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Winter 2016

A Publication of the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter

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New Models

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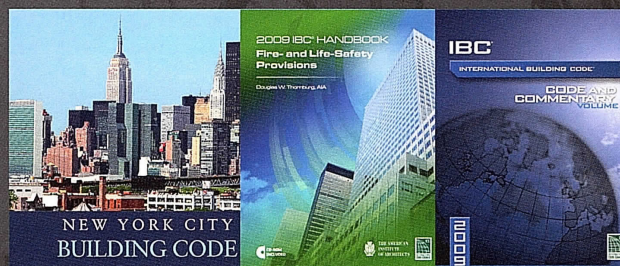
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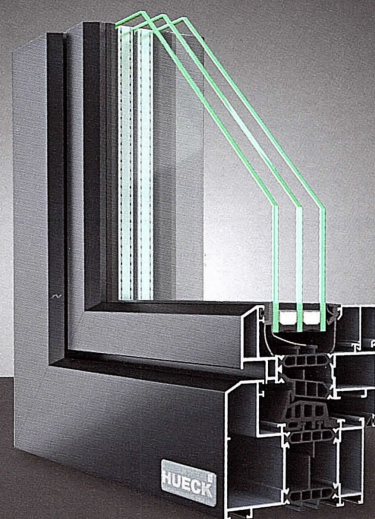
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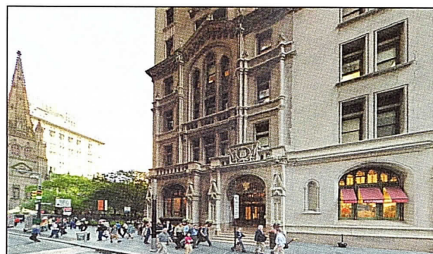
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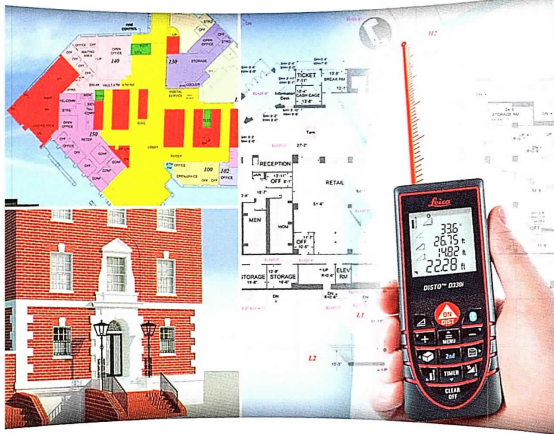
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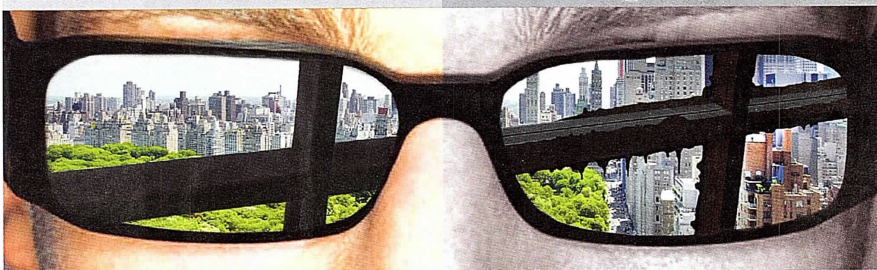
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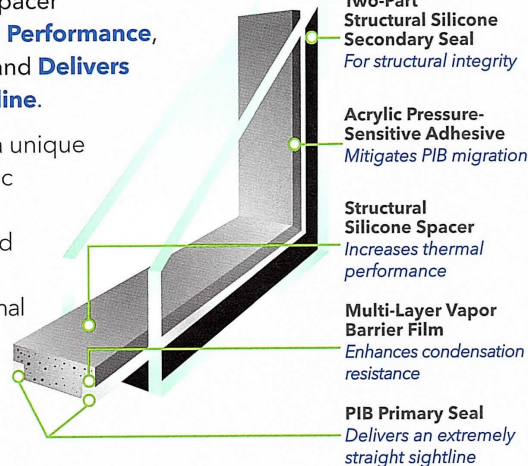
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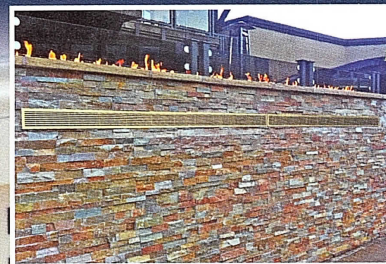
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Winter 2016 Vol. 78, No. 4

Oculus: A publication of the AIA New York Chapter

OCULUS STAFF

Editor-in-Chief

Kristen Richards, Hon. AIA, Hon. ASLA
kristen@ArchNewsNow.com

Contributing Editors

Lisa Delgado; John Morris Dixon, FAIA; Julia van
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Publisher

Naylor Association Solutions

AIA/Center for Architecture News

(formerly eOculus)

Camila Schaulsohn Frenz

cschaulsohn@aiany.org

Oculus Committee/Advisory Board

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AIA/CENTER FOR ARCHITECTURE STAFF AND SERVICES

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Benjamin Prosky, Assoc. AIA (ext. 129)

bprosky@aiany.org

Managing Director, AIA/NY

Suzanne Howell Meeks, Hon. AIA/NYS

(ext. 115), smeeks@aiany.org

Education Assistant

Hadley Beacham (ext. 133)

info@cfafoundation.org

Office Manager

Julia Christie (ext. 113)

info@aiany.org

Development Associate

Annie Ciccarello (ext. 134)

aciccarello@aiany.org

Membership Coordinator

Joseph Corbin (ext. 118)

jcorbin@aiany.org

Director of Program Committees

Eve Dilworth Rosen (ext. 117)

erosen@aiany.org

Digital Projects Manager

Meghan Edwards (ext. 136)

medwards@aiany.org

Director of Operations

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jfallarino@aiany.org

Program Committees Coordinator

Kelly Felsberg (ext. 139)

kfelsberg@aiany.org

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Jacob Fredi (ext. 111)

jfredi@aiany.org

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thayduk@cfafoundation.org

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bhoff@aiany.org

Senior Director of External Affairs

Jesse Lazar (ext. 108)

jlazar@aiany.org

Senior Archtober Manager/
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kmullen@aiany.org

Policy Coordinator

Justin Pascone (ext. 116)

jpascone@aiany.org

Communications Director/
Editor-in-Chief, AIA/Center for

Architecture News

Camila Schaulsohn Frenz (ext. 114)

cschaulsohn@aiany.org

Development Manager

Anne Shisler-Hughes (ext. 134)

ashislerhughes@cfafoundation.org

Director of Education

Catherine Teegarden (ext. 135)

cteegarden@cfafoundation.org

Development Associate

Morgan Watson (ext. 110)

mwatson@aiany.org

Finance Director

Henry Zachary (ext. 131)

hzachary@aiany.org

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One-year subscription (4 issues): \$40 (U.S.),

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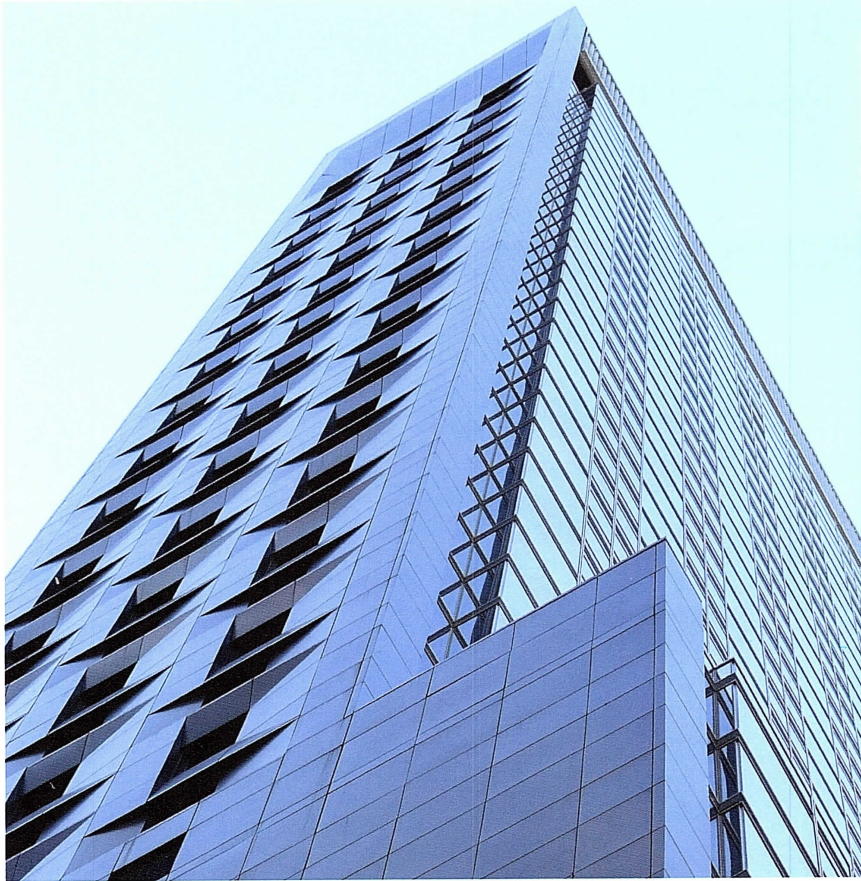
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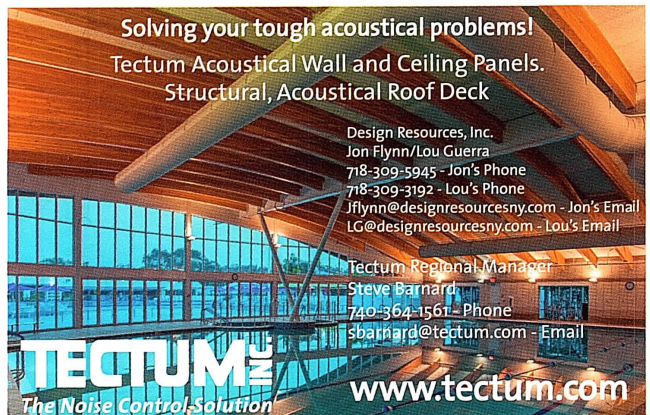
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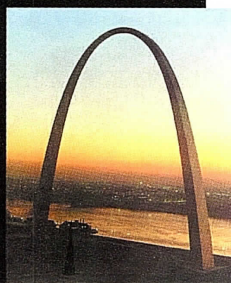
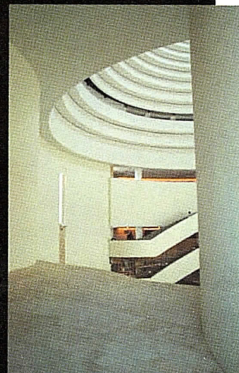


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LETTERS FROM TWO PRESIDENTS

To Inspire and Uplift

Time flies – and nowhere more quickly than at the Center for Architecture. The year began with a new president – that would be me – and a new executive director – Ben Prosky, Assoc. AIA. Together we forged a strong relationship based on common goals, hard work, collaboration, and good cheer. Ben has broadened our outreach, strengthened our advocacy, and helped enhance our member value.

We adopted the theme “Authenticity and Innovation,” which grew into multiple programs including materials, cultural institutions, and the city itself. We explored why natural materials still play a significant role, even in the most innovative contemporary spaces. An exhibition of the 210 New York branch public libraries paired with a symposium, *Reports of My Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated: Libraries for the 21st Century*, refuted any notion that libraries are dying out. Rather, they remain central to communities as they transform to contemporary needs. Finally, Donald Albrecht’s exhibition “Authenticity and Innovation” brought to light the cultural, economic, and environmental significance of older buildings in our ever-changing city.

The AIANY Chapter and Center for Architecture continued to blossom this year. Public outreach has grown, and the Learning by Design:NY program has expanded beyond the Center and schools to community centers. Kudos to Catherine Teegarten and her team for helping to build the pipeline for future architects and an informed public.

Looking ahead, as we face challenging national issues, we must remain true to our core values of fairness, inclusiveness, diversity, and sustainability because we believe that our work can, in the end, improve the human condition. There has been much discussion about the need for infrastructure investment here in New York – a critical issue for us as professionals and as citizens. Discussions about Penn Station are an important focal point for the Center, as the project will address practical problems and help make us more competitive. It is also an opportunity to inspire and uplift us, as we know architecture can.

Thank you to the AIANY staff and leadership for all you do to advance our mission. I know you will be in excellent hands with David Piscuskas, FAIA, LEED AP, as president. So long, but not farewell.

Carol Loewenson, FAIA, LEED AP
2016 President, AIA New York Chapter



Architects: Assembly Required

Some years ago, during the economic downturn, a lawyer asked me, “You’re one of the canaries; when are things going to recover?” At the time I was surprised that a lawyer wanted advice from an architect, but that distant exchange reverberates now, for different – and more urgent – reasons.

Today, architects are enjoined by fundamental issues beyond their next job. Matters of equity, diversity, and community engagement combine with concerns about accelerating climate change, resource scarcity, and environmental resiliency to make this a time of profound transformation in our profession. In New York, the locus for this inquiry is the Center for Architecture and the community of AIANY colleagues who, with countless others, activate a vibrant and vital exchange on architecture and urbanism.

On behalf of our AIANY constituency, I extend thanks and appreciation to 2016 AIANY President Carol Loewenson, FAIA, LEED AP, for her thoughtful initiatives and hard work this past year. I also offer appreciation and admiration to Ben Prosky, Assoc. AIA, our recently appointed executive director. If you haven’t yet met or engaged with Ben, you should. He is bright, energetic, and dedicated to extending the reach and impact of AIANY.

As we look ahead, there is much we all care about and much we must do. We will work together to propel the live project that is AIANY and the Center for Architecture on the 2017 Presidential Theme “Architects: Assembly Required.” Through advocacy, outreach, programs, exhibitions, and more community engagement, we will be focused on effecting positive change towards a more humanist, inclusive, equitable, and relational civil society.

To this end, we should – and will – be connecting with others from diverse pursuits and professions besides our own. We succeed best with your input, ideas, and action, so plan to participate in these stimulating initiatives. Share your energy, your knowledge, your optimism. Get involved!

David Piscuskas, FAIA, LEED AP
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Taking Care of Business



Editor agrees with Scooter, mascot of the (soon-to-be-renamed) Staten Island Yankees: Winning 1-0 against the Aberdeen IronBirds in the bottom of the 9th is just the best!

First order of business: This issue takes a slightly different slant in approaching a theme encompassing the business side of architectural practice. This is made clear in the Opener (pg. 21), in which Richard Staub garners some pithy observations from international business consultant Paul Nakazawa, AIA, about what Staub describes as the big-picture “forces affecting how New York design firms develop and prosper.” In “Weathering the Storm,” we get into more detail with sage advice about how to keep your firm resilient in what may feel like uncertain times. There are specific steps you can take to protect your firm during economic downturns.

“The Drama of the Commons: Engaging the Public” looks at the challenging roadblocks often encountered between architects and local citizens when it comes to civic projects, and the strategies to avoid contentious relations. Looking beyond our borders, it’s no longer only the “big hitters” making their mark on the global stage – thanks largely to technology, small firms are finding their own footing on foreign soil, as you’ll read in “Found in Translation.”

As Nakazawa notes, competitions “can be a valuable experience – or just an expensive way to make a living.” We talk to some competition winners who have found both to be true. Speaking of competitions, the 2016 New Practices New York winners are an eclectic and creative mix of young talent. It will be interesting to see where the class of 2016 will be 10 years hence – as we look at where the inaugural 2006 NPNY winners are today.

In our regular departments, “One Block Over” takes in the “awe-chitecture” of Santiago Calatrava’s World Trade Center transit hub. Our “69-Year Watch” delves into I.M. Pei’s “unlikely launch” of his long and storied career. And “In Print” parses the pages of Alex Garvin’s *What Makes a Great City*, and takes an eye-catching look at the Philadelphia Electric Company’s Palazzos of Power.

Second order of business: After 13 years and almost 60 issues, I am stepping down as editor of *Oculus*. AIANY is bringing its publications program in-house, and now seems a good time to spread my wings and explore new horizons.

It has been an honor and a privilege (and fun!) to work with wonderful Chapter presidents and members, and *Oculus* Committee chairs and members. Special thanks to the oh-so-talented journalists who have graced the masthead and our pages these many years – meeting deadlines through heat waves, snowstorms, and hurricanes. And to art director Jessica Wyman and copy editor Elena Serocki for making us all look so sharp.

In this period of transition over the next two issues, colleague and friend Alan G. Brake will be serving as guest editor. I know the magazine will be in good hands. In the meantime, you haven’t seen the last of me – I plan on being an active supporter of Center for Architecture and AIANY programs and events for many years to come.

Thank you all for your many years of encouragement and support – and please know you will always have mine.

Kristen Richards, Hon. AIA, Hon. ASLA
kristen@ArchNewsNow.com

Center Highlights



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(above) The AIANY and Center for Architecture's 2016 Heritage Ball honored leaders who champion design excellence in New York City. (l-r) The Rudin Family: **Michael Rudin**, **Samantha Rudin Earls**, **David Earls**, **Fiona Rudin**, **Eric Rudin** (Honoree); **Alice Tisch** (Honoree); **Benjamin Prosky**, Assoc. AIA, Executive Director, AIANY/Center for Architecture; **Thomas Phifer**, FAIA (Honoree); **Carol Loewenson**, FAIA, LEED AP, 2016 President, AIANY; and **Tom Krizmanic**, AIA, President, Center for Architecture. Not shown: **Senator Charles E. Schumer** (Honoree).



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(above) After the Ball, the Party@theCenter partied into the wee small hours.



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(above) **Pierluigi Serraino**, AIA, author of *The Creative Architect: Inside the Great Midcentury Personality Study*, was joined in conversation by **Suzanne Stephens**, Deputy Editor, *Architectural Record*, at the Arctober 2016 Oculus Book Talk.



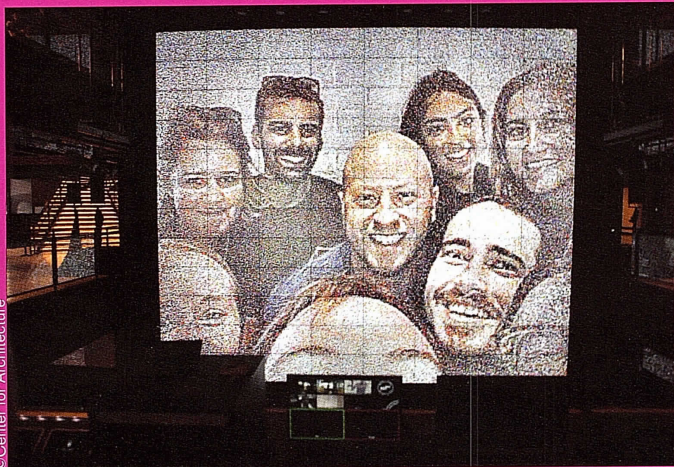
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(above) For the 2016 J. Max Bond, Jr. Lecture, the AIANY Diversity and Inclusion Committee and nycobaNOMA focused on the revitalization of Detroit. (l-r) **Ghislaine Hermanuz**, Architect and Urban Designer, Former Professor, City College of New York, Former Director, City College Architectural Center; **Maurice Cox**, Planning Director, City of Detroit; **R. Steven Lewis**, FAIA, NOMA, Urban Design Director, Detroit Central Region.

(right) SITU Studio's concrete pumpkin void took home the prized Pritzkerpumpkin at the first annual Pumpkitecture! Architectural Pumpkin Carving competition.



©Sam Lahoz



(above) A Center for Architecture staff selfie was projected on Samsung 837's three-story screen at the Archtober "Treat for Tweet" summer event, which included Coolhaus's architecturally inspired ice cream.



(above) Pentagram collaborated with SOFTlab to create an immersive grotto for this year's Archtober Lounge.



(left) Directors and educators from after-school programs in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens learned techniques for exploring neighborhood architecture with students in a training workshop – part of a three-year partnership between the Center's education department and the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development.



(left) "Authenticity and Innovation" curator **Donald Albrecht** led a VIP tour of the exhibition as part of the kickoff for Archtober 2016. The show, on view through January 27, 2017, features 28 adaptive reuse and preservation projects outside the purview of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, based on the theme set by 2016 AIANY President **Carol Loewenson, FAIA, LEED AP**.



(left) Young builders explored the different structures they made for the City of Boxes program at the Center for Architecture's K-12 Department's Open House New York Family Day.



(above) Nearly 300 architects, students, and enthusiasts packed the Center for Architecture to hear one of the industry's contemporary greats, **David Chipperfield, CBE, RA, RDI, RIBA**, at the 10th Annual Arthur Rosenblatt Memorial Lecture, organized by the AIANY Cultural Facilities Committee.

Eye on the Oculus

Awe-chitecture in the shape of a bird

BY CLAIRE WILSON

The fact that the Oculus at the World Trade Center (WTC) site was seven years behind schedule gave detractors and the press that much more time to criticize it. “Boondoggle,” they called it. “Monstrosity.” “Kitsch stegosaurus.” And, as if the unusual, somewhat whimsical birdlike design of the transit hub-cum-shopping concourse by Santiago Calatrava, Hon. FAIA, wasn’t enough, the naysayers also had the cost overruns: about \$4 billion, or roughly twice the original estimate.

Most critics, however, have fallen silent since the complex opened in August, and the ultimate judges – the public who would be using it – were allowed to experience it. They have only praise for the bi-level shopping mall, the enchanting play of light through the roof, and the ease of moving vast distances through sleek, efficiently designed corridors.

Jessica Lappin, president of the Alliance for Downtown New York, says it’s a game changer for subway riders and 50,000 daily PATH commuters. “It’s a big part of how they start and end their day,” Lappin says, “and they say they are enjoying their commute so much more.”

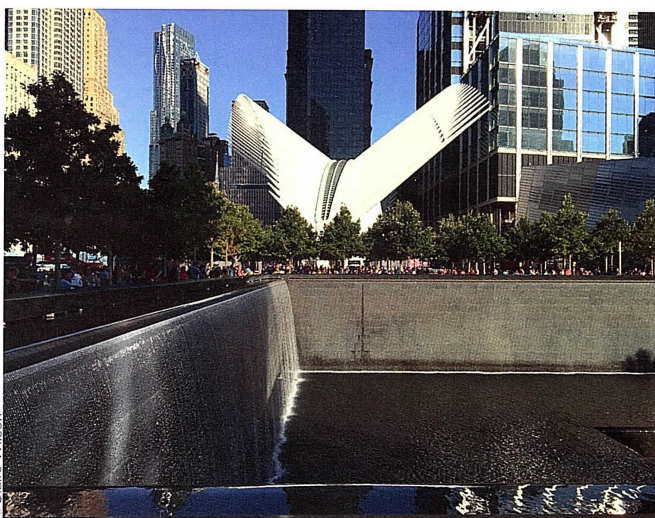
With 350,000 square feet of retail space, the Westfield World Trade Center has more than 100 shops and restaurants, including an Apple store and an outpost of the Italian food emporium, Eataly. But for people entering at street level and descending two levels to the floor of the Oculus, the shops become almost invisible, secondary to the mesmerizing appeal of the structure itself, which features a bright white interior and the pleasing geometry of riblike trusses soaring 160 feet toward the sky. Visual surprises abound.

Perhaps most surprising is that while the concourse is subterranean, there is no basement gloom. The Westfield WTC is all light and air with spectacular views of sky and skyscrapers – exactly what Calatrava sought to achieve. “My vision was to create a lively plaza below ground with the feeling of being outside,” he explained for this issue of *Oculus*. He wanted that organic blend of social meeting place with the dynamism of a transit hub. “This creates a synergy between the cafés and passersby, the way we see in Paris.”

There is a positive synergy at street level, where the transit hub sits to the east of the pools of the 9/11 Memorial, designed by Michael Arad, AIA, LEED AP, a partner at Handel Architects, with PWP Landscape Architecture. Nearby is the National September 11 Museum, whose ground-level Pavilion was designed by Snøhetta, and whose below-ground exhibition space was designed by Davis Brody Bond. Diagonally across from the transit hub will be the long-delayed Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center at the WTC, designed by REX.



© Claire Wilson



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The consensus is that it all works holistically, but it’s only when all thoroughfares have been restored that the true nature of the new downtown will be revealed. “Part of the beauty of the new master plan was to reconnect those streets,” says Craig Dykers, AIA, founding partner of Snøhetta. “Once those streets are open, we’ll see a positive impact on the life of the city and a new vibrant center.”

Claire Wilson is a New York-based freelance writer.

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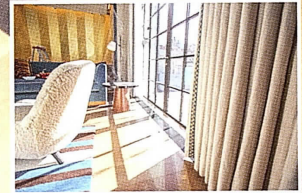
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FOLLOW THAT TRAIL OF BREAD CRUMBS

BY RICHARD STAUB

We're living in fraught times with pressing issues such as climate change, immigration, terrorism, and racial identity continually on the front page. So we're introducing this issue on architectural practice with an expanded frame that presents some of the external forces affecting how New York design firms develop and prosper. And who better to turn to than self-professed "big picture guy" Paul Nakazawa, AIA? An international business consultant who was a founding member of AMO, the research and development arm of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, he currently serves as the chairman of Snøhetta's Advisory Board, New York; a director of MASS Design Group, Boston; and an associate professor in Practice of Architecture at Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Taking this issue's articles as starting points, Nakazawa responded first to anxious talk about a coming recession. "It doesn't matter if it's coming," he says. "What's more important is the client's perception of its imminence, even if it's a relatively long time before it actually appears. What I'm seeing is a 2017 deceleration for large firms, with smaller, less profitable jobs entering the pipeline. How easily a practice can insulate itself will depend on its size. For large firms, it will matter whether they are more service- or design-oriented, and the level of difficulty in adjusting their complex operations. Small firms will find it that much easier if they have good relationships with their clients, and can refocus on planning and facility upgrades."

Looking ahead, Nakazawa is focusing on three areas of change. The first is the viability of cities and their willingness to rethink their civic and technological infrastructure; second is the accumulating impact of climate change; and third, on a smaller scale, is the economic disparities

for millennials entering the work force. "The priority should be on the infrastructure that needs to be changed out," says Nakazawa. "And rather than focusing on designing buildings – paying for a building is the last thing a client wants to do – architects should look at all of the thinking and analysis that happens beforehand, and their potential role in it. Don't leave any bread crumbs on the table."

In considering the success of firms that emerged in the 2006 New Practices New York competition, Nakazawa thinks that practices like WORKac (with whom he consults) have an advantage because they can develop fresh ideas and concepts that a larger firm's MBA-driven strategic planning division wouldn't consider. He cites BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group's success as the result of having an idea-based rather market-based firm – and sees such creative agencies as Squint Opera and DBOX as design competition because they will develop and push ideas that much further.

"As for entering competitions, it can be a valuable experience," Nakazawa says, "or just an expensive way to make a living. It is a difficult business model to support. Firms use it to get a shot at a different kind of building typology, but whether that tactic is successful is a crapshoot and unreliable for long-term results."

International work for a small firm is more of a challenge, offers Nakazawa, because it requires the ability to work across cultures, and having greater resources at hand than small firms usually do. But, if successful, it speaks volumes about the firm's agility, commitment, and reserves of energy. And, from a business standpoint, working abroad may save the firm.

Finally, Nakazawa notes that "work in the public domain has always been important work. It's the integration of spatial, civic, and social issues, with the charge to bring value to a wide constituency. And



Village Health Works Staff Housing,
Louise Braverman Architect, pg. 28

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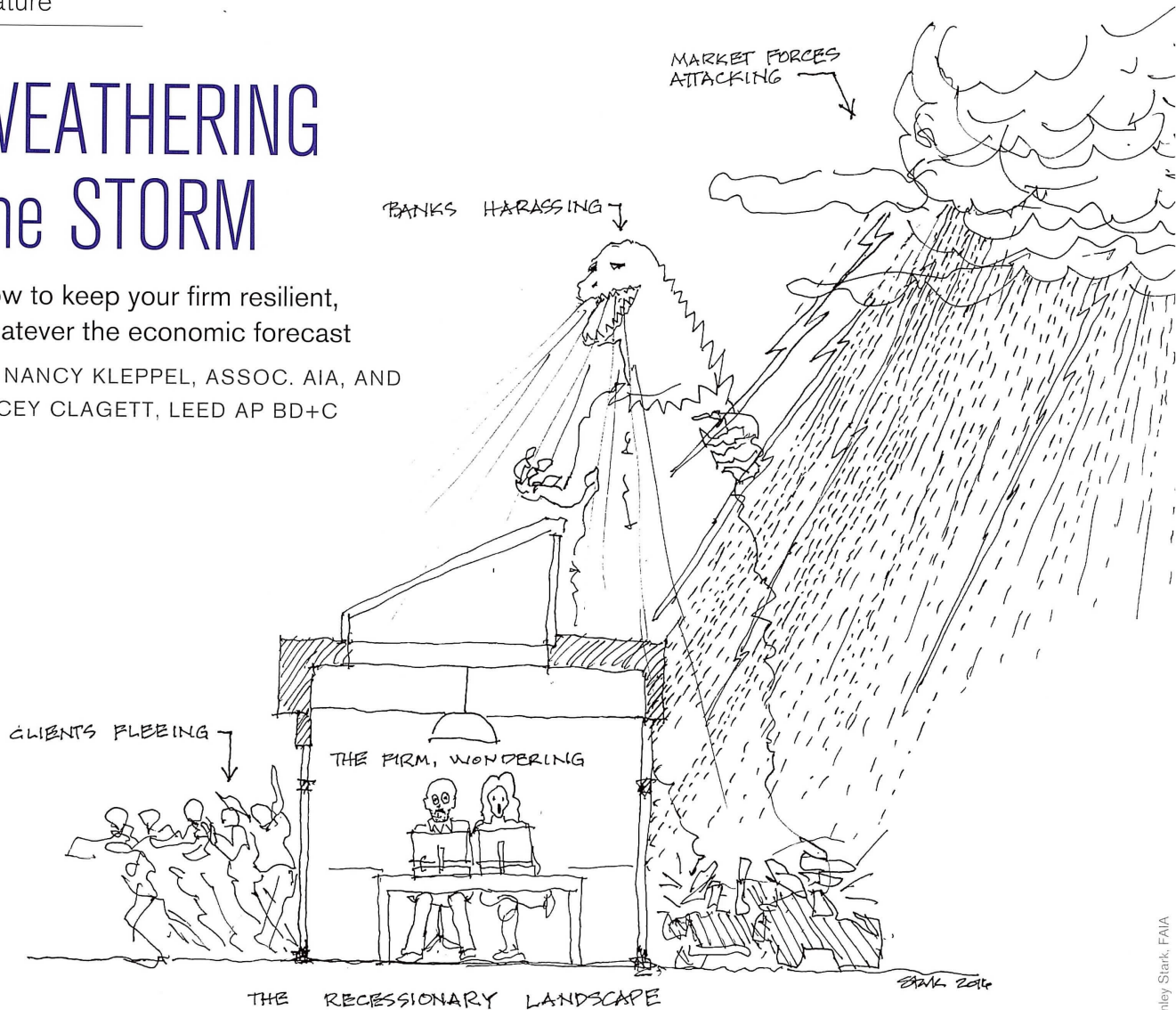
New York has been exceptionally good at investing in it." But he anticipates the time is coming when leading members of the profession will have to "stick a finger in the eye" when they see huge investments in projects that harm society. "If we won't defend the environment and urban fabric," he asks, "who will?" ■

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

WEATHERING the STORM

How to keep your firm resilient,
whatever the economic forecast

BY NANCY KLEPPEL, ASSOC. AIA, AND
KACEY CLAGETT, LEED AP BD+C



© Stanley Stark, FAIA

As we round the bend on eight years of positive economic growth, we are increasingly aware of the inevitability of change. While downturns are normal, how do you mitigate the uncertainty and threats to your firm and thrive – regardless of the flux? There are steps you can take that will shelter you from economic downturns and position your firm for long-term health.

Typically, economic cycles run from 7 to 10 years, measuring from their start through peak, downturn, nadir, and return to growth. Andrew Nelson, chief economist for the global commercial real estate services company Colliers USA, recently shared his thoughts about when a downturn might occur. “Economists are not good at predicting turning points, but

we can spot trends,” he said. “The current expansion has been longer than average by nearly two years, but there may be more time left. Expansions do not die of old age; something triggers them. While there is no imminent risk of recession, we are closer to the end than the beginning.

“The last recession was unusually long, deep, and widespread,” he continued, “and it hit commercial and residential property sectors hard, which is unusual. Nationally, the overall level of construction throughout the recovery has been low, with the exception of multifamily projects, which have been about normal. Markets are not oversupplied and will not cycle down as dramatically as the last time around.”

Recessions typically occur after changes in Presidential administrations,

and it appears that this last election cycle may be contributing some uncertainty already. In our practice, we see unevenness in different market sectors and geographic regions. Perhaps the influx of capital from Asia and Europe is keeping a downturn at bay; yet, if one looks closely, the past year’s “choppiness” in the tech sector could be an indicator of things to come. Like many economists, Nelson believes the next recession will be relatively mild, especially for real estate, design, and construction.

While this is reassuring, we recommend you assess your firm now for its resilience against a recession. A simple checkup will reveal how healthy your firm is, and how much you should prepare for a potential one to three years of slowdown.

Consider these seven factors, which are strong indicators of a firm's economic viability:

1. Does any one client account for more than 20% of your overall revenue?

2. In how many market sectors do you practice?

3. How much of your work is public sector vs. private sector?

4. What kinds of services do you routinely provide?

5. How proficient are your staff members in multiple project types or services?

6. How proactive are your business development practices?

7. What percentage of your junior and intermediate staff have you identified and mentored for leadership roles?

Why are these factors important, and what should you do if you find significant vulnerabilities in your firm and your strategy?

Client Balance: Losing a client that accounts for 10% to 20% of your income means you have lost your profit and probably your R&D budget for the year. If one client comprises more than 20% of revenue, a slowdown or loss of their work will mean pay cuts or layoffs. So expand your client base now, and keep your work among clients balanced.

Market Sectors: Some market sectors will be hit harder than others, some might never be affected, and some might never rebound. Aim to practice in three to five different market sectors.

Public vs. Private Sector: Typically, the private sector feels a recession first, and the public sector follows 6 to 18 months later. Cultivate both public and private sector clientele.

Service Types: Some services, such as interiors or feasibility studies, are simply more recession-proof than others. Diversify the services you provide.

Staff Versatility: A cross-trained staff helps you weather hardship and builds loyalty in employees when you actively foster their professional development. Even if you think you are too busy, cross-train and develop your staff.

Proactive Business Development: Those who survive and even thrive in a recession practice proactive business development. Firms that wait for an RFP to arrive lose sight of their mission and can get caught in a race to the bottom on fees. Adopt a proactive business development culture.

Leadership Promotion at All Levels: A firm that lays off junior and intermediate staff during a downturn may bounce back initially, but inflict serious injury to its long-term viability. When the economy rebounds, the next generation of leadership will be elsewhere. Be strategic about mentoring and leadership development and, as hard as it may be, think for the long term if you must downsize.

What else can you do?

1. Think about where you want to be in five years, and make your decisions based on where you want to go, not where you are now.
2. Recognize that business is built on relationships. When project starts are slow and it seems like there is little to pursue, initiate new relationships with people and organizations that have the potential to be future clients and allies. Once the RFPs and RFQs hit the street, it is too late to start building a relationship.
3. Involve your entire staff in firm development. You will be pleasantly surprised by how they will rise to the challenge and how it will positively impact your firm.
4. Get expert help from financial, management, marketing, and business development consultants. When principals think they can do it all, their firms often end up faring poorly.

Navigating a changing economy requires you to learn from a downturn's hard lessons. Ultimately, recessions can make you stronger. When you are aware of your core strengths, your target client base, and their needs, you will be well positioned going forward. Solicit input from your team as well as from experts when times are good, and you will be well prepared. ■

NANCY KLEPPEL, ASSOC. AIA, and KACEY CLAGETT, LEED AP BD+C, are principals of Appleseed Strategy, which provides integrated marketing, business development, and communications strategies for firms that work with the built environment.

THE DRAMA OF THE COMMONS: ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

By tapping citizens' local knowledge through formal structures or ad hoc partnerships, firms are producing civic projects that avoid contention and serve communities' interests

BY BILL MILLARD



©WXY architecture + urban design

Presenting ideas to the public has always been a roll of the dice. Designing civic space often involves friction with communities; practically any architect or planner who has addressed a community board, tenants' association, or neighborhood meeting has encountered obstruction from parties who suspect their perspectives are not being heard. It's not always NIMBYism; laypeople may have valid reasons for skepticism. The classic David-and-Goliath model is Jane Jacobs organizing neighbors to stop Robert Moses from doing to the Village and SoHo what he'd done to East Tremont.

Skilled communication and active solicitation of citizens' input, however, can make these engagements constructive rather than obstructive. Public processes don't move as swiftly as Moses's meat ax, but they have yielded some of the nation's most dramatic new spaces.

In the weeds with grassroots groups Alliance-building with local leaders underlies many successes. In workshops, charrettes, and hearings, says Adam Lubinsky, Ph.D., AICP, managing principal of WXY architecture + urban design, "I can say the same words these folks are

saying, but they're going to be received differently if they come from people they know and trust." On projects like the Astor Place/Cooper Square renovations, the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan, and the Spring Street Salt Shed (with Dattner Architects), WXY's skill at framing plans for the public is one reason AIA New York State named it 2016 Firm of the Year.

Having worked in London, where planning and approval structures are "much more localized and done in a very rigorous, methodical way," Lubinsky admires that city's Community Infrastructure Levy, a tax through which developers

contribute to large projects like Crossrail, London's high-capacity railway. In New York, he sees grassroots groups as project drivers. "New York City has this robust layer of community-based organizations," he says, building capacity to demand "mandatory inclusionary housing, making use of public lands, and thinking about more innovative solutions like community land trusts [to aid land acquisition]." With members of community groups moving to city agencies and vice versa, the city has such "a mature ecosystem of players that the conversation can get more nuanced."

WXY's East River Blueway, a beach/wetland/walkway complex extending from 38th Street to the Brooklyn Bridge, drew support from two community boards, the Lower East Side Ecology Center, and 40 other organizations along with Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Assemblymember Brian Kavanaugh, and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn. Early meetings with New York City Housing Authority tenant leaders were particularly contentious, Lubinsky recalls, but their concerns about access and program ideas elicited responses that won over opponents, to his surprise.

Not all interactions proceed as smoothly. At meetings with homeowners near the proposed Queensway rail-line park, "police officers had to step in and calm people down," Lubinsky says. "They're not used to charrette processes where people are working at small tables; they're used to hearings where people get up and talk. Some of it can be generational. There can be tension between certain methods of gathering information."

A bridge between

On some projects, public-agency networks can be complicated, and an external non-profit can be a catalyst. "We're a bridge between such multiheaded, complex agencies, getting different divisions to talk to each other," says Design Trust for Public Space Executive Director Susan Chin, FAIA, Hon. ASLA (and former AIANY president). Not adopted but inspirational were a feasibility study for spaces under the High Line, and a proposal to the trust's 2009 RFP to revitalize space under the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Chin says these led to Under the Elevated, a two-phase pilot project to reclaim underused space beneath rail and road infrastructure.

Partnering with the city's Department of Transportation (DOT), the Trust convened interdisciplinary fellows to research affected districts, led on-site workshops, and launched a prototype under the Manhattan Bridge in Chinatown. It selected the Bronx-based Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCO) as collaborator on a solar-powered popup, "Boogie Down Booth," playing Bronx-based hip-hop and jazz, and providing seating under the Freeman Street subway tracks. This required coordination among city and state DOTs and the Metropolitan Transit Authority. Like other Trust projects involving design professionals, Under the Elevated includes Design Trust fellows, such as Susannah C. Drake, FASLA, AIA, RLA, RA, principal, DLANDstudio Architecture + Landscape Architecture; Quilian Riano, Assoc. AIA, principal, DSGN AGNC; architectural designer Chat Travieso; landscape architect Tricia Martin, RLA, LEED AP; and lighting designer Leni Schwendinger.

"The World's Park," a larger-scale Trust project in 2014, Chin adds, enlisted the

(opposite page) WXY architecture + urban design's East River Blueway, extending from 38th Street to the Brooklyn Bridge, is a community-based initiative that represents more than a year of public consultations with stakeholders.

(right) The Design Trust's project "The World's Park" included ARTrances, artful entrances to Flushing Meadows-Corona Park that reflect the surrounding communities.

(far right) The "Boogie Down Booth" was a temporary installation with LED lighting, music, and seating, underneath the 2/5 subway tracks on Southern Boulevard in the Bronx, part of the Design Trust's Under the Elevated initiative.





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Queens Museum and the Parks Department to consider how to reconnect the 897-acre Flushing Meadows-Corona Park with its neighbors. Converted from ash heaps to the 1939 World's Fair grounds by Moses and wrapped by highways, the well-used but hard-to-navigate park was the topic of a Community Design School for 23 diverse advisors, who gained design literacy and historical knowledge working with Design Trust fellows, including Sam Holleran, also a design educator for the Center for Architecture's student programs. Some advisors are joining the Flushing Park Alliance and Community Advisory Board as advocates for the park's anticipated makeover, Chin notes, defying assumptions that "you have to have formal training in architecture or urban planning to even think about these things."

Digital media can be your friends

The structure and substance of civic engagement have assumed new forms in today's information-saturated environment. Previously, says Rob Rogers, FAIA, founder of ROGERS PARTNERS Architects+Urban Designers, "we'd call it the 'church-basement phase' of a project," attended largely by activists "ready to come out on a rainy night to a public meeting." Multimodal communications combining meetings and media now draw

more participants and allow architects to deliver more information. "It's not just six boards on easels," Rogers notes. "It's text; it's other people's comments. You can comment on a comment."

For Florida's St. Petersburg Pier (subject of multiple iterations and competitions, after citizens rejected Michael Maltzan Architecture's prior design through a referendum), Rogers and colleagues built nine different maps describing diverse potential uses. Their complex proposal, integrating a multifunction pier with ecological-education features into the city's waterfront park system, Rogers says, was trickier to explain than competi-

tors' variations on "a bridge-like structure to a thing" extending into Tampa Bay. The final stage pitted Rogers's firm against two rivals when the jury couldn't pick a first-place winner. "That extra period of conversation, presentation, and engagement, which included digital activity and media participation," he says, "benefited us, because projects that were a bridge and a thing don't develop more complexity with review over time. We had time to explain the complexity." Rogers's entry won approval.

The recurrent clash

Rogers finds "two things in the world of



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(above) For Florida's St. Petersburg Pier, ROGERS PARTNERS Architects+Urban Designers's complex proposal won over the public through presentations and conversations.

(left) Atlanta's Buckhead Park Over GA400, designed by ROGERS PARTNERS Architects+Urban Designers with Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, includes a 2,500-foot-long commons, plaza, and garden that straddle a freeway.

public outreach that seem to be consistent: just about every human being considers themselves a traffic expert, and they are deeply protective of their parking space.” In Atlanta, his Buckhead Park Over GA400 (with Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects) looks to a post-autocentric future, redressing imbalances he associates with “the indoctrination of the public via all the industries that support individual vehicles.” The 2,500-foot-long park’s commons, plaza, and gardens sections straddle the GA 400 freeway, upgrading a Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) station, integrating commercial space, and providing a hub along the Path400 Greenway Trail. “Changing the way people think about using the train,” he adds, means emphasizing convenience, “redoing these spaces so they arrive in the middle of a park.” Noting that local leaders increasingly value walkable space, Rogers sees the plan evolving over 6 to 10 years of consultation: “We didn’t go in with a blank slate, but we’re also not overly designed at this point – you’ve got to have a dartboard before you start throwing darts.”

W Architecture and Landscape Architecture Principal Barbara Wilks, FAIA, FASLA, finds the “classic clash between drivers and nondrivers” characterizing multiple projects, including the St. Petersburg Approach, where her firm’s park/promenade/bioswale/marina complex will adjoin Rogers’s pier, assuming some parking burden but favoring pedestrian space. “We made it a fundamental tenet of our proposal,” Rogers comments, “that cars were not on the pier. That ended up challenging Wilks, because all the parking ended up on the approach.”

Wilks’s Downtown Far Rockaway master plan – featuring “massive coordination” among city agencies, she notes with amazement – improves a challenging area including a Vision Zero priority intersection by adding two plazas, a shared-street space, and streetscape amenities from dune-shaped planters to public WiFi. “The biggest two camps,” she observes, “are people driving through town and people who aren’t.” An organized motorist

presence at meetings has complicated, but not obstructed, refinement of the pedestrian corridor.

Wilks is experienced at negotiating over sensitive transitional spaces. At West Harlem Piers, reconfiguring a narrow parking and highway-ramp site into an award-winning waterfront park, she revised her plan after neighbors said they’d rather see water when they looked down 125th Street. Keeping that vista clear, she expanded usable and perceived space with diagonal piers and subtle elevation changes. At Tampa’s Julian Lane Riverfront Park, near a historic African-American community damaged by old-school urban renewal, she credits Mayor Bob Buckhorn for respecting neighbors’ desire for access to community facilities that outside interests had informally privatized, including a boathouse many didn’t know was public. Before redesigning St. Patrick’s Island in Calgary into an amenity that would draw people downtown, Wilks organized a 24-hour “BioBlitz” where citizens joined scientists investigating the area’s flora and fauna, developing an ecological baseline

to guide plans for pathways through wetlands, an artificial hill, and a slow-flowing, wadable channel.

No project pleases everyone. As in economists’ tragedy of the commons, some interests have forgotten how to share community resources. Yet by building research on a foundation of public input, studying social conditions along with physical site conditions, these and other civic-minded architects are showing how professional acumen can benefit from conversations with, not just to, the public. ■

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.



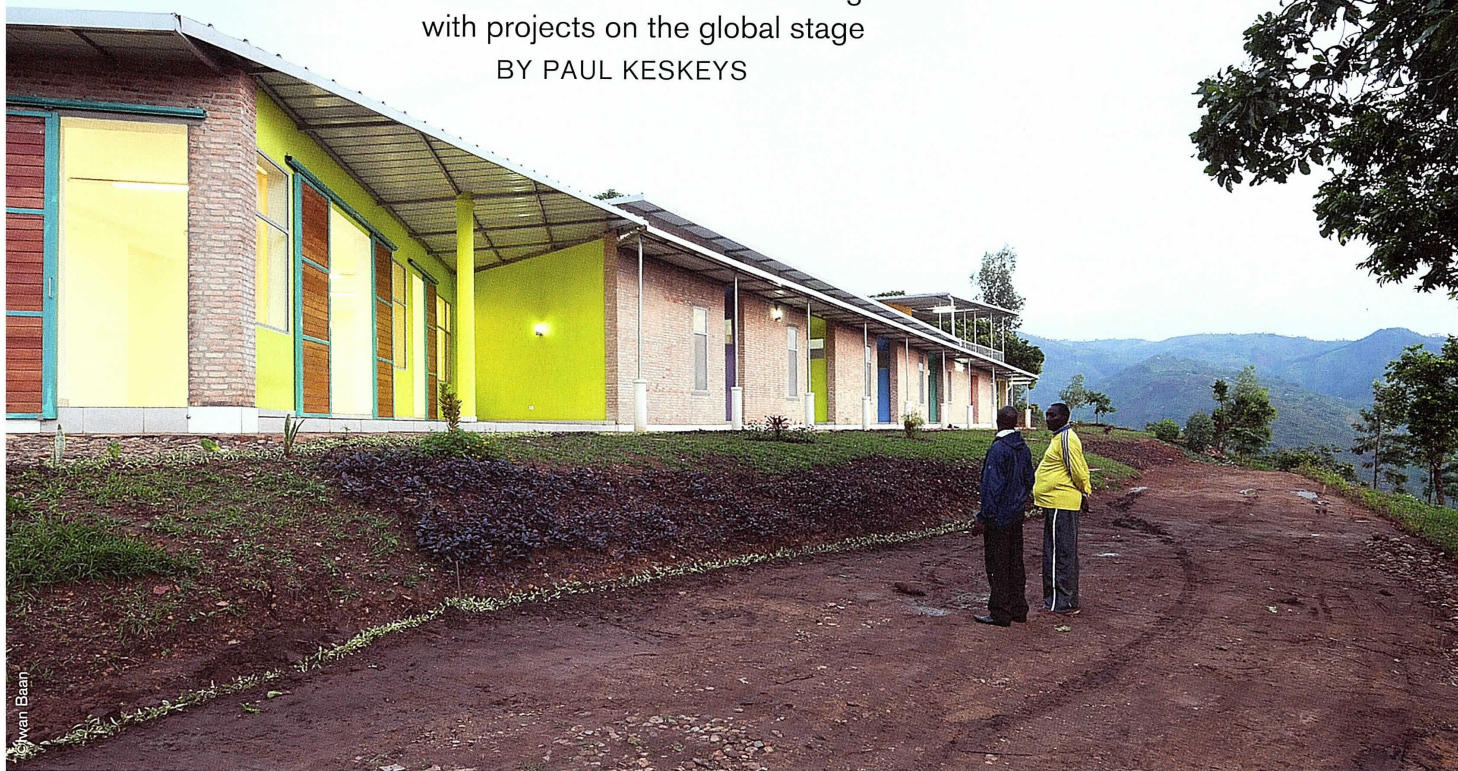
(above) At the West Harlem Piers, W Architecture and Landscape Architecture used diagonal piers and subtle elevation changes to give neighbors a clear vista down 125th Street to the water.

(left) W Architecture and Landscape Architecture's St. Petersburg Approach, adjoining ROGERS + PARTNERS' pier, attempts to balance the classic clash between drivers and nondrivers.

FOUND IN TRANSLATION

How small architecture firms are setting sail
with projects on the global stage

BY PAUL KESKEYS



The age-old idiom “It’s a small world” has taken on a whole new meaning since the Internet became ubiquitous, drawing people together in almost every sense imaginable. Rolling news sites mean we are constantly kept abreast of current events on every continent, while social networks have given rise to global communities that render geographic barriers to communication largely obsolete. Perhaps most significantly for architects, though, modern technology has expanded the boundaries of the workplace beyond recognition.

Just two decades ago, practicing architecture on a global scale was the domain solely of the profession’s “big hitters” – large, commercial firms such as Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Gensler, and Kohn Pederson Fox Associates – which have the contacts and capital necessary to secure commissions abroad and deliver on those projects. Now, medium- and even small-sized firms with fewer than

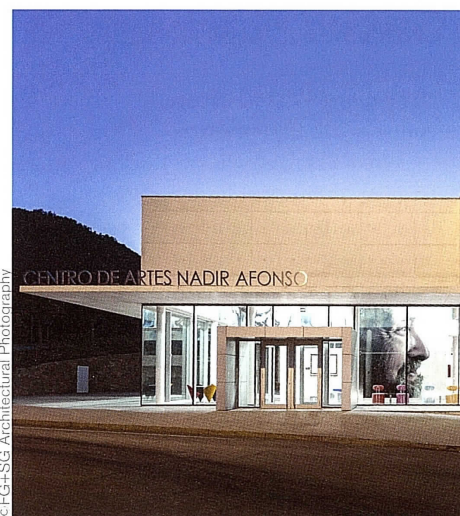
50 employees are shifting their view from local to global, often gaining international recognition in the process.

The universal language of design

One such firm is New York-based studio Louise Braverman Architect, a five-person practice that in recent years has completed projects across three continents. These commissions have ranged from a single-family home in Jerusalem to the Centro de Artes Nadir Afonso, a landmark museum in Boticas, Portugal. It is in Africa, though, where Louise Braverman, FAIA, has proven that the hurdles of long-distance design faced by small practices are now largely a thing of the past.

A project to design the Village Health Works Staff Housing in Kigutu, Burundi – providing 100% off-the-grid housing and community space for 18 residents – would be a challenge because of both the geographic distance between studio and site, and the language barrier between

designers and construction team. These issues were overcome thanks to a savvy combination of web-based technology and the great clarity of Braverman’s architectural drawings. “Global communication is a lot easier via Skype,” Braverman explains. “When our project was in





construction, we spoke to our Burundian community team on the ground every day. Because our drawings were clear and comprehensible, we were able to visually communicate effectively, avoiding issues of language difference. It is remarkable that construction documents are really a

universal language.” This process culminated in a beautifully detailed, sustainable home for the staff of Village Health Works, and netted Braverman numerous design awards.

“A cosmopolitan attitude”

A firm experiencing similar success is Brooklyn-based studio SO-IL, whose founders understand the global nature of contemporary practice better than most. “For us, the U.S. is international,” says Dutch architect Florian Idenburg, Intl. Assoc. AIA, who started the firm with Jing Liu in 2008. “We were born and raised in Asia and Europe; Jing came here to study, while I came here when I was at SANAA, charged with the design and realization of the Glass Pavilion in Toledo, and New York’s New Museum of Contemporary Art.”

Indeed, the founders approach the world of architectural design with what Idenburg calls “a cosmopolitan attitude,”

something that is perfectly reflected by the demographics of their practice: SO-IL currently has 20 staff members with an incredible 12 languages spoken among them.

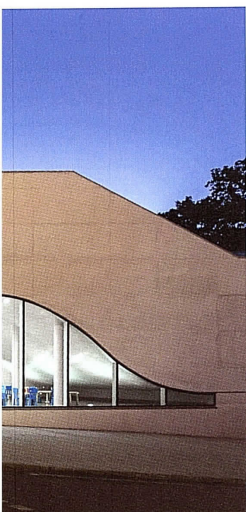
Beyond the U.S., the studio has projects either completed or underway in China, Hong Kong, Korea, Australia, France, the Netherlands, and Mexico. These commissions vary as much in programmatic terms as they do in geographic location: Site Verrier in Meisenthal, France, is a cultural center located on the premises of a former glass factory within the stunning Vosges Natural Park. In South Korea, the firm worked within far tighter urban constraints, completing the Kukje Art Center in Seoul’s historic Sogyeok-dong district – an award-winning landmark for contemporary art wrapped in a distinctive skin of pliable steel mesh.

SO-IL aims to tackle the different challenges inherent within this broad range of project locations with what Idenburg describes as a “juxtaposition of

(above, right) SO-IL: Kukje Art Center, Seoul, South Korea.

(above, left) Louise Braverman Architect: Village Health Works Staff Housing, Kigutu, Burundi.

(left) Louise Braverman Architect: Centro de Artes Nadir Afonso, Boticas, Portugal.





(above and left) Slade Architecture: The multi-award-winning Barbie flagship store in Shanghai.

an autonomous architectural idea with the specificity of a site." For Idenburg, researching the context of an international project must move beyond a pure analysis of vernacular styles. "Technology, craft, and dominant building techniques in different regions give us clear conditions to work within, or challenge," he says.

However, Idenburg cautions that, in spite of modern-day technology making global communication easier, putting these principles into practice remains a serious undertaking for a small firm. "We cannot compete with firms located in less expensive cities or regions, and since the scale of the projects is still relatively small, the margins are such that it is hard to make them all financially feasible," he says. "They are very time-consuming, and since we are involved in execution as well, they require us to travel a lot."

Of expectations and etiquette This issue undoubtedly remains an obstacle for many small firms, but it has not deterred Slade Architecture, the brainchild of wife-and-husband duo Hayes Slade, AIA, IIDA, and James Slade, FAIA, LEED AP. "We have always had an international outlook and interest," Hayes explains. "Both of us worked in London for two years: myself with Arup

and James with Rick Mather Architects." Furthermore, James founded Cho Slade Architecture with Min Cho, which led to many opportunities to complete buildings in South Korea, including Dalki Theme Park, Pixel House, and Chungmuro Inter-media Playground.

Since forming their own practice in 2002, the couple has completed the five-story flagship store Barbie Shanghai, a contemporary toy box with an ornately fritted glass façade and striking pink interiors, which garnered many design awards. The firm was also selected to design a villa for the extraordinary Ordos 100 project, a master plan by Ai Weiwei that, while never ultimately built, gave Slade more exposure on the world stage. This growing pedigree has helped the couple and their staff of six earn a place on the prequalified list of design firms for work in Latin America with Hilton Hotels, which they hope will lead to major commissions on yet another continent.

Slade's main challenge in carrying out commissions in other countries concerns the difference in expectations and etiquette of architect-client relationships. "Understanding the unsaid part of the work is the most challenging," says James. "In some cultures, formal agreement may or may not amount to anything. There are cultures where people never disagree openly with you, but will simply and passively refuse to execute certain things." These cultural nuances may come as a surprise to small firms during their first projects abroad,

and are typical of the subtleties that must be learned through experience.

Despite these hurdles, Hayes and James Slade agree with Braverman and Idenburg that technology is making international practice exponentially easier for small firms. "Communication and workflow issues have improved in recent years," reflects Hayes. "Design teams and clients alike are more and more comfortable with online collaboration, using tools like GoToMeeting and Skype, for example."

Ultimately, the fate of small firms working internationally all comes back to communication. To succeed, studios must define rigorous workflows using the digital tools available to them, and master remote modes of communication that do not diminish the levels of trust required for the architect-client relationship to remain strong. If these criteria are met, then it is true that – even for the smallest of architecture firms – the world is indeed smaller than it has ever been. ■

PAUL KESKEYS is a qualified architect from the U.K. who ventured into the world of design journalism and became architecture editor at Architizer in 2015. A graduate of the University of Edinburgh and the Bartlett School of Architecture in London, he has previously worked in London, Toronto, and San Francisco, and is now based in New York.

DEFINING MOMENTS

Love 'em or hate 'em, design competitions often open doors for young architects and firms

JANET ADAMS STRONG, PH.D.

Long is the list of architects whose careers were launched by a competition. Even longer are the litanies of praise and condemnation they generate: design competitions as strongholds of freedom and experimentation, or a dissolute waste and exploitation. In an unscientific investigation of the love-hate diatribe, we sampled several local Cinderella scenarios,* each of which emerged from an annual competition.

The MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program, created in 2000, has a good track record at picking untested firms with the ingredients to succeed. Deans of architecture schools and design editors nominate competitors, from students to established firms, for portfolio reviews. Three finalists submit preliminary proposals, the winner advancing to build a summer installation for the Warm Up music series in PS1's forecourt in Queens. The first award went to SHoP Architects, a little-known office established four years earlier, determined to enter only competitions with construction potential. SHoP Principal Chris Sharples, AIA, explains how the winning entry, "Dunescape," was designed in the early days of computerization, printed out in sections on plotting paper, and literally built on the drawings, one cedar slat after another. "It was a polemical turning point for our office as it crystallized our ideas about using technology to bring back 'the craft of making' to architecture," he says. The same polemic, manifest at grand scale at Barclays Center



©David Joseph



©Man Tse

(2014), continues to inspire the firm's innovative approach to design.

"A stepping stone"

Another leading force in competitions (for the last 122 years) is the Van Alen Institute, which bridges the classroom and professional practice with small urban interventions that encourage young architects to showcase their design skills while learning to work with real world constraints. A case in point is the annual Valentine Heart competition, which Times Square Arts staged jointly with Van Alen in 2014. Young Projects won the competition with "Match-Maker," a zodiacal sculpture of angled periscopes that allowed people to discover other viewers with astrologically compatible signs. In a digital age, the direct personal experience of seeing somebody's face, talking, and perhaps even meeting embodied Young Projects' attempts to increase awareness of surrounding spaces and cohabitants.

The firm's principal, Bryan Young, AIA, RA, reckons the competition "a stepping stone that brought much more public attention than our residential commissions." Its success took the sting

out of the ephemeral quality of temporary installations – another facet of the love-hate argument – by offering the heady opportunity for permanent construction. Designed to withstand winter crowds in Times Square, the aluminum tube structure was relocated to DUMBO and is now poised for a permanent home elsewhere. "We went a little further than people have in the past," says Young, "but the idea was to make a real piece of art that can endure over time." (Young Projects is also a winner of New Practices New York 2016 – see pg. 36 for details.)

The competition for the City of Dreams Pavilion on Governors Island, sponsored by FIGMENT, the AIA NY Emerging New York Architects Committee, and the Structural Engineers Association of New York, was begun in 2010. It similarly breathed life, and afterlife, into the winning submission by StudioKCA, a firm formed shortly before entering the competition in 2013. The "Head in the Clouds" pavilion, conceived as an evocative place for dreamers to dream, was created with a dimensional fabric of 58,000 plastic bottles, NYC's hourly discards. Beyond global media coverage and



©Chuck Choi

(left, top) SHoP Architects: "Dunescape" was the inaugural winner in MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program in 2000.

(previous page and left, middle) Young Projects: "Match-Maker," winner of the 2014 Van Alen Institute/Times Square Arts Valentine Heart competition.

(left) StudioKCA: "Head in the Clouds" on Governors Island, the 2013 winner of the City of Dreams Pavilion competition sponsored by FIGMENT, the AIA NY Emerging New York Architects Committee, and the Structural Engineers Association of New York.



©Courtesy of Jerome Haferd and K. Brandt Knapp

significant awards, the project spawned recyclable pavilions in São Paulo and São Lourenço, Brazil.

Winning opened doors for StudioKCA, says Jayson Klimoski, AIA, LEED AP, a founding partner with Lesley Chang, but he acknowledges the toll. “Entering a competition involves tremendous work, but winning and actually building a design requires 10 times the effort. Young firms have to prove their worth and creativity, but are competitions the right approach to architectural practice? That’s the bigger question.”

“The spirit of who we are”

The Architectural League of New York has had a distinguished record in identifying future leaders; winners of the League Prize (begun in 1981) and Emerging Voices (begun in 1982) constitute a veritable Who’s Who in architecture. In a partnership with Socrates Sculpture Park, the Folly competition aspires to the same outcome, weighing young architects’ future promise against their proposal, budget, methodology, and past achievements.

Recent Yale graduates won the first Folly in 2012, having collaborated on

weekends and after work in separate firms. “Curtain,” their winning entry, “defined the spirit of who we are at the very start of our careers,” says K. Brandt Knapp. Her co-designer, Jerome W. Haferd, concurs. “The competition,” he says, “called for a program-less built work which, for us, was a chance to showcase architectural potential with fresh, explicitly conceptual ideas, like a built manifesto.”

“Winning was an amazing experience,” says Knapp, who, like Haferd, is in the last stages of licensure and continues conceptual explorations in academia. “But there is a larger question for our generation about how to work in the public realm experimentally and sustainably in a way that can pay rent and contribute to our livelihood.”

The parameters of competitions vary but the essentials are constants. ■

JANET ADAMS STRONG, PH.D., is an architectural historian and author, and is principal of Strong and Partners communications.



©Courtesy of Jerome Haferd and K. Brandt Knapp

(above) K. Brandt Knapp and Jerome W. Haferd: “Curtain,” winner of the first Folly competition launched in 2012 by the Architectural League of New York in partnership with Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City.

* A more comprehensive Design Competition Survey, completed by *Architectural Record* and Van Alen Institute in 2015, can be found at <https://www.vanalen.org/projects/architectural-record-van-alen-institute-competition-survey/#keyfindings>

2016 NEW PRACTICES NEW YORK: New York State of Mind

Floating offices, “projects within projects,” multi-scalar collaboration and other aspirations of young architects just getting started
BY JULIA VAN DEN HOUT

Building in New York is challenging, especially for young architects. Small firms often work on a reduced scale with limited budgets, while simultaneously trying to have their voices heard and make a big impact. But this year’s New Practices New York (NPNY) winners are also evidence of the possibilities the city has to offer – and the optimism and inspiration it provides. As winner Benjamin Cadena, AIA, sums up, New York “is an incredible breeding ground of talent and creativity, as well as a platform with unparalleled global reach.”

This year’s winners were selected by a jury that included William Menking, editor-in-chief of *The Architect’s Newspaper*; Julian Rose, principal of Formlessfinder; Jane Smith, AIA, IIDA, ASID, partner at Spacesmith; Martino Stierli, the Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at MoMA; and Ada Tolla, partner at LOT-EK. Committee co-chairs were Philipp von Dalwig, Dipl. Ing., Assoc. AIA, LEED AP, partner, MANIFOLD. ArchitectureStudio, and Christopher Leong, Assoc. AIA, principal, Leong Leong.



© Matthew Niederhauser

MODU: Outdoor Room, Beijing: A temporary structure with an elliptical opening that framed views of Olympic Park landmarks, which appeared and disappeared, depending on how thick the air pollution was.

MODU

New York, NY
Phu Hoang, AIA, NCARB
Rachely Rotem, LEED AP BD+C
www.moduarchitecture.com

Founded in 2012 by Phu Hoang, AIA, and Rachely Rotem, LEED AP BD+C, MODU takes its cue from a larger scale than New York. “Rather than specializing in a given project type, MODU focuses on the idea that the built environment, especially public spaces, should adapt itself to the weather and climate,” explains Hoang. Their interest lies in the different typologies that result from architecture existing in various climate types, from tropical wet to dry and humid. What results is a multi-scalar approach that has led them to collaborate with experts like marine biologists, robotics engineers, interactive artists, and, currently, a climate scientist from NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Hoang and Rotem won the Founders Rome Prize and are Fellows at the American Academy in Rome. ▲

SCHAUM/SHIEH

New York, NY, and Houston, TX
Rosalyne Shieh, AIA
Troy Schaum, RA, LEED AP BD+C
www.schaumshieh.com

Based in New York and Houston, SCHAUM/SHIEH is mindful of finding the balance between client work and independent work. “Architecture is a competitive, project-oriented profession where the pace and drive suggest we should always be ‘on to the next, better project!’ We want to maintain the space for exploration and experimentation, and not get hijacked by the drive to be prolific,” says Rosalyne Shieh, AIA, who runs the office with Troy Schaum, RA, LEED AP BD+C. Since its founding in 2009, the firm has worked on a range of projects, including the White Oak Music Hall, a multistage indoor and outdoor music venue in Houston, and a series of installations in Detroit that transformed abandoned houses into valuable cultural and community centers. ▼



SCHAUM/SHIEH:
About Face, Detroit,
2010: A diagonal room
that spans from an
exterior wall to the roof
of a single-family house;
it is both a stair and a
theater that overlooks
a stage on an adjacent
open lot.

© TK



c. Song Yousub

stpmj

New York, NY, and Seoul, Korea
Seung Teak Lee, Principal,
South Korea Office Director
Mi Jung Lim, AIA, Principal,
New York Office Director
www.stpmj.com

stpmj principals Seung Teak Lee and Mi Jung Lim, AIA, describe their approach as “provocative realism,” an effort to produce radical responses to the realities of the changing built and natural world, while remaining “architecturally nimble and resilient.” The resulting works vary in scale but connect in their appeal to the senses – from the “environment-sensitive” Shear House, organized around optimal sun exposure for its various programs, to the “vision-sensitive” Invisible Barn, a design proposal for a mirror-clad folly in the woods.

While the individual projects focus on hyperlocal conditions, with offices in New York and Seoul, stpmj considers itself an office floating between locations. Lee and Lim began collaborating in 2009 and have officially worked as stpmj since 2015, recently winning the Korean Young Architects Award. ▲

(above) stpmj: Shear House (2016), Kyung Buk, Yecheon, South Korea: A double-skin façade controls heat and humidity and reduces heat gain and loss by 20%.

Studio Cadena

New York, NY
Benjamin Cadena, AIA, LEED AP,
NCARB
www.studiocadena.com

“It is essential to shape a practice that becomes an effective conduit to intensify an engagement of place,” says Benjamin Cadena, AIA. Founded in 2013, the studio has tackled projects that foreground the sensory and spatial to create new experiences and maximum effect. One such project is Masa Bakery in Bogotá, Colombia, where Studio Cadena incorporated the café and kitchen into one big area separated by a large storage wall and long bar. The resulting space connects customers directly to the creation of food through smells and sounds.

In Brooklyn, the firm transformed a typical residential loft into a landscape of distinct volumes that activate shared living areas. “Architecture is a very important part of our culture, as it defines the context we inhabit,” says Cadena. “It shapes the circumstances of our daily lives, but is never the object of it. As architects we often forget that, alone, it cannot solve every problem.” ▼

(below) Studio Cadena: Masa Bakery (2014), Bogotá, Colombia.



c. Studio Cadena



© Victor Martinez

Taller KEN

New York, NY, and Guatemala City, Guatemala
Gregory Kahn Melitonov, Assoc. AIA
Ines Guzman Mendez
www.tallerken.info

"In the past few years, visualization software has drastically increased in ease and sophistication, enabling clients to be more likely to be involved in directing the design process," explains Taller KEN Principal Gregory Melitonov, Assoc. AIA. "Going forward, architects have to work harder than ever to stake out new ground beyond form-finding or as administrators of construction."

Melitonov and partner Ines Guzman Mendez, have happily taken on this challenge and, after working together at Renzo Piano Building Workshop, established Taller KEN in 2013. "Our interest lies in our ability to take our designs to new and risky places, all while navigating the usual external pressures," Melitonov says. The principals call themselves a Commercial Architecture Workshop, where all employees have responsibility and projects are shaped in a highly collaborative environment. As part of this effort, the firm recently launched FUNdAMENTAL, a design-build internship for nine young architects from various nations, who will work together on a project in Guatemala City. ▲

(above) Taller KEN: Alessa Designs jewelry store (2015), Guatemala City, Guatemala.

(below) Young Projects: Competition entry for a new contemporary art wing for the Museo de Art de Lima (MALI), Peru; light courts bring daylight and greenery to the below-ground Education Level.

JULIA VAN DEN HOUT is founder of the editorial and curatorial office, Original Copy, and editor of *CLOG*, a quarterly publication that provides a platform for discussion of one topic at a time.

Young Projects

New York, NY
Bryan Young, AIA
www.young-projects.com

For Bryan Young, AIA, principal of Young Projects, limitations are not necessarily a bad thing. "Nothing about building in New York City is direct – schedules, zoning, permitting, cost – the list goes on. But the reality of dealing with these factors breeds a mindset of being adaptable and not too precious about your projects," he says. "Being forced to alter a project can be a healthy reminder that flexibility in design is a really good thing."

Founded in 2010, the firm often seeks out opportunities to go beyond a prescribed program, pursuing "projects within projects." In the Gerken Residence in Tribeca, Young Projects explored the boundaries between digital fabrication and artisan construction methods with a curved, pulled-plaster wall and a polished stainless-steel sliding partition. On a larger scale, the firm is completing the Retreat at Playa Grande in the Dominican Republic, consisting of a main house, guest house, and spa that carefully frame and rediscover the surrounding jungle landscape. ▼



© Young Projects



2006 NEW PRACTICES NEW YORK: JUMPSTART ON CREATIVE CAREERS

Ten years later, a look at the winners of the first New Practices New York competition

BY CLAIRE WILSON

Mark Strauss, FAIA, AICP, recalls how it happened: In 2005, he was at a reception at the Center for Architecture when he and Susan Chin, FAIA, then AIANY Chapter president, were approached by another guest, who said, "I just started an architectural firm and I need some help." The FXFOWLE senior partner had an immediate epiphany. "We weren't serving those firms," Strauss says. "If the AIA was going to stay relevant, we had to embrace new firms because they could be our bread and butter in 20 years."

From that encounter came the New Practices Roundtable, a series of programs (jokingly called "group therapy for emerging practices") that brought ideas about business practice, technology, and marketing to architects just starting out. The New Practices New York (NPNY) showcase followed in 2006, with approximately 50 practices submitting their work for the first competition. Six firms were selected, all of which were founded within the previous six years: Architecture in Formation, G TECTS, Gage/Clemenceau Architects, Interboro Partners, WORKac, and Zakrzewski + Hyde Architects.

Fledgling status was all the six firms had in common a decade ago, with each practice taking a vastly different approach to its work. Those differences have become more pronounced since the first showcase, as firms made different choices informed by technology, the 2008 downturn in the economy, experience, and networking. Here's where these firms are today:

LOW-TECH, HIGH-TECH

When Gage/Clemenceau Architects won the NPNY competition, partners Marc Clemenceau Bailly, AIA, and Mark Foster Gage, RA, were doing experimental work in robotic carving technology and digital fabrication to create 3D geometry studies that would trickle into designs for unusual surfaces in apartments, retail stores, and, in 2009, a giant heart installation in Times Square. "We would design anything the client wanted, including furniture," says Bailly, co-chair of the New Practices Committee 2006–2012. In 2007 the firm was a finalist in the MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program. After the two split amicably in 2012, Bailly founded Bailly & Bailly in Seattle in 2013, and Gage founded Mark Foster Gage Architects in New York in 2014. He is an assistant dean at the Yale School of Architecture.

Bailly is adapting his New York ways to Pacific Northwest tastes on the design of a farmhouse on a steep slope and the restoration and renovation of a 1923 high school. Gage has since pivoted into fashion-oriented tech work that includes installations for Diesel, Google, Samsung, Intel, and Vice. His work with fashion director and editor Nicola Formichetti includes multiple retail interiors and a costume for Lady Gaga. He also did a pavilion for fashion retailer H&M at the Coachella Music Festival. ◀

(left) Gage/Clemenceau Architects: Pop-up store for Nicola Formichetti



© Rendering by Dimitris Stasis

(above) Interboro Partners: "Holding Pattern," the 2011 winner of MoMA PS1's Young Architects Program.

(left) Zakrzewski + Hyde Architects: East Village Passive House.

UNEXPECTED INSPIRATION

The economic turndown in 2008 was a good thing for Marianne Hyde, RA, and Stas Zakrzewski, AIA, RA, founding partners of Zakrzewski + Hyde Architects. It gave them the time to discover their passions: Passive House architecture and using CLT, or cross-laminate timber, which they were exposed to while working on a design for a NYC Department of Sanitation garage. During the recession, each got certified in an aspect of these disciplines and testing techniques, and theirs is now a go-to firm for environmentally conscious clients. Zakrzewski is treasurer of the non-profit organization New York Passive House. "We try to take our high-end residential aesthetic and marry it to this technical strategy," explains Hyde. Passive House projects include a Victorian house in Ditmas Park, Brooklyn; a 36-unit, 1915 masonry building on Riverside Drive; and the conversion of a five-story loft into a 10-story residential building on Washington Street. In 2008 the firm was honored for its design of the elevated promenade atop the SoHo sanitation garage that first inspired them. ▲

(right) Architecture in Formation: Navy Green housing for the homeless with social services programs at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.



© Dean Kaufman

INPUT FROM END USERS

Before NPNY, Interboro Partners had already won the LA Forum for Architecture and Urban Design's "Dead Malls" Competition in 2003, and the Architectural League's Young Architects Forum in 2005. Those projects were informed by the people who inhabit and use a place. "It's not about coming up with an idea and imposing it on a site," says Georgeen Theodore, AIA, a partner with Dan D'Oca and Tobias Armbrorst. "It's using the logic of the site as raw material for the renovation of the site." What she calls "dialogues with the community" informed "Holding Pattern," the 2011 winner of MoMA PS1's Young Architects Program, where input from prospective users helped design the temporary courtyard. A current project, Envision Cambridge, uses mobile engagement stations to work with the public on envisioning the city's future, according to Theodore, an associate professor of New Jersey Institute of Technology's School of Architecture. "It's a funny metaphor," she says, "but I think of Iron Chef being given all these different ingredients and making up new meals people never anticipated." ▲



© Tom Powell Imaging

SMALL INVESTMENT, BIG RETURN

Gordon Kipping, AIA, found out about NPNY on a Friday, pulled a portfolio submission together that weekend, and ended up one of the chosen six. “It was the most return for the least effort I’ve ever received,” says the founder of G TECTS, whose current projects include outposts in Harlem and Newark for the Bridge Golf Foundation, a group that mentors 12- to 13-year-old Black and Latino boys by integrating a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) curriculum with a high-tech approach to learning golf. He designed Conduction Space, a proposed performance space for vacant land under the Williamsburg Bridge, and the J. Max Bond Center at the CCNY Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture. Kipping was recently selected for the Design Excellence Program by the DDC. ▼



(above) G TECTS: Conduction Space, a proposed performance space for vacant land under the Williamsburg Bridge.

GAME CHANGER

Ten years ago at Architecture in Formation, Matthew Bremer, AIA, was “playing around with strategies for developing the exurban landscape,” he says, when he won the NPNY competition. Mark Strauss, FAIA, AICP, persuaded the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development to consider young firms for an RFP, and Bremer was chosen to work on Navy Green, a complex of housing for the homeless with social services programs at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. For Bremer, co-chair of the New Practices Committee 2008–2012, it was a game changer. “I’m indebted to Mark for having the interest and faith to bring in a young firm to work with his team,” he says. Architecture in Formation has been accepted to the NYC Department of Design and Construction’s (DDC) Design Excellence Program, and is working on bike rental stations in city parks, and high-end and affordable housing. ◀



(above) WORKac: Kew Gardens Hills public library in Queens.

BATHROOM RENO TO CONFERENCE CENTER

WORKac’s specialty in 2006 was ideas and experiments. “We were prolific, had tons of ideas, and moved fast. The word ‘fresh’ was often used,” says Amale Andraos, founding partner and now also dean of Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. “We brought those ideas to bear on the smallest projects.” Those projects included a doghouse and a bathroom renovation, laughingly recalls founding partner Dan Wood, FAIA, LEED AP. The NPNY recognition helped the firm focus on larger projects, including a loft renovation and addition at 93 Reade Street in Manhattan; a conference center in Gabon, Africa; a public library in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens; and two projects for Edible Schoolyard New York. WORKac was named 2015 Firm of the Year by AIA New York State.

Looking back, Wood views the NPNY competition as significant on two levels: it’s a good way to check that your work resonates with people, and the mandate from a jury of your peers is priceless. “You can’t make it in architecture without the support of the community,” he comments. “And the imprimatur of the AIA is particularly important.” ▲

CLAIRE WILSON is a New York-based freelance writer.

Raves + Reviews

REVIEWS BY STANLEY STARK, FAIA

What Makes a Great City

By Alexander Garvin

What makes great cities? Alexander Garvin, Hon. AIANY, architect/planner/urban designer, maintains it is the public realm in all its forms: streets, squares, parks, public spaces, and visible infrastructure systems like transit. The public realm, he says, most strongly frames people's perceptions and influences every aspect of urban life.

Based on his observations and experiences throughout North America and Europe, Garvin identifies the characteristics that make a city great: it is open to all and has something for everyone; it has frameworks for urbanization; it attracts and retains market demand; it makes people feel comfortable; it nurtures a civil society; it promotes security; and it provides alternative frameworks, such as linear developments and other urban forms.

Cities are never finished, but keep reconfiguring themselves, Garvin says, and government and quasi-governmental organizations play an important role in maintaining and enhancing the public realm through investment, attention, and stewardship. He provides examples from the usual suspects (New York, London, Paris) but also from Dubrovnik, Bilbao, and Los Angeles (!). I'm not sure the public realm alone can account for urban greatness, but this book leaves no doubt it is a vital component.

Palazzos of Power: Central Stations of the Philadelphia Electric Company 1900–1930

By Aaron V. Wunsch and Joseph E.B. Elliott;
forward by David E. Nye

This tale of industrial architecture is about the 20 or so central power stations the Philadelphia Electric Co. (PECO) built around the periphery of the city as a privately owned public utility in 1900–1930. The book weaves together the business considerations, adoption of a new technology (AC electrification), and logistical/technological/political considerations of creating and running a large-scale regional enterprise with the central roles architectural and aesthetic decisions play in this process.

The power stations were massive industrial buildings. A conscious decision was made to adapt academic Neoclassicism as a style to make the public more comfortable with the new technology and to align PECO as an enterprise with the objectives of the City Beautiful movement, conveying messages of civic purpose and betterment. But this was not about new technology shaping new forms – it was about corporate identity.

After WWII, these facilities were replaced by larger, more anonymous structures. Wunsch contends that the original facilities can be repurposed to play a useful public role. Elliott's respectful, crisp, formal black-and-white photography of these buildings' powerful massing and impressive interiors emphasizes this contention. These stories about design, technology, politics, market forces, and the withering effects of time are worth our attention.

Noted but Not Reviewed

You Are Here: NYC: Mapping the Soul of the City

By Katherine Harmon

A compilation of personal maps of NYC by architects, designers, artists, and writers.

Understanding Architecture

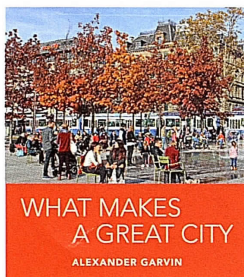
By Robert McCarter and Juhani Pallasmaa

A renewed acquaintance with great buildings – always a refreshing venture.

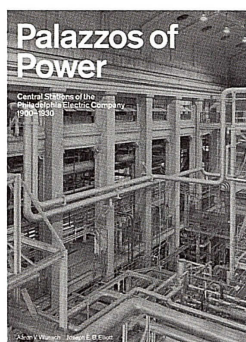
Industries of Architecture

Ed. by Katie Lloyd Thomas, Tilo Amhoff, and Nick Beech
Explorations of architecture's relationship to industry, largely in Europe, and the degree to which architecture can be considered a part of the industrial enterprise.

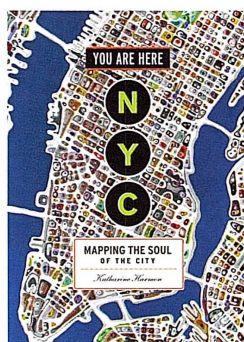
Stanley Stark, FAIA, served as chair of the Oculus Committee from 2005 to 2007.



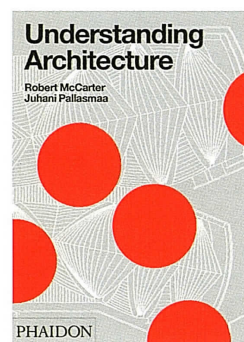
Washington, DC: Island Press, 2016. 344 pp. \$40



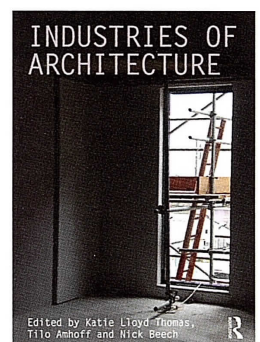
New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2016. 160 pp. \$29.95



New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2016. 192 pp. \$24.95



New York: Phaidon Press, 2012. 448 pp. \$85



New York and London: Routledge, 2016. 346 pp. \$54.95

Pei's Unlikely Launch

BY JOHN MORRIS DIXON, FAIA

When I.M. Pei, FAIA, RIBA, began his career in architecture in 1948, there was a well-established path to practice: a professional degree (sometimes two) followed by a prescribed apprenticeship before the crucial exam. While Pei carried out the academic phase of this process with distinction, he pursued a notably unorthodox course in launching his stellar practice. He started to design buildings – producing some of his signature works – while working for 12 years as the in-house architect for the New York development firm Webb & Knapp.

Pei earned an undergraduate professional degree from MIT, followed by a master's from Harvard Graduate School of Design during its Gropius-led heyday. After some brief stints working for Boston-area engineering and architecture firms, he accepted a faculty position at Harvard. The intriguing details of his entry into the profession are recounted in the 1990 book, *I.M. Pei: A Profile in American Architecture*, by Carter Wiseman.

While teaching at Harvard, Pei was persuaded to follow an unconventional – and professionally risky – path toward practice. He went to work for William Zeckendorf, who was transforming Webb & Knapp from a modest property management firm into the nation's most prolific real estate developer. Zeckendorf believed in architectural distinction as a development asset, and sought to hire “the country's greatest unknown architect.” Following the advice of a Museum of Modern Art staff member, he recruited Pei.

Webb & Knapp soon undertook some very large projects, and Pei needed to assemble a staff. His first hire was former student Henry N. Cobb, FAIA, who would later become his partner in practice. Other long-term associates whom Pei added then included Eason H. Leonard FAIA, RIBA, Araldo A. Cossutta, FAIA, and James Ingo Freed, FAIA. Working there for shorter times were such architects-to-be as Ulrich Franzen, FAIA, and James Stewart Polshek, FAIA.

Early on, Pei's team designed the million-square-foot Roosevelt Field shopping center on Long Island, completed in stages from 1951 to 1956. One of their most distinctive creations was the circular penthouse added to Webb & Knapp's Madison Avenue offices – as part of a 1951 overhaul of the entire building. Reached by private



elevator from the circular office they designed for Zeckendorf, this glazed cylinder housed his private dining room, kitchen, and restroom.

Pei's work as Webb & Knapp's architect continued until 1960, and included the design of such notable projects as the Mile High Center and Courthouse Square developments and Hilton Hotel in Denver, the extensive Southwest Washington redevelopment project, the three-million-square-foot Place Ville Marie office-retail development in Montreal, the Kips Bay Plaza apartments in New York, and the Society Hill residential complex in Philadelphia.

Despite the opportunity Webb & Knapp offered Pei and his younger collaborators, the limitation of their work to multifamily residential and commercial projects was seen as restricting their professional prospects. In 1959, MIT invited Pei to design its prominent Earth Sciences Building, one of the few outside projects that Zeckendorf permitted. In 1960, Webb & Knapp's financial difficulties and the aspirations of Pei and his associates led to the final separation of the architects and the developer. The rest is relatively conventional architecture firm history.

69-year watch

Zeckendorf's office penthouse on Madison Avenue (look closely – that's Henry Cobb perched jauntily on the roof edge).

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.

Note: We look forward to observing I.M. Pei's 100th birthday on April 26, 2017.

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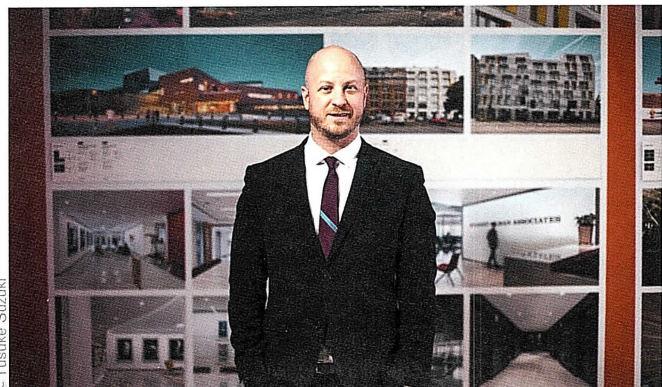


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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Words to Practice By

November 15, 2016

To close this last issue of the year, at a time when the nation is deeply divided, I want to share the letter that the AIANY Board of Directors addressed to the Chapter's membership in the wake of the 2016 elections. Many architects are anxious about what it will mean to practice in the context of the new administration. This letter reminds us all that regardless of the political climate, architects should always devote their work to ensure the safety and well-being of all.

Benjamin Prosky, Assoc. AIA
Executive Director
AIA New York Chapter and
Center for Architecture

NB: *Oculus* will also go through some changes in 2017. After being at its helm for 13 years, Kristen Richards, Hon. AIA, Hon. ASLA, is stepping down as editor-in-chief. We thank her for her dedicated service to the Chapter and the Center for Architecture, and hope she will remain an active supporter of our missions and activities. We are delighted to announce that Alan G. Brake, opinion columnist at *Dezeen* and former senior editor of *The Architect's Newspaper*, will serve as guest-editor for our next two issues of *Oculus*. Welcome, Alan!

Dear AIANY Members,

The statement made post-election by AIA National on behalf of you, the largest chapter within its network of 89,000 members, pledged your support to an administration that many strongly denounce. The Board of Directors of AIA New York was not consulted by AIA National leadership prior to their decision to support President-elect Trump's yet undefined infrastructure agenda, and we do not condone their statement.

The leadership of the New York Chapter would like to reassure our membership and extended community that we reject the violent rhetoric that has pervaded the recent presidential campaign, and we oppose any association with it. We believe in inalienable rights, regardless of creed or nation of origin, gender or sexual orientation, language of birth, or skin color.

Architects, by training, are fundamentally committed to providing shelter and protecting the safety and well-being of all people. Civil dialogue, reciprocal respect, and the protection of human rights are essential to this activity, and are vital characteristics of the profession.

These principles are not only our human values; they underpin the practice of our profession. We believe in equity in design and its benefits to all, especially in the critically needed areas of affordable housing, safe schools, and accessibility. We will continue to espouse fair and ethical business practices throughout the building industry. And we remain committed to mitigating climate change and protecting New Yorkers from its unavoidable consequences.

We are fortunate that the AIA New York Chapter functions in one of the most diverse and inclusive cities in the world. To this end, AIA New York is committing to increasing programming and exhibitions that promote a more inclusive America and address the needs, concerns, and principles of you, our members.

We are first and foremost a membership organization, and our members are our strength. As members, you have insights that will drive our future actions. We want to hear from you. Please email membervoices@aiany.org with your suggestions for how this organization can best respond to the challenges you see facing us as a community. We are committed to addressing your concerns.

Sincerely,
The Board of Directors
American Institute of Architects New York Chapter

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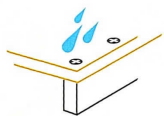
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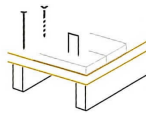
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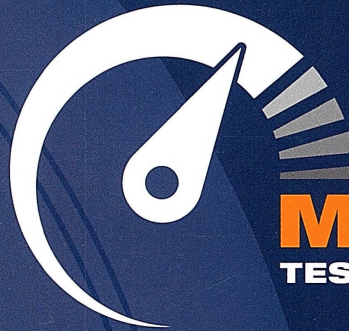
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