



Spring 2015

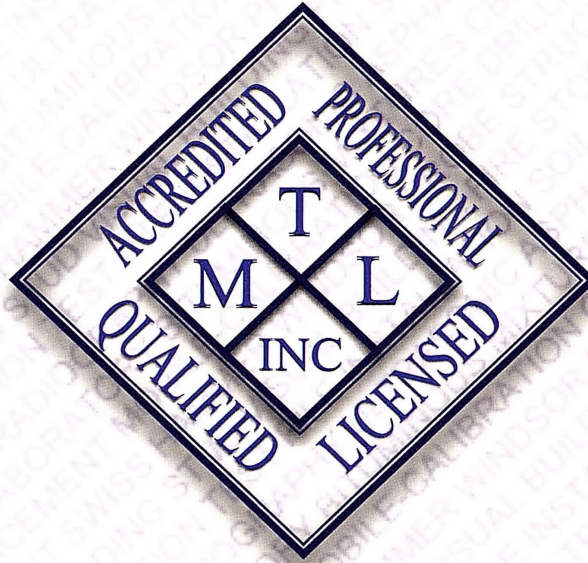
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Dialogues from the Edge of Practice

**Mars in the Bronx
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A Results-Oriented Think Tank
The Resilience Factor
Socrates at the Drafting Table
Architecture in the Social Data Era
Museum as Incubator
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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Repositioning All Around

AIA National is now well underway “repositioning” the organization, streamlining its leadership structure, revising its institutional framework, and sharpening its operational focus. The goal is to make a better, stronger, more responsive AIA, and to develop a communication strategy that helps the public appreciate our role in delivering true value to society. At AIANY, we are also working on our own parallel, bottom-up strategy.

Subtly, but in meaningful ways, AIANY and the Center for Architecture have initiated a joint and mutually beneficial repositioning strategy to be implemented in 2015. You may walk into the Center and not notice anything different, but organizational changes are already underway to increase the impact and effectiveness of our collective research, outreach, advocacy, and programming.

At the beginning of year, the Center for Architecture Foundation (the institution) and the Center for Architecture (the place) merged into a single 501c3 not-for-profit entity, with aspirations to become the preeminent institution for architectural education and discourse geared to improving the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the public realm – locally and globally. While it remains a sister institution to AIANY, the Center for Architecture now has its own autonomous Board of Directors and a unique mission rightly distinguished from a membership-driven organization like AIANY. As its formal mission statement is being crafted, we should think of the Center for Architecture as a bona fide cultural institution with the purpose of sharing critical architectural ideas and content with a broad public audience.

Our committees are the lifeblood of our programming and shall remain central in the development of content at the Center. But the relationship between AIANY and the Center needs a new vocabulary. I would like us to see AIANY as the “think tank” for advanced architectural research, and the Center for Architecture as the “public portal” for the broad dissemination of our innovative

ideas. Utilizing the Center to communicate with the lay public can further elevate the role of design in public life and ensure that our ideas benefit from interdisciplinary interaction with non-architects. Communicating our value increases the stature of the architect in the public’s eye.

As my presidential theme, “Dialogues from the Edge of Practice,” unfolds, I intend to sponsor a monthly forum on a topical issue related to the discipline, and on the architect’s expanding role into new modes of practice. We will use the Center to broadcast these ideas to a larger audience. Please join me in “repositioning” the architect, reclaiming lost disciplinary territory, and entering new frontiers of providing value in the built environment.

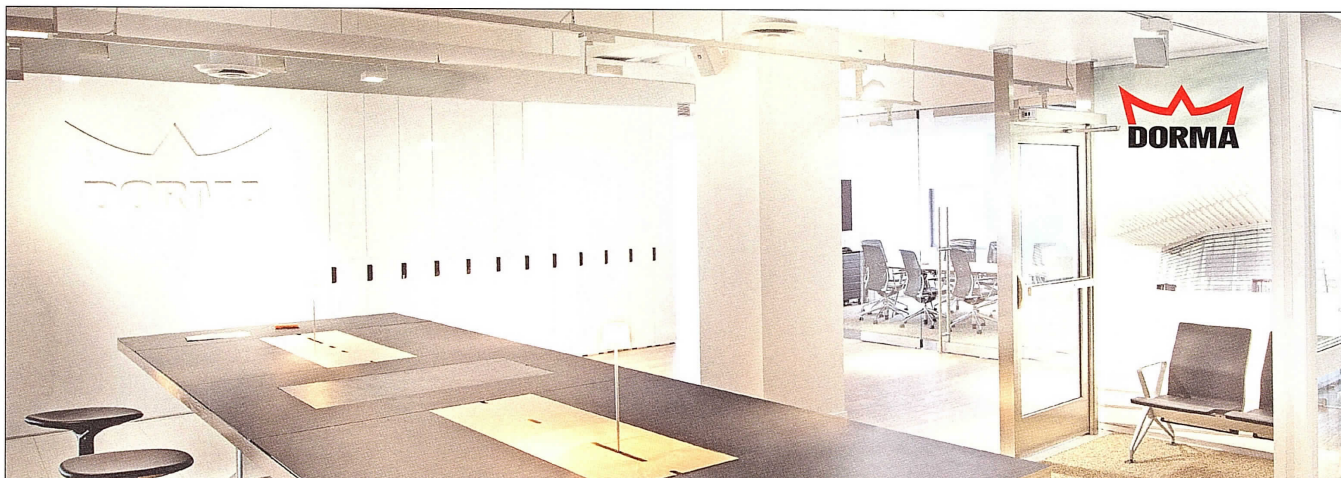
We have always pursued a robust political advocacy agenda, most often by lobbying. This year we’ve tried something new: we let the mayoral administration know that if its goals resonate with our institutional mission and advocacy priorities, we can help forward its agenda. I hope that elected and appointed officials will be encouraged to approach us freely to help deliver a more ideal urban environment for the citizens of NYC.

The fantastic, crazy idea that NYC would benefit from a Center for Architecture has proven true. Now, almost 12 years since opening, it is time to reevaluate whether we need a larger center, polycentric centers in other boroughs, or a totally new concept of what a center should be. A task force has been organized to address this, and my hope is that we will be able to announce a bold plan at the National Convention in NYC in 2018.

For AIANY, 2015 is a year of transition, experimentation, and joining together to make the Chapter an even greater force in the advancement of architectural research and culture. And through collaboration with a reconceived Center for Architecture, we can make sure that our city and the general public understand how design can improve lives and create a better society.

See you at the Center!

Tomas Rossant, AIA
2015 President
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Edge of New

If ever there was a city that represented a place “on the edge” of just about everything – architecture, design, art, fashion, technology, even politics (never mind miles of shorelines) – it’s New York. So winnowing down an impressive list of firms, architects, and projects to highlight in an issue themed “Dialogues From the Edge of Practice” was no easy task. What is the “edge of practice”? We decided to focus on four areas where architects have extended themselves beyond the traditional scope of architecture: Research, Practice, Incubator, and Advocacy. How better to kick things off than with futurist David Zach’s exhortation for architects to “think into other boxes.”

Research being done by the Center for Architecture Science and Ecology, a collaboration between SOM and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, is bringing building and environmental technologies out of the lab and into real-world applications at space-race speed. ARO’s experimentation with digital technologies has led the firm to take what some might consider a mundane material (felt!) to new levels of sophistication – and a new product line. And Grimshaw’s NY/London think tank uses research, theory, and public discourse to create better built environments.

Perkins+Will has devised new tools for design research that uses big data in resilience design and planning, resulting in new service areas – and revenue streams. REX considers contract details as important as any design challenge, employing a sort of “architectural therapy” with its clients. Melissa Marsh, an organizer of AIANY Professional Practice Committee’s Transforming Architectural Practice series, explains how engaging new data sources can transform architectural

practices. The New Museum’s incubator NEW INC is designed by SO-IL and Gensler to nurture multidisciplinary entrepreneurs. Last, but certainly not least, Deborah Gans, FAIA, outlines why it’s so important to advocate for communities to be involved in post-disaster planning of their own neighborhoods.

In our regular departments, “One Block Over” looks at the choppy waters lapping at the feet of redevelopment plans for the South Street Seaport historic district. “In Print” cheers *Bricks & Mortals: Ten Great Buildings and the People They Made*, and *Tales of Two Cities: Paris, London and the Birth of the Modern City*, and several other tomes. Swid Powell’s eclectic lines of tabletop accessories, designed by some of the design industry’s most notable names thinking out of the box, is the subject of “31-Year Watch.”

When I joined *Interiors* magazine in 1989, one of my first assignments was to check out the just-completed Natural Resources Defense Council’s NYC headquarters on West 20th Street, designed by Croxton Collaborative Architects. It was considered one of the first “green” projects back in the day, when many architects, designers, clients – and editors – weren’t really sure what “green” meant. It was so cutting-edge, so out-there, that many poo-poo’d it as a passing fashion that would never catch on, was too costly to go mainstream, or was pie-in-sky idealism signifying not much. Fortunately, more thoughtful – and optimistic – minds prevailed. Today, sustainable design is considered the norm and, in many places, is mandatory.

As Forrest Gump might have said, life is like riding the crest of a wave – always moving forward, but always on the edge. What will tomorrow’s edge be?

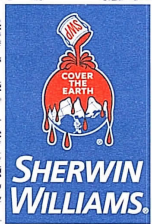
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Editor on the edge.

Correction: In the Winter 2014 feature “Hello, We’re at a Place Called Vertigo,” the credit list for 432 Park, pg. 25, should have included Reginald Hough Associates as concrete consultant.



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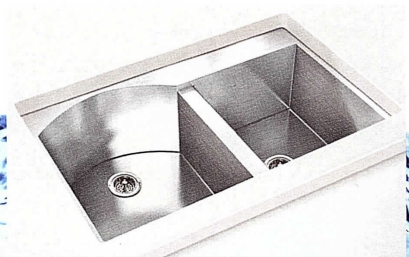
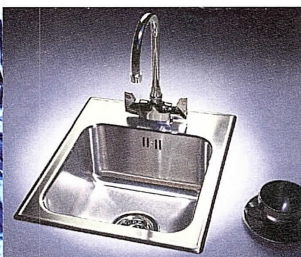
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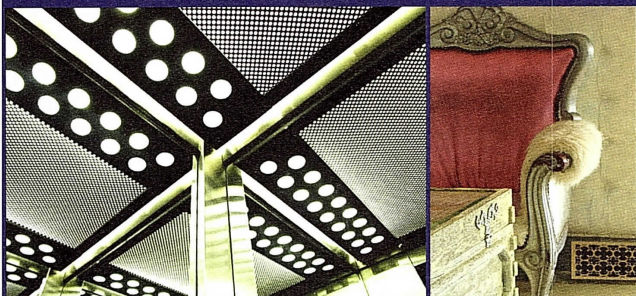
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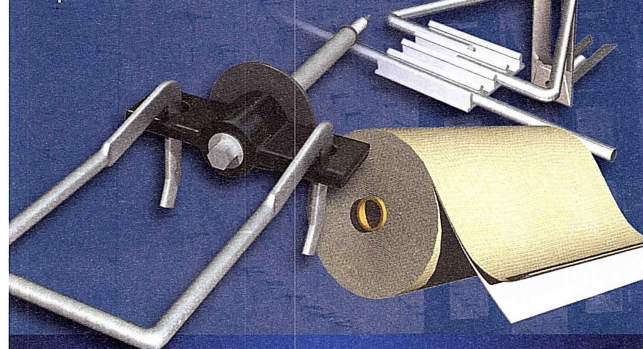
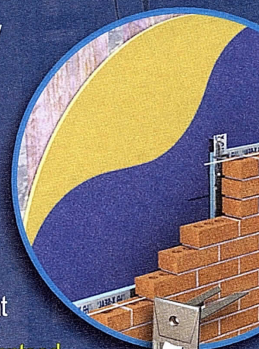
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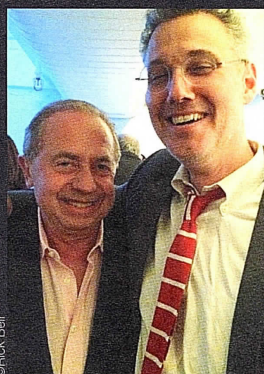
Center Highlights



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(above) AIANY 2014 President **Lance Jay Brown, FAIA** (right), passes the gavel to AIANY 2015 President **Tomas Rossant, AIA**, at the 2015 Board Inaugural.

(right) **Andy Frankl, Hon. AIA NYS**, President and Founder of IBEX Construction, was joined by newly-inducted AIANY 2015 President **Tomas Rossant, AIA**, at the IBEX/AIANY Holiday Party following the 2015 Board Inaugural.



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(above) Organizers and winners of the AIANY COTE 2014 Proof + Beauty Awards celebrated exemplary sustainable projects in NYC at the first annual awards ceremony and exhibition. (l-r): **David Hess, AIA, LEED AP BD+C**, AIANY Committee on the Environment (COTE); **Claire Mifflin**, Kiss + Cathcart; **Steven Iovanna**, BL Companies; **Kevin Smith**, Robert A.M. Stern Architects; **Laurie Kerr**, Urban Green Council; **Paul Curcio**, BL Companies; **Graham S. Wyatt, AIA**, Partner, Robert A.M. Stern Architects; **Gregory Kiss**, Kiss + Cathcart; and **Stephen Knust**, AIANY COTE.



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(left) AIANY Executive Director **Rick Bell, FAIA**, encouraged the audience to pick up their own copies of *Urban Alchemy: Restoring Joy in America's Sorted-Out Cities* at January's Oculus Book Talk with author **Dr. Mindy Thompson Fullilove**, and **William Morrish** of Parsons The New School for Design.



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(left) Columbia GSAPP Dean of Architecture **Amale Andraos, Assoc. AIA**, and **Evan Douglas**, Dean of the School of Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, were among 12 architecture school deans who discussed leadership in architectural education at the 2014 Deans' Roundtable.

Amale Andraos
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Evan Douglas
RENSSELAER
POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE



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(above) Organizers and speakers at "Fondue Pot Stickers: Divergent Voices" discussed the convergence of architectural voices in the melting pot that is New York. (l-r) **Hana Kassem, AIA**, Co-chair, AIANY Global Dialogues Committee; AIANY 2014 President **Lance Jay Brown, FAIA**; **Alejandro Zaera-Polo**, Principal, AZPML and

Visiting Professor, Princeton University; **Florian Idenburg, Intl. Assoc. AIA**, Principal, SO-IL; **Dan Gallagher, AIA**, Co-chair, AIANY Global Dialogues Committee; **Nader Tehrani**, Principal, NADAAA, and former head of the Department of Architecture at MIT; and **Hashim Sarkis**, Dean, MIT School of Architecture and Planning.



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(above) AIANY Housing Committee Co-chairs **Fernando Villa, AIA** (far left), and **Peter Bafitis, AIA** (far right), and committee member **Carmi Bee, FAIA** (center left), welcomed **Alan Mallach** (center right), Senior Fellow of the National

Housing Institute, the Center for Community Progress, and the Brookings Institution, for the 2014 Ratensky Lecture, which recognizes a lifetime commitment to affordable housing and community development.



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(left) At a FamilyDay@theCenter program, kids and parents exploring the "Building Connections" exhibition were inspired to design and build their own projects, ranging from treehouses to theaters. The exhibition highlighted work from the Center for Architecture's school, summer, and vacation programs.

(above) At a program on the Norwegian-Finnish all-female collective Kaleidoscope, (l-r) architects **Miia-Liina Tommilla** and **Emmi Keskiarja** discussed their winning entry

for European 12, after which performers **David Gelles** and **Caitlin Mehner** recited a play responding to the 2011 terrorist attack in Oslo.

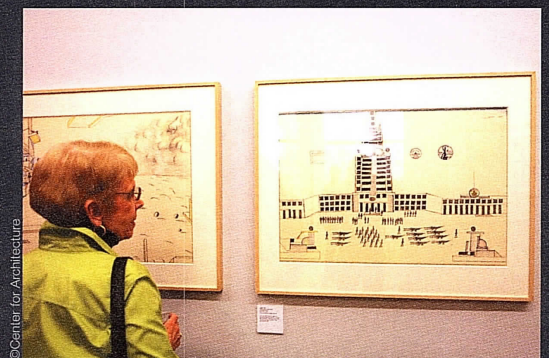


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(left) High-school students participating in the Learning by Design:NY program presented their final projects to a group of architects, engineers, and design professionals at the Center for Architecture.



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(above) "Saul Steinberg Drawings | Architecture Public Space," presented in association with The Saul Steinberg Foundation,

celebrated the centennial of Steinberg's birth with an exhibition that explored the themes of architecture and public space.

one block over

As seen from the East River Esplanade, the South Street Seaport redevelopment project, designed by SHoP, includes a proposed 42-story residential tower, moving and renovating the 1907 Tin Building (center) as a food market, and a new, mixed-use building on Pier 17 (right), currently under construction.



Rough Waters

Squalls continue over the redevelopment of South Street Seaport

BY CLAIRE WILSON

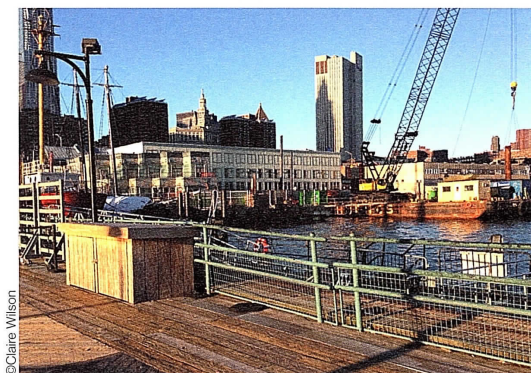
It's not smooth sailing for South Street Seaport, where a replacement for the Pier 17 mall is underway, along with a plan to revitalize the once-bustling 19th-century seaport as a mecca for new area residents and tourists.

The most contentious issue is a proposed 42-story waterfront residential tower with a new middle school at the base. Community groups say the tower is out of character with the neighborhood. "When you look at the historic area with the ships, low-rise buildings, and Schermerhorn Row, the tower just doesn't fit in," says City Council member Margaret Chin. Howard Hughes Corp. (HHC), the developer, leases the seaport property from the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC).

Gregg Pasquarelli, AIA, founding principal of SHoP Architects, which designed most of the seaport redevelopment, Pier 17, and the East River Esplanade, defends the project, citing increased waterfront access, a restored street grid, and more public green space. (In one concession, the tower was shortened by 10 stories, and it was proposed that its 60 units of affordable housing be shifted to Schermerhorn Row.) Pasquarelli also argues that revenues from the glass-and-zinc striated tower will support the rest of the project for years to come. "You need something to pay for what everyone wants," Pasquarelli says. "You are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars. The city can't write that check, but we have a corporate developer who wants to do it."

Community Board 1 will apply for the eighth time (since 2002) to stretch the NYC landmarks district to include the 1939 New Market building, once part of the Fulton Fish Market, that would be razed to make way for the tower. If approved, authorities could veto the tower. But that would mean losing the much-needed school and community space. All aspects of the project are subject to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure.

The 1907 Tin Building (also once a fish market) is slated to be moved out from under the FDR Drive, renovated, and raised above the flood plain by SHoP, and given an additional floor on top. Moving it will also provide a larger plaza in the front, designed by James Corner Field Operations, which will meet the East River Esplanade, a project commissioned by NYCEDC and designed by SHoP with Ken Smith Landscape Architects and HDR/



(above) Once it is moved and renovated by SHoP, the 1907 Tin Building (center) will be a food market; the 1939 New Market building (far right) will be razed to make way for the proposed SHoP-designed tower.

Arup. Once completed, at a cost of \$54 million, the Tin Building will be a food market.

The South Street Seaport Museum will remain in Schermerhorn Row and gain some funding from HHC. The community consensus, however, is that the entire seaport area has lost sight of its original mission as memorial, research center, and outdoor ship museum. Michael Kramer of Save Our Seaport bemoans the chaos created by the inadequate infrastructure that already can't handle the crowds from concerts and special events in the area. He also sees no place for a private marina planned for the area just north of the tower at the expense of the "street of ships" for historic vessels. There are approximately six historic ships now berthed at the seaport – half the number that berthed there in the past. Pier 16 now services commercial passenger boats instead of reflecting its history as a working harbor. "Dozens of historic vessels could dock here each year, making it a destination attraction," he says. The developer "should be happy for anything that draws people down here."

Claire Wilson writes for the *New York Times*.

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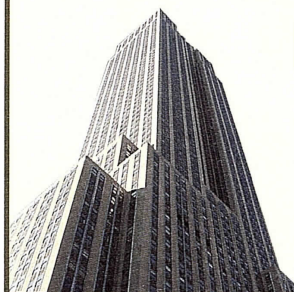
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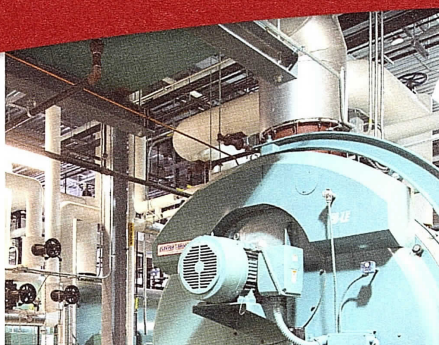
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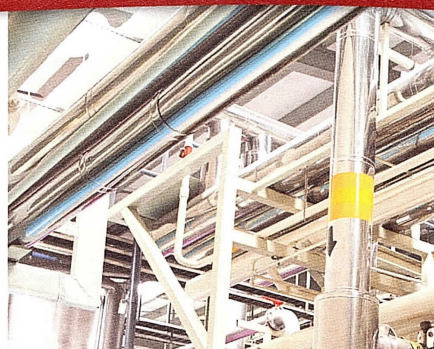
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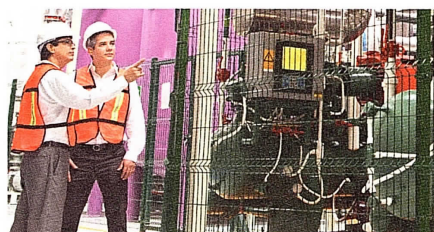


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Thinking Into Other Boxes

BY DAVID ZACH



If there is a map of the professions, then the boundaries for the Architect have been precisely drawn. We know what's on the inside and we know that everyone else is on the outside. Boundaries keep the risks low and the knowledge specific. But are the boundaries too specific? They help keep the wild things out, but do the inside things become too tame? Tame things take no risks and make no plans. Tame professions are always in danger of being boring.

Architects have less excuse for being boring than any other profession out there. And that's the problem: too much of the profession isn't out there. It has retreated inside of those carefully plotted boundaries. It's safely inside of a predictable organizational box, and left out of most everybody else's conversations.

So it's time to look away from your screens, dust off your pencils, and draw some new conclusions by thinking into other boxes. Add intellectual depth to your thinking the way you do to your drawings: use multiple-point perspective. See the world through the well-trained eyes of an architect, but also try seeing from other angles, as each has a valid and valuable perspective. Invite the points of view of non-architects. When you think into other boxes, you can see the greater context of your problems and the greater reach of your solutions. No one is better qualified than an architect to connect across boundaries because you already do – by connecting art and science, form and function, strength and beauty.

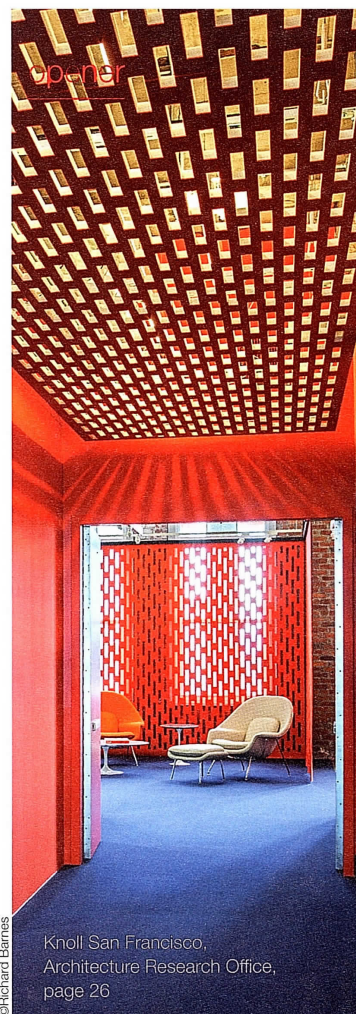
By thinking into other boxes, architecture becomes an emerging profession. Architect and educator Billie Faircloth, AIA, believes, “All materi-

als are emerging materials.” There’s so much more about everyday materials that we don’t yet see, but we can if we take new perspectives. AIA President Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA, talks of the value of reemerging professionals who stepped back from architecture and then returned, bringing with them the wealth of additional perspectives. Architect and educator Maia Small created the fascinating Tumblr list “Architects of Other Things,” showing people who trained as architects and then famously did other things. They prove that thinking into other boxes works and creates value.

In 2012 I surveyed AIAS students, asking: “If you don’t become an architect, what else might you do?” Their answers generated this word cloud. It reveals that emerging professionals see design as the center of connected professions. They will bring design to the work at hand, no matter what work their hands do. Licensed or not, gripping a tool or holding a stylus, they will be designers.

Connecting with these young professionals will help this profession to emerge in new ways and to reemerge in time-tested ways. Their talent must not be boxed into just one line of work. They will rethink boundaries and re-enchant the world with design connected outside of today's boxes. They will not be boring – and that may be the most exciting thing about the future of architects.

David Zach is a futurist who frequently speaks to the design professions. He was the 2011–13 Public Director on the AIA board. In 2012 he received an AIAS Presidential Citation for his work with emerging professionals. His website is www.davidzach.com



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Top-down



(left) The Public Safety Answering Center II in the Bronx, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, will incorporate CASE's Active Modular Phytoremediation System (AMPS), an interior green wall that filters circulating air.

(below) Rendering of an AMPS application in a building lobby.

(opposite page, left) An AMPS testing chamber.

(opposite page, top right) Detail of AMPS unit.

(opposite page, below right) As air passes over the plants installed in the AMPS unit, the root structures absorb volatile organic compounds and other pollutants. The filtered air passes through the AMP unit and circulates back to the indoor environment.

Mars in the Bronx

CASE gets new environmental technologies out of labs and into buildings at (relative) warp speed

BY JONATHAN LERNER

Of necessity, the Public Safety Answering Center II, New York City's back-up emergency call facility now under construction at the intersection of Pelham and Hutchinson River Parkways, is a bit like a spacecraft. To maintain functionality during crises one is loath to imagine – say, toxic gas clouds – it must be able to shut down fresh air intake from the outside, yet remain habitable within. To achieve this, the building's architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) have specified an Active Modular Phytoremediation System (AMPS). AMPS is an interior green wall tied right into the HVAC. Air is cleaned as it is drawn through the plants' roots, and then recirculated through the building. The technology was developed by the Center for Architecture Science and Ecology (CASE), a collaboration between SOM and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). "Our microbiologist cut her chops by looking at the relationship between microbes in space capsules and astronauts' health and well-being," says CASE Director Anna Dyson. Adapting knowledge from extraterrestrial living to buildings here on Earth? SOM's Ken Lewis, AIA, a CASE principal, quips, "We're going to Mars in the Bronx."

CASE, launched in 2008, brings architects from SOM together with RPI architecture faculty and researchers in biochemistry, computer and cognitive sciences; economics; and structural, environmental, and aerospace engineering. The purpose, says Dyson, is to leverage insights derived from long-term research in fields like nanotechnology and biotechnology "into transformative



Courtesy of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill ©CASE

new technologies for buildings, and accelerate the times of deployment to actual test beds." That acceleration is pivotal. Typically, she says, a concept may spend 30 years under development in the lab before being translated into an applicable product; meanwhile, the environmental challenges architect-

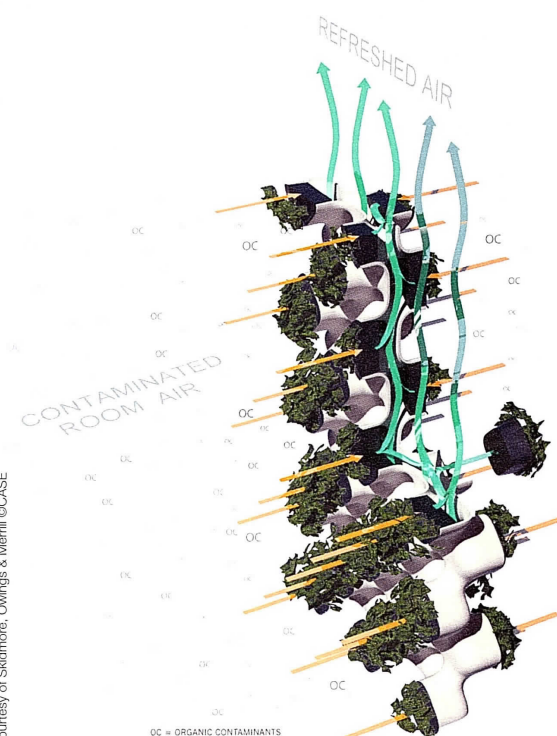


ture should address proliferate and intensify. AMPS, by contrast, has resulted from only 10 years' work. (It incorporates research begun before CASE was formed, at NASA.)

AMPS emerged from one of a dozen areas of research CASE is conducting. Another application already being tested in buildings is a modular façade system that harvests photovoltaic energy, reduces solar gain, enhances interior daylighting, and still provides outside views. Also being explored are buildings shaped to optimize and channel wind flows toward multiple small turbines, called Building Integrated Hybrid Flow Control Systems, or BIFCS (*see cover*). A number of other impressive projects are being investigated: solar-harvesting building envelopes that simultaneously power water recycling and maintain interior thermal comfort; new ceramic structural systems; and the manufacture of construction materials from agricultural byproducts like coconut husks. Some lines of inquiry focus not on buildings but on built environments – the role of street layouts and dimensions in buildings' energy consumption and generating the urban heat island effect; and a technology to replace lost mangrove shorelines in tropical coastal cities.

The architect-led collaborations, says SOM's technical director Nick Holt, AIA, are about understanding the relationships between "the various forces that are acting on a building to look for technologies that aren't single-facet," but harness several such forces simultaneously. Dyson, herself an architect, says, "We don't take on things that offer just incremental improvement." AMPS, she explains, could have a "transformative impact on the way we will design buildings in the future relative to delivering air. And that affects every system, and the organization and shape of the building." She adds, "It's going to dramatically change how we process air in cities."

What makes the cross-discipline interaction work? "Architects who feel confident with multiple engineers at the table," says Dyson, "knowing what they know, but also being able to discuss things that they don't know."



"We're in an amazing moment where there's a huge amount of venture capital in the world," says Lewis. "And there is a deep hunger for systems like these." CASE is demonstrating that architecture's need for solutions can lead to – and speed up – those solutions' development. ■

Jonathan Lerner's articles have appeared in *Landscape Architecture*, *Metropolis*, *Pacific Standard*, *Modern*, and many other design and mainstream magazines. He also heads the consultancy UrbanistCommunications.com.



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Spinning Research Into Practice

Intense experimentation with digital technologies is yielding remarkable designs and products

BY LISA DELGADO

(above) The ARO-designed Knoll showroom in San Francisco sports the Architecture Research Office Collection for FilzFelt, including ARO Array, a series of five hanging privacy-screen patterns.

Some architecture firms define themselves through a signature visual style, but Architecture Research Office (ARO) has always gone a different route. “Research” is the middle name because the firm chose to be “defined by a process of inquiry, rather than a kind of a priori formal or conceptual bent,” says Adam Yarinsky, FAIA, LEED AP, who co-founded the NYC-based firm with Stephen Cassell, AIA, LEED AP, in 1993. “The name really reflects how we approach our work.”

That research-driven methodology infuses the whole practice, from self-initiated R&D to projects for clients. There’s a “parallel tracking of research work and project-driven work. Sometimes those strands come together very closely,” says Principal Kim Yao, AIA.

ARO has researched topics as diverse as climate change and affordable green housing, but the firm’s most enduring area of research has been the potential of CAD/CAM technologies to expand possibilities in the realm of craft. When the architects got their first in-house CNC laser cutter in 1999, they didn’t use it just to create architectural models; they investigated its potential as a tool for fabricating new designs. One early project was *Paper Wall* – an intricate art installation built using woven-together units of finely laser-sliced paper – which was displayed at Artists Space gallery in SoHo in 2000.

Working with clients, “We always try to look for opportunistic alignments that allow us to push research further,” Cassell remarks. A couple of recent commissions for Knoll are quintessential examples. In 2012 to 2013,

ARO designed two new spaces for the company: a 41,510-square-foot headquarters/showroom/retail space in Midtown Manhattan, and an 8,000-square-foot showroom/office in San Francisco (with Alexander Jermyn Architecture as executive architect). Delighted at the opportunity to have access to various fabrics and the expertise of a fabricator that works for Knoll, Appalachian Stitching Company, ARO seized the opportunity to push further its experiments with digital design and fabrication.

A central question in the design process was, “How do we display Knoll product in an architectural way?” Yao says. In the Midtown location, ARO added prominent new staircases wrapped in fabrics. Using Grasshopper, the firm designed one staircase to be sheathed in woven strips of vibrant orange-red FilzFelt wool felt. Woven brown Spinneybeck leather cloaked another staircase. Elsewhere in the NYC and San Francisco spaces, ARO incorporated elements such as perforated wool felt screens and undulating wall panels and seating of the same fabric.

Once the spaces opened, Knoll’s salespeople reported that customers showed keen interest in various architectural elements ARO had designed. Often they wanted to buy “the display ideas themselves, rather than just the product. People went in and said, ‘We want a wall like that’ or ‘We want a stair like that,’” Cassell says.

That led to an unexpected spin-off project designing a collection of acoustic architectural finishes for FilzFelt, a Boston-based company that offers a line of German-manufactured eco-friendly wool felt. The Architecture Research Office Collection for FilzFelt launched in June 2014 at NeoCon, and includes a variety of panels, screens, and baffles. ARO is currently working on new products to add to the collection this year.

Designing the collection presented certain technical challenges, such as figuring out how much perforation could be added to Array, a type of hanging privacy screen, before the wool felt began to lose its shape. “Certain things that seem like great design ideas are hard to pull off,” Cassell says. “We did a whole round of tests of patterns and kinds of shapes to see just what would work.” The extra effort paid off in the creation of a series of screens that offer the sensual, tactile qualities of felt yet also appear airy at the same time, with a play of light and pattern across the surface.

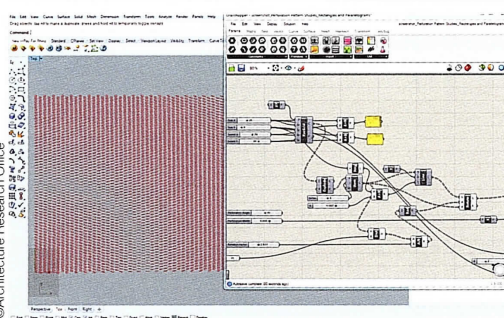
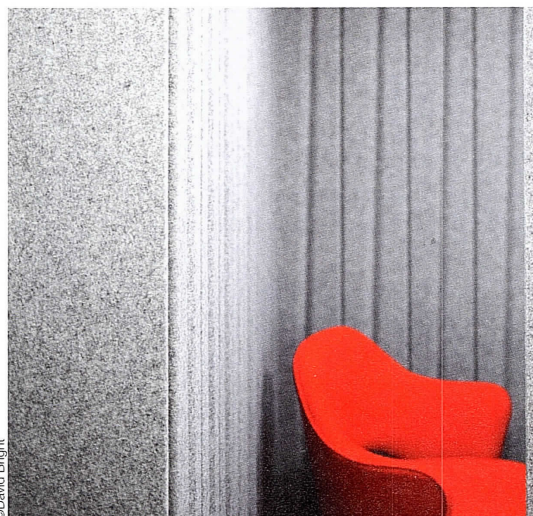
Though the wool felt collection is far more ambitious in scale than the *Paper Wall* installation, both projects explore how CNC cutting can give a



(left) The Architecture Research Office Collection, which debuted in the Knoll showroom at NeoCon 2014, includes ARO Plank, a modular wall system that can be assembled to create a variety of patterns (and a custom bench).

(below) An installation of an ARO Array hanging panel and ARO Plank wall system.

(left, bottom) Array studies using Grasshopper scripts.



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high-tech transformation to an old, ordinary material. Both are part of a long and fruitful line of exploration, grounded in intense research. In ARO’s methodology, there’s often a “kind of piggybacking that relates to the iterative way of work,” Yao says. “Projects build on projects.” ■

Lisa Delgado is a freelance journalist who has written for *e-Oculus*, *The Architect’s Newspaper*, *Architectural Record*, *Blueprint*, and *Wired*, among other publications.

A Results-Oriented Think Tank

Defining architectural practice broadly enough to include research, theory, and public discourse, Grimshaw's Urban Research Unit is a full-circle activity leading to a richer built environment

BY BILL MILLARD

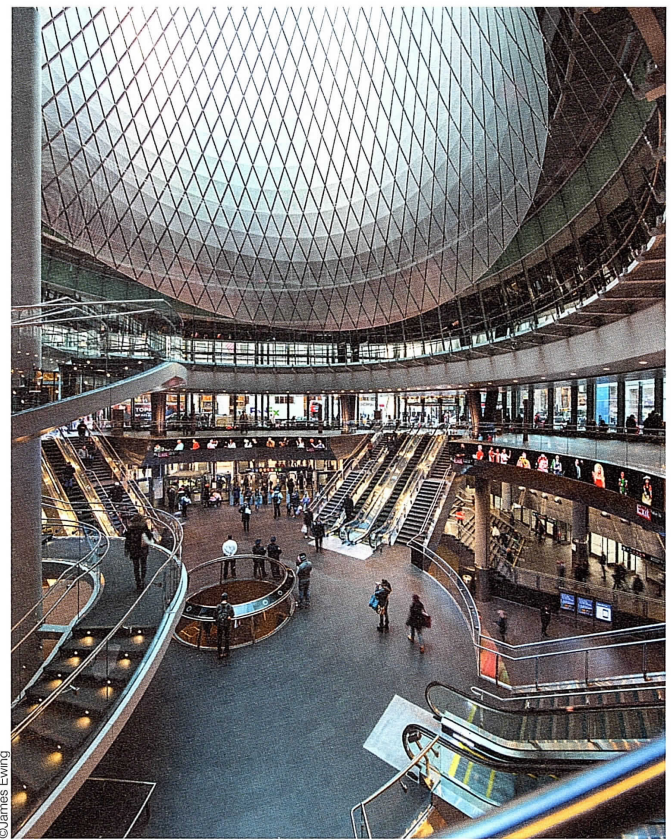
A moment spent in Fulton Center evokes its designers' sophisticated understanding of the transit experience. The bright new hub unites a tangled maze of transit concourses into three interweaving levels wrapping an atrium lit by James Carpenter's light-channeling sculpture *Sky Reflector-Net*. Grimshaw's latest contribution to New York signifies that its expertise in large-scale urban projects can be successfully augmented by a think-tank auxiliary.

Under the leadership of New York partner Andrew Whalley, AIA, RIBA, and Mark Davy of London's placemaking agency Futurecity, the British firm has channeled its theoretical work through the Urban Research Unit (URU). Conceived initially as a single-year initiative in partnership with Futurecity and the Royal Society of Arts, then extended with further products in mind (including an exhibition and publications), URU presented panels in New York and London during 2013–2014 (video-excerpted at www.urbanresearchunit.com). These events convened public and nonprofit-sector officials, developers, artists, scholars, newscasters, and others to examine "The Future City" through eight conceptual lenses: definitions, work, housing, navigation, play, economics, culture, and greening.

AIANY's 2014 President Lance Jay Brown, FAIA, URU's academic advisor (an involvement that arose through conversations with Whalley and Grimshaw Partner Vincent Chang, AIA, RIBA, during the planning of Via Verde with Dattner Architects), describes URU as a "nouveau salon," an outgrowth of the tradition of "people talking who are respected for their knowledge in a very conversational setting, making the flow of information between those on the podium and those in the audience fairly easy." Like Richard Sennett's *Theatrum Mundi* at the London School of Economics, URU creates space for speculation apart from the demands of specific projects.

More than a talk shop

Far from being academic in the sense of "unrealistic," however, URU focuses on results. Both Grimshaw and Futurecity, Davy says, "wanted to create a research unit that was dealing with deliverables, with ideas that could actually be applied. There's so

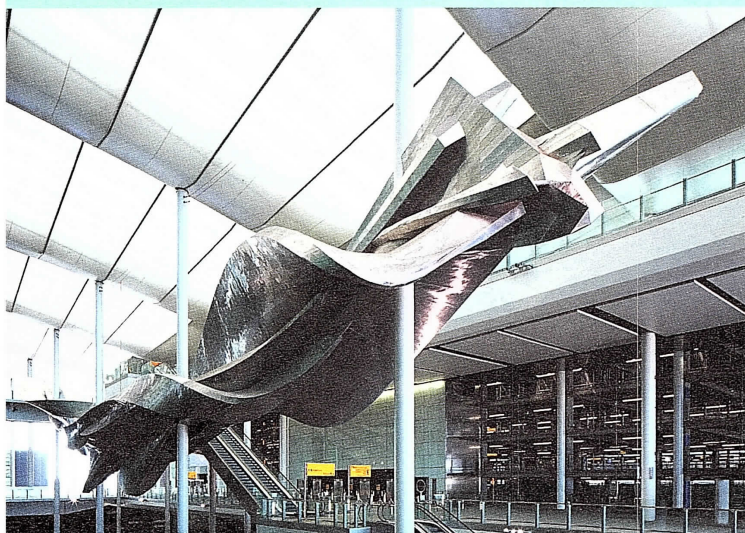


At Fulton Center, Grimshaw "went the distance to make an inside-outside relationship," says Lance Jay Brown, FAIA. Transparency and daylight are maximized through the angled oculus and James Carpenter's *Sky Reflector-Net*. "There is an extremely progressive attitude towards leading with technological solutions, ways in which you can humanize the city."

much theory around urbanism and the city, but it's very hard to find ways of applying that intelligence." The eight panels build a "toolkit for the Cultural City," as Davy has written, "to turn our towns and cities into the locus of creative and cultural genius." One driving principle for URU is to integrate varieties of play into an environment's master plan. The research is intended to persuade bottom-line-oriented developers of the value – social and cultural as well as economic – of making places that tease out the unique aspects of locality and use. As private entities increasingly fund arts, parks, and sports, developers should be talking to placemaking specialists with public-sector experience (a hallmark of both Grimshaw and Futurecity).

"London is driven by this incredible property-sector boom," Davy comments. "One big change in the U.K. has been the realization that culture is becoming the linchpin of placemaking." He contrasts the "vacuous field of somewhere like Canary Wharf" with vibrant hubs on various scales. Single buildings can transform public life, as in the auditorium/gallery/café added to the flagship Foyle's Bookshop when it expanded into the St. Martin's Arts School in 2014, which itself is a repurposed industrial granary that has become a centerpiece of the massive King's Cross redevelopment. Davy notes that "developers here are beginning to encourage the cultural organizations to stay and try to make their money work differently. We've said to developers, 'On street level, where commercial spaces are, why don't you see that as a loss leader? Give that away so you have a creative life on the street, but make your money from the residential above it.'" In newly developing industrial districts like London's Nine Elms

The first Futurecity/Grimshaw collaboration, says Mark Davy, was for Heathrow's new Terminal 2, where "we replaced all the landscape scheme with Richard Wilson's huge sculpture *Slipstream*. It has been such a success that Heathrow is rethinking its whole placemaking strategy for the airport."



©David Levine

or New York's West Chelsea, "suddenly they've wised up to the idea that each should be a creative district, so they're saying to each development group, 'What's your creative offer?' This is not legislative; this is not a Percent for Arts or government forces. These are individual developers being asked to create a picture or vision for their own territory."

Connectivity is everything

URU views urban space in terms of movement, not objects, applying Guy Debord's Situationist concept of psychogeography. As the Crossrail project, which includes architectural components by Grimshaw, progresses to give London a new transportation spine (to launch in 2018), Futurecity has paired eight international galleries with eight stations, each incorporating one artist's intervention in the architecture, funded by eight private sponsors. The resulting "Culture Line" will allow *dérives*, or playful urban wanderings, like those New Yorkers take along the High Line. Aided by social-media technology, Londoners are "beginning to look at the city in a very different way," Davy finds. "They're all playing with the city. They're creating routes that didn't exist; they're creating journeys and events."

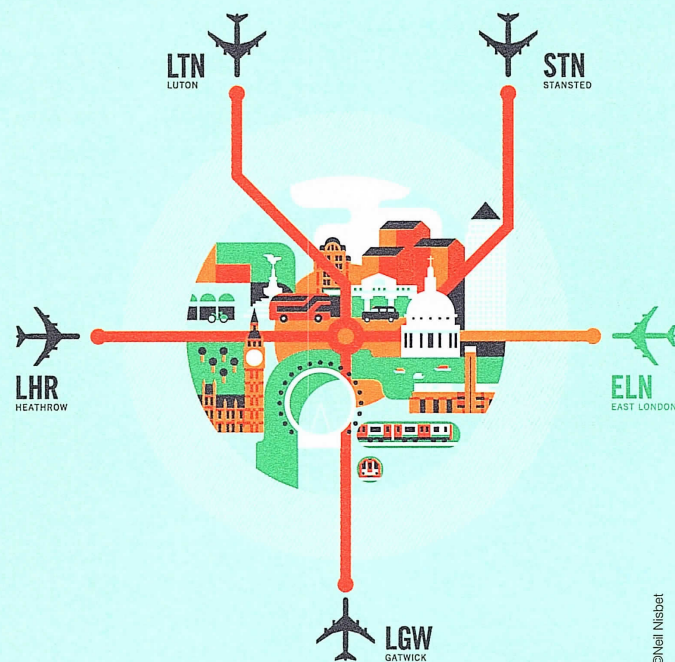
Similarly, Whalley reports, "We've been working with the Municipal Arts Society, looking at the area around Penn Station 'with a view of refocusing on New York, east-west.' From Penn Station to Hudson Yards, 'How many designers are there?' asks Davy. 'Are there creative industries? Are there poets?' The idea is to quantify the components of place value."

URU's attention extends to cities' relations with outlying land. The "Greening" panel heatedly debated urban farming, Whalley recalls, considering the 2010 Venice Biennale's "1,000 Singapores" pavilion and that city's blend of density and greenness. "Gardens permeate the buildings, not just horizontally

but vertically, which is easy to achieve in a tropical location," he notes. While multiplying Singapore's model could fit the planet's whole population into less than 1% of its land ("the same area as France," he calculates), "Singapore can't survive without the support of Malaysia. That's the urban pattern, but it doesn't account for its food print. You need to think in even broader terms when you talk about the greening city, but also its green surrounds and its agriculture support systems."

As URU considers spaces, resources, and play, connectivity is everything. By bringing private stakeholders in contact with discourses traditionally heard in universities or foundations, URU refines their sense of place. "The red line defines the ownership of land," Davy says, "but a cultural red line, which is a much wider area, says, 'You are in the middle of something. Where are you? What are your neighbors? How do you appropriate or link what's going on around you?'" Planning that grasps these cultural narratives, URU's leaders contend, can better serve the people and businesses that breathe life into cities. ■

Bill Millard is a freelance writer and editor whose work has appeared in *Oculus*, *Architect*, *Icon*, *Content*, *The Architect's Newspaper*, *LEAF Review*, *Architectural Record*, and other publications.



One concept offered by URU is Hub City, which envisions the city of London as a connection hub for airports including Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, and Luton, and a hypothetical new Thames estuary site. Andrew Whalley, AIA, RIBA, describes "investing in our rail infrastructure and linking at least two and maybe more airports to the city – and each other."

The Resilience Factor

Perkins+Will is making resilience design and planning a growing area of practice and income

BY RICHARD STAUB

For Janice Barnes, AIA, LEED AP, the wake-up started with the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Barnes, who is global discipline leader for planning and strategies at Perkins+Will (P+W), once lived in New Orleans and still had good friends there. So while her concern about the city and surrounding area's recovery was personal, her professional side was also piqued. That only increased two years ago with Superstorm Sandy's vast destructive impact on the Northeast coast.

Accustomed to thinking about organizational strategic change and future planning, Barnes began to consider how to apply that approach to resiliency planning, and how resiliency planning could become part of the firm's practice. "There was an urgent need that a lot of us felt – colleagues within P+W and outside – for a comprehensive approach to how we can prepare for, live through, and recover from catastrophic events," says Barnes. "For example, two members of our New York office assumed leadership positions in the city's and

the AIANY Chapter's response." Robin Guenther, FAIA, LEED AP, P+W's sustainable healthcare design leader, co-chaired the Critical Buildings Committee of the NYC Building Resiliency Task Force to improve healthcare resilience to extreme weather events. She was also a member of the Critical and Commercial Buildings (CCB) working group for AIANY's Post-Sandy Initiative. Jason Harper, AIA, was named co-chair of the AIANY Health Facilities Committee, which organized the AIANY CCB working group, of which Harper was also a member. The group authored the CCB section of the AIANY Post-Sandy Initiative report, "Building Better, Building Smarter: Opportunities for Design and Development."

"Within the firm we created a task force to look at the nature of resilience, all its implications, and the response our firm could offer," says Barnes. "What that consists of is still evolving." And although it's yet to be found on its website, the firm can point to a revenue stream from resilience planning.

©Anton Grassl/Esto

(above) Built on a brown-field site on Boston Harbor, the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Charleston, MA, Perkins+Will raised the ground floor of the LEED Gold building 30 inches above the 500-year floodplain level, and located the MEP and communication infrastructure on the roof. Surrounded by native plantings, its drought-tolerant gardens also address storm impacts.





OWNER: Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, Partners HealthCare

ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER: Perkins+Will

DESIGN TEAM: Ralph Johnson, FAIA, LEED AP, Tim Marsters, LEED AP, Robin Guenther, FAIA, LEED AP, Dennis Kaiser, AIA, LEEP AP, Jessica Stebbins, IIDA, LEED AP, Paul Clinch, AIA, LEED AP, Jeffrey Keilman, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Michael McPhail, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Juliette Bowker, LEED AP ID+C, NCIDQ, Daniel Stubbs, CDT, LEED AP, Robert Neper, AIA, LEED AP, Deborah Rivers, AIA, LEED AP BD+C

GENERAL CONTRACTOR/CONSTRUCTION MANAGER: Walsh Brothers

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING: Haley & Aldrich

MEP ENGINEERS: Thompson Consultants (lead engineer); Buro Happold

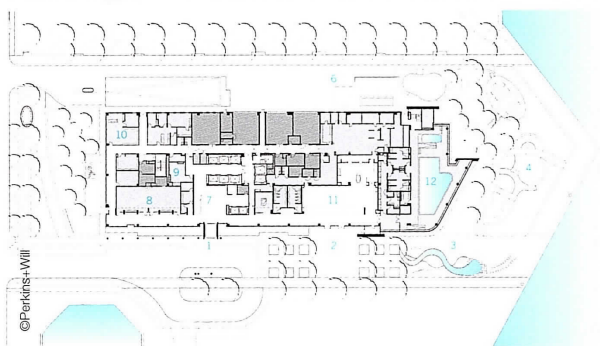
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: McNamara/Salvia

LIGHTING DESIGN: AKF

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT PLANNING: Source Atlantic

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS: Copley Wolff Design Group; Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects (roof terraces)

(left) Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital site plan.



Barnes explains that resilience isn't only about planning for hurricanes. She cites the much broader approach taken by The Rockefeller Foundation and its president, Judith Rodin, as seen in her book, *The Resilience Dividend*. Rodin defines resilience as the "capacity of any entity – an individual, a community, an organization, or a natural system – to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow from a disruptive experience." Which, she says, is not just about acts of nature and climate change, but also such traumatic events as the Rwandan genocide and recovery, the deforestation and regrowth of forests in Costa Rica, and the decline and resurgence of Lewiston, MA.

Within P+W, Barnes indicates three levels of engagement with resilience. The first is incorporating resilience planning in all new design. "This has become as integral to our architectural practice as sustainability," says Barnes, pointing to the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Charleston, MA, which was completed in April 2013. The 260,000-square-foot, LEED Gold building is an expanded replacement for a 35-year-old hospital. In this new version, resiliency measures include raising the ground floor of the building 30 inches above the 500-year floodplain level to account for the projected rise of sea level. All critical MEP and communication infrastructure has been placed on the roof, as have gas-fired co-generation and emergency diesel generators to offer additional redundancy for power generation in the event of grid loss or diesel generator issues. Guenther spearheaded the integration of sustainable and resiliency measures for the building.

The second level consists of consulting engagements with various cities, such as the resiliency workshop P+W is conducting with Washington, DC's District Department of the Environment. The research group is focusing on severe weather, storm, and water challenges the city could face and the responses needed. The process includes looking at climate models and evaluating where water levels will be over the next several decades and further out. Outcomes include assessments of how the city will be affected and prioritization of the city's buildings, infrastructure, and planning issues.

The third level is more daunting – and one that organizations, including The Rockefeller Foundation, are still coming to grips with. As Barnes notes, it's one thing to make a building resilient, but the creation of a resilient city with the accompanying social and economic dynamics is a complex process. And whether the traumatic events are physical, social, or economic, they usually don't honor the boundaries of cities, states, and regions. Plus there are accumulative stresses, such as racial inequality or economic decline, that have to be accounted for. The team for an effective resiliency program may well require sociologists, psychologists, and economists, as well as planners, architects, landscape designers, and engineers. Who leads the team will depend on the kind of planning and implementation required.

P+W is also using research in the form of big data from citywide or regional databases to look at the need for facilities linked to social issues. For example, in New York City, Barnes's team is working with the city's Economic Development Corporation and Department of City Planning to look at the need for "health districts," where incidences of disease and other variables suggest additional health or community facilities. Using analytic models, the firm can apply datasets to shape design decision-making.

These far-ranging extensions of practice exemplify how architectural design and planning will continue to evolve, addressing the fundamental changes and crises that have come to exemplify the 21st century. ■

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

Socrates at the Drafting Table

Joshua Prince-Ramus, AIA, came of age as a partner of Rem Koolhaas, heading up the New York office of OMA (Office of Metropolitan Architecture) before going out on his own with the 35-person studio, renamed REX, in 2006. He has fashioned himself a modern Master Builder, reclaiming the responsibilities – and the power – long surrendered by many of today's practitioners. Whereas architects, of necessity, grapple with the conventional aspects of practice, Prince-Ramus does so by preference and passion, immersing himself in all the strategic, if unsexy, mechanics of contract negotiations, procurement, management, execution, and yes, accountability, each an opportunity to advance the architectural process and product. In the face of today's fast-track imperatives, REX champions a slow think-tank architecture of methodical problem-solving. Design is deferred until after key issues are mastered, as the question is not representation but performance: what a building does and how it's achieved.

The name REX is a conflation of "RE," the open-ended prefix of enabling concepts like reimagine, recycle, and other reinterpretations, and "X," the unknown factor in the architectural equation. Royal overtones dissolve in a hyper-collaborative architectural culture that debunks the myth of the solitary creative genius. Authorship being "irrelevant," ideas from interns and seasoned veterans are valued equally; Prince-Ramus, involved in every project, appears toward the end of alphabetized credit lists. A hefty ego prevails, of course, but it's less personal and more consortial, more "we" than "I."

REX champions a slow think-tank architecture of methodical problem-solving

BY JANET ADAMS STRONG

REX's approach to architecture is a direct outgrowth of Prince-Ramus's philosophy studies at Yale and the interlocutor method learned to defend his work at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. Practical application came in 1999 when, in his hometown, he led his first project as partner-in-charge of the Seattle Central Library, designed by OMA/LMN. "I couldn't go into a board meeting as a 29-year-old and say, 'This is my vision.' They'd laugh me out of the room. So the idea of argumentation was necessary and became incredibly powerful."

Like a latter-day Hegel in skinny black jeans, an e.e. cummings tattoo scrolling inspiration down his forearm ("Always the beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question"),

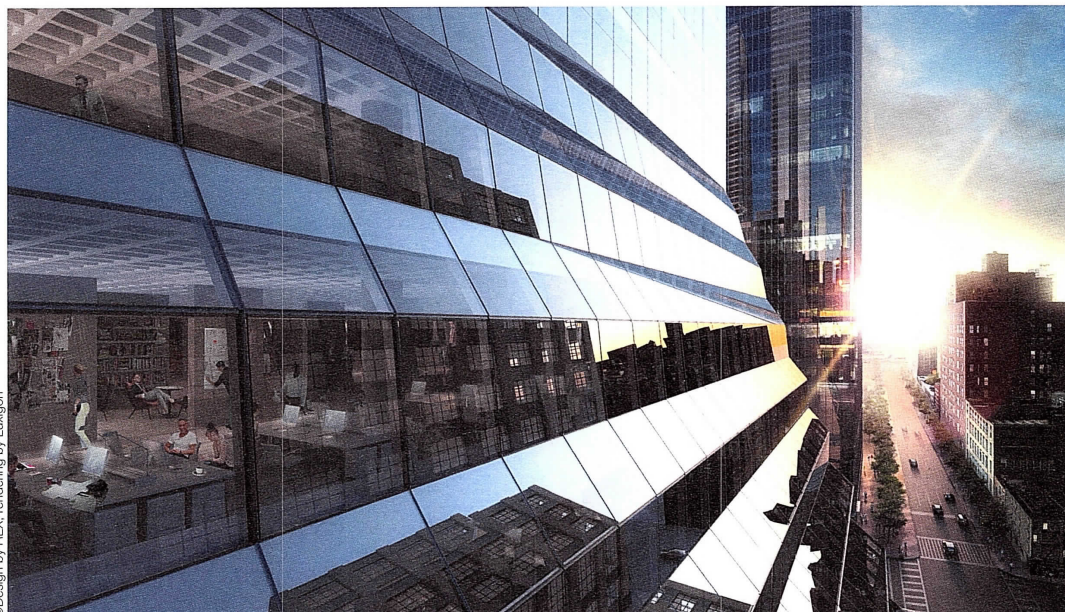


(opposite page above, and right) 5 Manhattan West celebrates the most distinctive aspects of the original Brutalist building by Davis Brody (1969), with large, open loft spaces and unusually high and exposed coffered ceilings. To update its identity, the sloped concrete exterior is being replaced by a high-performance, pleated glass façade that maximizes usable interior space, views, and natural light, while reducing, through transparency, the mass of the 1.5-million-square-foot building.

(opposite page below) The original 1969 Davis Brody building with the High Line in the foreground.

CLIENT:
Brookfield Office Properties
ARCHITECT: REX
DESIGN TEAM: Cheryl Baxter, Qianqian Cai, Adam Chizmar, Rachel Dao, Danny Duong, Luis Gil, Alysen Hiller, Gabriel Jewell-Vitale, Romea Muryn, Judith Mussel, Kurt Nieminen, Roberto Otero, Se Yoon Park, Assoc. AIA, Justin Piercy, Joshua Prince-Ramus, AIA, Ishtiaq Rafiuddin, Lena Reeh Rasmussen, Minyoung Song, AIA, Elina Spruza, Yuan Tiauriman, João Vieira Costa, Matthew Uselman, AIA, Cristina Webb, Matthew Zych
ARCHITECT-OF-RECORD:
AAI Architects
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:
James Corner Field Operations
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: SOM
MEP ENGINEER: Cosentini
LEED CONSULTANT: Atelier Ten
FAÇADE CONSULTANT:
Front Inc.
FAÇADE MAINTENANCE CONSULTANT: Entek
SIGNAGE CONSULTANT:
Pentagram
LIGHTING CONSULTANT:
Tillotson Design
ACOUSTIC CONSULTANT:
Cerami
VERTICAL TRANSPORTATION:
Edgett Williams
TRAFFIC CONSULTANT:
Philip Habib
CODE CONSULTANT:
William Vitacco

©Design by REX, rendering by Luxigon



Prince-Ramus begins each project with a Socratic dialectic of inquiry and discussion, using the tools of philosophy and rhetoric to doggedly “tear apart” assumptions and conventions in search of the right solution – whether to understand why an existing premise does or does not work or, very frequently, to discover new opportunities. Decision-maker clients undergo intense explorations with REX, almost like architectural therapy, in refinement of stated and unstated goals. Each decision rests solidly on those preceding so that, in the end, everything is in service of underlying ideas, almost as if the building designs itself. Remarkably, the same methodology is used in competitions where REX plays the surrogate client, hoping on the strength of its Socratic approach to win the opportunity to begin anew with the client’s actual involvement.

Since the iterative process ensures intellectual buy-in at every stage, there are no unwelcome surprises, no misunderstood intentions, and, as clients will attest, no gross overruns of schedule or budget. And because REX works seamlessly with its consultants from the beginning, especially with Front Inc., a multidisciplinary design and engineering practice specializing in all aspects of the building envelope, technical issues and social implications are discussed, often yielding new opportunities and efficiencies. Just such a collaboration led to the implausibly inexpensive (\$272-per-square-foot) Seattle Central Library and more recently, in Dallas, the stunning \$65-per-square-foot tubular enclosure of the Wyly Theater. Both buildings won national AIA Honor Awards, in 2005 and 2011 respectively.

As a business model, REX’s time-intensive methodology limits the number of projects it can simultaneously undertake, but ensures a portfolio of work in which the architects are fully invested and proud. To be sure, the experience is not for

everyone, but for select clients wanting true collaboration, it’s as close to core creation as it gets. Indeed, some clients have been “fired” during contract negotiations for their unwillingness to hash out key issues. “A contract isn’t a fight,” explains Prince-Ramus. It’s a moment when involved parties acknowledge differences and work to resolve them. “The contract is where the rules are. The reason we want to design the contract is so we can design the process so we can design the building.” Unlike most firms that secret contracts away for the adults, REX posts them on its server and expects team members to know them fully.

REX has no signature design since each project results from its own evolutionary process, yet all are conceived for reuse. Whereas architects still embrace “the high Modernism of the empty box,” REX proposes a new definition of flexibility with a compartmentalized array of distinct typologies that can each be reconfigured as needed over the life of a building. With concern for sustainability in the broadest sense, the firm also engages in more traditional adaptive reuse as in the weighty 1969 Brutalist building at 450 West 33rd Street (Davis, Brody & Associates, 1969), now named 5 Manhattan West. The 17-story building is undergoing a radical transformation with a new double-height lobby; loft-like floorplates of more than 100,000 square feet; new retail, circulation, and operational systems; a pleated glass façade that replaces the original concrete walls with self-shading floor-to-ceiling windows; and, on a transfer deck over the railyards, an animated rear façade where none previously existed: REcladding and REimagining X. ■

Janet Adams Strong, Ph.D., is an architectural historian and author, and a principal of Strong and Partners communications.

Architecture in the Social Data Era

Transforming our practice to engage new data sources and design intents

BY MELISSA MARSH

More than 15 years ago, I stumbled upon Bruce Nussbaum's introduction to the *BusinessWeek/Architectural Record* design awards. His words resonated with my craving for evidence of the capability and power of architecture to impact people and business. Architecture, in both design and theory, seemed to lack quantifiable measures of how it affected social structure, emotional and interpersonal experience, even cognitive and neurological impact.

My pursuit of new methods for understanding, analyzing, and incorporating user behavior in the design process drove me to a summer internship with the Arup R&D team in London. There, we studied the unexpected wobble of London's then-new Millennium Bridge. It prompted us to think differently about measuring buildings, people, and their interactions. Along with engineers from a variety of disciplines, I spent several months exploring ways to discover what made this pedestrian bridge sway: the collective weight of crowds? Walking speeds? The density of the group? And, of course, monitoring structural results of acceleration. Analyzing data from recording devices on walkers' ankles, we discovered that a slow-paced, sauntering crowd eventually synchronizes its gait, inducing the collective force that excited the bridge.

Arup engineers designed and manufactured a damper system to stop the wobble, and I discovered what would become the basis of my career. Since then, my passion for people, architecture, and measurement has informed diverse projects, ranging from campus master planning to global-workplace guidelines. In each instance I work iteratively using data, discovery, testing, and design. At PLASTARC my team has expertise in sociology, anthropology, data visualization, environmental psychology, urban studies, organizational design, and knowledge management.

Looking forward, I expect the next 15 years to be an era of optimizing architecture for human factors (physical, social, cognitive, and neurological), much as the last two decades have focused on learning to model ecological and environmental factors. Led by more data, this next development phase will move faster, and have an even greater risk of being taken out of architects' hands than the sustainable building movement. Architects must seize the opportunity now to deeply analyze and understand the consequences of the occupant experience. With these data, we can refine design to improve performance for occupants, and thereby show evidence of our value to society and clients.

"It is a method of building teams that communicate and innovate. It is a way of telling customers who you are and what you stand for. Architecture is perhaps one of the least understood and most powerful business tools available. Yet architects, by and large, are unable to explain how powerful a role they can play in achieving business goals. And business people, by and large, remain unaware of architecture's bottom-line prowess..."

— Bruce Nussbaum, *BusinessWeek*, November 1999

Some observations from the field:

Know that smart buildings are social buildings

A colleague recently said, “With social media at play, all the time that used to be spent marketing a product will have to be spent making it a great product.” Today, with sensors and mobile apps, we can collect building feedback to better inform client decisions. This work might once have required dozens of engineers, hundreds of volunteers, innumerable hours, and other resources. It is now possible to incorporate real-time, candid input from occupants, using technology to channel this information more seamlessly into our work. With a streamlined discovery process, we can more easily draw upon what we learn in order to inform the path of our design and improve our product.

Measure or be measured

At a moment of more and more availability, transparency, and optimization of data in other fields, architects are increasingly being asked to show evidence that our solutions can and will perform for a variety of occupants’ requirements. While other professionals speak in terms of product efficacy and performance, architects tend not to, especially in relation to how our work affects people. We must be willing to embrace the data and technological tools at our disposal, from building sensors and digital thermostats, to Twitter and Foursquare data. It is essential for architects to take charge of these performance criteria – to measure or be measured.

Consider user experience (UX) for architecture

As consideration of human factors and behaviors in building performance moves to the forefront, it is imperative that we explore new ways to measure and predict these variables. We must ask the questions that help us understand the physical and psychological impacts of space at every scale. We must pursue this both before and after design, leveraging emergent data for new discoveries, and collaborating with neurological and cognitive science to explore the impact of our work. Moreover, these measurable – and describable – impacts of design will include a full sensory repertoire, such as smell, taste, texture – even humidity.

Leverage current buildings as a full-scale prototype

In a North America that is mostly built, our role as architects will shift from building new to reshaping. The architectural business model will become more iterative. Each built work will operate less as a finished work and more as a step in a perpetual learning process. Engaging continually with facility managers and community clients, we can collaboratively evaluate how our buildings are working, informed by improved information and public data.

Embrace an architectural diaspora

Questions of design and human experience extend beyond architecture, and the future of evidence-based architectural design will need to be an interdisciplinary venture. We will need to engage with technologists, sociologists, psychologists, ergonomists, and others in the pursuit of measuring buildings through the lens of human perception and performance. Simultaneously, we must train current and future designers to use data, feedback, and user experience design tools in their practice.

(opposite page) Smart buildings are social buildings: PLASTARC data showing occupant-based building performance assessments in social-media-style.

To lead this effort, we must shift our own focus as professionals, while also expanding the definition of “architect.” We need an inclusive rather than exclusive model of the profession: an architectural diaspora composed of many experts. This future definition will be inclusive of many who contribute to the built world, and embrace those who are educated as architects yet deploy their talents elsewhere. Whether they are developing real-estate valuation apps or digital olfactory transmission products, these innovators are expanding the frontier of our profession. ■

Melissa Marsh is founder and CEO of PLASTARC, a social research, workplace innovation, and real-estate strategy firm serving tenants and owner-occupiers, and collaborating with architecture and design firms. Marsh is a regular contributor to *e-Oculus* and an organizer of AIANY Professional Practice Committee’s Transforming Architectural Practice series.



The NEW INC workspace was designed by SO-IL architects (Florian Idenburg, Intl. Assoc. AIA, and Jing Liu) in collaboration with Gensler.

©Courtesy New Museum, New York; photo by Naho Kubota

Museum as Incubator

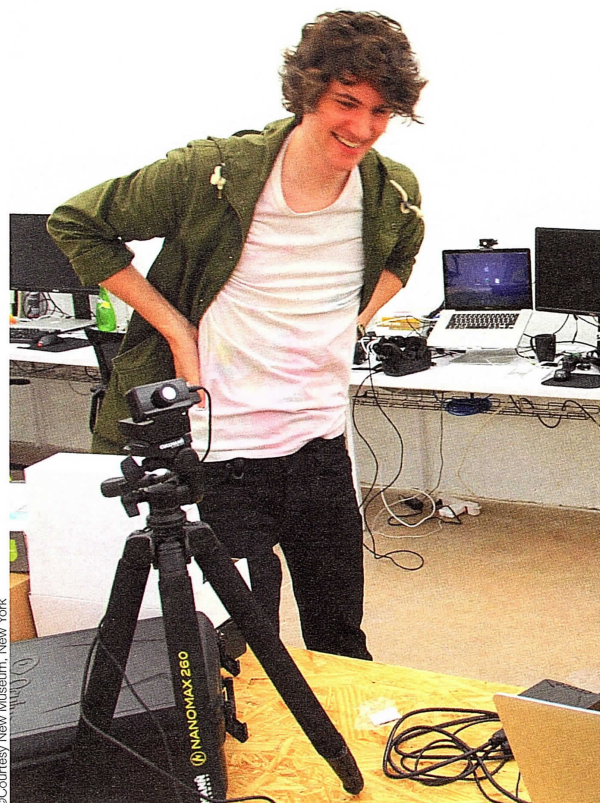
The New Museum hatches a multidisciplinary workspace to nurture creative entrepreneurs

BY JULIA VAN DEN HOUT

Since the New Museum purchased the property next to its SANAA-designed building, the painted-brick loft building at 231 Bowery has hosted a number of boundary-pushing programs and exhibitions. From 2011 to 2013, its ground floor was home to Studio 231, a project that gave emerging artists the opportunity to generate site-specific works commissioned by the museum. Before that, architects may remember the space as the venue for OMA's *Crono-caos* exhibit, a show that guided half of 231's ground-floor conversion from typical Bowery restaurant-supply store to pristine exhibition space, leaving the other half as found, and retaining the exterior's old awning intact.

Now 231 Bowery has again undergone a makeover. In September 2014, the New Museum opened the building's second floor as the headquarters of its newest initiative, NEW INC. An extension of the museum's mission, "New Art, New Ideas," the multidisciplinary incubator brings together full- and part-time members in a creative nucleus that nurtures start-up projects at the intersection of art, design, and technology.

To shape this protective creative bubble, NEW INC co-founders Lisa Phillips, the New Museum's Toby Devan Lewis director, and Deputy Director Karen Wong looked at precedents such as General Assembly and Y Combinator – two web- and technology-focused business incubators. As a result, NEW INC, which describes itself as positioned "somewhere between a business incubator and an artist residency program," focuses not only on seeding creative innovation, but also on the possibility of practical application. Led by Julia Kaganskiy, NEW INC offers its members professional development programs and an opportunity to learn directly from an advisory council of some of the most successful, and well-connected, creative and entrepreneurial minds, including John Maeda (design partner, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers), An-



©Courtesy New Museum, New York

drew Weissmann (partner, Union Square Ventures, and co-founder of Betaworks), Fred Dust (partner, IDEO), and Yancey Strickler (co-founder and CEO, Kickstarter). NEW INC also brought in Rhizome, a not-for-profit arts organization, and Studio-X, an offshoot of Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, as anchor tenants. They share the space with what will be an annually changing set of members, while maintaining their independent operations.

An environment that is at once business-minded and determined to innovate might be exactly what many offices – especially newer firms – need to be successful. In its first four months, NEW INC members set up a successful system of skill sharing, using several full-wall dry erase boards to list what they want to learn and what they can teach each other, including branding and marketing outreach, coding, UX/UI design, and risk strategy.

NEW INC's multidisciplinary workspace could offer a much sought-after resource for a younger generation. "New York City isn't the friendliest place to young architects," says Wong. "So you have a generation of architects who are searching for different kinds of practices, to develop a different language. It used to be only about making a building, and now what they're trying to say is, 'I'm going to make these buildings talk, exploring different projects and infrastructures that investigate emotion that comes out of space.'"

For the design of the workspace, NEW INC tapped SO-IL – itself a relatively young firm, led

CLIENT: New Museum
ARCHITECTS: SO-IL in collaboration with Gensler
SO-IL TEAM: Florian Idenburg, Intl. Assoc. AIA, Andre Herrero, Assoc. AIA
GENSLER TEAM: Madeline Burke-Vigeland, AIA, LEED AP, Bevin Savage Yamazaki, Assoc. AIA
MEPS: ICOR Consulting Engineers
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: SGH/ Simpson Gumpertz & Heger
EXPEDITING: Milrose Consulting
ELEVATOR: VDA

(below, left) NEW INC members experimenting with oculus rift technology.

(below, right) A NEW INC workspace.

Julia van den Hout is founder of the editorial and curatorial office, Original Copy, and editor of *CLOG*, a quarterly architecture publication that provides a platform for discussion of one topic at a time.

by Florian Idenburg, Intl. Assoc. AIA, who, while senior associate at SANAA, was in charge of the design and realization of the New Museum's iconic 2007 building. "For NEW INC, the users, although somewhat defined, were less specific than when we design for a single firm or organization," Idenburg says. "So we offered a variety of work areas without necessarily knowing who and how they would be used." The long, narrow space is separated into a front and back room by a light well and a small hallway. The 6,500 square feet of usable area contains 60 desks for its full- and part-time members, two conference and meeting rooms, a kitchen, a prototyping lab and community workbench, a 30-seat screening room and event space, and social lounge areas.

To encourage cross-pollination between disciplines, SO-IL, which worked in collaboration with Gensler, created an open workspace with communal elements, punctuated by mirrored lozenge-shaped columns. "The design tries to offer the members a work setting in which he or she becomes aware of 'the other' in the space," explains Idenburg. "We also wanted to give members a sense of connectedness to the outside – the city – so we worked hard on bringing light deep into the space."

Over the year it will organize several public programs and demo days in the New Museum's theater. While NEW INC was first and foremost conceived as a private workspace, the programs are one way it continues its strong connection to the Bowery community. ■



When Bottom-up Meets Top-down

The benefits of community engagement in post-disaster rebuilding plans

BY DEBORAH GANS, FAIA

Our increasingly frequent need to manage complex and expensive coastal disaster has ushered in an emerging rapprochement between “bottom-up” activism and “top-down” governance. In the usual politics of strange bedfellows, the expanding role of community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in resiliency planning equally satisfies a bias against capital expenditures, libertarian zeal to keep the government out of the backyard, and a progressive belief in the value of community-based activism. This tripartisan appeal has granted it inroads into even large federal bureaucracies, with FEMA calling for a “whole community recovery” process.

Even within the format of the recent U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) competition, Rebuild By Design, where there was need to control local expectation regarding conceptual projects unlikely to be implemented, the federal government crafted a sophisticated if limited process to engage the community. Design teams met with local officials and community leaders in a “town hall” format early in the design process, and then presented proposals to local resi-

dents toward the end. Increasingly, we are grooming a new breed of citizen-architects and engaged bureaucrats and developing new design protocols.

The AIA New York Chapter entered the fray in 2004 when, under the leadership of Lance Jay Brown, FAIA, the Disaster Preparedness Task Force began to lobby the State AIA and Office of Emergency Management for Good Samaritan legislation, which would allow architects to volunteer their services outside the constraints of standard malpractice insurances. It also began the work on an AIA NYS Disaster Preparedness Manual modeled on those in place in California, Texas, and Kansas for use by homeowners. The direct descendant of that task force, the current AIANY Design for Risk and Reconstruction Committee (DfRR), sponsors more than 25 educational events a year geared toward informing the public about their environment and its future. At DfRR's suggestion, the AIANY and the Center for Architecture hosted federally-sponsored (free to the public), FEMA-supported courses called Hurriplan: Resilient Building Design for Coastal Communities, which bring together in microcosm the “whole commu-

Design teams met with local officials and community leaders in a “town hall” format early in the design process, and then presented proposals to local residents toward the end. Increasingly, we are grooming a new breed of citizen-architects and engaged bureaucrats and developing new design protocols.

(below) Students in Pratt Institute's Rebuild Adapt Mitigation Plan curriculum worked with NYC's Department of Emergency Management in Participatory Urban Planning workshops to create interim housing and resilient neighborhoods in Redhook, Brooklyn.



©David Martinez



©Gans Studio, Sean Gold and Cristina Zubillaga

ity” of designers from many disciplines, government from various levels, and local stakeholders in a non-hierarchical workshop setting to design community storm shelters.

Bottom-up and top-down constituencies both gravitate toward “sheltering-in-place” after a disaster, rather than displacing populations to remote locations. In this way, neighborhoods don’t lose their social networks and local economies during recovery. Cynthia Barton, the housing recovery manager for both the NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the federally-funded regional Catastrophic Planning Team, guides such a program. Called Participatory Urban Planning (PUP), it stages similar “whole community” workshops to strategize neighborhood-based interim housing solutions. PUP’s larger goal is to make this roundtable of stakeholders part of the government’s ongoing planning process for long-term recovery. The first of these planning exercises took place in Redhook, Brooklyn, with the community engagement efforts of Pratt Institute faculty Ron Shiffman, FAICP, Hon. AIA NYS, myself, and our students as part of our Rebuild Adapt Mitigation Plan (RAMP) curriculum, funded by a post-Sandy Kresge Grant. The Pratt workshops used OEM’s interim module designed by Garrison Architects to plan larger neighborhood strategies that considered water management, social infrastructures, and housing to benefit both Redhook’s long-time NYCHA residents and its new “maker” communities.

(above) For Stanton Court in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, a shared boardwalk would connect the raised, prefabricated bungalows. Below the boardwalk, a water garden and soft infrastructure would replace extensive paving.

Bottom-up and top-down constituencies both gravitate toward “sheltering-in-place” after a disaster, rather than displacing populations to remote locations. In this way, neighborhoods don’t lose their social networks and local economies during recovery.

Makeover in Sheepshead Bay

Community-based, bottom-up design also persists, but with new consequences. An example is a project in the bungalow courts of Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, that Gans Studio began just after Sandy in collaboration with the Pratt Center for Community Development. Originally developed in the 1920s for seasonal usage on marshy infill, the seven courts of Sheepshead Bay are a variation on an old coastal New York typology of charming bungalows arrayed along narrow mews. Unfortunately they are three to seven feet below street level. During Sandy, water filled the sunken shared spaces like bathtubs. Flooding is a common occurrence even during everyday storms. The legally mandated approach to reconstructing the courts requires raising the severely damaged houses to the insurable design flood elevation – as much as 13 feet above the mews. To make them not just insurable but also structurally sound, truly weathertight, and systemically efficient by today’s performance standards means replacing them.

To accomplish this court makeover, the first problem addressed was the social infrastructure for collective action. Many of the homes have been occupied by multiple generations of the same family for almost 75 years, giving the neighborhood a robust network of social relationships. But there is a dearth of community development corporations and social service providers to coordinate the rebuilding process and represent residents. The shift-



©Gans Studio

(above) Stanton Court as it looks today.

ing state of building codes, zoning, the new flood maps, and the complexity of funding programs have challenged the ability of individual residents to take full advantage of rebuilding programs. The noble role of the Sheepshead “court captains” was revived during Sandy, but concerned itself primarily with immediate needs and physical safety. It was at an open-call meeting at a local yacht club and subsequent visioning sessions for each court, led by Gans Studio and Pratt Center, that neighbors began a “whole community” design process to envision their larger future, including the question of whether they would stay or go.

Thus far, most residents on at least four of the courts are determined to stay, and have worked for almost two years with Pratt Center and Gans Studio on two pilot projects: Stanton Court, which is representative of an inland block vulnerable to heavy rain, and Weber Court, which typifies

coastal exposure. Stanton’s residents have begun to embrace the idea of replacing not just the substantially damaged homes but all of them with raised, prefabricated “green” bungalows, connected by a shared boardwalk. This collective action takes advantage of economies of scale and addresses shared infrastructural problems that cannot be solved one house at a time. As long-time veterans of storms and sand, Stanton residents understand that raising one house will increase the exposure of a neighbor to scouring by flood waters. Collectively raising homes to the same height will protect them all.

The resilient design for Weber Court developed out of the residents’ deep understanding of the challenges of water at the larger scale of their coastline. It includes a fortified bulkhead ending in a stepped seawall to break the storm surge, and small wetland inlets to absorb wave action. As for the houses themselves, the design strategy follows the lead of homeowners who anticipate abandoning their ground floors. In lieu of literally lifting the houses, the reconstruction would add a floor at the top and needling piles for a new foundation, and convert the ground floor into a lattice-sheathed porch.

Future strategy needed

These plans address the water conditions for the moment, but climate change will intensify the risk. To truly manage the anticipated quantity of rainfall, more space for green infrastructure will be required, suggesting that some vacant and severely storm-damaged properties become water-absorbing gardens. With no monies yet distributed, destroyed and abandoned properties are now found in every court. This suggests a potential city or state strategy to purchase these houses for conversion to wetlands, to sustain the neighborhood rather than see it eliminated by growing blight.

Stanton’s residents have begun to embrace the idea of replacing not just the substantially damaged homes but all of them with raised, prefabricated “green” bungalows, connected by a shared boardwalk. This collective action takes advantage of economies of scale and addresses shared infrastructural problems that cannot be solved one house at a time.

(below and opposite page below) Sections of Stanton Court.



©Gans Studio, Sean Gold and Cristina Zubillaga

The community-based group Zone A, with the help of architects Studio 16 and Architecture in Formation, has envisioned a similar set of design responses for devastated bungalow settlements in Staten Island. They propose both a collective house-raising for 53 homes on a common raised platform in Sunnymeade Village and South Beach, and additional buyouts for expanded wetland.

With an activist appetite for engagement, some government players, such as Thaddeus Palowski, who was a planning advisor with the Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery Operations, and Deborah Morris, director of Resiliency Planning at NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), recognized the effectiveness of action at the scale of a court or village, and its potential replicability in other neighborhoods. They brought their colleagues from several departments on tours of Sheepshead and Staten Island, and invited them to discuss possible futures. While called Community Block Development Grants, HPD's Build it Back funds are, in fact, available only to individual homeowners, which has made quick and direct adoption of larger scaled strategies impossible. But, last December, under the leadership of its director, Amy Peterson, the NYC Housing Recovery Office, along with the Department of Design + Construction and HPD, issued an RFP for rebuilding, specifically acknowledging: "Amongst these neighborhoods [of 14,5000 properties damaged by Superstorm Sandy] are blocks of homes with serious design and infrastructure constraints, which will require innovative urban design approaches for achieving a more cohesive neighborhood scale design by working with groups of homeowners linked by common architectural or structural features."

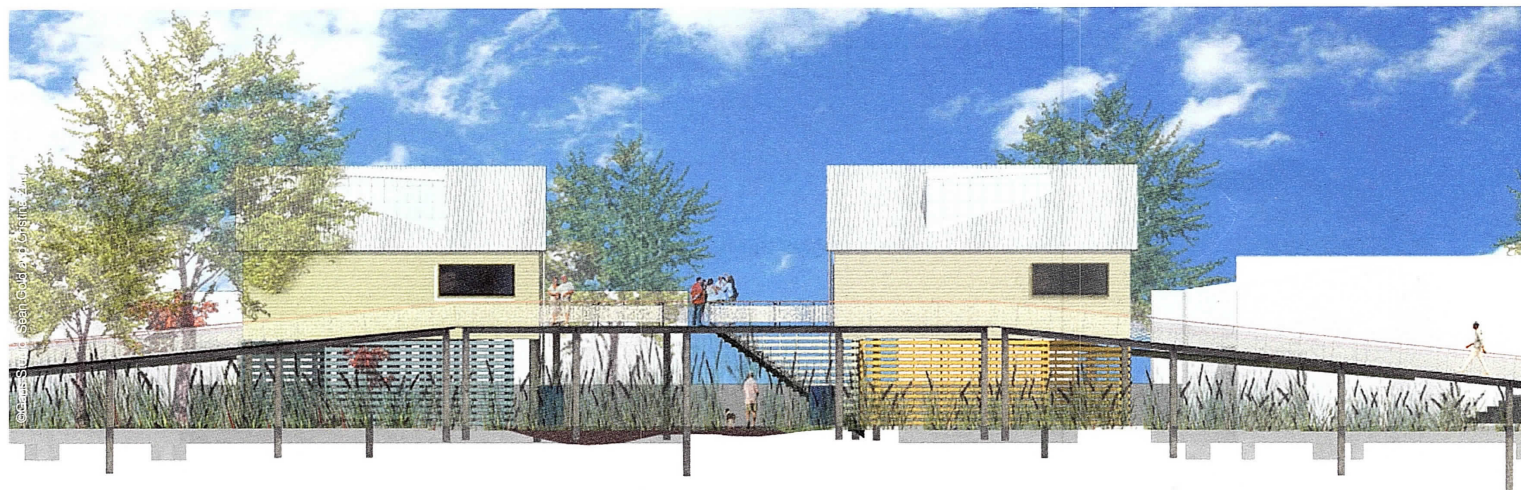
Much that is difficult to implement within an individual property is easier to accomplish at a scale

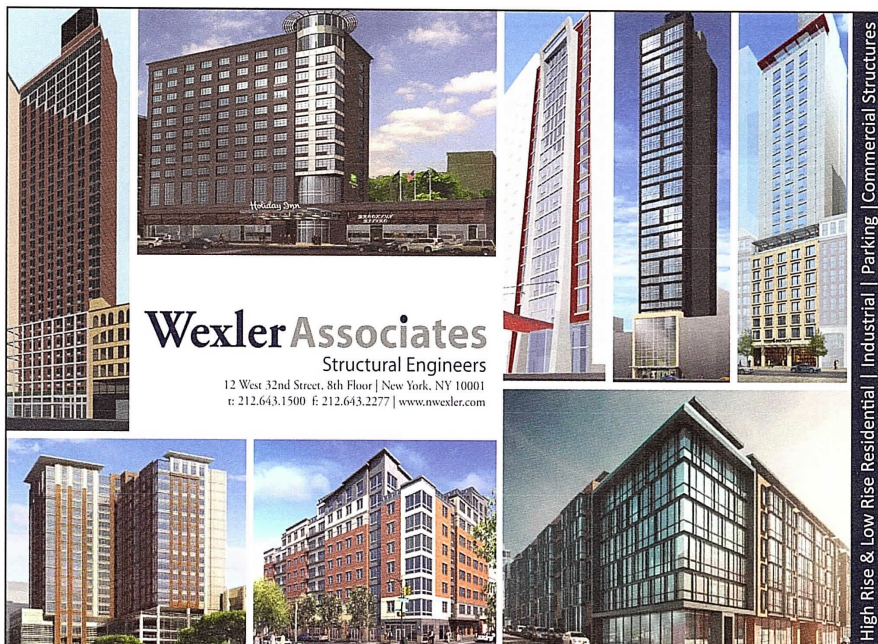


(above) The South Beach Civic Association and Zone A New York on Staten Island engaged Mathew Bremer, AIA, principal, Architecture In Formation of Manhattan, and David Businelli, AIA, principal of Staten Island-based Studio 16 Architecture to develop the design concept for Sunnymeade Village. It exceeds new government standards for post-Sandy shoreline redevelopment. Replacing nearly 50 Sandy-ravaged homes, the re-envisioned bungalow community includes elevated structures, green space, storm-compliant commercial space, and a modest increase in density.

of a block – like boardwalks to houses raised 13 feet. But much that is difficult to conceive of implementing from above is easier to strategize from within the neighborhood – like collective backyard landscapes without fences. At the scale of the block, when bottom-up meets top-down, we gain the power to leverage the design to produce self-sustaining neighborhoods, and create, as an invaluable by-product, informed citizens who are agents in the planning of their own sustainable futures. ■

Deborah Gans, FAIA, is principal of Gans Studio and professor of architecture at Pratt Institute. Her work over the past 20 years has focused on the role of architecture and technology in the emergence of new social forms.





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Raves + Reviews

REVIEWS BY STANLEY STARK, FAIA

Bricks & Mortals: Ten Great Buildings and the People They Made

By Tom Wilkinson

This is a fascinating but often exasperating study of how 10 signal buildings are intertwined with their patrons and stewards. Wilkinson, history editor of *The Architectural Review*, believes these projects embody critical ideas about architecture, its roles, and its trajectory. Their greatness lies in the debate they stimulate and the issues they raise.

The Tower of Babylon represents the use of architecture as a symbol of power. The Great Djinguereber Mosque in Timbuktu, Mali, is discussed as an object of memory and a target of the author's dissatisfaction with the politics of world heritage sites. Renaissance Florence gave us Giovanni Rucellai's palazzo: a home, banking headquarters, and example of architecture as both art and business. This launches Wilkinson's skewering of modern corporate architecture and real estate development.

Other projects illustrate how architecture is entangled with broader issues: Beijing's Garden of Perfect Brightness with colonialism; Wagner's Spartan Theatre in Bayreuth as a model of public entertainment space; Ford, Fordism, and factory architecture with the industrial process; Eileen Gray's E-1207 house in Cap Martin as a tale of love, sex, and the mad resentment of LeCorbusier for her design achievement; Tecton's Finsbury Health Centre as an example of Modernism, with all its tropes, in service of the social good; and Niemeyer's footbridge in Rocinha, a *favela* in Rio de Janeiro, symbolic of the future, looked at with both favor and dismay. Wilkinson believes that architecture can address the problems of the modern world, particularly the affordable housing shortage, but is neither oriented nor organized to do so. It is hard to disagree with this conclusion.

Tales of Two Cities: Paris, London and the Birth of the Modern City

By Jonathan Conlin

This is the story of how Paris and London, Europe's two major capital cities and rivals, competed, collaborated, copied, and bested one another in developing features we regard as fundamental elements of modern urban life. From the mid-18th century

to 1914, these cities traded influence as they spun toward the future.

Conlin studies six areas where this collaboration and cross-learning had an innovative effect: the emergence of high-density apartments for residents of all socioeconomic levels; transformation of the hazardous urban streets into pedestrian-friendly thoroughfares; the development of the urban restaurant and the phenomenon of dining out; the evolution of theaters, music halls, and public entertainment; efforts to make the urban environment safer; and the integration of cemeteries into meditative urban space.

The underlying theme is that the processes by which urban environments improve and grow is wired into us. We benefit from the crosscurrents of insight and influence from rivals who also have the capacity to be collaborators.

Noted but Not Reviewed

Visionaries in Urban Development: 15 Years of the ULI J.C. Nichols Prize Winners

By Trisha Riggs, et al.

This book documents the winners of the Urban Land Institutes J.C. Nichols Prize since the program began in 2000. Familiar names and remarkable achievements inspire and motivate land use professionals in both private and public sectors.

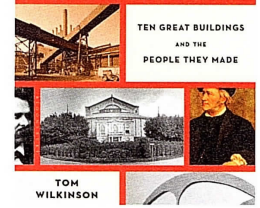
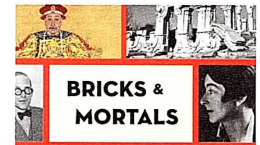
American Urban Form: A Representative History

By Sam Bass Warner and Andrew H. Whittemore
The evolution of a typical American city is depicted by drawing on the histories of Philadelphia, Boston, and New York and creating a mythical city that embodies key elements of all three.

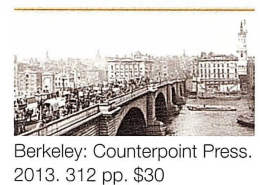
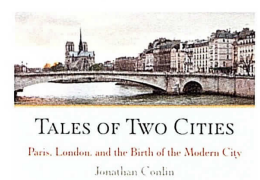
Preservation is Overtaking Us

By Rem Koolhaas, with a supplement by Jorge Otero-Pailos
Koolhaas's 2004 essay about preservation law and timelines; his 2009 Bayard Memorial Lecture on recent work, museums, preservation, and starchitecture; and OMA's Preservationist Manifesto.

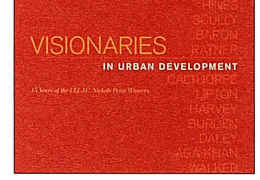
Stanley Stark, FAIA, served as chair of the Oculus Committee from 2005 to 2007.



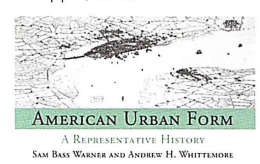
New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2014. 352 pp. \$21.99



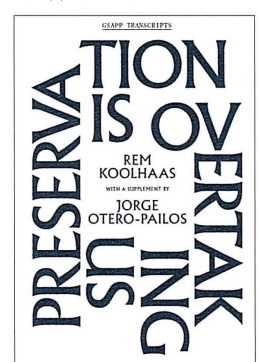
Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2013. 312 pp. \$30



Washington, DC: Urban Land Institute, 2014. 2014. 140 pp. \$59.95



Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012. 200 pp. \$14.95



New York: GSAPP Books, 2014. 104 pp. \$22.95

Architectural practice

once embraced dinner plates and candlesticks
produced by Swid Powell

BY JOHN MORRIS DIXON, FAIA

In the early 1980s, a couple of enterprising women saw an opportunity for architects to apply their talents in an unconventional way. Nan Swid and Addie Powell realized that architects attaining prominence could expand their recognition in an area known in commerce as “tabletop and decorative objects.” The pair were no strangers to the marketing of architect-designed objects, both having been executives at Knoll (the company where Nan’s husband, Stephen Swid, had recently become co-chairman).

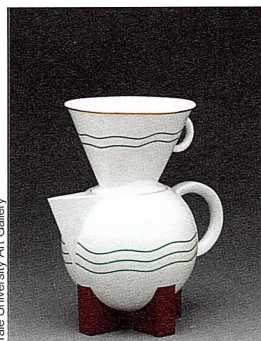
To launch the project, the two hosted a lunch at the Four Seasons for a gathering that included Richard Meier, Robert A.M. Stern, Stanley Tigerman, and Charles Gwathmey’s partner, Robert Siegel. There they laid out a business plan offering royalties on product sales, rather than design fees. Present to bless the project, but not participate, was Philip Johnson. In 1984 the partners unveiled their first line of products and began marketing them through high-end department stores.

Of course, noted architects had designed tableware in the past. Frank Lloyd Wright and his Vienna contemporary Josef Hoffmann had designed widely admired tabletop items early in the 20th century. In 1979 the Italian metal products maker Alessi had commissioned opulent tea and coffee sets by architects such as Meier, Michael Graves, Robert Venturi, and Hans Hollein.

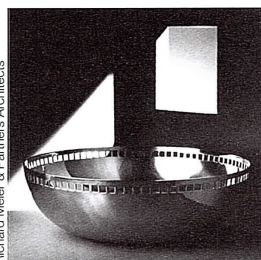
Drawing on their Knoll experience, the two entrepreneurs had knowledgeably scouted the potential market. By the 1980s, great numbers of baby boomers had acquired the resources and discernment to buy useful objects with exceptional design cachet. Meanwhile, the Postmodern movement had made ornament more acceptable to both architects and their public.

The architects recruited for Swid Powell covered the whole Modern-Postmodern spectrum. Meier and Siegel limited their ornament to very restrained geometrical devices; Stern introduced discreet historical references; Venturi and Graves went for bolder patterns and colors.

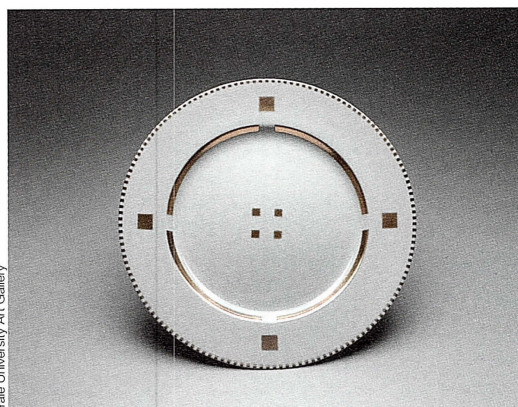
Over the next few years, Swid Powell added designs by several architects from across the U.S.



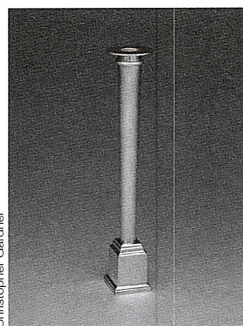
Yale University Art Gallery



Richard Meier & Partners Architects



Yale University Art Gallery



Christopher Gardner



Christopher Gardner

(clockwise from top right)
Charles Gwathmey and Robert H. Siegel: “Tuxedo” pattern buffet plate; Robert Venturi: “Grandmother” pattern four-piece place setting; Robert A.M. Stern: “Metropolitan” candlestick; Richard Meier: “Classic Bowl”; Michael Graves: The Big Dripper Coffeepot and Filter.

Richard Meier “Classic Bowl” courtesy of Richard Meier & Partners Architects. All other photos courtesy of the Yale University Art Gallery, Swid Powell Collection; “Tuxedo,” “Grandmother,” and “Metropolitan” Gift of Nan Swid; Big Dripper Coffeepot and Filter Gift of Lindsay S. Suter, M. Arch. 1991.

and the world, among them Arquitectonica, Arata Isozaki, Robert and Trix Haussmann, and Paolo Portoghesi. Steven Holl and Zaha Hadid joined the roster as they became widely known.

Consistently, however, the most marketable items were from New York firms. The best-selling dinnerware pattern, by far, was “Tuxedo” by Gwathmey Siegel, with sparse geometrical figures on a white ground. There were much smaller but respectable sales for patterns by Venturi, the Haussmanns, and Holl. In the area of silver-plated bowls, picture frames, trays, pitchers, and candlesticks, Meier’s works were the best sellers, with substantial sales for those of Stern.

In the most successful six-year period of Swid Powell’s architect-designed products – 1984 through 1989 – sales totaled more than \$10 million. In the 1990s, the company introduced well-designed but less distinctive pieces by fashion-world figures such as Calvin Klein. Swid Powell survived into the early 2000s, but the heyday of its architect-designed tableware had passed. Today these objects have, ironically yet predictably, become collectors’ items.

John Morris Dixon, FAIA, left the drafting board for journalism in 1960 and was editor of *Progressive Architecture* from 1972 to 1996. He continues to write for a number of publications, and he received AIANY’s 2011 Stephen A. Kliment Oculus Award for Excellence in Journalism.

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— ARIEL KAMINER, THE NEW YORK TIMES



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Eve of Construction



Bell in Brooklyn.

You may leave here for
four days in space
But when you return
it's the same old
place...

And you tell me over
and over and over and
over again my friend
You don't believe
we're on the eve of
destruction.

—P.F. Sloan in
"Eve of Destruction," 1965

Because every people
in search of itself thinks
about where to locate
the margin between its
own home and the rest
of the world....

—Milan Kundera in
Encounter, 2010

We must think not as
individuals but as a
species.
We must confront the
reality of interstellar
travel.

—Christopher Nolan &
Jonathan Nolan in
Interstellar, 2014

Am I wrong for thinking
out the box from where
I stay?

Am I wrong for saying
that I choose another
way?

I ain't tryna do what
everybody else doing
Just cause everybody
doing what they all do.

—Kahouly Nicolay Sereba &
Vincent Dery (Nico & Vinz) in
"Am I Wrong," 2014

The unknown can seem fearsome and far. During the Age of Discovery, European navigators used portolan charts illustrating harbor positions and city profiles. Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library has a collection of such maps, where "monsters people the chart's sea." The New York Public Library's Hunt-Lenox Globe, purchased by AIA founder Richard Morris Hunt in Paris in 1855, famously has "HC SVNT DRACONES" or "here be dragons" inscribed off the coast of East Asia.

More recently in Paris, Gehry Partners and STUDIOS Architecture created a vessel for the Fondation Louis Vuitton. Situated in the 846-hectare Bois de Boulogne, which also dates to 1855, the new "ark" is at the limit of the city, as was Central Park, commissioned at the same time and equally remote from settlement. The Bois, three times the size of its New York cousin, incorporated two ponds and a river and was thought of as a green lung for an increasingly dense metropolis. Its interdisciplinary design benefitted from the engineering skill of Jean-Charles Alphand and the landscape flair of 31-year-old Jean-Pierre Barillet-Deschamps. Appropriate to the site, Gehry's distended sail-like forms float over a water feature that also surrounds crystalline shapes described as icebergs, creating remarkable inside-outside spaces suggesting a shipwreck. The software allowing for the Fondation Louis Vuitton's structural design is still *au point*, and the collaborative effort to achieve the romantic *naufnage* quite remarkable.

Closer to home, Brooklyn-based sculptor Tom Fruin has an installation along the East River in Brooklyn Bridge Park, adjacent to Jean Nouvel's carousel pavilion. Called *Kolonihavehus*, the colorful acrylic *casita* symbolizes the small Danish escape-hatch garden houses that beckon Copenhagen residents out of town on weekends. Fruin worked with lighting designers, performance artists, a sound artist, and concrete poet Vagn Steen. "The city's greatest competitive edge is its cultural depth and sophistication," wrote Ray Gastil in *Beyond the Edge: New York's New Waterfront*, "and the waterfront is the greatest stage to show that edge."

In his 1991 book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*, Joel Garreau quotes a description by Charles Dickens of London in 1848: "There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the earth, moldering in the water, and unintelligible as in any dream." The ethereal qualities of the Gehry and Fruin works are not at all accidental: they are carefully designed and intentional. What they have in common, more than a remote park location, is a distance from traditional expectation and the interaction of structural form with color-enhanced imagery. Not for nothing at the Gehry building is there bespoke art by Ellsworth Kelly and Olafur Eliasson.

Broad splashes of color added to monochromatic museums or courthouses can hone their edge and engender reveries, as with the Robert Rauschenberg *House* sculpture at Richard Meier's High Museum in Atlanta, and the *Boston Panels* by Ellsworth Kelly at the Pei Cobb Freed-designed John Joseph Moakley Courthouse in Boston's Fan Pier. Was Christopher Nolan thinking of Henry Cobb when he cast Leonardo DiCaprio, Marion Cotillard, and Michael Caine as Paris-based architects in *Inception*, filmed at 31 locations on four continents in 2010? In this movie about how architects can implant dreams while continually second-guessing reality, DiCaprio's character, "Cobb," says to his father, an architecture professor played by Caine, "You told me that in the real world I'd be building attic conversions and gas stations. You said that if I mastered the dream-share I'd have a whole new way of creating and showing people my creations. You told me it would free me." And he enlists Cotillard's "Ariadne" by saying that his design proposition is not about money, but "the chance to build cathedrals, entire cities – things that have never existed."

Whether what we design and build is on the perimeter of our cities – or our universe – the trans-sectorial aspiration is an evocation of the impossible made real, the transformation of void into meaning.

Rick Bell, FAIA
Executive Director, AIA New York Chapter

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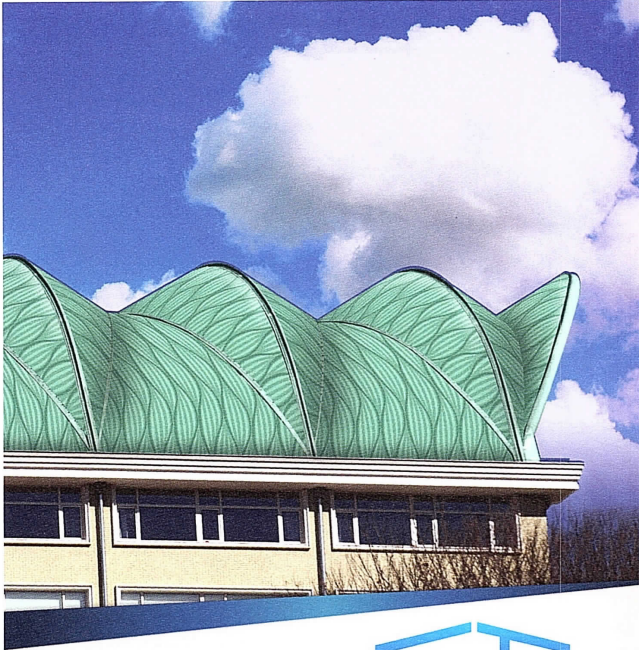
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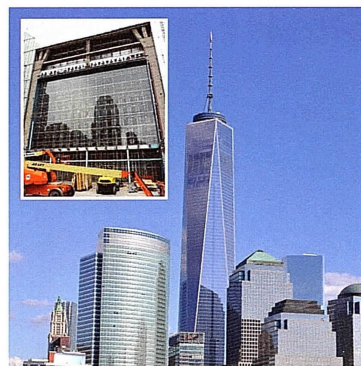
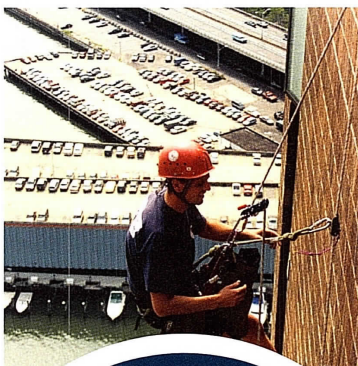
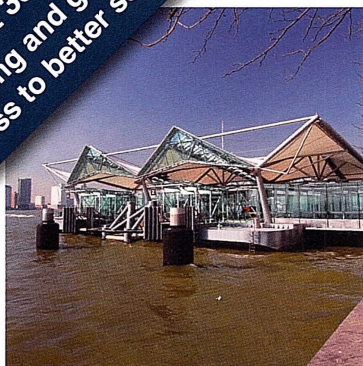


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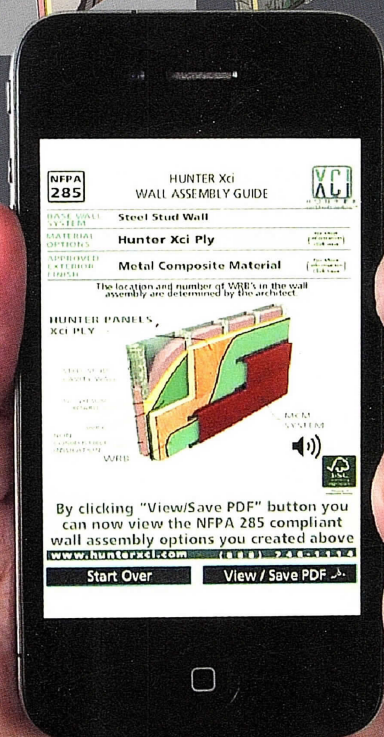
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