MIRALLES AND TAGLIABUE’S LAST COLLABORATION NAMED THE BEST BUILDING IN BRITAIN

The new Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh—a building called one of the worst wastes of public finances—has just received the 10th Royal Institute of British Architect (RIBA) Stirling Prize for best British building of the year. It was designed by Catalan architect Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue, his partner and second wife. Miralles was a respected figure who sprang to fame with his archery center for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, and who was revered for his marvelous spidery drawings. He died after winning the Edinburgh project, tragically young. Tagliabue was left to finish the project—and also to dodge the brick-bats.

Despite extensive media coverage of the proposed (and reviled) FEMA-villes current-ly popping up in Hurricane Katrina’s wake, the mechanics of housing an estimated 250,000 or more individuals have remained unclear. Engineering firms like Bechtel and Fluor, both California-based, and Colorado-based CH2M Hill have been contracted to oversee the installation of these temporary villages. Each company is working in a dif-ferent state—Bechtel in Mississippi, CH2M in Alabama, and Fluor in Louisiana—as contracted by FEMA.

NEW HOCKEY FACILITY THE CENTERPIECE OF CITY’S DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

On October 3, construction of a new venue for the New Jersey Devils began in down-town Newark. The new arena will replace the hockey team’s current home at Continental Arena in the Meadowlands. Called simply Newark Arena (its name will be put out to bid at a later date), the 850,000-square-foot arena will include approximately 17,500 seats, a significant decrease from Continental Arena’s 19,040 capacity. The difference will be made up with an increased number of revenue-generating luxury suites (78 total). The arena will also feature a gourmet restaur-ant overlooking the.

This Land IsYour Land

A scandal arose when costs shot up to around £425 million after politicians asked for more space. It didn’t help that the original estimate was also hopelessly inaccurate. The winning competition entry intended to invoke upturned traditional Scottish boats, but after subsequent revisions and refine-ments, the design became more supple and complex, and better for it. The entrance sequence—from the building’s shallow vaulted entrance lobby, up an asymmetri-cal staircase to a vast debating chamber with its downstand roof trusses—is superbly handled. Externally the building is more continued on page 2

NEW POOL AND SKATING RINK FOR FLUSHING MEADOWS CORONA PARK
WATER, ICE, AND SOMETHING NICE

Queens is set to become the city’s new urban leisure hot spot with the construction of a pool and ice-skating rink complex in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. The $55 million stand-alone building houses the two indoor facilities. Funded by the city and borough and designed by Handel Architects in association with Hom + Goldman Architects, the project is located on the north side of the park next to the Van Wyck Expressway, and will open in Fall 2007.

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The project was launched in 2000, put on hold after 9/11, and revived in early 2004, albeit modified to be a part of the city’s 2012 Olympics bid. Though the city lost the bid to London, the complex will be completed anyway, overseen by New York City’s Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which developed the.

Continued on page 3

DEVELOPMENTS TO NEWARK

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Continued on page 2

NATIONAL DESIGN AWARD WINNERS NAMED

The 6th Annual National Design Awards gala, held at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum on October 29, was punctuated with a few surprises: Laura Bush, the awards’ honorary patron, didn’t show up (the crowd snickered when her name was mentioned) and graphic design’s enfant terrible Stefan Sagmeister bested 2x4 and Paula Scher of Pentagram in the communications design category. Okay, so the First Lady’s absence wasn’t such a big surprise, and Sagmeister’s win should not have been either, given the fact that all the finalists—in the cate-gories of architecture, fashion, product, and, new this year, landscape and interior—should probably, at some point in their careers, win the nation’s highest design honor.

Sagmeister was in fact a finalist for the award in 2000. Architect Rick Joy was an architecture award finalist in 2002, before winning.
In the run-up to next week's mayoral election, incumbent Michael R. Bloomberg announced the expansion of his five-year housing plan, New Housing Marketplace, which he initiated in 2003. His enhanced housing plan promises to boost the city's target number of new affordable housing units from 65,000 to 164,000 over the next ten years (the original plan only spanned five years) and to increase its funding commitment from $3 billion to 7.5 billion, among many other ambitions. These revised targets actually bring Bloomberg closer to what his primary challenger, Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, and housing advocates such as Housing First have recommended.

But how has housing in the city fared since Bloomberg took office? The election promises to be no contest—as of press time, polls show Bloomberg with a 28-point lead over Ferrer—but it's still worth looking at some of the mayor's accomplishments measured against his campaign promises.

Certainly, residential construction has boomed in recent years—in fact, it's at a 32-year high. Property development throughout the five boroughs has been buoyed by the city's vast rezoning plans and the simplification of permitting processes at the Department of Buildings (DOB). Though Bloomberg opposes mandatory inclusionary zoning (the use of zoning to make housing developments include units for people with low and moderate incomes)—a key difference between him and Ferrer—affordable housing units are indeed being added to the market under Bloomberg's watch. According to the New Housing Market-place Progress Report 2005, 28,550 units have been funded, with 39,000 existing units being preserved. In August the city released four RFPs on the last major remaining city-owned land for 3,200 mixed-income units and it's currently working with the New York City Housing Authority to create 1,800 new units. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is busy too, preserving existing units and planning the increase of supportive housing (for the elderly, disabled, or homeless) by 65 percent, or 12,000 new units. Promising, though we don't know how many affordable units have been lost under Bloomberg.

Bloomberg's late-game housing push might be an "election-year ploy," as Ferrer said. Former secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Andrew Cuomo, who endorses Ferrer, noted after Bloomberg announced his new plan that it was an indication that his old plan wasn't working. But if the Ferrer has served only to pull Bloomberg closer to his position on the issue of affordable housing, then he is to be celebrated. And more power to Bloomberg, to see these bold plans through.

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ARCHITECTS: "GROSS" AND "UN-AMERICAN"

Gather 1,300 architects who are downing champagne faster than they eat up outdated theory and discipline breaks down. That’s what happened last month at the AIA New York chapter’s Heritage Ball dinner at Chelsea Piers, honoring J. Max Bond, Jr., Amanda Burden, Frank Sciame, and Bette Midler’s New York Restoration Project. “Sit down! Sit DOWN!” AIA president Susan Chin kept reminding us from the dais, trying to put a lid on the gaiest that was drowning out the evening’s speakers. “EXCUSE ME!” was the indignant phrase invoked by Urban Assembly founder Richard Kahan as he tried to introduce Burden. Indeed, things got so bad (though we were too busy chatting to notice) that Jeanne-Claude, the Fragile-haired counterpart to wrap artist Christo, took it upon herself to storm the podium. “You gross people! Be quiet!” she berated in her French accent. “[Your behavior] is not only gross, but impolite and—I dare not say—un-American.” Later, however, Midler hilariously got everyone’s attention. “I do look good,” she announced, with eyelids and cheekbones stretched out to Hoboken. “I am a restoration project.”

WATER, ICE, AND SOMETHING NICE

continued from front page: building’s program for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The revised design, constructed of muddled precast building and glass, features a cable system that supports a large canopy roof and giant windows that frame the park beyond. Blake Middleton, project designer and principal at Handel, said that the inspiration came from the pavilions for the 1939 and 1964 World’s Fairs, which were held in the park. The design also kept the Olympic-sized pool, which features a mechanical system that raises and lowers the pool’s floor to allow for both competitive meets (which requires a greater depth) and handicapped accessibility. According to Kevin Hom, principal of Hom + Goldman, “It’s like a giant colander—the basin remains full of water while a perforated secondary floor raises and lowers.”

The cable system, the most visible structural element of the building, was another element left over from the Olympics. It was originally designed to relieve structural pressure from one of the walls, which could be removed to create a grandstand. “The whole idea is to juxtapose the two spaces—cold rink and warm pool—and have them interact via spectators who can simultaneously watch both,” Middleton said of the walkway between them. The complex’s dual uses posed the unique challenge of condensation. “Given the temperature change, one side would always have to sweat,” said Middleton. The problem will be solved through the use of precast concrete on the interior and exterior of the building. The material has the density and thermal resistance to prevent the different climates from affecting each other, while remaining easy to for the city to maintain.

JAFFER KOLB
On October 6, a small contingent of the Landmarks West! preservation society staged a solemn protest outside the Center for Architecture, while inside, architect Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works unveiled his controversial redesign of Edward Durell Stone’s building at 2 Columbus Circle, for the Museum of Art & Design. On display in the gallery was an impressively luminous model of Cloepfil’s design that, in massing, mirrors Stone’s 1964, 57,000-square-foot structure, but without its recognizable marble façade and “lollipop” columns.

Instead, the architect introduced a tiled façade of terra cotta with a series of snaking cuts filled with glass (samples of both materials were also included in the display). The architect’s intention is clear—to open up the windowless structure to light and give it a colorful, iridescent surface.

During the bidding process, Allied Works budgeted restoring the building, demolishing it and replacing it with a new structure, and replacing the façade. Each of these three strategies would have cost about the same (the current budget is between $50 and $60 million). The architects and the museum decided on the latter option—replacing the façade in order to give the museum its own identity while preserving part of the original structure.

Zoning regulations only allowed the architects to push the existing façade out by 4 inches, which complicated matters because the redesign required the incorporation of insulation and a vapor barrier to meet current museum standards—features which Stone’s building lacks. The building’s new skin is a unitized curtain wall system of 8-by-30-inch terra-cotta tiles placed in galvanized steel pans and clipped onto an aluminum rail system. Terra cotta was chosen primarily for its ability to accept a nacreous glaze, which would vary in color and tone in reaction to changing light conditions. The glaze is being developed by Allied Works in collaboration with Dutch artist Christine Jetten and tested by Radii, a modelmaking and effects studio based in Hoboken.

The existing structure is a load-bearing concrete box. The snaking cuts that open the gallery floors with a series of vertical and clerestory windows are not merely openings in an ornamental façade but are interventions that manipulate the building’s structural frame. The cuts create a series of interlocking canopies, bolstered with 2-by-8-inch tube steel pins placed at intervals along the horizontal openings. In addition to the cuts in the façade, openings are made through the floor plates of the building to bring light further into the interior. Two or three types of glass, custom-fabricated by Old Castle Glass (which is donating all of the glass used in the project), will be chosen to clad the openings, depending on the degree of transparency desired and to match the chosen glaze on the exterior. Glass will also clad the ground floor, fronting the structural “lollipop” columns, one of which will be removed to create a grander entrance.

Section through horizontal and vertical cuts

"Museums tend to not reflect their holdings in their architecture," noted Holly Hotchner, MAD’s director. "In this case we wanted a building that would relate to the art collection, which consists largely of ceramic and glass pieces." She went on to say that the museum’s art thrives in varying conditions of light, which is not true of painting. But detractors of the design have contended that the proposed method of bringing natural light into the museum will not work because the passive light that hits the building’s north-facing façade won’t flow into the galleries, as its architects proposed. Kyle Lommen, project architect at Allied Works, countered by saying that “north light is the best—it’s natural indirect light—that’s why studios typically have north facing skylights. Direct light would have to be more controlled.”

Aaron Seward

TERRA COTTA TILE ON UNITIZED CURTAIN WALL FRAME
WIND LOAD ANCHOR
GALVANIZED STEEL SHEET
MINERAL FIBER INSULATION
LINE OF STRUCTURAL STEEL TUBE BEYOND
FORMED ALUMINUM SHEET
GLASS
CONCRETE WALL BEYOND
GLASS & ALUMINUM CURTAIN WALL

VAPOR BARRIER SYSTEM
The Louvre has awarded the design of its new satellite in Lens, France, to the team of architects that includes Tokyo-based SANAA, New York-based Imrey Culbert, and Paris-based landscape architects Mosbach Paysagistes. The team, in a partnership coordinated by Imrey Culbert, beat out Zaha Hadid and Rudy Ricciotti (who with Mario Bellini are designing the Islamic Gallery for the Louvre in Paris) to win the job.

For the past several years, the Louvre has entertained proposals from towns wanting to host an extension of the museum, eventually settling on Lens in the north of France near Belgium, a largely blue-collar town with a good rail connection to Paris. By extending its Paris-based facilities, the Louvre is following in the footsteps of the Centre Georges Pompidou, which is building a satellite museum in Metz, designed by Shigeru Ban.

The $77 million facility, to be built on 153 acres of a former mining site, will be a series of seven interconnected glass and aluminum pavilions, each roughly 82 feet wide by 300 feet long, according to Tim Culbert, a partner in Imrey Culbert. "The program was not about creating a new Bilbao," he said. "Over 60 percent of the brief addressed the art collection." The single-level complex will house a wide range of the Louvre's historic art collection, with the aim that the museum will be in a more open, fluid space. This led to the design of "a non-hierarchical building that's sympathetic to more traditional ways of showing art and sympathetic to the landscape," said Culbert, who is a fluent speaker of French and Japanese.

The firms were selected by a committee of nearly 30 members, comprised of Louvre administrators, local and national government administrators, along with a small number of architects, including Jean Nouvel. Currently on a fast track, with a 10-month design development window, the museum is expected to open in 2009.

Andrew Yang

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CIVIC-MINDED ARCHITECTS BRING IMPROVEMENTS TO CHINATOWN’S STREETS

Hester Street Collaborative’s outreach tactics are targeting the street. In 2004, the nonprofit design group joined a coalition to spruce up Allen and Pike streets, which run from Houston Street through Chinatown to the East River. In coming weeks, the collaborative—with the research of local teens—will create street signs honoring immigrants for Allen and Pike’s midblock malls.

The street sign project brings new exposure for Hester Street Collaborative’s nonprofit design group joined a coalition to expose Hester Street Collaborative’s outreach projects in its community. Architects Morgan and Mark Turkel, Yale classmates and principals of Leroy Street Studio, started the collaborative in 2001, when they moved their firm to Hester Street in Chinatown. The group’s first project, still in process, is aimed at improving the campus and gardens of the neighboring I.S. 131. The nonprofit’s executive director Anne Frederick also helps teach art at school. Earlier this year, program coordinator Alex Gilliam started a summer internship program, engaging local students to address neglected neighborhood sites. Frederick hopes to the mock-ups of new Allen and Pike Street signs (which may be cloth banners or metal) to engage public feedback.

This effort emerged from the architects’ frustration with the nature of community development in Chinatown. In 2004, Frederick joined United Neighborhoods To Revitalize Allen and Pike Streets (UNRAP), created by social service agency Asian Americans for Equality (IAAFE) after extensive public outreach on design questions. "There’s no compelling design aesthetic for Chinatown," explained Robert Weber, AAFE’s policy director. Many civic groups sought to glamorize the Allen-Pike corridor, and AAFE created UNRAP to pool political strength. But according to Frederick, city bureaucrats muddled design options at a spring meeting. “They said, ‘Do you want high density or low density,’” she recalled. These terms fell flat with residents, many of whom speak little English.

Hester Street’s four summer interns sought community input by handing out postcards at AAFE’s street fair in August. But they drew blank stares. “Having compelling visuals was not enough,” said Frederick. “To engage the public you need larger strategies.”

So interns William Chung and Dominick Freeman, who both graduated from high school in June, concocted a board game called Bad Design Darts. “Targets would be areas that seem unlikely,” explained Chung, who’s now enrolled at the Fashion Institute of Technology. “Participants would throw at the targets and it would be like a survey.”

Frederick and Gilliam hope to adopt some of their interns’ tactics for subsequent community engagement efforts. “It’ll be great to use Bad Design Darts to pull people off the street and ask, ‘What’s wrong with this site?’” said Frederick.

The design of the Allen-Pike signs remains uncertain, pending student input and public response. “Each student [in our art program] is submitting a sign,” said I.S. 131 art teacher Alison Plump. “Anne’s going to have to do a lot of filtering to figure out what’s important to the larger community.”

Frederick is coordinating an advisory board of civic leaders to vet design suggestions. She hopes to dispense a public ballot before mid-November. Advisors would vote on a design strategy in December. ALEC APPELBAUM

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Antoine Predock. The other architects included architects Toshiko Mori, Juergen Riehm, Frederic Schwartz, Andrea Blum, Paul Auster, Robert Paxton, Robert Redford, Ornette Coleman, Richard Meier, architect of Herman Miller’s iconic Aeron Chair, and Boym Partners, which has created works for Alesii, Vitra, and Swatch, were passed over in favor of Burt Rutan, designer of the first aircraft to fly around the world nonstop and the first privately manned spacecraft. Rutan’s achievements are not in question, but his engineering triumphs seem out of place alongside chairs and tableware. The museum should consider adding a new category, for engineering or transportation design. Despite the appeal of the dramatic “And the winner is...” moment, the notion of finalists is odd. Unlike the Academy Awards, which honors specific projects and performances, the National Design Awards seem to assess career accomplishments. The other half of the program’s awards are on the right track: Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley earned the Design Patron Award for his commitment to sustainable development and little-known Sergio Palleroni of the Center for Sustainable Development at the University of Texas was bestowed Special Jury Commendation for his design/build studio devoted to bringing resource-efficient construction and design skills to marginalized communities around the world. And Eva Zeisel was given the Lifetime Achievement Award. In the evening’s highlight, the elegant 90-year-old designer, who didn’t hesitate to smack a malfunctioning microphone, advised her standing-ovation crowd, “Designing means having a good time, copying what’s in your head, in the air, what you see. What else can I say? I wish you all a long and productive life.”


In August, the Boston Society of Architects and AIA New York Chapter jointly awarded the Boston architecture firm Arrowstreet Inc. the K-12 Honor Award for Design Excellence and the Sustainable Design Award for their Artists for Humanity EpiCenter in Boston.

On September 29, the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced 22 winners of its National Preservation Awards, including Cass Gilbert’s 1905 Essex County Courthouse (Newark), the Normandy style 1933 Stone Barns Center (Pocantico Hills), and Ralph Walker’s 1926 Verizon Central Office Building, formerly the Barclay-Vesey Building (Manhattan).

In September, the French Order of Arts and Letters, an organization dedicated to recognizing achievements in the arts and literature, named the recipients of its biannually awarded medal. Several prominent Americans were among the honorees, including writer Paul Auster, artist Andrea Blum, musician Ornette Coleman, singer Marilyn Horne, architect Richard Meier, historian Robert Paxton, actor Robert Redford, actress Meryl Streep.

On October 6, Benjamin Moore inaugurated its Hue Awards, recognizing innovative color usage in architecture and design and awarding Steven Holl with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Other honorees included Drake Design Associates for residential interiors, Daniel Welland Architect for residential exteriors, Rockwell Group for contract exteriors, and Clive Wilkinson Architects for contract interiors.

The prestigious 17th Annual Praemium Imperiale Arts Laureates were announced on October 7. The award, created in 1989 by the Japan Art Association, recognizes lifetime achievement in the arts, in categories not recognized by the Nobel Prizes. Carrying a prize of $15 million ($12 million), the awards went to Yoshio Taniguchi (architecture), Issey Miyake (sculpture), Robert Ryman (painting), Merce Cunningham (theater/film), and Martha Argerich (music).
Edmund Bacon Dies at 95

One of the few urban planners who is credited for single-handedly transforming the landscape of a major American city in the 20th century, Philadelphia's Edmund N. Bacon, died on October 14 at the age of 95. Bacon served as executive director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission from 1949 to 1970, and his planning skillfully combined redevelopment and preservation for Society Hill, Penn's Landing, and Independence Mall. His face graced the cover of The American Institute of Architects' magazine, November 1964 issue for a story on urban renewal. Although he retired from his official post 35 years ago, his influence on urban planning lasted. His 1967 book, Design of Cities, is a classic planning text in which Bacon ties his work in Philadelphia to the history of great urbanism with great clarity.

Alexander Garvin, a former vice president at the L MDC, was a friend of Bacon in the last decade. Describing him as "the most extraordinary planner of the 20th century," Garvin noted, "he had a vision and legacy. That same year, Bacon donated his personal collection of books to Philadelphia's Charter High School for Architecture + Design, which named its library after him. John Carmeci

Bacon is survived by six children, including his son Kevin, the actor. The sometimes cranky, irascible Bacon remained free-wheeling in his commentary on urban planning in recent decades. In 2002, he was footloose on a skateboard in Philadelphia's LOVE Park, which he designed in 1932, to protest the park's ban on skateboarders. The Ed Bacon Foundation (www.edbacon.com) was launched in 2004 to advance his vision and legacy. That same year, Bacon donated his personal collection of books to Philadelphia's Charter High School for Architecture + Design, which named its library after him.

Suburban Stickering Subverts Adverts

Ads are so ubiquitous on New York City streets—shouting from buildings, street furniture, subways, and taxis—that many of us just tune them out. Freelance art director Ji Lee has devised a way for New Yorkers to talk back. "The bubbles are a platform for people to express themselves," said Lee.

For the Bubble Project, Lee designed a cartoonlike thought bubble sticker that he places on advertisements he passes by. Some time later, he'll revisit the bubble, which inevitably have been filled with a caption of some fellow citizen's devising. He then photographs the revised advertisements. The bubbles grew out of a project Lee developed for a client four years ago. The goal was to come up with a fun way for parents and children to leave one another notes around the house. This strategy was ultimately rejected but Lee decided to take the concept to the streets. Said Lee, "There are so many ads, and so many of them are boring, that I wanted to transform them into something imaginative. Also, by combating the media bombardment with this outlet for the public, I am essentially balancing out the media bombardment with this outlet for the public, I am essentially balancing out my work in advertising."

In the scribbles one regularly sees on advertisements around the city, the vulgarians are prominent. But it was the more social and political commentary that inspired Lee to keep posting stickers. "I was very surprised by the depth and complexity of the content," Everything from accusations of clandestine involvement of the Bush government in 9/11 to tart commentary on consumerism has shown up on bubbles Lee has photographed. They serve as a form of indirect communication among observers, soap boxes, and creative poster boards without being abrasive.

Last month the Bubble Project launched its own website where visitors can read its manifesto, view a catalogue of message bubbles, and even download a template to start pasting their own bubbles. By the end of October, the Bubble Project website will begin selling bubble stickers at cost for distribution. A book about the project is scheduled for release next summer. To find out more or to get involved in the bubble project, go to www.thebubbleproject.com. Note the caveat on the website that reminds interested parties that placing bubbles on public or private property is illegal and engaged in at the user's own risk.

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The dense residential urban fabric of Manhattan and Brooklyn was historically defined as much by the blocks of town houses as by the voids between them—the unbuilt lots that until very recently were a prominent part of the streetscape. Their constricted sites have long made town houses an absurd economic proposition. Multifamily residences have obvious economies of scale and higher returns. Moreover, building a town house has its unique problems in New York: With no staging area for contractors and the need for expensive underpinning of the neighbor's foundations, prices can range from $500 to $1,500 per square foot. But the phenomenal rise of real estate prices and ability to flip even small properties (this, the town of million-dollar studios), it has become economically feasible to build on these empty parcels. With the city's small infill lots being snapped up at unparalleled pace, the experience of walking in the city has been forever changed in a relatively short period of time.

The town house as a building type in fact reaches back to Crete and Pompeii, a city built almost entirely of these narrow-fronted single-family structures. Le Corbusier describes them in great detail in his 1923 Towards a New Architecture. He admired them for the great variety of space and light they allowed within a standardized plan, which fit in with his theories about the potential industrialization of housing, and the relationship of the part to the whole in the house and the city. Leon Battista Alberti and Andrea Palladio also wrote at length about town houses, and in his 1516 socialist tract Utopia, Renaissance scholar Sir Thomas More described his ideal city Amaurote as composed of town houses: "The houses be of fair and gorgeous building, and on the street side they stand joined together in a long row through the whole street without any partition or separation."

As a former Dutch colony, New York City inherited the town house type originally from Amsterdam, though the local variations derive equally from London precedents. The stoop is of Dutch origin, while the common half-level dropped floor is drawn from the London type. These references persisted—perhaps too persistently. From the massive construction of brownstones and classical townhouses in New York in the late 19th and early 20th century, one can count one hand the number of modernist takes on the town house. There's the glass block front of the Lescaze House of 1937 on the Upper East Side; the lacy stone façade of Edward Durrell Stone's own uptown house; George Nelson's... continued on page 14

TOWN HOUSE
UPPER EAST SIDE, MANHATTAN
ALEXANDER GORLIN ARCHITECTS

Unlike other urban infill projects that build to the lot line, this jewel-box of a house, which occupies a 25-by-100-foot lot on the Upper East Side, is set back 25 feet from the street. It actually occupies the footprint of a previous structure, a 1958 two-story modernist town house to which architect Alexander Gorlin wanted to pay respect. He also preserved the glazing and mullion rhythm of the original ground-floor façade, extending them upward, to the renovated second floor and a newly added third floor. "In the original house"—sandwiched by two big apartment buildings—"it got darker as you went up," said Gorlin. He made the quite natural decision to glaze both front and rear elevations, and also funnelled light through the home via a skylight-topped open staircase. Further, he floored the hallway of the top level with glass blocks, which allow light to penetrate below.

Gorlin converted the basement into a children's playroom, reserving the entrance level for spaces for entertaining—kitchen, dining, and living room. Private bedrooms fill the second floor and the top floor contains a guest room, office, and an acoustically isolated media room that opens to a terrace. "The husband is in the music business so the media room is the ultimate space in the house," explained Gorlin.

CATHY LANG HO

The second floor plan

The third floor plan
FEIFER-CHUN RESIDENCE
BOERUM HILL, BROOKLYN
TINA MANIS

The clients of this ground-up infill house wanted "a suburban house in an urban setting," said New York architect Tina Manis. They wanted a garage and a big backyard. But they also wanted a rental unit and separate entrances. The challenge for Manis, formerly a project manager at OMA who broke off on her own five years ago, was to design a structure that allowed all the home's future inhabitants to have open views and space as well as privacy. The first two floors are the owners' unit, with a second-floor terrace that overlooks their backyard. The rental unit has its own street entrance, leading to the top floor and a terrace facing the street. "Basically, they want the rental to be invisible," said Manis.

In suburban style, the façade is wood-sided, though in this case, the elegant cedar-birch panels are arranged in alternating widths and patterns, forming a moiré pattern. The different textures create a screen (left, top) that cleverly hides the owner's entrance, the garage door, and the tenant's entrance. The project features an all-glass back façade (left, below) that opens to their backyard.

ANDREW YANG

TOWN HOUSE
FAR WEST VILLAGE, MANHATTAN
MATTHEW BAIRD ARCHITECTS

In addition to being architect Matthew Baird's first ground-up building, this 5,000-square-feet West Village townhouse also has the distinction of being the first single-family home built in the district in the last 14 years. A former architect at Tod Williams Billie Tsien Associates, Baird used a single, prefabricated 40-foot-tall steel plate to create a sense of privacy within the building—a feature not unlike the massive metal-alloy façade employed at Williams and Tsien's Museum of American Folk Art. Inside, the house, which sits on a 20-by-60-foot lot, features such striking spaces as terrace and kitchen that are completely open to each other, a double-height media room, and plenty of skylights. The project is both forcefully modern and context-appropriate, in scale and even material (Baird argues that the house's industrial feel relates to the surrounding Meatpacking District), despite neighbors' initial disapproval of the project. AY
This 19,000-square-foot residential conversion includes an existing five-story 19th-century commercial loft building and an adjacent narrow, vacant 1,615-square-foot lot. "We wanted to acknowledge the recent history of the site in our design," noted George Schefferdecker, a principal of BKSK Architects. "Having something transparent is a reminder of that long-standing gap in the city fabric." The infill structure has a glass and aluminum façade. Due to current zoning laws, it is only 45 feet deep—much shallower than the adjacent building to which it has been attached. With the street appearance of two separate buildings, in fact, the new structure is united, with individual apartments occupying full floors. The new, glazed half is open in plan, housing the kitchen, dining, and living room spaces. Bathrooms, bedrooms, and storage spaces are housed in the more closed existing structure. The new, enlarged ground-floor is now available for lease to one or two commercial tenants while a two-story penthouse was added to the twin structures. AARON SEWARD
Williamsburg’s south side. For all intents and purposes, it is a new building. Standard Architects developed a scheme in which three very distinct spaces—a ground-floor working studio and garage, and second-floor private studio, and a third-floor apartment—are linked by dramatic, skylight-lit stair that runs up diagonally along the side of the three spaces. "We had to sacrifice a little bit of floor space, but Tara was really enthusiastic about the idea of the single stair," explained principal John Conaty. When the guts and stripped remains included built projects and those approved for construction—from which judges Julie Eisenberg, Adele Nuade Santos, and Michael Poytak selected nine awards and five citations. The New York AIA housing committee hasn't held an awards program since 1981, said McCullar, for unexplained reasons. And somehow with the Design Awards program, "housing got lost in the shuffle," he recounted. In the last few years, New York architects have been invited to submit to the Boston Society of Architects (BSA)'s biennial housing awards. "But with all of the recent zoning changes in New York, such as the Greenpoint waterfront," said McCullar, there could not be a more opportune time to bring local housing efforts to the forefront. Shaun Donovan, commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and a guest speaker at the October 17 awards ceremony, drove McCullar's point home when he stated, "Since 1990, New York City has added more people than the population of Boston," creating an unprecedented need for affordable housing. Donovan lauded such projects as the Schermerhorn House, Polshek Partnership’s citation-winning, glass-faced supportive housing project for Common Ground Community, which brings luxuriously light-filled interior spaces to a mix of low-income and formerly homeless residents. Donovan’s praise was tempered, however, by a more critical take on some new typologies as far as the Schermerhorn House, Polshek Partnership to Richard Meier’s exclusive Charles Street tower. Yet the focus of the judges, and of the AIA New York Chapter housing committee behind the awards, was clearly on the unplanned side of the shelter spectrum: affordable housing.

Spearheaded by housing committee chair James McCullar, the nascent program drew 102 entries—including built projects and those approved for construction—from which judges Julie Eisenberg, Adele Naude Santos, and Michael Poytak selected nine awards and five citations. The New York AIA housing committee hasn’t held an awards program since 1981, said McCullar, for unexplained reasons. And somehow with the Design Awards program, “housing got lost in the shuffle,” he recounted. In the last few years, New York architects have been invited to submit to the Boston Society of Architects (BSA)’s biennial housing awards. “[But] with all of the recent zoning changes in New York, such as the Greenpoint waterfront,” said McCullar, there could not be a more opportune time to bring local housing efforts to the forefront. Shaun Donovan, commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and a guest speaker at the October 17 awards ceremony, drove McCullar’s point home when he stated, “Since 1990, New York City has added more people than the population of Boston,” creating an unprecedented need for affordable housing. Donovan lauded such projects as the Schermerhorn House, Polshek Partnership’s citation-winning, glass-faced supportive housing project for Common Ground Community, which brings luxuriously light-filled interior spaces to a mix of low-income and formerly homeless residents. Donovan’s praise was tempered, however, by a more critical take on some new typologies as far as the Schermerhorn House, Polshek Partnership to Richard Meier’s exclusive Charles Street tower. Yet the focus of the judges, and of the AIA New York Chapter housing committee behind the awards, was clearly on the unplanned side of the shelter spectrum: affordable housing.

"I don't expect this project to be published in the magazines," said architect Jeffrey Murphy of his firm Murphy Burnham & Buttrick's award-winning project. His sentiment sums up that of many architects who submitted to the AIA New York Chapter 2005 Housing Design Awards. Displayed in an exhibition at the Center for Architecture and titled Everything Housing: From Homeless Shelters to Luxury Living (open through December 3), the awards span the gamut—from a supportive housing development in Brooklyn by Polshek Partnership to Richard Meier’s exclusive Charles Street tower. Yet the focus of the judges, and of the AIA New York Chapter housing committee behind the awards, was clearly on the unplanned side of the shelter spectrum: affordable housing.

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In 1926, Le Corbusier designed these town houses as respectful neighbors of the urban street wall. On the interior, however, all hell breaks loose, following the French tradition of the asymmetrical plan. The Maison d'Enfant House and Studio (Paris, 1922), Maisons Guiette (Anvers, 1926), Maison M. Cook (Boulogne-sur-Seine, 1926), and Maison Planex (Paris, 1927)—are also very important. Despite his loathing for the street and urban life in general, Le Corbusier designed town houses that explored his Viennese contemporary Sigmund Freud's idea about the prurient, that the "dream has a façade like a house." The Tristan Tzara House in Paris of 1926 contrasts a symmetrical façade with a labyrinthine interior of stairs, different levels, volumes and materials. Even the Schroeder House by Gerrit Rietveld in Utrecht of 1923, one of the seminal houses of the 20th century, is really a town house. At the end of a block of traditional Dutch houses, it takes the same rhythmic dimensions and explodes into a series of planes, De Stijl primary colors, and interior sliding panels—containing lessons that have been rediscovered time and again by contemporary architects.

The New York town houses depicted here show the latest exploration of the ancient building type that is at once inflexible in its constricted frame, generous with opportunities in section, street expression, and circulation, and rich with challenges in lighting, budget, and construction. ALEXANDER GORLIN, FAIA, IS THE PRINCIPAL OF ALEXANDER GORLIN ARCHITECTS. HE IS THE AUTHOR OF CREATING THE NEW AMERICAN TOWN HOUSE (RIZZOLI, 2005).

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Grahame Shane, author of
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AIA-NEW YORK 2005 HOUSING DESIGN AWARDS continued from page 13

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER 2, 2005

HOUSING IN TOWN continued from page 10 streamlined Fairchild House of 1941 at 17 East 65th Street; Philip Johnson's Messian Rockefeller Guest House of 1956, in Midtown; and Morris Lapidus' home and office at 256 East 29th Street, of 1959. The great breakthrough in modern town houses in New York are the ones by Paul Rudolph, primarily his own mirrored extravaganza, designed in 1972, overlooking the East River.

All these houses owe a great debt not only to the modern movement but to a number of houses that are—but almost never referred to—as town houses. Sir John Soane's own London town house—actually three linked houses, built from 1792 to 1812—is one of the best examples. On the exterior it is stately and reticent; inside the house is an archeology of the architect's mind, exploring the house as the site of life and death with a sarcophagus and dome of heaven above. His architectural innovations have inspired Philip Johnson and others for their insight into the town house typology. Le Corbusier's series of town houses of the 1920s—the Ozénfant House and Studio (Paris, 1922), Maisons Guiette (Amvers, 1926), Maison M. Cook (Boulogne-sur-Seine, 1926), and Maison Planex (Paris, 1927)—are also very important. Despite his loathing for the street and urban life in general, Le Corbusier designed these town houses as respectful neighbors of the urban street wall. On the interior, however, all hell breaks loose, following the French tradition of the asymmetrical planning of the hotel particular. The masterpiece of the modern town house is without a doubt the Maison de Verre, designed by Pierre Chareau and Bernard Bijvoet in 1931 for the French gynecologist Dr. Dalsace. It is an obsessive exploration of the relationship between technology and the sensual domestic interior. Its striking translucent glass block facade provides privacy and recalls Adolf Loos' dictum that "a cultivated man does not look out the window...It is only there to let light in, not let the gaze pass through." On the interior, industrial details of structural steel bolted columns are surrounded by articulated wood cabinets framed by wrought iron and steel on a rubber tile floor. Its unlikely juxtapositions of materials has provided a model for the town house interior for over 75 years.

Loos himself designed numerous town houses that explored his Viennese contemporary Sigmund Freud's idea about the prurient, that the "dream has a façade like a house." The Tristan Tzara House in Paris of 1926 contrasts a symmetrical façade with a labyrinthine interior of stairs, different levels, volumes and materials. Even the Schroeder House by Gerrit Rietveld in Utrecht of 1923, one of the seminal houses of the 20th century, is really a town house. At the end of a block of traditional Dutch houses, it takes the same rhythmic dimensions and explodes into a series of planes, De Stijl primary colors, and interior sliding panels—containing lessons that have been rediscovered time and again by contemporary architects.

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DIARY

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER 2, 2005

WEDNESDAY 2
LECTURES
Maya Lin
6:30 p.m.
Asia Society
726 Park Ave.
wvw.asiasociety.org

Rafael Munoz
On Arbitrariness in Architecture
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

THURSDAY 3
LECTURES
Jacqueline T. Robertson
Architecture and the Politics of Design
6:00 p.m.
City College
Shepard Hall
Convent Ave. and 138th St.
www.ccny.cuny.edu

Helen Stengelrand
Reinhard Kroff
A New Wave in Norwegian Architecture
6:30 p.m.
Scandinavia House
58 Park Ave.
www.scandinaviabhouse.org

Glenn Murcutt
Sustainability: A Cop-out for Good Design?
6:30 p.m.
Yale School of Architecture
Hastings Hall
180 York St., New Haven
www.arch.yale.edu

SYMPOSIUM
Global vs. Local: Critical Sustainability in Architecture and Urban Form
Hal Foster, Stan Allan, Juhani Pallasmaa, et al.
Rockefeller University
Caspar Hall
1230 York Ave.
www.arch.aae.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Designing the Taxi
Parsons the New School for Design
2 West 13th St.
www.parsons.edu

FRIDAY 4
LECTURES
John Zukowski
Building for Space Travel
3:00 p.m.
Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum
West 46th St. and 12th Ave.
www.intrepidmuseum.org

Peter Eisenman, Leon Krier
Two Ideologies
6:30 p.m.
Institute of Classical Architecture
20 West 44th St.
www.classicist.org

SYMPOSIUM
Fabricating Identity
Gwen Wright, Diane Favro, et al.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.bwaf.org

SATURDAY 5
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Hans Haake
State of the Union
Paula Cooper Gallery
534 West 21st Street
www.paulacoopergallery.com

MONDAY 7
LECTURES
Avis Berman
Edward Hopper's New York
6:30 p.m.
Cooper Union
Great Hall
7 East 7th St.
www.cooper.edu

Neil Denari
Formographies
6:30 p.m.
Yale School of Architecture
Hastings Hall
180 York St., New Haven
www.arch.yale.edu

TUESDAY 8
LECTURES
Alessandro Camini
Art Before the Abyss: Preserving our East Village Heritage
6:30 p.m.
New York University
Deutches Haus
42 Washington Mews
www.nyu.edu

Susan Yelich, Huda
Smithshahjan, Abi Farès
Global Issues in Design and Visuality
6:00 p.m.
Parsons the New School for Design
Tishman Auditorium
66 West 12th St.
www.parsons.edu

WEDNESDAY 9
LECTURES
Vincente Guallart
Microgeographies
6:00 p.m.
Princeton School of Architecture
Betts Auditorium
www.princeton.edu/-soa

Eva Zeisel
6:00 p.m.
Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
www.ndm.si.edu

Jeffrey Kipnis
How I See Things, at the moment
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EVENT
Modernism: A Century of Style and Design
6:00 p.m.
Park Avenue Armory
643 Park Ave.
www.brooklynmuseum.org

LECTURES
Tom Angotti, Daniel Golstein, et al.
Planning Forum: Atlantic Yards
8:30 a.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

Calvin Tsao
6:15 p.m.
Parsons the New School for Design
25 East 13th St.
www.parsons.edu

Meesin Yoon, Alvin Lucier,
Joel Sanders, Ben Rubin,
Karen Van Lengen
Architecture and Sounds
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

Flornmae McCarron-Gates,
Jordan Kim
Excavating the Vocabulary of Landscape
6:30 p.m.
Yale School of Architecture
Hastings Hall
180 York St., New Haven
www.arch.yale.edu

Exhibition Opening
Reinhard Kropf
1071 5th Ave.
www.mas.org

TUESDAY 15
LECTURE
Elisabetta Terragni
The Beauty of Leftovers
6:30 p.m.
Steelcase
4 Columbus Cir.
www.nyft.org

SYMPOSIUM
Innovation: Shaping the Future of Design and Construction
McGraw-Hill
1221 Ave. of the Americas
www.construction.com

TRADE SHOW
Build Boston
Seaport World Trade Center
200 Seaport Blvd., Boston
www.buildboston.com

WEDNESDAY 16
LECTURE
Michael Bell
Binoocular House
6:00 p.m.
Princeton School of Architecture
Betts Auditorium
www.princeton.edu/-soa

The Design Workshop:
Seven Years of Design
Build at Parsons
Parsons the New School for Design
Aronson Galleries
66 5th Ave.
www.parsons.edu

THURSDAY 17
LECTURES
Graham Savage,
Diana Agrest, et al.
Architecture and Cities:
Recombobnent Urbanism
6:30 p.m.
Cooper Union
7 East 7th St.
www.arch.aae.org

Arne Collins Goodyear
Modernism on High:
The Impact of the Airplane on Art of the 20th Century
7:00 p.m.
Pratt Manhattan Gallery
144 West 14th St.
www.pratt.edu

SYMPOSIUM
Bernard Tschumi, et al.
The Politics of Design
Van Alen Institute
30 West 22nd St., 6th Fl.
www.vanalen.org
Princeton University
212 Robertson Hall,
Princeton
www.princeton.edu/-soa

FRIDAY 18
LECTURE
Wilbert Hasbroek,
John Zukowski
The Chicago Art Club
6:30 p.m.
Municipal Art Society
487 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

MONDAY 21
LECTURE
Peter Zumthor,
Olafur Eliasson
Architecture and Art:
Architecture as Platform
Cooper Union
Great Hall
7 East 7th St.
www.cooper.edu

TRANSCENDING TYPE
Yale School of Architecture. 180 York Street, New Haven November 14 to February 3

TRANSCENDING TYPE
Yale School of Architecture's newest exhibition, shows how six American architectural firms define modern building types. Originally presented in the U.S. Pavilion the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennale, which was showcased Metamorph, the show has jumped the puddle to Yale. Curated by the editors of Architectural Record, Transcending Type will feature drawings, digital media, and three-dimensional installations that provide new takes on public architecture, such as shopping centers, sports arenas, and parking garages. One project, a film by New York-based firm Reiser + Umemoto, shows a bridge that is placed in both real and fictional settings, constantly assuming new characteristics. In response to Venice's constant flooding, young California-based Predock, Frane Architects suspended nearly 6,000 green and white filament from the ceiling to evoke the sensation of a sinking city. Works by Lewis-Tsurumaki-Lewis, Kolman McDonald, George Yu, and StudioGang also appeared in the Biennale and will be on display at Yale.

LIST YOUR EVENT AT DIARY@ARCHPAPER.COM

DESIGNING THE TAXI
Parsons the New School for Design, 2 West 13th Street
November 3 to January 15

Last spring, Parsons the New School for Design and the Design Trust for Public Space sponsored a public program based on improving the taxicabs. This month, the responses are on view at Parsons along with a full-scale model of a city street with a mock traffic jam showcasing past, present, and future cabs. Design and architecture firms such as Bierse + Seek, IIDE, WeiLo + Yoes, Pentagram, and KFWOLVE submitted a range of entries that incorporate energy efficiency, handicapped accessibility, bright LED displays, a real-time map of the cab's route, glass roofs, and systems of hailing a taxi at the push of a cell phone button. New York-based technology designer Sigi Moedinger of Antoni Design presented a cab (pictued above that simplifies the driver/passenger interface with clearer signage, improved safety, navigation systems, and rear display panels. The accompanying catalogue, published by the Design Trust, offers an in-depth look at each project.

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The Global Housing Question

Four Conversations: The Columbia Housing Studio and New York City
Columbia University GSAPP, Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall
October 10

At the daylong conference Four Conversations: The Columbia Housing Studio and New York City, the central focus of discussions about the possibility of critical practice (or lack thereof) for architects who hope to provide living spaces for society as a whole rather than a small number of rich clients. In the midst of this ever-changing context, the symposium's organizers made an understandable decision to invite—almost exclusively—those who have either taught or studied in the Columbia Housing Studio. This led to a day of informative presentations on the work of students and graduates in New York and elsewhere, as well as a rich account on the history of housing in New York City, the intricate relations between real estate and design, and the need to reimagine the architect's role in housing production. But the conference aimed for more. In his introductory speech, Michael Bell, the coordinator of the Housing Studio, stated that the intention was to "conceptualize from a global lens, to see New York as a palimpsest of the world where one can understand global poverty and the market." This sounded promising indeed, and yet, despite Sumila Gulyan’s presentation "Housing: The Masses and a Post-ethnic City," the global aspect remained a bit undercooked part of the symposium, addressed only by some introductory comments on the world’s increasing housing demand, and by noting the fact that slums and illegal settlements take up more than 50 percent of the housing stock in fast-growing cities around the world. Moreover, dated terms, and Orientalist and Western missionary habits, still surfaced; this textured the debate with implications that the Third World is waiting for our help, or that housing can provide local resistance to the global. It could be overlooked if only it did not hint at a subconscious but persistent tendency to imagine the U.S. as the world’s great shaping force. Above all, does New York really give the best perspective to learn and discover critical strategies for the housing demand of the world at large? In their presentations, Richard Plunz and Lance Freeman acknowledged the relative failure of affordable housing in the U.S. Moreover, once the discussions brought up the question whether or not housing is a human right, one could not help remember that, when the United Nations tried to recognize housing officially as a universal human right in the 1995 International Habitat for Humanity meeting, only the U.S. resisted the proposal since this would have put extreme financial burden on the government to provide housing for its own poor.

It is risky (if respectable) for an Ivy League school to address affordable housing, since it easily stirs up patronizing comments about how the rest of the world—or the rest of the world—should live. Fortunately, Kenneth Frampton explicitly addressed this risk in his introductory remarks by stressing the need to approach housing in a subtle way, without either imposing or being totally absorbed by the mass-taste and trends. He cited Alvar Aalto as an architect who successfully walked that line.

Rather than extending New York, or even the Columbia Housing Studio to the rest of the world, how could one think of expanding the studio to include ideas and examples from around the world? Still, the conference was a well-conceived attempt to bring to the fore some urgent and meaningful questions. Housing, once again, proves to be one of the most pressing issues in architecture and in the world at large.

ARCHITECT ESRA ARACAN IS A POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW AND CORE LECTURER AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. SHE ALSO TEACHES GRADUATE SEMINARS AT PARSONS NEW SCHOOL OF DESIGN.
Robert Smithson and Floating Island
Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Ave
Closed October 23

Odd Lots: Revisiting
Gordon Matta-Clark's Fake Estates
Queens Museum of Art
New York City Building
Flushing Meadows: Corona Park
Through January 22
White Columns
320 West 13th Street
Closed October 15

Coincidental or not? This fall, works by Robert Smithson and Gordon Matta-Clark, which were never completed during their lives, have been realized. Although organized separately, the simultaneous presentation of Smithson’s Floating Island and Gordon Matta-Clark’s Fake Estates provided a rare opportunity to understand the two artists and their influence on current discourse about public space. Floating Island was created in conjunction with a major retrospective of Smithson’s work at the Whitney Museum. Curated by Eugenie Tsil of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (where it was first shown), the exhibition successfully identifies the main themes in the body of paintings, drawings, work on paper, essays, photographs, objects, and films Smithson made from 1955 until his 1973 death in an airplane crash at the age of 35. Although known for pioneering earthworks, Smithson’s early projects were more portable, or made for gallery settings. However, his fascination with the landscape is evident in early proposals for projects such as the conceptual drawing Proposal for a Monument in Antarctica (1966), in which he depicts a cubic form set within the icy landscape. Mirror Displacement (Cayuga Salt Mine Project) from 1969 is an attempt to bring the outside indoors. Mounds of salt rock are installed in a straight line and overlaid with square mirrored tiles that reflect the material and the context in which they are placed, bringing the two into play with one another. The exhibition provides a comprehensive background for Smithson’s work, yet his monumental in-situ works remain his trademark. These include his iconic 1,500-foot-long Spiral Jetty (1970), a curvilinear form made from salt-crusted rocks embedded in the Great Salt Lake in Utah, and Broken Circle and Spiral Hill, two works he created in Emmens in the Netherlands for the Sonsbeek Festival in 1971.

Smithson borrows his forms from shapes found in nature: the curve of a landscape, the mound of a hill, the irregular patterns of a slowly eroding coastline. Yet his works also give back—they make us look again at our surroundings and find beauty in unexpected places, materials and forms. A cliché perhaps, as good art always has the ability to prompt reexamination, yet I never tire of looking at footage of a hill, the irregular patterns of a landscape, the mound of a landscape, the mound.

Smithson worked on his projects with a ritualistic fervor and created an immense quantity of sketches, paintings, drawings, and plans. It is thanks to these that it was possible to realize Floating Island.

Although not drawn to scale and roughly worked out, they provided the blueprint for this project, his ode to Manhattan. Thirty years after Smithson tried unsuccessfully to raise the funds and get permission to float an island of trees and shrubs around Manhattan, a group of institutions—including the nonprofit public arts organization Minetta Brook, the Whitney Museum, the Estate of Robert Smithson, James Cohan Gallery, and Smithson’s widow Nancy Holt—all worked together to make the project happen. The project was developed by the landscape architect Diana Balmori and Nat Oppenheimer, an engineer. Last year, Christo and Jeanne-Claude also made headlines when they realized The Gates, a project conceived thirty years before. Compared to their $21 million venture, Floating Island cost a mere $200,000. In Manhattan, where we have become used to seeing floating cities in the form of cruise ships that compete with the scale of skyscrapers, Floating Island might seem like a futile gesture. But the hundreds of people that gathered on Pier 46 in the West Village on September 17 to witness this floating oasis of trees, rocks, shrubs and grass proved that you don’t always need to make the biggest splash to create a ripple effect.

Like Smithson, who grew up in sight of Manhattan in New Jersey, Gordon Matta-Clark was an artist of the city and his work pays homage to the detritus of everyday urban life. He too died at the age of 35, in 1978. A trained architect, Matta-Clark is best known for his building cuts such as Pier In/Out (1975) and Day’s End (1975). Illegally entering the warehouses, he laboriously sliced holes through them, opening up views of the water and allowing light to stream in. Fake Estates, a project that recently came to light, is a smaller scale work but it further illustrates Matta-Clark’s insatiable curiosity with the urban frame and his desire to expose the mechanisms

The creative services agency Art + Commerce, best known for its representation of provocative photographers such as Annie Leibovitz, Steve Meisel, and Ellen von Unwerth, has organized its second annual Festival of Emerging Photographers. With 150 works by 24 budding artists, all based in the tri-state area, the exhibition showcases photography that is both conceptually driven and broadly appealing. Accessibility is important to the organizer Jim Moffat, which is part of the reason the show is sited in a facility—a grand, brick tobacco warehouse—that’s in a public park.

Most of the works have a documentary feel, which is likely to resonate well with the general public. A dominant feature among the varied works is an impulse to capture the bizarre in sensuous colors and disciplined compositions. Beauty is revealed in an eclectic mix of subjects, from animal agriculture (Samantha Bass) to male vulnerability (Jesse Burke), isolated urban encounter (Matthew Conners), and transgender lifestyle (Cass Bird). One photographer, Shai Kremer, focuses on roads in Israel (where he is from) and Palestine, articulating cultural theorist Paul Virilio’s theory that “possession of territory is not primarily about laws and contracts, but foremost a matter of movement and circulation.” In tranquil photographs of roads that divide and delineate the contested space between these two embattled lands, Kremer makes a poignant observation on conflict, describing it as a virile “infection” of the landscape.

REBECCA FUCHS IS AN EDITORIAL INTERN AT AR.

New Focus

Art + Commerce: 2005 Festival of Emerging Photographers
Tobacco Warehouse
Empire Fulton Ferry State Park,
DUMBO
Closed October 25
In our stressed-out age, have we all become neurotic? What are our fears? What makes us feel safe? What gives us psychological and emotional comfort? What gives us economic and ecological comfort? Will the designer be the new shrink? Fiona Raby, a London-based designer, addressed these and other questions in a recent lecture at Columbia University.

Blood, energy, electromagnetic waves, fashion models, genetically modified pets, and chickens were integral parts of Raby’s dark-humored presentation. Raby teaches at the Royal College of Art (RCA) and runs a design practice with her partner Anthony Dunne. The firm Dunne & Raby has worked within academia, museums and cultural institutions but also with industrial research labs. The pair has developed experimental design strategies in order to explore the social and cultural implications of new technologies on everyday life. Their work is featured in several publications and some of their designs are currently on view in the exhibition SAFE: Design Takes On Risk at the Museum of Modern Art.

Dunne & Raby’s work considers products as mediums. Objects embody social values and are also potential research instruments that permit us to trace how our habits evolve. In their 1996 Faraday Chair, Dunne & Raby tried to respond to a very contemporary “need”: In the last years, wireless technology has modified the concept of public space. We are constantly surrounded by radio frequencies and electromagnetic waves, so the designers wanted to create a space that protects us from these invisible threats. The prototype of the Faraday Chair is a rectangular transparent airtight case, a small version of a day bed. To dwell in this micro-shelter, one must be willing to not only use a snorkel to breathe but also to assume a fetal position. This technological womb exposes our vulnerabilities and perhaps some paranoia as well. Dunne & Raby’s Huggable Atomic Mushroom also responds to our fears: The bomb is exercised by turning it into a domestic toy—therapy through design.

How does a designer today deal with the complexity and contradictions that scientific and technological innovations raise? Many of the projects Raby presented in her lecture were based on the research of her former member that prompted Raby to smile. “We won’t have the possibility of choosing,” she replied. “There is no space for blind optimism about our future. The probability that we could buy an advanced DNA for our son or that we could design the perfect fiancé is perplexing. Will Harry meet Sally in the BioLand? Will everybody say I love you to his or her mushroom? We are anxious to find out.

Olympia Kaz is a New York-based architect. She was a junior curator in the architecture office of Triennale di Milano.

The Faraday Chair is a modern take on the daybed—an airtight, technological womb. The prototype of the Faraday Chair is a rectangular transparent airtight case, a small version of a day bed. To dwell in this micro-shelter, one must be willing to not only use a snorkel to breathe but also to assume a fetal position. This technological womb exposes our vulnerabilities and perhaps some paranoia as well. Dunne & Raby’s Huggable Atomic Mushroom also responds to our fears: The bomb is exercised by turning it into a domestic toy—therapy through design.

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**SAFETY NETS**

Fiona Raby

*Design for Fragile Personalities in Fragile Times*

Columbia University GSAPP

Economic Development

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

National Lighthouse Harbor Site, Staten Island

New York City Economic Development Corporation ("NYCEDC") is seeking proposals for the redevelopment of the National Lighthouse Harbor Site (the "Site") as a high-quality mixed-use development. Portions of the Site that are closest to the waterfront are available for long-term lease; the remaining majority of the Site is available for purchase. While existing buildings must be preserved, there are opportunities for new development on three areas within the Site.

Featuring outstanding views of the Manhattan skyline and the New York Harbor, this 10-acre waterfront property is located approximately 1/3 of a mile southeast of the Staten Island Ferry Terminal and is connected to the terminal via the St. George esplanade. Bay Street borders the Site to the west and Upper New York Bay to the northeast. Staten Island Borough Hall is located across Bay Street (at Borough Place) to the north of the Site.

The Site served as the center for lighthouse operations in the United States for over 100 years. The intent of the Request for Proposals is to reactivate this waterfront property with residential, retail and or commercial uses; to preserve the historic landmarked structures; and to incorporate plans for the National Lighthouse Museum.
In her latest work, Frente Feroz, the New York-based Peruvian artist Grimanesa Amoros has created a site-specific work that directs attention to a part of a building that typically goes unnoticed. While most pedestrians only see buildings’ ground floors, with the occasional craned-neck gander at certain skyscrapers, Amoros’ piece—colorful silhouettes of exotic animals projected on the windows of a historic Cass Gilbert office building in Harlem—draws attention to the neglected second floor.

Developer Eugene Giscombe of Giscombe Henderson Inc. owns the Lee Building on 125th Street, and commissioned the permanent installation. "The work is a reflection of [Giscombe]," said Amoros. "His love of exotic animals inspired the silhouettes." The silhouettes are mechanically controlled, moving in rhythmic cycles and backlit with theater lights. Though conceptually rich, the piece was executed in a disappointingly flat manner. Diverting attention from the street—which in New York is a quite lively theater in itself—would require a bit more than cartoonish, childlike imagery and garish lighting.

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