is very little architecture, other than Disneyland, that consists of recreating old buildings. We could do that; it would be an interesting world to imagine.

BM Jean Baudrillard, the French postmodern media/cultural theorist who identified Disneyland as a paradigm for all

that is “hyper-real” in American culture, would probably say we already are.

AS Well, we certainly were in the 1980s. Here we’re one block away from the “Chippendale” building [Johnson/Burgee, 1986]. Maybe during that time there was a certain hardcore Postmodernism. But in architecture we have favored newness: each building has to have its own validity and level of success relative to its site, its context, its place.

BM For a critic who’s going to evaluate these forms that require an attentiveness to types of newness – reinventing criteria at every performance – what’s the best background?

AS The dirty secret of a journalism school is that you probably don’t have to do this to become a critic. I certainly don’t think that criticism falls in the category of heart surgery, where you need to become professionally trained to practice with a license. That’s both a good thing and a bad thing, and probably predominantly a good thing, because it allows lots of types of people to get involved.

Architecture’s a very interesting case. Some of the most egregious cases of hypertheoretical writing happen to be about architecture, which I consider a great irony. The most practical, real-world art form seems to give rise to the most ethereally theoretical critical mulch that you’ve ever read. I suspect that some reason may be that a lot of people who do the writing haven’t built buildings. I do think it would be ideal if writers could come to it with grounding in architecture, and also in urban design and preservation.

The successful critic today is able to recognize value in a hundred different places, explain why those are valuable on their own terms, and ultimately cobble together a higher-order complexity. A critic has to be an amazing sponge for a variety of influences.

One of the great things about our new discourse is that it’s increasingly able to pull away from individual masterpieces and virtuosos; we have learned to understand and see the arts as a system. I think there’s greater appreciation for the forest than for the trees today.

BM For the writer navigating a couple of forests – not just that forest, but the forest of the institutional imperatives of the media – what would you recommend to do the best and most responsible job?

AS These are not good times for journalism. Newspapers are increasingly turning out to be the road kill on the “information superhighway.” That seems so quaint, but we are seeing the playing-out of the online paradigms, and this has been devastating for newspapers. Newspapers are doing what any company would do:

These are not good times for journalism. Newspapers are increasingly turning out to be the road kill on the “information superhighway.”

maintain core staff and outsource everything that can be outsourced. For better or worse, culture coverage is eminently outsourcable.

The good news is that in some respects cultural writing already represents the brave new world of journalism, partly because of the long history of freelancing, but also it’s not “objective” journalism. It’s a journalism of engagement. It’s thriving outside of newspapers and in the online environment, which tends to be heavily skewed to editorializing, value-driven, analytical, perspective-oriented content.

In Europe, you know the newspaper’s point of view, and that comes through all of its reporting. I think the American system is wonderful, as long as it isn’t used to sugarcoat the biases. The reality is, sadly, that those biases are there, but that people try to surround them with just the right amount of quotes and little objectivity tricks to make it seem as though it’s purely objective. When it comes to criticism, I wonder if “objective criticism” is an oxymoron.

BM What institutions might help readers get a clearer sense of those biases and understand the territory better?

AS The solution to all these problems – and I’m sad to say I don’t think there’s a way back – is more newspapers. In many cities of this world today, what used to be true in America 80 years ago is still true: there are five, six, seven daily newspapers. In no part of the newspaper has this had greater positive effects than in culture, because the very idea of discourse presumes that there are different points of view competing in the public arena. A lot of the problems that plague journalism have to do with the fact that for most newspapers this competition has fallen by the wayside. I don’t think that there’s any single institution that could remedy the loss of multi-newspaper towns.

I think that we really are the poorer for the lack of a cultural foundation/think tank that is as aggressively interested in conducting a public debate about the arts as political think tanks. It boggles the mind that we are sitting in the world’s largest cultural city, and we have no designated institute, academically based or otherwise, that hosts public debates on the arts, provides new information on the arts in a kind of centrist way, and advances the quality of public dialogue on the arts. Without this I think we lose, collectively as an industry. It is certainly what I would hope to see if I could wave my magic wand.

Bill Millard is a contributor to *Icon*, OMA’s *Content*, and other publications.

You didn't have to be there – at the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington, the open field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, the Ninth Ward in New Orleans, or the coastal communities of Mississippi and Louisiana – to experience the horror of what man and nature unleashed on innocent people and the built environment on September 11, 2001, or August 29, 2005. Day after day, the media hurled images of catastrophe from America's own shores into our faces. It would be reasonable to suppose that 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina represent turning points in the public's perception of architecture. How could the public fail to care about its most important buildings and places after witnessing such destruction? Why wouldn't increased public interest improve the planning and design process? Wouldn't the newly informed public start directly advocating good design?

So it seemed, at least initially. Even as New Yorkers grieved for victims of the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers – a project designed by Minoru Yamasaki that now enjoys unprecedented reverence – they

“And all who question the future of the Crescent City need to know: There is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again.” The date was September 15, 2005.

The case for optimism: We're all in this together, right?

There's good reason to think an appreciation of architecture runs deeper in the American soul than cynical architects might suppose. As Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, explains, 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina reminded the public how vital and symbolic public buildings and major public places are in our lives. “A century ago,” he points out, “the nation deliberately designed its schools, courthouses, and libraries to be great buildings. If people respected the buildings, they respected the functions they represented too.” Moe is encouraged by the public's interest in replacing the World Trade Center, which surprised planners and architects alike. “Katrina and 9/11 have sensitized us to this issue again,” he concludes.

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Turning Points in Public Perception of Design

openly speculated about rebuilding the site. When an extraordinary town hall meeting of 5,000 citizens soundly rejected six preliminary rebuilding plans proposed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in July 2002, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation sponsored a design competition that engaged some of the world's most renowned architects, organized as Foster and Partners, Richard Meier and Partners, Peterson/Littenberg, Studio Libeskind, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, THINK Team, and United Architects. With the public enthusiastically voicing its own opinions, Daniel Libeskind was announced the winner. The date was February 27, 2003.

A few years later, the nation recoiled from the sight of Katrina's victims and their drowned homes, and sent people, supplies, and money to rescue the Big Easy and other Gulf Coast communities. To its credit, Congress speedily approved over \$60 billion in aid. President Bush, realizing his administration had badly underestimated Katrina's impact, visited the region repeatedly and conducted a nationally televised address from Jackson Square in the Vieux Carré to pledge federal support. The president declared, “Tonight I also offer this pledge of the American people: Throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes... we will stay as long as it takes... to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives.” He added,

Despite massive media coverage of 9/11 and Katrina, the real impact on how the public perceives design is still in doubt

By Roger Yee

Losing the World Trade Center and much of New Orleans has certainly made architects more appreciated, both as experts on planning and design and as sources of design creativity. Robert Ivy, FAIA, editor-in-chief of *Architectural Record*, states, “I believe 9/11 in particular had a strong impact on the public's perception of architects. People saw an immense void appear in the urban fabric and looked to architects for answers. They became aware of architects' ability to affect their environment, wellbeing, and way of life. Talk about architects and architecture actually entered everyday conversation in New York.” Ivy admits that Hurricane Katrina presented a more complex situation. Because the Gulf Coast's environmental problems are so vast, recovery operations and stabilization of the delta are taking top priority.

Architects are contributing enthusiastically to the dialogue about the Gulf Coast's recovery, helping the public deal with the painful questions of what should be saved, reconstructed, or replaced. “The

fact that architects have publicly faced tough issues in a positive way on numerous occasions has helped people understand that design professionals have a direct, profound, and positive effect on their lives,” reports Reed Kroloff, dean of the School of Architecture at Tulane University, a leading New Orleans institution since 1834. “The public has seen architects in the forefront here for months.” Kroloff, who was appointed by Mayor Ray Nagin as co-chair of the urban design subcommittee of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission, feels that architects are natural spokespersons for planning and design, and shouldn’t hesitate to step forward.

The case for pessimism: Katrina who?

Despite the public’s best intentions, things are not going smoothly at Ground Zero or for the Queen of the Mississippi. Libeskind’s bold and sophisticated master plan and design for the World Trade Center site has yielded to a more conventional vision with three major elements: a 9/11 memorial designed by architect Michael Arad, AIA, Max Bond, FAIA, and landscape architect Peter Walker, FASLA; a Freedom Tower designed by David Childs, FAIA, and his colleagues at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; and a transportation hub designed by architect Santiago Calatrava, FAIA. Unfortunately, Libeskind’s winning concept has all but disappeared, a victim of politics and business.



KRISTEN RICHARDS

New York: Ground Zero, November 2001

Meanwhile, New Orleans and its neighboring cities and towns are struggling with a reluctant federal government over the cost of rebuilding the levees, sewers, and other key infrastructure that will protect and serve the Gulf Coast even as public and private rebuilding continues. Estimates range well above \$100 billion, and the White House has asked that money for New Orleans be subtracted from other items in the federal

budget. To make matters worse, media attention threatens to drift elsewhere – a possibility *Time* magazine highlighted in its November 28, 2005, cover story about the city’s many unresolved problems.

How can architects keep the public concerned about architecture? Architect Scott Lauer, executive director of openhousenewyork, an organization that promotes public awareness of New York’s built environment through tours and other educational programs, thinks his colleagues must regularly bring relevant issues to the public’s attention. “Ideally, the successful introduction of good design and innovation will increase the appetite for more,” he says. “However, in order to build a power constituency for good design and planning, our



LANCE JAY BROWN, FAIA

New Orleans: Pink wall, collapsed by hurricane Katrina, adjacent to ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) headquarters, November 2005

own design community must continue to join forces and reach out to the public.” His sentiments are echoed by Kroloff, who notes that the successful effort to preserve New York’s High Line, the elevated railroad viaduct running from Gansevoort Street in the Meatpacking District through West Chelsea to the Hudson Yards, was launched by just two determined individuals, Robert Hammond and Joshua David, founders of Friends of the High Line.

What should architects, whose way with the spoken word is often idiosyncratic at best, tell the public? Andrew Blum, contributing editor at *BusinessWeek* Online and *Metropolis*, urges them to put aside conceptual discussions for storytelling. “The public responds to stories, much as the Bush administration does,” he suggests. “With storytelling, you don’t need to deal with the formal values of design.” Blum is convinced that Libeskind owed his success at Ground Zero to his emotional portrayal of the site. He also admires the anecdotal way architect Andres Duany, FAIA, tells large audiences how life in New Orleans should be.

Of course, the public will have to be taught something about the planning and design process that characterizes development in America, a complex undertaking that occurs largely behind the closed doors of power brokers. Happily, it’s not impossible to understand. Architects must do it, with or without a 9/11 or Katrina to empower them, every working day.

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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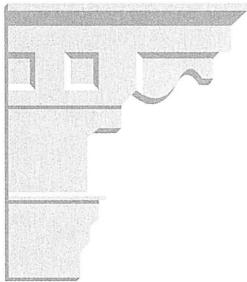
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Epitaph for a Critic

Outside View

By Sheri Olson, FAIA



SHERI OLSON

A negative review of this project revealed risks to freelance critics

My short-lived career as an architecture critic could be attributed to the fact that I just wasn't nice enough for Seattle: in a notoriously passive-aggressive city my reviews didn't pull any punches. Reader response was overwhelmingly positive, but the bully tactics of a local firm and the lack of support from my own paper made it impossible for me to continue.

When I approached the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* in 2001 about writing criticism, I had seven years of experience as an architectural journalist, primarily as a contributing editor at *Architectural Record*. I began as a freelancer at the newspaper with the understanding that I could be brought on staff, but financial woes were cited whenever I broached the subject. The tenuousness of my position became clear when the paper received a letter from an architecture firm threatening legal action for alleged irreparable damage done to its reputation by my April 12, 2004, column. My review commented that, while not the most egregious design in town, the project, an apartment building, is a prime example of how mediocre architecture drains a city's vitality. Oddly enough, the firm agreed with the criticism. The complaint was that I failed to mention that it was cut out of the design and construction process; the client, contractor, and neighborhood design review board (everyone but the plumber) were to blame for the outcome. There were several problems with the firm's complaint. They were distancing themselves from a project that was at the time prominently displayed on the firm's website with no disclaimer as to the authorship of the design. The firm's name also appeared on a large sign at the site throughout construction. But the firm's own lackluster portfolio did the most to undercut their claims: did the architects get cut out of the design and construction process on all projects?

As demanded in their letter, a meeting was held with the firm's partners, including one who was then president of the Seattle Chapter of the AIA. She drew on this authority to scold me: "You should know that architects have no control over their work." Her statements, made in front of the paper's managing editor and arts and entertainment editor, undermined the case that architecture deserves at least a portion of the coverage allocated gardening, food, or television. Ultimately, the paper stood by the column. They offered to print a letter to the editor or an op-ed piece, but the firm never submitted one. The firm also never stepped down from the threat. As a freelancer, my main concern was that the paper cover my legal expenses if I were sued. I asked repeatedly if the paper would indemnify me but never got a definitive "yes." I soon learned that a freelance art critic left for the same reason. Lawsuits against critics do happen and although the First Amendment protects expressions of opinion frivolous lawsuits consume money, time, and energy. When my editor suggested that my future reviews not mention firm names to avoid offending anyone, I knew it was time to quit.

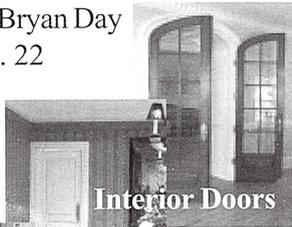
When the situation became public, an outraged local architect filed a formal complaint with National AIA's Ethics Committee against the firm for backroom intimidation and won (the firm was required to write a public letter of apology). The paper has a new architecture columnist, also freelance. Instead of funding a full-time critic the paper launched a Saturday magazine section featuring wire service columns on home decorating. As for me, I started my own practice and am a member of the Design Commission, where I review public buildings before it's too late.

Sheri Olson, FAIA, is a Seattle-based architect and former architecture critic for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

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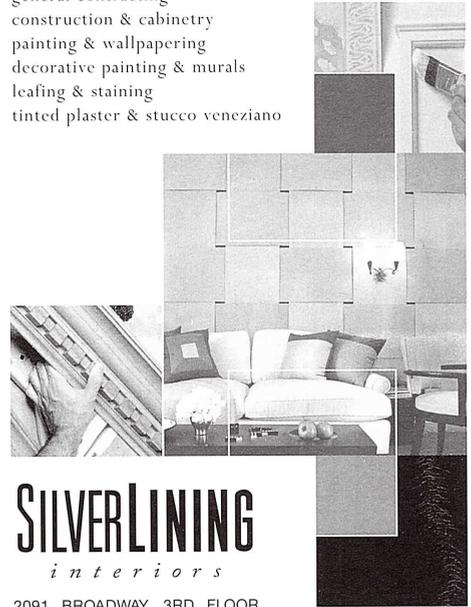
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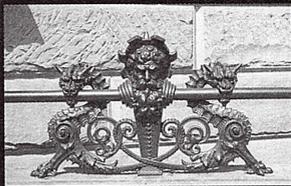
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45-Year Watch

**Pavilion and Colonnade
Apartments, Newark, NJ, by
Mies van der Rohe, 1960
By Fred Bernstein**

The publicity has been relentless – since the announcement of Richard Meier’s apartment buildings in the West Village, news about “starchitects” designing high-rise housing in New York hasn’t abated. There isn’t an architecture writer (including this one) who hasn’t made a few bucks from commenting on the supposed trend.

But of course Meier wasn’t first, not even in the New York area. A quick trip out to Newark reveals three buildings designed by no less than Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. As it turns out, soon after completing Manhattan’s Seagram Building, Mies designed three towers near Branch Brook Park, north of Newark’s downtown.

Privately owned, the buildings (which opened in 1960) were intended to bring middle-income families to the area of the Christopher Columbus Homes, a cluster of low-income apartment buildings shorter and less graceful than Mies’s 20-story towers.

Two of the Mies buildings, called the Pavilion Apartments, face each other across a lawn. The third, called the Colonnade, is a long rectangle that overlooks Branch Brook Park – Newark’s equivalent (in many ways) to New York’s Central Park. Alongside the park is the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, a masterpiece about the size of New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral, and no doubt an influence on Mies, who created his grayish box as a kind of foil to the ornate cathedral. (To paraphrase a line often used about the World Trade Center and the Empire State Building: Mies’s Colonnade looks like the box the cathedral came in.)

The Colonnade and the two Pavilion buildings are nearly identically detailed. In each, façades are made of glass and under-window grilles that read as solid surfaces; I-beams, doubling as mullions, extend a couple of inches beyond the building envelopes. The approach is vintage Mies, and it’s used here as successfully as it is in any of his far-more-famous buildings.

The best thing about the buildings is their ability to capture views. In a corner apartment on the 18th floor of the Pavilion’s south tower, the panoramas are staggering even on a hazy day – taking in Newark’s downtown and wide swaths of New Jersey. (A 1960s brochure for the buildings promised that, for east-facing residents, Manhattan’s skyline would be the “fourth wall.”) Radiators and air conditioning units are kept low to the floor, a far more satisfying arrangement than at, say, I.M. Pei’s Kips Bay Towers in Manhattan, where window air conditioners are a visual nuisance. Each apartment is provided with vertical blinds in a light gray that keep the exteriors chromatically consistent (a trick Mies tried at Seagram too). The biggest problem, according to residents who post paeans and pans at www.apartmentratings.com, is that the windows don’t open.

The buildings are in relatively good repair, though the concrete bases of the Pavilion apartments have been painted beige (the bases of the Colonnade are still unpainted concrete).

At the huge Colonnade building, the twin lobbies have been gussied up with hideous gilt-and-crystal chandeliers (the better to attract tenants), while the travertine furnishings by Mies are largely obscured. Landscaping at the Pavilion is lovely (a photo on the buildings’ official website shows more trees than building); the Colonnade has almost no landscaping to speak of (with Branch Brook Park and the Cathedral to the west, and a giant parking lot to the east). In both cases, the buildings lack underground garages, which may have been their saving grace: the fact that residents can come and go through the glass-walled lobbies creates a feeling of community absent from buildings that offer a direct route from garage to elevator.

What has changed more than the buildings themselves is their context. Newark, in the 1960s, was harder hit by riots (and “white flight”) than any other U.S. city, and the recovery didn’t really begin for more than 20 years. The city closed the Columbus Homes in 1990 and dynamited them in 1994. They have been replaced by suburban looking one- and two-family houses with shutters and flowerboxes and front stoops.

Unlike, say, Brooklyn, where apartment buildings are sneaking in between low-rises, in Newark, low-rises are appearing in what had been a densely populated neighborhood. The process is a kind of deurbanization, a greening of Newark, and it gives the Mies buildings an oddly unsophisticated setting.

Still, unlike the Columbus Homes, Mies’s buildings have survived – survived long enough to attract young renters who appreciate their modernist mien, even if not one of the tenants I spoke to on a recent Sunday had heard of Mies van der Rohe or even knew that a famous architect had designed the buildings.

Is it too late for Mies to hire a publicist?

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*.



Pavilion Apartments south tower

FRED BERNSTEIN

Leveraging Attention

Insights about the best ways for small firms to get and leverage media attention

By Bruce Kupper

Using public relations as a promotional tool for your firm is smart thinking, as I learned a quarter of a century ago after founding my communications agency in 1977. Back then, I was looking for ways to build the business and finally realized that if I had greater credibility in the marketplace, I could move the sales cycle faster

It is amazing to me how the written and spoken word can be seen as such a powerful endorsement of a company's model and strategic plan. Yet time and time again, I have seen the media generate better publicity for a business than almost any paid advertisement.

In the service business, I've learned that credibility trumps creativity, that a writer's recommendation carries more weight than a copywriter's unique selling proposition, and that a third party endorsement is more meaningful than a primary participant's pronouncement.

Going for Momentum

In those early days, once I understood the powerful vehicle of public relations, I no longer had to start at step one with prospects. That's where you have to "build media awareness." Then you go to the client, figure out the needs, research what you can do to help, and get back to the client with a proposal.

Instead, I was able to start at step three, where you tell the client, "We're here. You know us. Now tell us what you want." It was a critical lesson, one that didn't come without introspection. Some of the tactics include touting case studies, industry accolades, and broadcasting deal-making endeavors, all of which I'll discuss.

But first, about that introspection: It came in the way of my figuring out what the press – and, in particular, the local and regional outlets, which is where exposure usually begins – is really all about.

Leveraging Personality

The media aren't interested in running stories that trumpet how well your firm is doing. Instead, they want personality-driven copy, stories that inspire and uplift. Entrepreneurs and business leaders are as thirsty for good news as are the typical consumers who tire of the latest fire or murder.

All of us, regardless of the nature of our business, are searching for the inspirational and the imaginative items that compel us to come into work and push our employees and ourselves to the next level. As much as we have experienced over the years, most of us still get excited when we see one of our contemporaries break through and stand out. It not only inspires us; it also gets the old ego going to get our stories out and into the marketplace as well.

The good news for entrepreneurs is that they stand a better-than-even shot of being the story, and thus, a more-than-reasonable chance of getting the coverage that leads to the type of exposure that benefits their firm. They can talk about what they love, the mistakes they've made, the projects that bear their personal stamp. All of this is fodder for the personality-driven stories that entice the local media.

Leveraging PR

Getting public relations, however favorable, isn't the same as leveraging it. The most powerful tactic for categorical marketing is the



case study. When you tell an industry how you assisted one of their own, then a number of others clamor for the same type of services, namely your company's expertise.

We have utilized this technique to build our various practices. In each instance, we have taken examples of actual projects at which we've excelled and approached industry-specific trade publications. They are, of course, interested in leading trends in their various categories. Our function is fairly straightforward. We make them aware of our successes and give them sufficient numbers and data to define that success. They get the word out for us.

The second dependable way to gain valuable exposure is through the announcement of various deals, ranging from mergers and acquisitions to restructuring existing operations and beginning strategic initiatives.

Ink and Eyeballs

A small company like ours has made it into the *New York Times* on three occasions via the deal route. The most recent was when we announced a minor deal, the purchase of a company with annual revenue of under \$1 million. The day that story appeared, I immediately received about a dozen phone calls. We have also gotten numerous exposures in the major trade publications that have found our deal making more newsworthy than our regular account wins and losses. There just seems to be a certain amount of definition in a deal announcement that simplifies the reporting for the press and the acceptance levels for the readers.

Many decision makers pick up on these stories and notice a firm from this type of publicity. The niche that we seem to occupy from this publicity is that our firm is big enough to matter in their industry, while still small enough to care about individual businesses, when compared with the large multinational companies against which we may be competing.

The third technique that has proved to be meaningful for us is the so-called industry accolade. Awards and industry's "Top 10" (or 50 or 100) lists are all helpful in positioning a company as a significant player.

The beauty of accolades is that someone else is creating PR for

you. You aren't hyping yourself. If you issued a press release about your accomplishments, no one would care, but if a third party does it, everyone picks it up.

Leveraging Business Development

Winning awards is nice. However, they are not important unless you have a credible and visionary marketing effort to exploit this type of exposure. It doesn't give me a thrill to read my name in the newspaper; what's exciting is being able to use the citation as a lever for landing a substantial client.

Coverage is solid from most organizations giving awards. The real difference seems to lie in two areas. One, you need to inform clients and selected prospects that you are winning these types of accolades, and two, you need to look for trends in the awards you win and utilize these to position your firm as an expert in those areas.

Packaging the News

This idea of being a proven entity on the edge of new developments has helped us to leverage our exposure and translate it into additional business. That is because the bottom line is that clients want new and experimental approaches. They just want these approaches carefully tested with someone else's marketing dollars.

So depending upon the markets your company serves and your plans for harnessing the power of public relations, you will find that any one or a combination of these techniques will pay dividends for your business. Your defining moment, however, will be not just the achievement of the coverage, but rather your ability to package and market the materials concerning your firm to your prospects and current clients. That's when you will see your company really profit.

Bruce Kupper founded St. Louis-based Kupper Parker Communications in 1977, and currently serves as president and chief executive officer. This article is adapted from "The Art and Science of Getting Noticed," which appeared in the September 1, 2004, issue of *BusinessWeek*.

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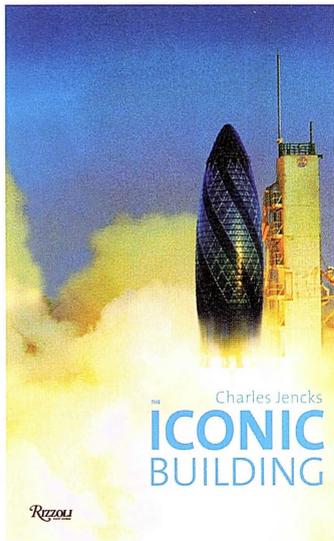
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Iconicity: New Kid on the Block?



The Iconic Building, by Charles Jencks. New York: Rizzoli, 2005. 224 pages. 200 color and b+w illustrations. \$35

While the controversy over whether to preserve Edward Durell Stone's former Huntington Hartford Museum building on Columbus Circle was at its height in mid-2005, Jencks's new book came out, and a lot of the protagonists would have done well to read it, as it smartly tackles that perennial issue: the landmark building (Jencks

calls it an iconic building).

At the core is the classic tension between the two stripes of landmarks – those that are historically significant (“George Washington slept here,” “the first marble-covered building to emulate a Venetian palazzo north of 42nd Street”), and those that should be preserved for reasons of architecture or urban design. In my opinion, 2 Columbus Circle fails on both counts, so it's good to see a man with Jencks's dialectic pedigree wade into the topic.

“Driven by social forces, the demand for instant fame and economic growth, the expressive landmark has challenged the previous tradition of the architectural monument,” Jencks argues, pointing out that in the past a prominent public building such as the cathedral or city hall stood for shared meaning in the community, by using location, scale, form, materials, and often sheer size to stake its claim.

For today's iconic building, Jencks contends, in a world marketplace competing for attention, these watchwords are out the window, and the iconic culture, a.k.a. the Bilbao effect, will expand and prosper because we live in a global culture that has no unifying faith and standards.

So Jencks takes up the recognized icon makers of today – Gehry, Hadid, Calatrava, Eisenman, Libeskind, OMA, Piano, Miralles, Childs – and through interviews and a look at their work, is able to uncover answers to basic questions about the iconic building as the phenomenon *du jour*.

Especially apt, given the theme of this issue of *Oculus*, are Jencks's thoughts on what he calls Iconic Media Wars. The chapter is a disappointment, devoted as it is not so much to media wars as to a single media war, the internecine struggle still underway on the remaking of the World Trade Center site. We have read all this before, in works by Goldberger, Nobel, and others. It brings little new, except for a cunning statement where Jencks argues a building becomes

iconic in part for traditional reasons, in part also “when it is part of an unfolding media event that takes time. In other words, the building plus its reception over many months creates the necessary ritual. In a secular society only the newspapers, magazines, and TV can engender the proper aura, establish legitimacy, create taboos, and define what can be said and felt and what is unacceptable.”

As always, Jencks's writing is an icon of clarity, one that more of his professional and academic colleagues would do well to emulate.

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA

A Material World

Material ConneXion: The Global Resource of New and Innovative Materials for Architects, Artists, and Designers, by George M. Beylerian and Andrew Dent. Edited by Anita Moryadas. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005. 800 color illustrations. \$80

Any New Yorker who ever visited Material ConneXion's quarters in a made-over loft on West 25th Street will at once

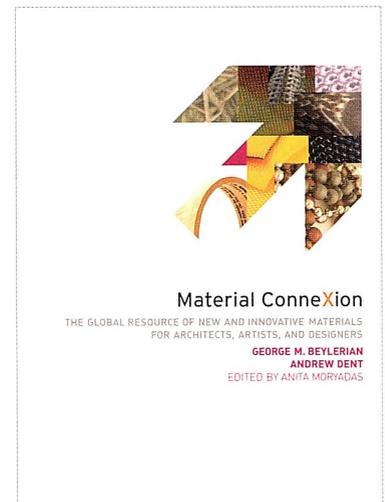
recognize in this book the deep affection that George Beylerian, Material ConneXion founder and president, and his coauthors have for the physical means of construction – the more modern, innovative, simple, or composite, the better.

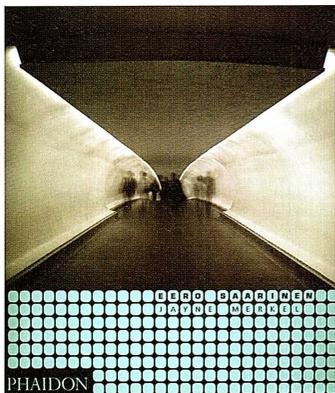
Through its 800 color illustrations, the book, like the gallery, seeks to raise awareness among architects, interior designers, product and fashion designers, and the construction and production industries of how new materials have changed, and continue to change, the look of buildings and how they are built.

The work comprises seven sections, one each on the main materials categories – metals, glass, ceramics, polymers, natural and naturally derived materials such as wood; carbon-based materials; and cement-based materials.

Included are interviews with leading designers who reflect on the parts played by materials in their practices.

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA





A Style for all Seasons
Eero Saarinen, by Jayne
Merkel. New York: Phaidon
Press, 2005. 256 pages.
300 color and b+w pho-
tographs. \$75

Jayne Merkel, a former chief editor of *Oculus*, uses sharp writing and carefully selected photographs to successfully break through the glossy formulaic barrier that lavish books

often erect between author and reader. She ends up with a shrewd look at the work and character of one of the most misunderstood Modernists of the 20th century.

"Eero Saarinen's work is of interest today," writes Merkel, "because of his technical innovation, for architects in the early 21st century are also exploring new materials and techniques." That perhaps explains why Saarinen, during his short (51-year) life and since, has been alternately praised and damned for lacking any style, and for having no visible stylistic link between his next building and the previous one.

But this is in part explained by Saarinen's very faith in technical innovation – one may safely assume he always asked himself the classic question attributed to his contemporary Louis Kahn: "What does it [the material] want to be?" So whether it was the MIT Auditorium, the Yale Hockey Rink, the TWA Terminal at JFK or the main terminal at Dulles, the GM Technical Center or the John Deere Company Headquarters, or the St. Louis Arch, or the Ford Foundation – each represented a formal as well as technical breakthrough. It allowed a tight alliance between material and program to dictate the form, come what may, without any preconceived ideas of continuity. (In that his best ally was his brilliant partner and technologist the engineer John Dinkeloo, who, too, passed away at a premature 63 years of age, leaving Kevin Roche to carry on the practice.)

Oddly enough, in his eclectic approach to design, Saarinen was an early exponent of Postmodernism, witness the historicizing Morse and Stiles Colleges at Yale (1958-1962).

The book traces Eero's family history – growing up as the son of Eliel, his breakaway to work on his own projects, including furniture design, and his first breakthrough at the GM Technical Center, a masterpiece of detailing and urban design. Other chapters describe his considerable college campus work, his three buildings for Columbus, IN, his embassies in Oslo and the one in London – a rather clumsy effort to use a precast concrete window system to emulate the subtle scale of a West End square – his airport projects, and his memorials in St Louis and Milwaukee.

An excellent chapter called "Postscript: The Legacy" taps a range of journalistic assessments. A personal postmortem came from Thomas Creighton, then editor of the now defunct journal *Progressive Architecture*: "He was an innately good...and modest great person...tremendously enthusiastic...and utterly tireless."

Ada Louise Huxtable, having given the architect during his lifetime "a chance to explain his often-questioned lack of an identifiable style," said, "When this reviewer expressed concern about the pitfalls of free experimentation, he agreed that it presented great dangers, but said 'there would be greater danger if we didn't.'"

Stephen A. Kliment, FAIA

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So you think your work has finally gotten the attention it deserves? Click on www.vitruvio.ch to double-check your actual world exposure. Essentially a Google search powered by Swiss good taste and intelligent content, the site helps you hone in on architects and architecture. Architects are called many things but on this website they are "Protagonists," so click that heading for the web addresses of architects worldwide who have tapped the power of the press. You can also do a search by theme or name.

The site is also an excellent reference point for historical research and images. For example, the "History" section includes an intriguing "Future" portal with links to places like Electronic Shadow and Architecture Internet Cyberspace. Also of interest in "Tools" is a link to international blogs.

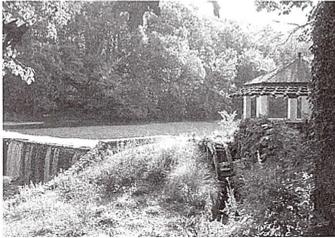
Vitruvio.com also catalogs competitions, awards, news, and architectural guides, but its most endearing feature may be "Cinema." This is a list of movies with architectural content that links to Amazon for immediate purchase if still in print. This may be the best benchmark of exposure yet. If there is still no movie about you or set in your architecture, keep working on getting noticed.

Margaret Rietveld, AIA



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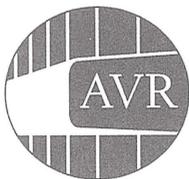
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Just Remember, All the While

See the pyramids along the Nile

Pee Wee King

Drove my Chevy to the levee, but the levee was dry

Don McLean

Writing in *Chambers for a Memory Palace* about the design of his New Orleans fountain, Piazza d'Italia, Charles W. Moore quoted *Architectural Review* writer Gordon Cullen, who called close contact with water a "mental leaning-out-over." At the fountain, which survived the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, water spews from terra cotta castings of Charlie Moore's face, and water helps define an image of Italy that is graphic, witty, and literate. The Piazza d'Italia is the only structure in New Orleans listed by Sydney LeBlanc in her 2005 edition of *The Architectural Traveler: A Guide to 263 Key American Buildings*. She writes of its "waters recreating the Po, the Tiber, and the Arno."

Elsewhere in New Orleans, in the Ninth Ward and in Gentilly, water is not so benign. With entire neighborhoods devastated, and a large part of the population dispersed, the status of New Orleans as a tourist destination has changed. From a city of mystery and desire, New Orleans has become a deserted ghost town, a city unmade; visitors are touring ruined neighborhoods.

In *Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain wrote of Pompeii: "It was a quaint and curious pastime, wandering through this old silent city of the dead, lounging through utterly deserted streets where thousands and thousands of human beings once bought and sold and walked and rode, and made the place resound with the noise and confusion of traffic and pleasure."

So what is to be done? Restore and rebuild New Orleans certainly. Create new landmarks, reinstate traditional neighborhoods, and recreate the density, diversity, and distinctiveness of a city that is no longer big, no longer easy. And, just as important, recognize the lack of coordination between urban design, post-war sprawl, and fragile infrastructure.

Other places have witnessed a similar disconnect between urban growth and inadequate sustaining systems. At a recent symposium on the future of New York City, developer and philanthropist Daniel Rose spoke of Fatehpur Sikri, a 16th-century regional capital not far from the earthquake-devastated areas of Kashmir. Despite its unparalleled tower structures, this Moghul Albany was abandoned because there was no easily accessible source of drinking water. Its depopulated terraces now recall the empty plazas of Corbu's Chandigarh during the 1975 period of Indian martial law, when only caretakers and the occasional architectural enthusiast visited.

Was it always so – people visiting places to see the latest marvel, while gawking at what was left behind by those who had left, or

were lost? In the recently published *Architourism: Authentic Escapist Exotic Spectacular* (edited by Joan Ockman and Salomon Frausto), WTC memorial juror James E. Young writes that "the powerful allure of ruins persists, a near-mystical fascination with sites seemingly charged with the aura of events that once occurred there, as if the very molecules of such places still vibrated with the memory of the past." Paul Theroux describes Luxor in *Dark Star Safari: Overland from Cairo to Cape Town*, "I most remember the graffiti, the vandalism, the names of ancients chiseled into the tomb walls, the scrawls of the French army, of the English nineteenth-century travelers, of the crazed Copts, the defacements of the iconoclast Akhenaton."

In *Dream Songs*, poet John Berryman called Kyoto, Toledo, Benares, and "shimmering" Cambridge the holy cities, their names conjuring images of buildings to die for. And Twain, while writing travel books, wrote about travel: "The moral of it is this: if you are of any account, stay at home and make your way by faithful diligence; but if you are 'no account,' go away from home." He commented that travel is fatal to narrow-mindedness, bigotry, and prejudice.

Is reading architectural critics and their travel writer cousins almost as good as being there? Of course not. Even photography is an unreliable indicator. To understand how buildings work they must be seen and entered while in use. Architectural critics and travel writers are the advance scouts, crabby crusaders scavenging new venues. They allow subsequent visitors to safely bring home the spicy and salacious and to more easily see the salubrious and sacrosanct.

Many of the dispatches from the architectural publication wars are made in New York. The remains of "Newspaper Row" surround City Hall Park, where Horace Greeley's statue still sits stiffly. The mass media has headed uptown, following the *Sun* and keeping up with the *Times*. Competing midtown towers bare their trademarks: Condé Nast and Reuters, Hearst and Time Warner, and all send critics and reporters far afield.

But who wouldn't want to go to Austin, Bilbao, or Milwaukee, guidebook or placenotes in hand, digital camera at the ready – never a Twain to meet?

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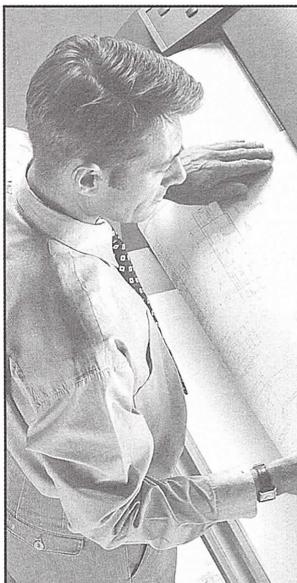
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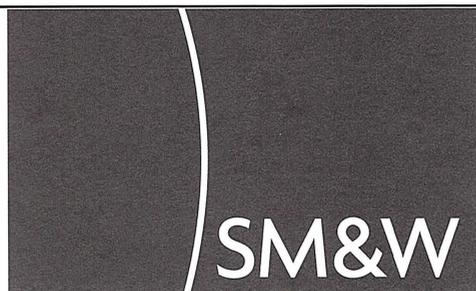


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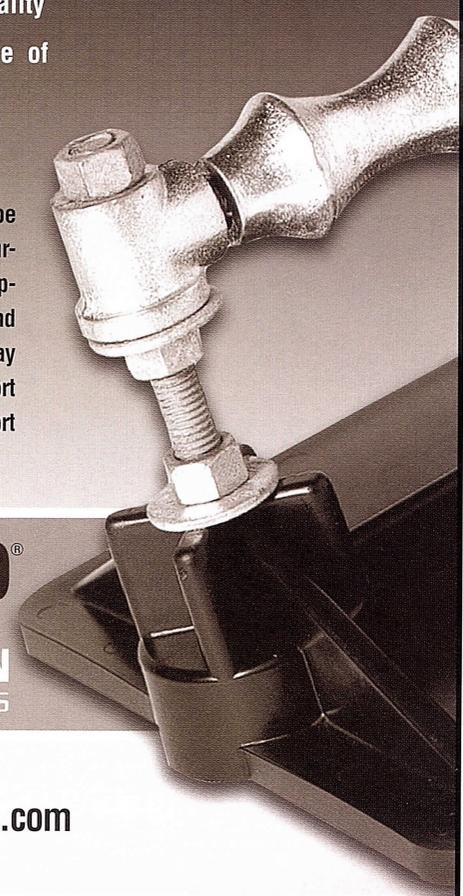
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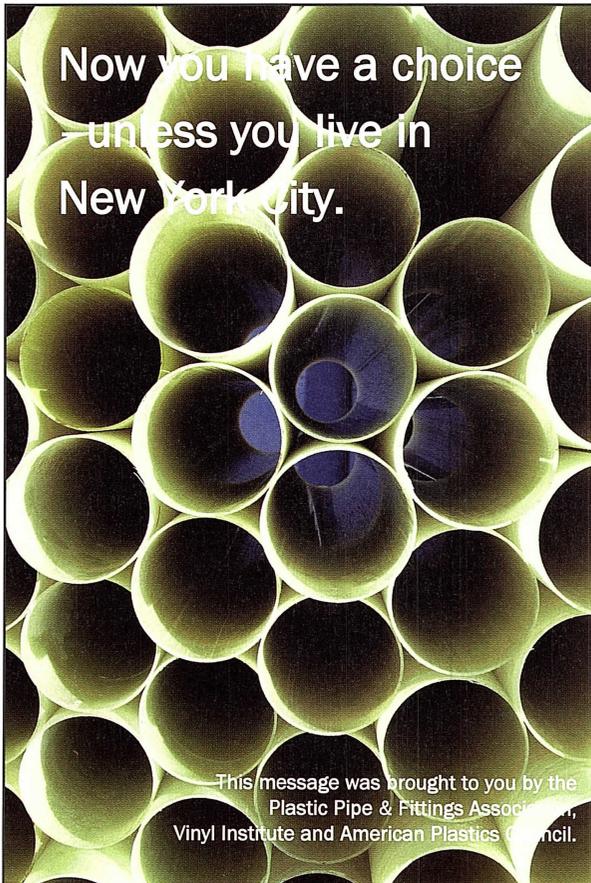
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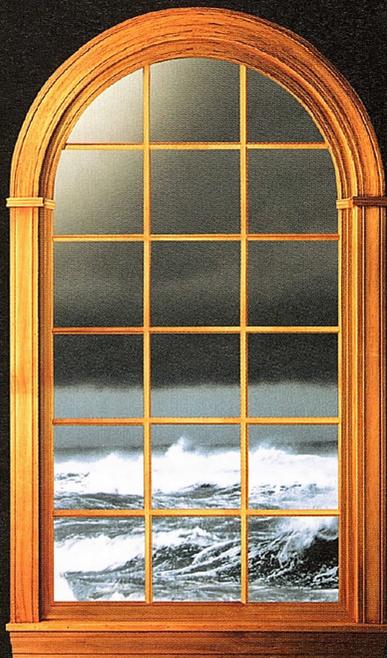
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