THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER
19 11.16.2005
NEW YORK ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM
$3.95

FOUR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND MADE PUBLIC

FANTASY ISLAND

Conversations about what to do with Governors Island may seem like the longest-running show in New York City real estate, but things are moving ahead, albeit slowly: On October 19, the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC) held a public meeting to present four conceptual schemes for the future of the island, which was decommissioned in 1996 after 200 years as a military base. In his brief introductory remarks to a crowd of about 200 people gathered at the Fashion Institute of Technology, GIPEC chair Daniel Doctoroff said that the development of the 172-acre island is one of the top priorities for Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's second term.

Formed in 2004, GIPEC is a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation and is charged with overseeing the island's redevelopment. Its 12-member board, appointed by Bloomberg and Governor George Pataki, is working on the island's redevelopment with the National Park Service, which controls 22 acres in the form of a National Monument. In January of 2004, GIPEC selected Robert Charles Lesser & Company, Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects, and Urban Strategies Inc. to do preliminary planning and analysis, and create the conceptual plans that were presented to the public that evening.

After Doctoroff left the stage, interim GIPEC president Paul Kelly briefly explained the history of Governors Island and the planning process. He ticked off eleven priorities for the island's future development, including improved public access, coordination with other waterfront projects throughout the city, and economic self-sufficiency. Drawing from responses to a Request for Expressions of Interest (issued in spring of this year) and input from consultants, GIPEC developed four possible directions for redevelopment: Minimum Build Island, Destination Island, **continued on page 10**


COURTESY GIPEC


Prince Charles accepts the Vincent Scully Prize from Vincent Scully.
VIVIAN RONAY / COURTESY NBM

PRINCE OF WALES WINS VINCENT SCULLY PRIZE

On Day 3 of the Prince of Wales' first official trip abroad since his marriage in April to Camilla Parker-Bowles, the royal couple dropped by the National Building Museum (NBM) in Washington, D.C., for Charles to receive its annual Vincent Scully Prize. The presentation of the award, which was established six years ago "to recognize exemplary practice, scholarship or criticism in architecture, historic preservation, and urban design," coincided with the opening of two shows organized by the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment: one on the work of the Prince's School of Traditional Arts and the other on buildings developed within the "traditional urbanist" movement. Both are at the NBM **continued on page 12**

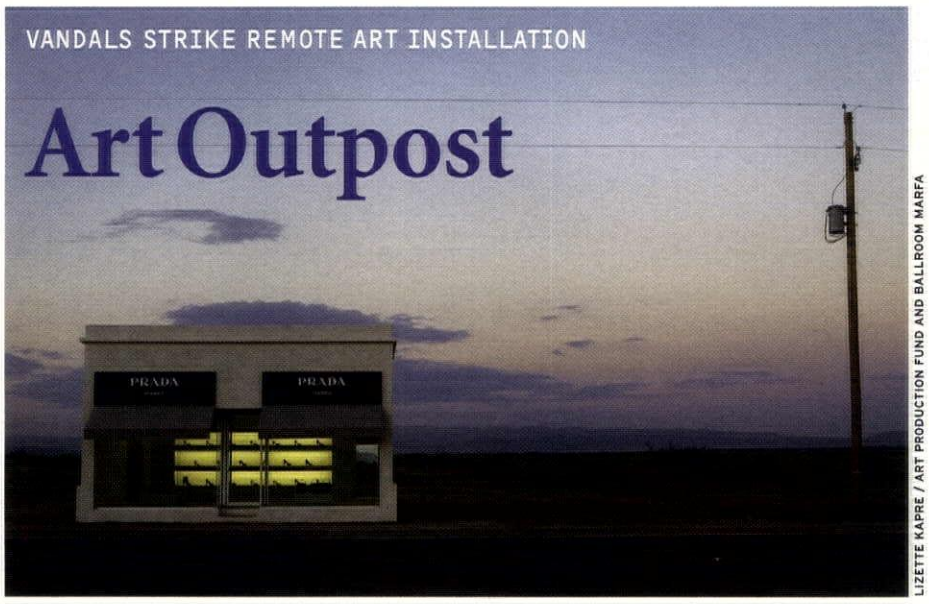
HOLIDAY DISCOUNTS MAY PAVE THE WAY FOR CONGESTION PRICING

SUBWAY SURPRISE

There are two constant truths in ever-changing New York: A subway ride will always cost about the same as a plain slice of pizza, and the cost of both will always go up. But a recent move by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority will temporarily reverse this trend. In a measure prepared by MTA Chairman Peter S. Kalikow and approved by a 12 to 2 vote during a contentious board meeting on October 27, the MTA will halve subway and bus fares to $1 per ride. The cut would apply on weekends between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, and will cost the MTA an estimated $50 million. That money will come from an unusual one-time cash surplus of some $700 million, resulting **continued on page 4**

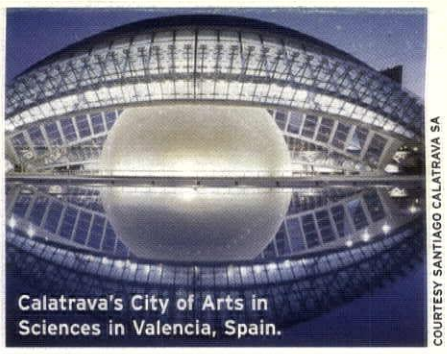
VANDALS STRIKE REMOTE ART INSTALLATION

Art Outpost



LIZETTE KAPRE / ART PRODUCTION FUND AND BALLROOM MARFA

Marfa, Texas, has enough cachet to attract culture seekers, but a new permanent installation by Scandinavian artists Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset is giving art pilgrims added incentive to make the trek to the Chihuahuan Desert. The $100,000 work, called *Prada Marfa*, is actually located 40 miles outside of Marfa near a border town called Valentine (population 217), where undocumented immigrants have been known to cross into the United States. During his first trip to the site, South Carolina architect Ronald Rael—who along with fellow architect Virginia San Fratello, worked with the artists to design the sculpture/store—was surrounded by three border patrol vehicles and questioned about his reason for being there. **continued on page 6**


Calatrava's City of Arts in Sciences in Valencia, Spain.
COURTESY SANTIAGO CALATRAVA SA

CRIT: JULIE V. IOVINE

CALATRAVA'S SQUEAKY CLEAN SHOW

Sculpture Into Architecture, the title of Santiago Calatrava's show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (on view through March 5), asks visitors to consider how the Spanish architect/engineer's artworks have led to a new class of architecture. An "artchitecture," perhaps. The prospect is as grating as the show itself, starting with the wheezy crank of *Shadow Machine*, a lightweight but noisy resin claw-in-motion that is attached to the wall over the show's entrance. Just architecture would have been more satisfying.

It has been a long time since the Met celebrated a living architect in depth and the honor has fallen to one who apparently doesn't care to leave any unvarnished traces of his actual thinking. The show inadvertently reveals how sculpture and architecture are actually not that compatible on display. People go to museums to be awed or challenged **continued on page 7**

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VOLUME 03 ISSUE 19, NOVEMBER 16, 2005
THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER (ISSN 1552-8081) IS PUBLISHED 20 TIMES A YEAR, BY *THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER*, LLC, P.O. BOX 937, NEW YORK, NY 10013. PRESORT-STANDARD POSTAGE PAID IN NEW YORK, NY. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO: THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER, CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT, P.O. BOX 937, NEW YORK, NY 10013. FOR SUBSCRIBER SERVICE: CALL 212-966-0630. FAX 212-966-0633. $3.95 A COPY, $39.00 ONE YEAR, INTERNATIONAL $160.00 ONE YEAR, INSTITUTIONAL $149.00 ONE YEAR.

EDITORS

Criticism is at the heart of architectural education and practice. Through studio crits, client presentations, and community reviews, architects are well accustomed to the process by which their work is analyzed, interpreted, judged, and nudged toward conclusion. Still, many practitioners are ambivalent about criticism. Of course, they love when their work is written about (it's gotten so that work doesn't seem to matter unless it's published), and they'll also mouth support of discourse. But if any negative criticism is directed at their work, they'll dismiss it as a matter of opinion.

This is partially the fault of those writing the criticism and their editors. Architecture criticism has devolved over recent years, from being consciousness-raising, progressive, and pleasurable to read—a standard that Ada Louise Huxtable worked hard to define from the moment she became *The New York Time*'s and the country's first fulltime architecture critic over 40 years ago—to being ad hominem, celebrity-obsessed, object-centric, and obtuse—a trail blazed by Herbert Muschamp, who was the *Times* architecture critic for 12 years before retiring last year. Is it any wonder that no one—professional or lay reader—wants to read criticism anymore?

But Muschamp's idiosyncrasies would not have been so detrimental had there been other prominent voices to balance him out. The problem is, the field atrophied: When the country's first and second generation of architecture critics started retiring in the 1990s, the newspapers that employed them didn't bother to replace them. City magazines, alternative weeklies, and other special- and general-interest magazines—with the exception of *The New Yorker* and a few others—didn't exactly fill the void. The *Village Voice* never produced an architecture critic of consequence after Michael Sorkin stopped writing his column nearly 10 years ago. Finally, the trade publications—while providing an important platform for established, treasured critics, as *Architectural Record* does for Sorkin and Robert Campbell of the *Boston Globe*—could do more to nurture young critical voices. Architects can help, too, by being more open to criticism and less controlling about how their work is portrayed.

The New York Times protected the position of architecture critic when other publications didn't, but its protective instinct went too far: Muschamp was notoriously territorial about his subject, obstructing other writers from covering architecture-related stories, even from a journalistic standpoint. The newspaper, the profession, and the public were all shortchanged. (Muschamp did not respond to our request to interview him for this issue, which is a shame because he is an important part of the evolution of American architecture criticism.)

So where does all this leave us? Architecture criticism has lost its place in public dialogue in a larger sense. In newspapers across the country, architecture stories appear in Arts, Home, and Real Estate sections, reflecting their increased emphasis on aesthetics and lifestyle. If written properly, architecture criticism would touch on issues such as technology, politics, urban planning, sociology, ecology—areas that merit appearance across a newspaper's sections, and across media outlets, for that matter. Retired architecture critic Allan Temko's stories regularly appeared on the front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and, as a result, helped build literacy about and sympathy for the field.

Critics fill the important role of linking architecture to the values we hold and the world in which we live. We're grateful to critics—and editors—who understand this.

LETTERS

DON'T FORGET THE BOROUGHS

I am compelled to point out a mistake you have made several times. There is no AIA New York City Chapter! There are, however, five AIA chapters in New York City.

The Staten Island and Brooklyn chapters are chartered by their borough name, while Queens and the Bronx are chartered by their county name. Your article "AIA-NYC Design Awards 2005" (*AN* 16_10.5.2005) was referring awards program of the AIA New York Chapter, as it is actually chartered.

Each of these chapters is independent. The New York Chapter by no means speaks for AIA members citywide. In fact, the New York Chapter is only one part of the Architects Council of New York City, comprised of the five borough AIA chapters, the New York Society of Architects, and the New York Chapter of the Society of American Registered Architects.

JOHN GALLAGHER, RA

CORRECTION

In "Campus Life" (*AN* 15_9.21.2005) we failed to note that Gruzen Samton is the associate architect working with Morphosis on the new engineering school at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. We apologize for the oversight.

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SUBWAY SURPRISE continued from front page

from higher-than-expected tax revenues and lower-than-expected interest rates. Despite a suggestion by Governor George Pataki that the surplus be earmarked for downtown Manhattan stations and services, the surplus spending includes $450 million for employee pension funds, $150 million for security and service improvements, and another $50 million for the holiday discount next year. "It's nice," Kalikow told local news network New York 1, "to be called Santa."

But the idea has its skeptics. Following a controversial 2003 price hike, two significant service-stalling electrical fires over the past two years, and recent criticism for antiquated technology, financial mismanagement, and haphazard security measures, the MTA faces a continuing budget crisis that will see a net deficit of $128 million in 2007, which may rise to almost $1 billion in 2009. Another permanent price hike is rumored within the next two years. Typical is the question posed in *The New York Times* by Fiscal Policy Institute economist James A. Parrot: "Why is the MTA engaging in feel-good, short-term gimmicks rather than convincing riders and business leaders that it has sensible, long-term plans for a balanced operating budget and a fully funded capital budget?" The feel-good factor coincides with a $2.9 billion bond act that the MTA is asking voters state-wide to approve on Election Day, November 8. Proposal Number 2, would fund maintenance and advancements on the near-mythical Second Avenue Subway.

The MTA suggests the fare cut would ease traffic congestion during a busy travel season made harder by ever-higher gasoline prices, encourage tourists and holiday shoppers, and promote the use of mass-transit year-round. It also sets a local precedent for congestion pricing, in which transit systems raise fares during rush hours and lower them off-peak. Nicole Gelinas, a senior fellow at the Mahattan Institute who has studied the issue, speculates that the fare cut may be a way to test the ridership's reaction to this idea. "If people flock to the subways when the fare is a dollar, it follows that future fares could be set in regard to market pricing," said Gelinas. "It would be interesting if they hiked fares for weekday transit, and left weekends alone." Off-peak ridership has increased dramatically in the past decade, but it's not clear if those riders would stay on board if fares, which now constitute about one half of the MTA's operating budget, were raised to what Gelinas called "an adequate amount, which would be $4."

All of which leaves the question, will the city's pizza prices follow suit with holiday discounts and congestion pricing? Queries to the city's various Original Ray's Famous Pizzerias, were, as of press time, unanswered.

THOMAS DE MONCHAUX

EAVESDROP: ARIC CHEN

NO MORE GEHRYS?

Get your **Frank Gehrys** while you can. We took notice the other day when we saw a story in the UK publication *Building Design* that quoted architecture's Big Daddy as saying, somewhat awkwardly, "I'm 76. We have tonnes [sic] of work now, so that to finish it will probably be most of it for me" [sic, sic, and sic]. Adding that Gehry currently has about five years' worth of projects in the pipeline, the article implied that he'll call it quits after they're done, at which point he'll be 81. Could the end be in sight? Who will mentor **Brad Pitt**? And what, we dare ask, will become of all those underlings when there are no more crumpled bits of tinfoil to transform into masterpieces? "That comment [in *Building Design*] was out of context," a Gehry rep curtly insisted. "It isn't accurate." We're aware that—unlike us—the British press has a tendency to make something out of nothing. Nevertheless, expect every would-be Medici and deep-pocketed *arriviste* to start scrambling for a piece of whatever action might be left.

WAH-WAH WANDERS

The cocky Dutch designer **Marcel Wanders** isn't feeling so smug about THOR, his new restaurant at The Hotel on Rivington. At a recent New York cocktail party for Netherlands Architecture Institute director **Aaron Betsky**, Wanders was whining to anyone who would listen—and we do mean anyone—about how he's unhappy with how his design for the interior turned out. He blamed the client, who he called "an asshole."

JOHN DOE, AIA

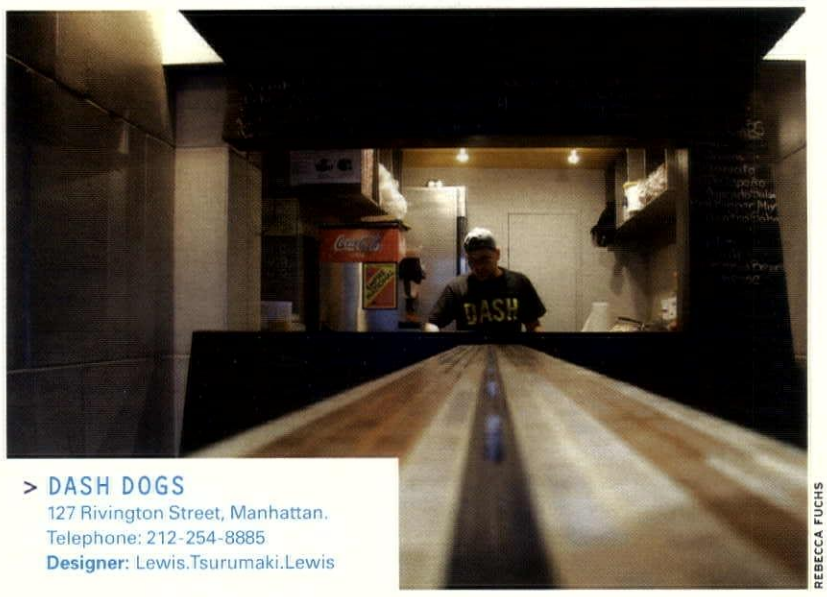
As if the rhetoric of **Rem Koolhaas** wasn't bad enough, you can now add identity theft to the occupational hazards of the architecture profession. We've learned that, last month, an employee of the New York City Department of Education's construction unit was arrested for unlawfully posing as a licensed architect. In an apparent moonlighting scheme, one **James Arriaga** allegedly used the bogus stamp and seal of an unnamed, bona fide architect on building plans, permit applications, and other documents for more than 150 duped clients. "The lesson is that you should watch your seal," a Department of Buildings rep told us. "Also, periodically check applications filed under your name in the city's Building Information System, and be mindful that if you hire somebody, they clearly have access to your license number and so on." Um, aren't there better ways to illicitly make money?

THE WOBBLY WIFE

We have some good news to share with a particularly prominent architect in our community: Your wife was not recently mugged, as you thought. Now, the bad news: She's a lush. And so, we ask our readers: Which architecture couple, no doubt wanting to cozy up with a certain constituency, recently had dinner with a group that included one of its key members before the wife got so drunk that she busted her nose? We hear the husband left early, but she stayed on for a nightcap or three and got so trashed that her companions had to practically carry her home. Once there, she fell on a stone floor and got a bloody nose—claiming she'd been mugged instead. Don't worry, dear, he would drive us to drink, too.

LET SLIP: ACHEN@ARCHPAPER.COM

OPEN>HOT DOG STAND



REBECCA FUCHS

> DASH DOGS
127 Rivington Street, Manhattan.
Telephone: 212-254-8885
Designer: Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis

On noisy, colorful Rivington Street on the Lower East Side, a protruding wooden prong directs attention to an understated glazed storefront. It is the edge of a bamboo plywood counter, which extends all the way inside DASH dogs, an acronym for Dan, Allen, and Steven's Hot dogs, the establishment's owners. The bite-sized place is the latest by Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis, which has made a cottage industry out of designing hip eateries. With a limited budget and only two months to design and build the standing-room-only space place (which expects to have the most traffic in the wee hours), the architects decided to use tough, urban materials. Gray cement board covers the side walls while a steel parquet sleeve shapes the ceiling, floor, and serving counter, stretching from the front of the space to the rear. The floor actually rises and the ceiling drops as one moves through DASH; the only element that remains level is the continuous bamboo counter. Principal Paul Lewis explained, "The design engaged the limits of a very small place by, in a sense, making it smaller, thereby increasing its idiosyncratic quality." **OLYMPIA KAZI**

REBECCA FUCHS

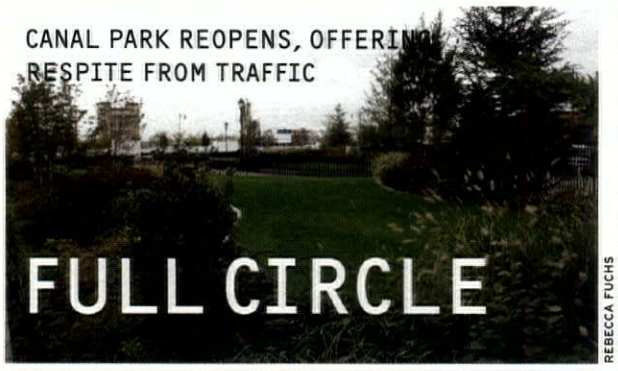
P.S. 64, FORMER ART CENTER, SAVED FROM CONDO-IZATION

WAR OF THE DORMS

Though gentrification has undoubtedly reached Alphabet City, the city recently made a move to protect an important neighborhood landmark, showing a commitment to preservation in the area as well as zero-tolerance for shady developments.

P.S. 64, located at the corner of East 9th Street and Avenue B, has served as a magnet for the community since the mid-1980s, when it became home to arts center CHARAS/El Bohio. The building, designed by C.B.J. Snyder and completed in 1904, was an elementary and middle school until 1976, when it closed due to a demographic shift that left the neighborhood with few young children. In 1979 the city, which owns the building, leased it to the arts group, which funded operations through the sale of work by prominent artists such as Elizabeth Murray and Keith Haring, according to Roland Legiardi-Laura, cofounder and vice president of the East Village Community Coalition (EVCC), a local group dedicated to protecting the building.

"In the late 1990s, our community group rubbed [Mayor Rudolph] the wrong way," explained Legiardi-Laura. "He put the building up for auction in 1998, and it sold to a developer named Gregg Singer for $3.15 million." The stipulation of the sale was that the building remain solely a community facility, a designation that allows for **continued on page 9**



REBECCA FUCHS

On October 21, a small triangular plot at the intersection of Canal Street and the West Side Highway reopened as a park after 85 years of serving, by a combination of accident and oversight, as a parking lot. Canal Park was unveiled amid fanfare that included a free concert by neighborhood residents Lou Reed and Laurie Anderson, both members of the Canal Park Conservancy, which was established in 2004 to care for the almost-lost park.

The park is actually the site of one of the city's oldest public squares, dating to 1807. It was home to a produce market for several decades before being transformed in 1871 to a viewing park. In 1888, Calvert Vaux, who worked with Frederick Law Olmsted on the design of Central Park, and Samuel Parsons redesigned the park to make it more pedestrian friendly, adding an S-shaped walkway and lush plantings.

Jump to 1921: The park was closed and loaned to the New York/New Jersey Bridge and Tunnel Authority for four years while the Holland Tunnel was under construction. Despite the stipulation that the park be rebuilt when the tunnel was completed, it remained closed, so as not to impede master-planner Robert Moses' desire to place an expressway along Canal Street.

Though that plan was defeated—largely through the work of urban activist Jane Jacobs—the site remained barren and began to fade from memory until 1998, when neighborhood residents Richard Barrett, Jana Haimsohn, and Carole De Saram unearthed the history of park.

In 2000, the Canal West Coalition, founded by Barrett in the mid 1990s, and the Tribeca Community Association, founded in the 1970s in part by De Saram, brought the matter to the courts. It took only one year for them to win their case. The Department of Parks and Recreation put $2 million toward the creation the park, designed by the department's landscape architect Allan Scholl, with Renata Sokolowski and Wim de Ronde.

The new design is based on Vaux's plan, with a central walkway lined with benches along a wrought-iron fence which is a replica of the original. Some changes are modern of course: They raised the park a foot to protect underground utility lines. There is also a driveway to allow service access to the old stream for which Canal Street is named, which meets the river under the park.

The Canal Park Conservancy, founded by the Canal West Coalition and the Tribeca Community Association, has raised approximately $100,000 and plans to hire a part-time gardener for $20,000 to maintain the park. **REBECCA FUCHS**

ART OUTPOST continued from front page

His purpose was to construct the piece, which the artists (whose most recent work *End Station* was installed at the Bohen Foundation) describe the as "a sealed time capsule that will never function as a place of commerce." The door to the boxy boutique is sealed; inside, rows of shoes are on display. Though the crisp white-stuccoed box doesn't look it, it's made from adobe. "Elmgreen and Dragset knew they wanted a white, stucco-like finish," said San Fratello. "Because of Ron's interest in adobe we decided on using mud brick." Rael has researched earth architecture for years. A few summers ago he founded AREA (Activism, Research, Experimentation, and Architecture), a research/build workshop at the Clemson School of Architecture, where they both teach. His previous research explores the meeting of industrial and non-industrial modes of production—for example, the application of digital processes to architecture made of raw earth.

"There's something kind of perverse about building Prada Marfa out of mud," said Rael. "[It's] something highly refined built with a material that is considered rugged."

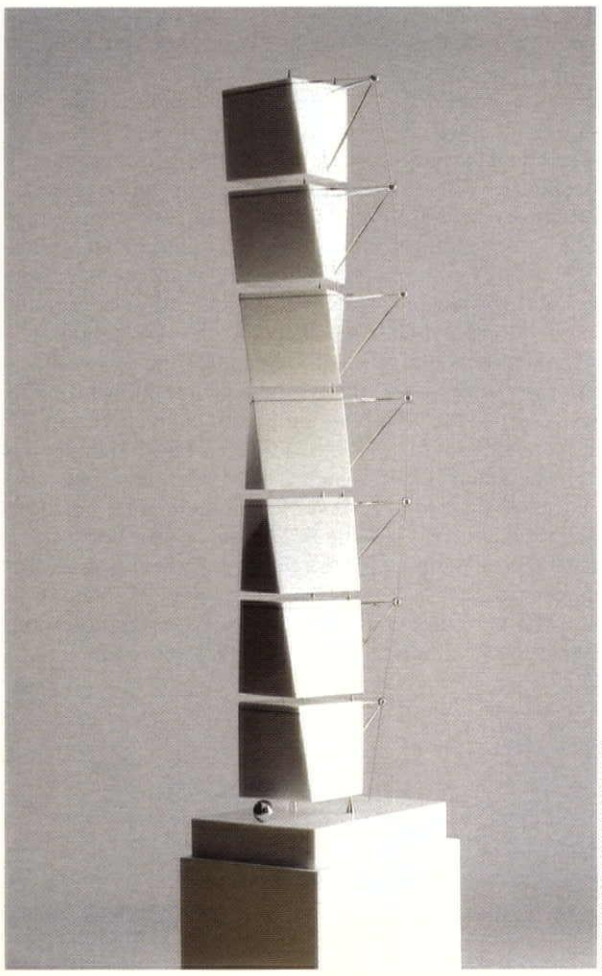
Prada Marfa was built with 2,000 traditional mud bricks covered in stucco. Usually, a wire netting is used so that when the stucco wears it cracks but holds together as an entire sheet. Since the building would never be occupied and was intended to become a ruin over time, the wire mesh was left out of the process, so as the stucco deteriorates it will splay off, exposing the mud brick beneath to the elements.

On October 1 the sculpture opened to a

crowd of curious locals and an imported art crowd. A couple of days later the door had been pulled off its hinges. Fourteen of the 20 right-foot shoes and all of the handbags on display, which had been personally selected and donated by the designer and art patron Miuccia Prada, had vanished. Two spray-painted messages adorned the store's exterior: "Dum Dum" and "Dumb."

Yvonne Force Villareal, president of the Art Production Fund, a not-for-profit group in New York that supported the project, had already been quoted in *The New York Times* as saying, "If someone spray-paints graffiti or a cowboy decides to use it for target practice or maybe a mouse or a muskrat makes a home in it, 50 years from now it will be a ruin that is a reflection of the time it was made." But apparently this was too quick a degradation. The building was repaired soon after and restocked (this time with the bottoms of the handbags cut out).

Rael points out that, along with a security system, there was also a new design change: "Before there was an expensive stainless steel handle on the door. Now there's none." **JERRY PORTWOOD**



COURTESY SANTIAGO CALATRAVA SA

Calatrava's 1991 sculpture *Twisting Torso II* (left) was the precursor for his new residential tower in Malmö. A 2003 watercolor (below) of his tower at 80 South Street.

CALATRAVA'S SQUEAKY CLEAN SHOW

continued from front page

by an artistic vision so complete that it breaks free of average human constraints to communicate its message. Sculpture can make mute stones speak. Architectural exhibitions necessarily offer something less complete: a sense of process, raw materials about to be transformed and forces wielded by, but not entirely in the control of, the architect. The object itself, the building, is someplace else waiting to be experienced.

With its discernible theme of process through art, the show offers nothing that looks originary, firsthand, or reeking of creative effort. Instead it feels sanitized or, worse, like an incredibly slick snow job. For anyone who would like to know how Calatrava transformed himself from designer of whizzy bridges to architect of luxury condominiums in under 20 years, this show will be frustrating. Again and again, the wall texts describe a breakthrough principle realized sometime in the past only to add that the sketch or model on display demonstrating the principle was made just for the show. And apparently, price was no object for these after-the-fact artifacts. Carrera marble, bronze, alabaster, ebony, and gold-plated wires—the list of materials reads like a marketing brochure for a Donald Trump penthouse. The sculpture is expensive-looking but second-rate, of a sort that brings to mind luxury items at a five-star hotel gift shop. Some, like *Eye* (1994) and *Bird 1* (1986), manage to look both abstract and clumsily literal. Others like *Fruit and Eros* (1999) are cringingly suggestive. (It doesn't help that Brancusi's 1923 *Bird in Space* and Boccioni's 1913 *Unique Form of Continuity in Space* are clearly visible in the next room.)

Connections are dutifully made between various marble models or drip-free watercolors of a twisting, turning, or climbing torso and this or that building, which is then documented with a single photograph, often shot at night, after a rainstorm, lending a slightly fuzzy aura. The real standouts are the bleached-white presentation models under glass, serene and devoid of life or information. A few, like the model of the Milwaukee Art Museum with its moveable brise-soleil, can be animated with a push of a button. Several weren't working. Someone call an engineer!

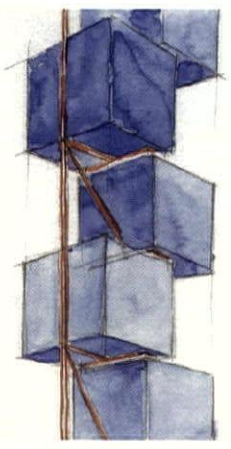
Pages from several sketchbooks are on display, but don't expect to get any closer to how this architect thinks. The breeziest miniature sketch is meticulously water-colored. The message is entirely under control but doesn't say much.

Still, Calatrava and his work are obvious crowd-pleasers. The Met show was packed early on a Sunday morning. At the Milwaukee Art Museum, signs had to be put up so that museum-goers could be notified to get back to the entrance in time to watch the brise-soleil flap at noon, as if it were some medieval mystery, like the astronomical clock that has adorned the Old Town Hall of Prague since 1409. Even I have seen Calaltrava elicit gasps when he whipped off one of his mirror-drawings of a dove in flight at a presentation to the editorial board of *The New York Times*. Corny but, until now, quite effective.

Such over-processed showboating undermines Calatrava's real achievements. His engineering feats are innovative (if on a slow evolutionary track). In fact, some of his mobile mechanisms don't look much more complicated than gigantic whirligigs.

There's no denying that Calatrava understands better than many architects working today that people yearn, with almost gothic fervor, to experience the soaring side of architecture. But recent architectural designs, like his Malmo Apartment Tower in Sweden (reportedly unstable) and the Tenerife Concert Hall in the Canary Islands (plagued with functional problems), once again prove that looks are never everything.

JULIE V. IOVINE IS *AN*'S ARCHITECTURE CRITIC AND THE FEATURES EDITOR AT *ELLE DÉCOR*. HER WRITING HAS APPEARED IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES* AND MANY OTHER PUBLICATIONS. SEND COMMENTS TO JIOVINE@ARCHPAPER.COM.

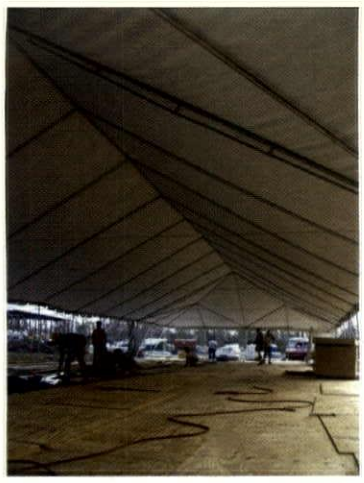


SHOP ARCHITECTS DESIGN ONE DAY, BUILD THE NEXT, IN MISSISSIPPI

COMMUNITY AT A CROSSROADS

Chris Sharples and Gregg Pasquarelli, partners of New York-based SHoP Architects, first met the philanthropist Martha Murphy after winning a juried competition to build a new academic building at Tulane University in New Orleans. That project was put on hold indefinitely when Hurricane Katrina hit the region on August 29. Like nearly all of her neighbors in Pass Christian, Mississippi, Murphy lost her home. She now lives out of her car in the parking lot of one of the area's the few remaining buildings: it is an elementary school in nearby DeLisle, Mississippi, and Murphy has set up a clinic and dispensary.

"It was profoundly disturbing, there was just nothing left. The town was completely obliterated—people were swimming out of their homes around me," Murphy recalled. "We were going to do something. It was a proverbial blank slate, and we needed someone who could help with immediate planning." Knowing SHoP's experience with emergency architecture—she saw the firm's design of the Rector Street Bridge, the first new infrastructure to be created at the World Trade Center site after 9/11—Murphy called on the firm to help knit the community back together.



Sharples and Pasquarelli arrived in the small unincorporated town of DeLisle on September 10, along with engineer Craig Schwitter of Buro Happold. The group quickly evaluated the situation and began sketching ideas. They decided to construct a temporary structure on a 55-acre vacant lot that Murphy owns across the street from the elementary school. The 39571 Project (the name refers to the zip code of the affected community) is a 10,000-square-foot space composed of two 3,100-square-foot sheds backed with a parking lot and fronted by a covered porch. The 200-foot-long porch has no rails and no barriers and is meant to welcome and shelter the whole community.

The team returned to New York on September 12 to hand off the plans they had sketched that morning to Reese Campbell, an architect at SHoP, and Andrew Coats, an engineer at Buro Happold. The pair studied the plans with the partners before flying to DeLisle, where they began surveying the site the same day. Later they were joined by another young SHoP architect, Federico Negro.

"We couldn't take a month to figure it out," said Sharples. "We did it in less than 30 hours. But it's not only about design and building, it's about leadership and directing. This sort of initiative can't wait years. We're not waiting for [planners] to tell us what to do."

Phase one of the project included clearing the swampy site, covering two acres with gravel, and paving a road. Simultaneously, phase two—a 5,000-square-foot tent—was erected so that Murphy could immediately transfer the clinic and supplies from the elementary school.

Luckily, Campbell had previous construction experience. When he arrived, the Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA had mobilized manpower and supplies but were unsure of what direction to take. With no surveying equipment and limited bulldozers, he and Coats strategized their first step and began to lay out the road with sticks and string lines. With four bulldozers and 30 men, they began to excavate. When someone from the nearby DuPont factory asked if they needed anything, Campbell asked for a back hoe, a front-end loader, and more bulldozers. The 27-year-old architect was orchestrating the first major construction in the area since the hurricane struck. (Coats is 32, and Negro is 26.)

"Reese, Federico, and Andrew quickly became part of the fabric of this community," Murphy marveled.

Working and sleeping on site, the team devised phase three. The initial concept, two open sheds turned at 15 degree angles to form a V with a wide patio did not change, but the program quickly evolved to accommodate the community's needs. Originally imagined as a temporary structure, the 39571 Project is now intended to become a permanent center for commerce and economic development, while also serving as a space where the whole town can assemble.

The availability of building materials has affected the design along the way. "At first we were coming up with this elegant storefront system, and then we stopped and said 'Wait a minute, we can't have windows like that, this is a place still at risk,' so we changed our approach," said Campbell.

Wood and concrete, along with simple forms and a single sloped roof, have come together to form something greater than the sum of their parts. One smart but simple move that pushed the project to a higher level was to pull the roof off the same 12-foot plane as the sheds and thrust it high above the porch.

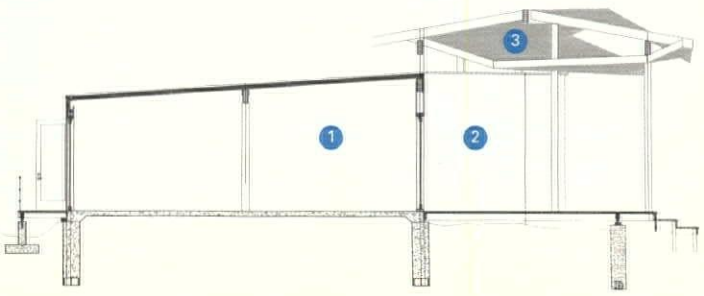
Murphy remembers the architects in a small, windowless box trailer, where they worked and slept, drawing and planning until early in the morning. She saw images of roofs tacked up on the wall and realized, "They were working so hard, really pouring their heart and soul into all this, but they weren't able to do what they do so well. They were so concerned about budget and limited materials that they weren't being creative, innovative, unusual. So I asked them, 'If you could do one thing that SHoP does best it would be the roof, right?' I saw their faces light up, so I told them to rip the roof, there needed to be a soaring aspect. Something that would let the building sing."

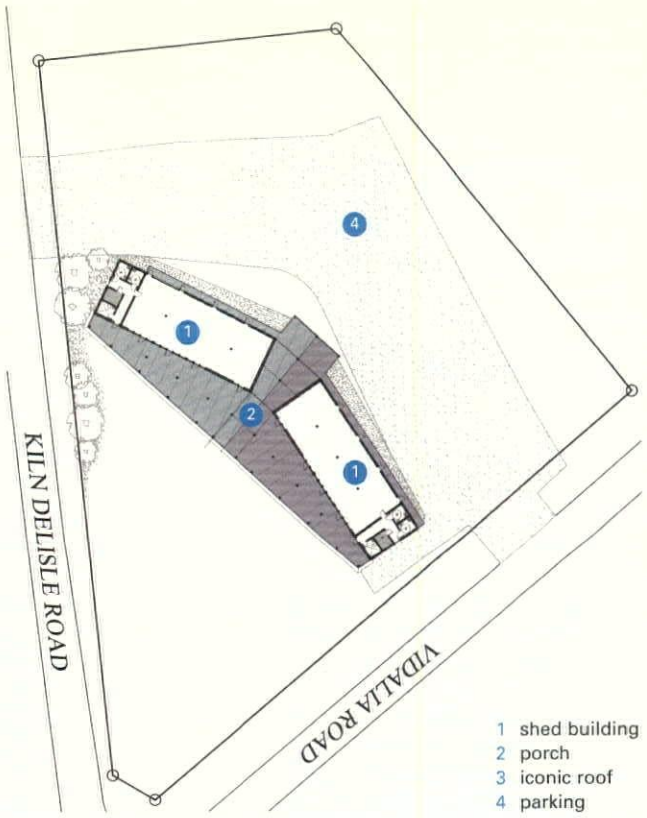
Murphy reinforced that the project's power to inspire was just as much a part of the program as its functionality. The act of building in a landscape that others were still laboring to clear, clean, and rehabilitate has been a positive force in itself. The presence of the architects and engineers, said Murphy, "offered great reassurance."

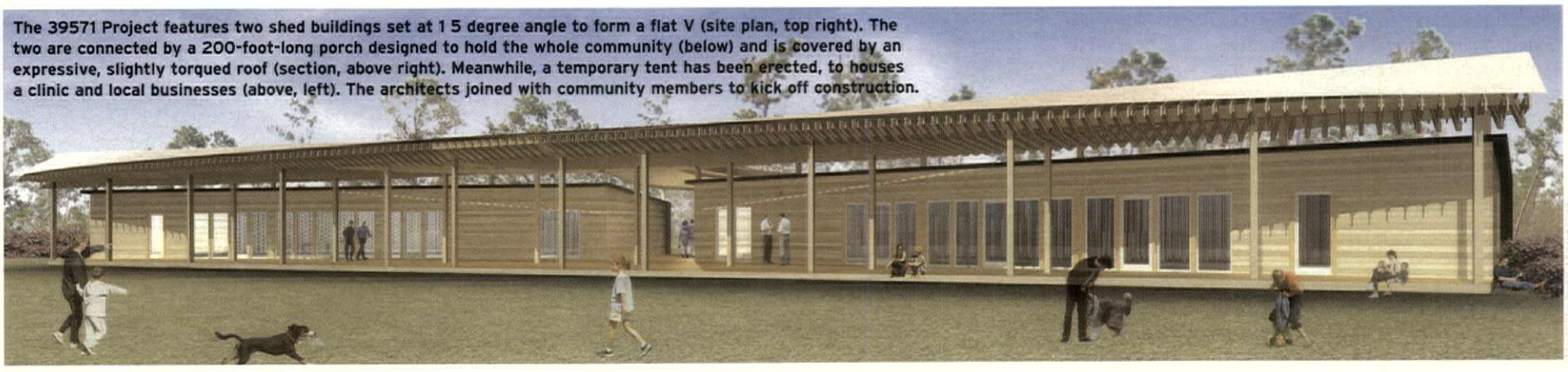
The design of the porch roof is now 18 feet at its highest point, with a series of 12-foot-tall, 8-by-8-foot timber posts as supports, and is covered with metal sheets. With its vast, inviting porch, the project pays homage to, without mimicking, Southern vernacular. "We didn't want to recreate our past," said Murphy. "We needed a real building. It's what our future's going to be."

At the end of October, Campbell and Negro were back in New York, furiously searching for a general contractor to complete the project.

"We were a day away from doing it ourselves with military help," admitted Campbell, "but we realized we reached our limit. It's an enormous amount of work to do without a legitimate contractor—we couldn't have regular people lifting huge 12-foot timbers by hand." In the meantime, locals are using the temporary tent as a place to start businesses, while other nonprofits are looking to the 39571 Project as the best place to locate their services. If all goes according to plan, this piece of architecture will be the heart of a community on the mend. **JERRY PORTWOOD**







The 39571 Project features two shed buildings set at 1 5 degree angle to form a flat V (site plan, top right). The two are connected by a 200-foot-long porch designed to hold the whole community (below) and is covered by an expressive, slightly torqued roof (section, above right). Meanwhile, a temporary tent has been erected, to houses a clinic and local businesses (above, left). The architects joined with community members to kick off construction.

COURTESY SHOP ARCHITECTS

WAR OF THE DORMS continued from page 5

a greater floor to area ratio (FAR) than a residential development on the same site. In the case of P.S. 64, the new community facility could be almost twice as high as the existing school. Meanwhile, the art center and other "squatters" (mostly artists using classrooms as studios) remained illegally in the center until they were evicted in 2001, said EVCC project manager Elizabeth Ruf-Maldonado, who had a studio in the building for five years. "Since then, the building is home only to pigeons."

Gregg Singer formed a group with several anonymous partners called the 9th and 10th Street, LLC, and sought to erect a university dormitory—which qualifies as a community facility—on the location. According to Department of Buildings (DOB) press secretary Jennifer Givner, an application to construct the dorm was pre-filed in October of 2004 and denied the following January. "They tried to file a number of applications in different ways, using different methods," said Givner. "All of them were rejected during the late fall and spring."

The developer in fact did not have an affiliation with any educational institution, which raised eyebrows at the DOB. As previously reported here ("Dorms, Redefined," *AN* 08_05.11.2005), there have been a slew of developers stretching the definition of dormitory to take advantage of density bonuses to build what are essentially standard rental apartment buildings. As a result, the Department of City Planning (DCP) passed a series of amendments on September 9, 2004 that stiffen the requirements to qualify as a community facility. This serves communities by curbing excessive large developments, said Rachaele Raynoff, press secretary of the DCP.

The 9th and 10th Street, LLC planned to provide a condo-like dormitory at below market rates for faculty, but the DCP's zoning amendments specifically exclude faculty housing from dormitories.

The design, by Beyer Blinder Belle, preserved much of the school's C-shaped façade while adding a 19-story tower, said Legiardi-Laura. After being rejected in January of this year, the developers filed an appeal to the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA).

Both the DOB and the DCP wrote statements this past August to encourage the BSA to deny the application, arguing that the developers needed to "demonstrate a legally binding relationship with an educational institution" to take advantage of extra-bulk allowances. Both also pointed out the need for a strict distinction between dormitories and residences "to prevent an owner from building an illegal, oversize structure."

On October 18, the BSA rejected the appeal, blocking the proposed development once and for all. Since the decision, Singer's group has put the building on the market through Massey/Knakal Realty Services, said Legiardi-Laura, with a hefty price tag of $75 million. Future development might be restricted if the building is landmarked, which is possible now that the Landmarks Preservation Commission has planned a hearing (not yet scheduled) for this fall.

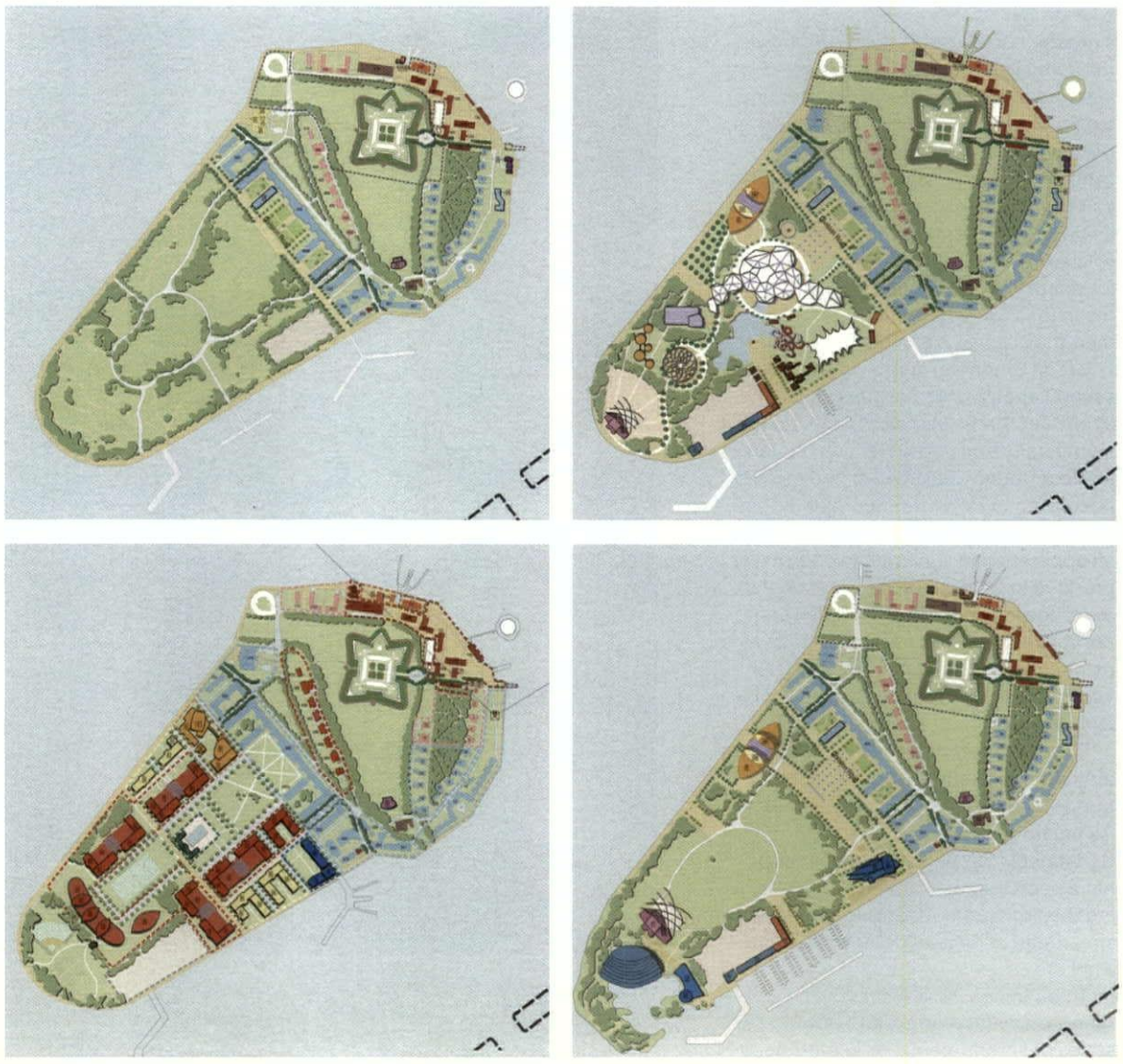
JAFFER KOLB

FANTASY ISLAND continued from front page

Innovation Island, and Iconic Island. Each was presented with an explanation of its presumed economic costs and social benefits.

The Minimum Build scenario focuses on restoring the historic northern quadrant for hotel, restaurant, retail, and cultural uses while leaving the entire southern portion open as a park. Destination Island would devote the south end to major tourism uses—the UK's Eden Project, the Cirque du Soleil in Orlando, and Ontario Place in Toronto were all cited as precedents—while devoting the restored north for heritage tourism. Iconic Island looked to Chicago's Millennium Park, the Miyazaki Ocean Dome in Japan, and—perhaps inevitably—the Guggenheim Bilbao as examples of ways to draw visitors, while Innovation Island's mixture of educational and commercial research facilities was presented as a potential economic engine for the city. Kelly continually stressed that these scenarios are merely suggestive, and that a great deal depends on finances, both public and private.

The money that must be spent on infrastructural improvements like sewage systems and transportation links, as well as the restoration of the historic quarter, is significant. According to Joe Berridge of Urban Strategies, basic site preparation may cost up to $368 million, while rehabilitating the buildings in the northern section is estimated to cost about $650 million. These numbers will come into sharper focus as GIPEC completes its infrastructure plan, which it expects to release in early 2006. The plan is a prerequisite for the Request for Proposals GIPEC hopes to issue to developers in the summer of 2006. **ANNE GUINEY**



Four possible development scenarios (clockwise from top left): Minimum Build Island, Destination Island, Innovation Island, and Iconic Island. Each scheme–and whatever is ultimately built on Governors Island–includes a public promenade running the perimeter, a public park of at least 20 contiguous acres, and the restoration of the historic buildings in the island's northern side.

In Foster and Partners' master plan for a new cultural district in Kowloon, a massive curving plastic canopy shelters an array of buildings and uses, including, possibly, a joint museum by the Guggenheim and Pompidou.

COURTESY WEST KOWLOON CULTURAL DISTRICT

GUGGEHEIM TEAMS WITH POMPIDOU TO TACKLE ASIA

Mission Hong Kong

Thomas Krens has long had his eyes on Asia as the site for a Guggenheim Museum. Now he may have finally found the beachhead that he sought, by allying with a French partner, Chinese financing, and a British architect. Last week the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris announced that the two institutions had joined forces as part of a bid to create an art museum in the West Kowloon Cultural District in Hong Kong (WKCD). The museum would be part of a 100-acre mixed-use development. The new museum, which Krens said will cost some $400 million, will be designed by Foster and Partners, the London firm headed by Sir Norman Foster, which is also responsible for the WKCD master plan. That master plan now involves covering much of the site with a gently curved clear plastic canopy. No completion date has been set for the project.

Before the two museums agreed to collaborate, each was part of a developer's plan for the district that included a museum in a commercial and residential mix. The museums united when those developers merged into a new company, Dynamic Star. The Pompidou/Guggenheim entente comes as something of a surprise, even though the two museums have organized exhibitions together. Only last year, the Centre Pompidou shrugged off notions of such a museum-building alliance involving the Guggenheim, with one representative commenting to Hong Kong journalists that its leadership didn't like the idea of adding branches, comparing it to licensing Coca-Cola bottling plants. (The Pompidou now denies that any such comment was made.) Besides reversing itself on that prospect, the Paris museum is also planning its first satellite, designed by Shigeru Ban, in the northeastern French city of Metz. ("Louvre Lens in Focus," *AN* 18_11.2.2005)

Krens' new gambit comes as less of a surprise. Hong Kong is far from the first Asian city he's courted. A Guggenheim "presence" in Tokyo has been discussed for years. In 2002 and '03, the Guggenheim had plans for a $200 million airplane-shaped museum designed by Zaha Hadid in Taichung, Taiwan. The project, which also included other civic and cultural buildings in an urban master plan, never advanced past a feasibility study, for which the Guggenheim was paid $2 million. (Also, it turned out that Taichung lacks a major airport.) And in an interview just last May, when the Guggenheim had already signed on as the cultural component of a bid by the Sands Hotel of Las Vegas for a $2.5 billion 40-floor hotel and casino in Singapore, Krens said, "The Guggenheim is very interested in a position in Latin American and Asia." (Soon after that a design for a Guggenheim Guadalajara in Mexico was unveiled; see "Artistic Licensing," *AN* 11_06.22.2005). The Singapore plan is one of 12 competing for the same site; another is a hotel/casino collaboration with the Centre Pompidou.

Compared with that the odds in Singapore, the critical mass of two museums working together in a development plan makes Hong Kong a better bet. The wealthy city still lacks a major museum for modern and contemporary art.

The choice of Foster as architect seems an unlikely one for the Guggenheim, whose institutional brand tends to be linked to edgier work by the likes of Hadid and Jean Nouvel. Foster was already attached to the developer's master plan, said a Guggenheim spokesman, who noted that Foster designed the stations for the new metro in Bilbao. And Bilbao credentials don't hurt in Hong Kong. "The developers were very impressed by the success of the Guggenheim Bibao," the spokesman said. Foster's London office said that the project was in its early stages, and referred all calls to the developer.

The announcement of the Hong Kong collaboration, potentially involving the collections of both museums, comes at a time when doubts are growing about the replicability of the Bilbao model, i.e., expanding a museum into a high-profile building by a celebrity architect, intended to lift a local economy. In January, the Guggenheim's chairman and major donor, Peter Lewis, quit the board museum when he became convinced that Krens' expansionist ambitions could not be sustained. **DAVID D'ARCY**

AT DEADLINE

QUIET VOICES

On September 16, after six and a half years of operation, ArchVoices, a nonprofit devoted to architecture education, released its 265th and final newsletter. The web-based publication was established in 1999 to foster exchange about architectural education, including the subject of internships and licensure. According to its website, the all-volunteer newsletter took too much time and energy from everyone involved. ArchVoices plans to continue with its essay competition and possibly with internship initiatives.

NOT DEFLATED

On November 1, the U.S. Commerce Department released its September report on construction spending. In September, construction spending in the U.S. reached a new high of $1.12 trillion, up 0.5 percent, mainly from a boost in private residential construction spending, which increased 1 percent to $624.3 billion. The report showed no sign that the housing market is weakening, despite widespread speculation that the real estate bubble is ready to pop. Although the housing sector is expected to decline in 2006, the New York City market anticipates its annual holiday spike will continue. The local increase coincides with year-end Wall Street bonuses, which account for 7.5 percent of the total wages earned in the city and infuses the market with high-end homebuyers.

JERZEY SOLTAN DIES

On September 16, Jerzey Soltan, professor emeritus of architecture and urban design at Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD) died at age 92. Born in Latvia in 1913, Soltan moved to Poland to attend the Warsaw Technical Institute before he was drafted into the Polish army during World War II. He was captured by the Germans in 1939 and spent the rest of the war in a prisoners' camp in Murnau. After the war, Soltan joined Le Corbusier's firm in Paris, but after five years, returned to Warsaw to help with his country's reconstruction. He became a professor in the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw but soon found himself struggling with the postwar communist government, which rejected his modernist, avant-garde tendencies, so he moved to the United States. He began teaching at the GSD in 1959, gained tenure in 1965, served as chair from 1967 to 1974, and then retired in 1979. Soltan is credited with bringing Le Corbusier to Harvard to design the Carpenter Center, the only Corbusier building in North America. In 2002, he was awarded the American Institute of Architects and Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture Topaz Medallion for excellence in Architectural Education.

SLOW AND STEADY

On October 26, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation conducted a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open Phase II of Brooklyn Bridge Park, an 85-acre project designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, in collaboration with several other design firms. The $3.7 million second phase, between Adams and Plymouth Streets, includes a rocky beach, a waterfront esplanade, and a children's playground. For those in the area, the ribbon cutting came a little late considering the park has been in use for over a year. Upon completion, the park will span 1.3 miles from Atlantic Avenue to the Con Edison site north of the Manhattan Bridge and comprise 85 acres of open space.

PRINCE OF WALES WINS VINCENT SCULLY AWARD continued from front page through January 8. Previous recipients include Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Andres Duany; Jane Jacobs; Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown; the Aga Khan; as well as the illustrious architectural historian for whom the prize is named. Indeed, given the key role vernacular architecture and traditional urbanism play in all their work, Charles—critic of modernism and advocate of traditional crafts, architecture, and planning—was a natural choice.

"Professor Scully and I agree on several things—the importance of retaining a connection with the natural world, particularly in the garden, the value of traditional urbanism, and the abiding significance of the sacred," said Charles in his acceptance speech on November 3, in the NBM's Great Hall.

Self-deprecating, witty, and intelligent, Charles focused in his lecture on what he saw as the emergence of a new ethos in planning and energy consumption. "A new consensus is emerging, a new modernity if you will," he said, "one that does not oblige us to bury those things that make life worth living."

The Prince of Wales first came out against modern architecture in 1984 when, at a Royal Institute of British Architects awards dinner, he called a proposed modernist extension of London's National Gallery "a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend." The plans were scrapped, and the extension was redesigned by Venturi and Scott Brown.

He raised hackles further in 1987 when, in terms only British royalty can get way with, he told London city planners, "You have, ladies and gentlemen, to give this much to the Luftwaffe: When it knocked down our buildings, it did not replace them with anything more offensive than rubble. We did that."

In 1989 the Prince wrote and narrated Vision of Britain, a documentary in which he offered what, in his mind, did and did not work in British architecture and town planning. It appeared on both the BBC and PBS.

During the 1990s Prince Charles moved to action and established a school for classical architecture, an architecture magazine (both of which later folded), and Poundbury, a 400-acre New Urbanist development in southwest England. Poundbury's design features mixed-use structures, pedestrian-centric traffic flows, and integrating affordable and market-rate housing to, in Charles' words, reinforce "local character and tradition."

The night before his lecture, Charles and Camilla joined President George Bush for dinner at the White House. In attendance were University of Pennsylvania urban planning professor Witold Rybczynski and Yale School of Architecture dean Robert A. M. Stern.

CLAY RISEN

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CHRISTIE

ON CRITICISM.

Architecture criticism, whether written for the profession or the general public, has one primary purpose: to parse the good from the bad. Of course, criticism involves much more than thumbs-up, thumbs-down assessments. Architecture is far too complex, demanding analyses on far too many levels. The critics interviewed in these pages describe how their varied concerns—technological, political, ecological, cultural—have shaped their approach to a field they helped create. Meanwhile, a new generation of critics are joining ranks in what Ada Louise Huxtable calls "an uphill battle," setting out to prove that responsible criticism benefits not just the profession but society at large.

From "Zoning: The End of the Line"
***The New York Times Magazine*, December 14, 1980**
Ada Louise Huxtable

In an attempt to legislate an impossible balance between a profitable city and a livable city, New York has created a monster—call it Frankenstein zoning. The process by which good intentions and innovative practice are turned into an urban nightmare has been gradual and technically arcane. But what has been happening, insidiously and overtly, is that the whole idea of zoning has been turned upside down. It has been subverted from a way to control building bulk and size to a method for getting bigger buildings than ever.

If that seems like an anachronism, it is; exactly the kind of overbuilding is being encouraged that the law was designed to prohibit. The result, which is just beginning to be visible, is the rapid appearance of ranks of oppressively massive, sun- and light-blocking structures of a size that we have never seen in such concentration before. Their outline and impact appeared first on Madison Avenue from 53rd to 57th Street, with the 42-story, block-long Tishman building from 53rd to 54th Street, another tower across Madison at 55th Street, and the gargantuan AT&T and IBM buildings, from 55th to 56th, and 56th to 57th Street. This enclave of block-busters was joined by the huge Trump Tower looming on the Bonwit Teller site at 56th and Fifth.

When the first of these immense projects designed under the city's revised 1961 zoning regulations appeared, such as Olympic Tower on Fifth Avenue or Citicorp on Lexington, they seemed unique; as singular structures they were more interesting than overwhelming. As a standard to be replicated, however, they have become cautionary examples... What must be understood is that this wave of bigger-than-ever New York buildings is not some overreaching passing fancy. It is the new and future norm... The bottom line is that the developers build what they are permitted to by law.

These new buildings, therefore, are equally revealing of the manipulative, negotiable, and mutable art that New York's zoning has become. And because what New York does in zoning is emulated by the rest of the country, whether it is innovative and constructive or dangerous and foolish, other cities will probably follow an example that has evolved from a reasonably system of controls, including creative attempts to balance restraints with public amenities, to an ad hoc exercise in horse-trading that is a clear environmental disaster.

ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

Born and educated in New York City, Ada Louise Huxtable pioneered the field of architecture criticism in the United States. In 1963, she became the architecture critic for *The New York Times*, a position she lobbied her editors to create, and which she held until 1982. She's still active today, at the age of 84, serving since 1997 as architecture critic at the *Wall Street Journal*. Over the course of her long career, she not only traced the trajectory of modernism, preservation, and urban development but influenced it.

Huxtable had worked as an assistant curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art from 1946 to 1950. She was a Fulbright scholar in Italy in 1950 to 1952, extending her research on modern Italian architecture, which she began as a master's student in architectural history at the Institute of Fine Arts. She emerged as a critic at a time when cities were in crisis, losing their built patrimony in the name of modernization and renewal. She built a mass audience for architecture criticism by bringing reason and passion together in straight-talking—sometimes sarcastic, always sophisticated—prose. When she won the Pulitzer Prize in 1970, her field was validated and papers across the country rushed to add architecture to their critical and journalistic beats.

Her newspaper columns are anthologized in *Kicked a Building Lately?* (Quadrangle, 1976), *Goodbye, History, Hello, Hamburger* (Preservation Press, 1986), and *Architecture, Anyone?* (Random House, 1986). She is also the author of *The Unreal America* (New Press, 1997), and *Frank Lloyd Wright* (Penguin, 2004).

What was the attitude toward architecture criticism when you were starting out?
There wasn't any! I'm proud of the fact that I convinced *The New York Times* that it needed to have an architecture critic. The very first thing I wrote for the *Times*, even before I started freelancing for them, was a long letter to the editor. This was 1959. The Sunday art section had a praising review of a photography show of a modernist housing project in Caracas. I had just been there and saw the project and the residents were having a terrible time—these were people from the countryside, having to deal with elevators and an alien type of architecture. The paper published my letter in full. Not long afterward, I got to do a cover story for the magazine, on the Guggenheim. I was terrified.

You were freelancing for the *Times* before they named you the critic. What shaped your story ideas and why do you think they grabbed your editors' attention?
I felt New Yorkers were entitled to more than they were getting from developers. There was so much building in the city but there was a total lack of understanding or care about architecture. I had just gotten married and my husband [industrial designer Garth Huxtable] was part of the team designing the interiors of the United Nations. I was just fascinated with architecture and construction.

The *Times* had plenty of real estate coverage. There were constant press releases about new buildings, all full of praise. These all came from real estate developers; at that time, there were no publicists for architecture. And I'd go to the editor and say, "Good buildings don't just grow on trees, you know."

One day I walked in to see Lester Markel, who ran the Sunday magazine. I remember I had a notebook with a list of all the stories the *Times* was missing. Well, you tell an editor what he's missing, and he pays attention. I was a young, brash, believing woman. You have to be very naïve. I was fixated on what I was interested in, so it didn't occur to me that you didn't barge in on an editor and ask for what you wanted. You have to give the *Times* a lot of credit.

How much input did your editors have in what you wrote?
Because they didn't know anything about the subject, they pretty much took anything I would suggest. And papers are always hungry for copy. Remember, too, this was a time of urban renewal and the total destruction of Lower Manhattan, when the beautiful warehouses on Front Street were being torn out for street-widening and Greenwich Village was being threatened. Most of the writing was crisis-oriented. You were crusading.

The paper didn't think we could do opinion pieces unless we first reported the facts of a story, so I would write news stories and appraisals that would appear in the daily newspaper. Then my critical columns appeared on Sunday. My criticism pieces were never edited because I was given the title of critic immediately. I don't know how it is at the *Times* today but back then, critics were edited for length and style. They never meddled with content.

After 10 years, they invited me to join the editorial board. I stopped writing for the daily paper and only wrote the Sunday opinion. That's when they hired Paul Goldberger to write for the daily paper.

How has the role of the architecture critic changed over the years?
The role is the same but the emphasis has changed. A critic has a lot of responsibility. It is largely informational and educational—to let the public know what's going on in the large and small issues and to let them know the difference between good and bad, how to distinguish a work of art. Today, I think the emphasis is too much on chasing celebrities, which has emerged all through society.

I want people to understand that architecture is an art. It's been my life's battle, to increase awareness of the field. But the way things have gone... don't wish for what you ask for! Architecture is definitely more in the public eye today than before, but I don't think it's understood any better.

How do you deal with any controversy your pieces elicited?
It was always difficult but I'm not capable of doing anything else. I'm of a generation that was not brought up to work in a man's world, to deal with jealousies—I'm fairly thin-skinned. But the *Times* was always wonderful. There were times that powerful people demanded meetings with the publisher to **continued on page 21**

JOAN OCKMAN READS THE DAILIES AND FINDS CRITICISM THAT'S FLUENT, FORCEFUL, AND SOMETIMES FLAT.

Fewer than 45 of the approximately 140 newspapers in the United States, with a daily circulation over 75,000 have architecture critics, according to a 2001 survey by the National Arts Journalism Program (NAJP) at Columbia University and only a third of them pursue architecture criticism full-time. Amazingly, cities like Houston, Detroit, and Las Vegas—places that have undergone huge building booms in recent years—lack a regular architecture voice. Of the papers that do have critics, half feature fewer than two dozen stories a year; that's less than one every two weeks. And while architecture implicates not just aesthetics and culture but so much else—political economy, ecology, social welfare—these stories are normally relegated to Arts, Style, or Home sections. Thus, as the NAJP study concludes, "major buildings and developments routinely go up with no public discourse on their practical or aesthetic merits—the most public of art forms receives the least amount of arts coverage." (The study was overseen by András Szántó, director of the now defunct NAJP.)

If this state of affairs is lamentable, it's necessary to acknowledge that architecture journalism for the mass public has long been a rarity in this country, with notable exceptions like Montgomery Schuyler at the New York World in the late 19th century and Lewis Mumford at *The New Yorker* during the middle decades of the twentieth. It was Ada Louise Huxtable, beginning her tenure at *The New York Times* in 1963 amid that decade's urban upheavals and preservation battles, who coalesced a wide audience for engaged and outspoken architectural criticism. Today, while the issues affecting the built environment are no less contentious or ripe for debate, architecture criticism in its various local venues inevitably finds itself inflected, and distracted, by a far more advanced and globalized culture industry.

The following brief survey of four contemporary critics at high-profile American newspapers is based largely on a reading of articles published over the last year:

Robert Campbell has been architecture critic at the *Boston Globe* since 1974. Trained as an architect—he received his MArch from Harvard's GSD in 1967—Campbell, now 68, garnered the third architecture Pulitzer (after Huxtable and Paul Goldberger) in 1996 for his "knowledgeable writing on architecture." His short-ish articles are conversational, descriptive, and well-mannered. He complains about "conservative Boston" while at the same time betraying a constitutional mistrust of avant-garde "pizzazz"; his taste runs to "plain old-fashioned modernism." This doesn't prevent him from acknowledging that Steven Holl's new Simmons dormitory at MIT, if perhaps "too inventive," is daring and beautiful; he likewise reserves final judgment on Gehry's Stata Center, which, despite appearances of being "a big, arbitrary sculpture," reflects "serious thinking about how people live and work." He frequently covers significant events outside Boston, but writes most often and generously about lesser-known architects at home. His interest in architecture as a register of urban and social history is reflected in a regular "city scenes" feature for the Sunday magazine section on which he collaborates with photographer Peter Vanderwarker.

Blair Kamin is strongly civic-minded and devoted to nurturing architecture culture in his home city. A self-proclaimed "activist critic," he uses the platform he has held at the *Chicago Tribune* since 1992 not as a bully pulpit so much as a lectern

Because the entitlements of loss and grief are the third rail of the [WTC] rebuilding effort, no one has challenged the subversion of the aims and intent of the plan. The parts that speak of hope and the future have not been able to survive the pressure for a single-minded commitment to the tragic past ... No one has had the courage, or conviction, to demand that the arts be restored to their proper place as one of the city's greatest strengths and a source of its spiritual continuity. We have lost what we hoped to gain—a creative rebirth downtown. At Ground Zero, what should be first is last. An affirmation of life is being reduced to a culture of death.
Ada Louise Huxtable, *Wall Street Journal*, April 20, 2005

Rem Koolhaas ... now the most overexposed architect since Frank Gehry, is likely to be the token avant-garde contestant. He has already declared his interest ... "I seem to be one of the few architects who liked enormously the World Trade Center ..." Self-serving though that tribute to Minoru Yamaski's behemoths may sound, Koolhaas has indeed always indulged a perverse weakness for Nelson Rockefeller's most bombastic architectural boondoggles, particularly those designed by his court architect Wallace K. Harrison, to whose chilly 1950s-style urbanism he paid homage in his retrograde master plan for the French city of Lille.
Martin Filler, *The New Republic*, September 6, 2002

How skyscrapers meet the ground is as important as how they scrape the sky. It is not encouraging that Calatrava's tower will emerge from a tiered, four-story podium like a stripper popping out of a cake. That is a crude way to bring a skyscraper to the street. It makes this tower resemble a piece of sculpture on a pedestal, fit for an on-the-make, look-at-me Persian Gulf boomtown like Dubai. But this is Chicago, where we don't need to put ourselves on the map. We need great architecture—and the thoughtful civic debate that is essential to creating it.
Blair Kamin, *Chicago Tribune*, July 27, 2005

We have high expectations of our best artists because their work and words carry special weight. It is not possible to build this project [Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem] without an opinion on larger issues—real issues of tolerance—in the region. What is Gehry's? This is not a question of the use of titanium versus Jerusalem stone. It is one of justice.
Michael Sorkin, *Architectural Record*, June 2004

ALLAN TEMKO

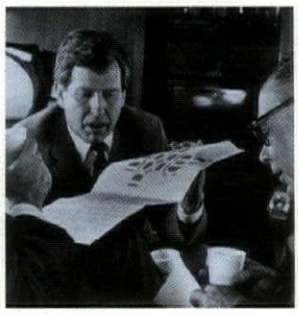
When Allan Temko started writing for the *San Francisco Chronicle* in the early 1960s, he didn't see himself as a regional critic, despite outsiders' perceptions to the contrary. Back then, the city was a fast-growing metropolis, the Golden State's financial capital. But Temko hardly limited his writings to the region. He wrote a book on Eero Saarinen and countless articles for *Architectural Forum* (he was its West Coast editor), *Horizon*, and other magazines. Still, Temko, now 81, is best known as an activist who unhesitatingly took on anything that threatened the Bay Area's soul—the first designs for the San Mateo Bridge, for example, and the horrendous plan to criss-cross San Francisco with freeways. Without Temko's voice, the Bay Area would be markedly different, and decidedly less beautiful, today.

Fifteen years have passed since Temko, now 81, left his post. One realizes, talking with him, that the people he wrote about were often his friends, despite his reputation for making enemies. He was admired, even by his targets, for his ability to place design in a cultural context he so clearly loved.

How did you become a critic?
When I left Columbia University in 1947, my professors helped me get an American Lectureship at the Sorbonne. I was in France, teaching American literature, for seven years. Most of this time, I looked at Gothic churches, which to me had everything—rational structure and daring new forms to suit new conditions. But I also saw modern architecture, like Le Corbusier's. Because there was no good book in English on Notre Dame, I wrote one. [It was published by Viking Press in 1955.] Lewis Mumford edited it. When I returned to the U.S., he suggested I do what he was doing for the *New Yorker*, but for a mass audience. I knew the executive editor of the *Chronicle*, Scott Newhall, so I went there.

What's changed since then?
In the 1950s and '60s, people talked about painters, sculptors, and politics. Now they talk about buildings, spaces, and important environmental problems. The need for good criticism has never been greater, but if you look around, it seems mighty sparse. There are some outstanding critics, like Blair Kamin of the *Chicago Tribune*, but not many writing today understand activist criticism—the need to get out there and fight with fang and claw. With a big metropolitan paper, you can accomplish a good deal. Looking back, we were much better at stopping bad things than creating good things, but we were far ahead of other metropolitan areas, especially when you consider our resources. One big difference between being the critic of the *Chronicle* and being one for a great newspaper like *The New York Times* is that New York is really unmanageable. Here, it was possible to have an effect—to stop the freeways and keep Fort Mason and the Presidio from being ruined.

How were you edited at the *Chronicle*?
Newhall read my things. So did the city guys, the assistant managing editors, and if they couldn't understand something, I'd rewrite it. They were good stand-ins for the public. Newhall encouraged me to be controversial and shielded me **continued on page 16**



From "Colossal Boondoggle: San Francisco's Airport Mess"
***San Francisco Chronicle*, April 20, 1964**
Allan Temko

All that is maddeningly incompetent, stupidly complacent, brutally insensitive and almost incredibly extravagant in San Francisco—a city that perhaps did "know how" to build in William Howard Taft's time, but would be hard-pressed to erect a decent municipal doghouse today—is epitomized in our "New Era Airport," which in fact is one of the most old-fangled, inconvenient, and wastefully designed air facilities in the nation.

As a gateway to San Francisco, it should be blazoned with the inscription of Dante's Inferno: "Abandon all hope, ye that enter." For if this is the best we can do in the way of large public works that, precisely because of their staggering cost, are supposed to serve long-time needs, we had better give up hope for the future environment in this part of the world.

Rather than inaugurating a new era, this sprawling assemblage of malconceived and coarsely executed structures is already obsolete. Almost certainly the entire terminal—which even in its unfinished state measures about half a mile from end to end, and may yet be extended farther—will have to be extensively rebuilt if not totally demolished when the supersonic jets go into operation. Yet by rough estimate the city has thus far sank $45 million in terminal and parking facilities alone, and the end is not in sight.

The Public Utilities Commission—a veritable citadel of mediocrity—is cheerfully prepared to spend as much again, or more, to complete the "master plan," which to me is not a plan at all, but a gross improvisation at the taxpayers' expense.

Surely this colossal boondoggle warrants a Grand Jury investigation, such as the one which yielded such fascinating information concerning the genesis of the late Charles Harney's multimillion-dollar beauty, Candlestick Park.

But the public is entitled to know who, precisely, made the efforts which saddled the city with the most unwieldy airport of its size in the country, and why a comparable metropolis, Washington, D.C., obtained at substantially lower cost a resplendent terminal in every way vastly superior to our own. Above all, we should find out what is wrong with the building procedures of the city government, and try to set them right before more damage is perpetrated. For in recent years we have been suffering from an onslaught of architectural butchery that might be likened to a St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, administered by self-righteous hacks.

The airport, in truth, is merely one of a series of so-called civic improvements—the Geary Street expressway is another, and so is the new Hall of Justice, which is the most unjust building in town—which re really public excrescences.

from which to educate the public and to prod architects and municipal officials in socially constructive directions. A graduate of Yale's Master's of Environmental Design program and, like Campbell, a Pulitzer Prize winner (in 1999), the 48-year-old critic has collected his articles of the last decade in a book, *Why Architecture Matters: Lessons from Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), that reflects his broad-based but Chicago-centric concerns. Didactic, thoughtful, and judicious, he is given to relative judgments and careful distinctions. Less concerned with architectural form-making as such than its impact on people, he dwells on how skyscrapers meet the ground, the livability of tall buildings, the urban vibrancy produced by the clash of styles in Chicago's downtown. At the same time, in a city dominated during the 1990s by its mayor's retro tastes in civic improvement, he often finds himself arguing for contemporary aesthetics. But the shoddy detailing at IIT's Campus Center irks him, notwithstanding the brilliance of Rem Koolhaas' conception.

Nicolai Ouroussoff is younger than Kamin, at 43. Educated at Columbia's architecture school, he was anointed Herbert Muschamp's successor at *The New York Times* in the summer of 2004. Muschamp's departure was accompanied by demands for a less star-obsessed, more ecumenical replacement. Ouroussoff was quickly presumed to be in the same mold as his predecessor, however, albeit not as self-involved or flamboyant. Indeed, one of Ouroussoff's debut articles, entitled "The New New York Skyline," applauding a trio of luxury towers by Richard Meier, Santiago Calatrava, and Frank Gehry, picked up seamlessly, jumping on Muschamp's favorite hobbyhorse: "Manhattan's skyline was once a monument to the relentless forces of modernity, but for decades now the city's reputation as a center of architectural experimentation has been losing ground to London, Barcelona, Beijing, and Shanghai ..." Similarly Muschampian was a shrill attack on MoMA's architectural leadership and, in a tribute to Philip Johnson, a description of the Four Seasons as one of the sexiest rooms in the city, with "beaded steel curtains that conjure up a woman's slip"—an embarrassing echo of Herbert's evocation of the Guggenheim Bilbao in terms of Marilyn Monroe's skirts. If Koolhaas for years dominated Muschamp's fevered imagination, Ouroussoff's admiration for Gehry and Thom Mayne has likewise already occasioned a lot of New York newsprint. Nor have international celebrities like Herzog & de Meuron and Coop Himmelb(l)au escaped his appreciative attention as, befitting a paper that sees its beat as the whole world, Ouroussoff has begun to file from offshore datelines. At the same time, a string of recent pieces reflecting a firsthand look at New Orleans, and more generally on preservation and urban revitalization issues from Cairo to Columbus Circle and Ground Zero, are evidence of his willingness to take on challenging issues beyond aesthetics.

Christopher Hawthorne, the youngest of the four critics at 35, was appointed to his post at the *Los Angeles Times* after Ouroussoff's elevation to New York. A graduate of Yale architecture school, he was previously architecture critic a *Slate.com*. Hawthorne writes lucidly and forcefully, appreciates the complexities of urban planning and the pragmatics of building construction, and doesn't hesitate to tackle intractable issues like the politics of sprawl. He is interested in the back story, and not afraid to state his opinion, even if it's unlikely to win friends. He reserves a certain irony with respect to "high-wattage" architecture, as he calls it—not that he's hostile to it, just streetwise enough not to swallow it whole. Hawthorne effortlessly **continued on page 21**

ALLAN TEMKO continued from page 15 from the owners. When the architect of Pier 39, Sandy Walker, sued me for $2 million, the *Chronicle* defended me. Actually, Bill German, then the executive editor, told me that if I lost, the paper would pay half! The suit was thrown out, but Walker appealed. When I learned that the case was back in court, I asked *Chronicle* executive Phelps Dewey why I hadn't been told. "We want to win this thing," he replied.

When you're trying to stop something, you have to go straight for the jugular. Most critics today don't have that instinct—but neither do their papers. I'm vain enough to think that I could have stopped the whole Bay Bridge fiasco if I hadn't been ill.

What influenced you as a critic?

My years in France led me to see art and architecture as expressions of great civilizations. I always cared about heightening the public's sensibility. I wrote for the educated public, but I wanted everyone else to be able to understand my articles and enjoy them.

I saw my role as achieving better design for the whole region. I might have been the only architecture critic in this period who looked at cities at a larger scale—even as large as, say, the Bay Area's seashore, which became a national park. Today, you can walk on public land along the ocean for 50 miles north and south of San Francisco. That wouldn't have happened without people fighting for it, and stopping things like the nuclear reactor that PG&E wanted to put on Bodega Head. I played a big part in these initiatives, writing articles and then getting the *Chronicle* behind them. They were great victories. But I took on causes that ran the gamut—protecting Frank Lloyd Wright's store on Maiden Lane from retrofitting, sparing Market Street the mediocrity of the early design for San Francisco Center, taking Silicon Valley seriously, helping make the Presidio a national park. That's an appropriate range for a critic.

Did you make enemies?

Sometimes I was a bit harsh. People say I was brave, but that wasn't the point. It sold newspapers. It still would today but, despite media's resources, there's still not enough serious coverage of architecture and planning. One big difference is that when I was writing, I was often speaking for the paper as an institution. I would write a critical piece and then I would write an unsigned editorial for the *Chronicle* that supported my stance. Without that endorsement, there's no way I could have accomplished what I did.

What do you think of today's critics?

There are very few people writing things that you'd remember the next day. Part of our purpose, after all, is to be entertaining.

Architecture is like tennis—there's a small group playing at Wimbledon, and the rest are playing on the neighborhood courts. Which is not to say that the small courts don't have big players. When I started as a critic, San Francisco was a magnet for good architects. Richard Rogers was among them—he appeared on my doorstep one summer, saying, "Lewis Mumford sent me," and I got Chuck Bassett to sign him on at SOM. That influx of talent gave us Bassett in my generation and Stanley Saitowitz in the next—architects whose work is original and unique but which also reflects what they found here.

JOHN PARMAN CO-EDITS "COMMENTARY" FOR SAN FRANCISCO'S *LINE* (WWW.LINEMAG.ORG).

From "Green Monster: A Startling Addition to Astor Place"
***The New Yorker*, May 2, 2005**
Paul Goldberger

The first thing you think when you see the new luxury apartment building at Astor Place—a slick, undulating tower clad in sparkly green glass—is that it doesn't belong in the neighborhood. The tone of Astor Place is set by places like Cooper Union, the Public Theatre, and the gargantuan former Wanamaker store on Broadway: heavy, brawny blocks of masonry that sit foursquare on the ground. Louis Sullivan once described one of Henry Hobson Richardson's great stone buildings as a man with "virile force—broad, vigorous, and with a whelm of energy." The new building, designed by Charles Gwathmey, is an elf prancing among men.

Of course, cities are often enriched by architecture that seems, at first, to be alien: the pristine glass towers of Mies van der Rohe and the sylphlike bridges of Santiago Calatrava have brought grace to countless harsh, older cityscapes. But this new building, which is on one of the most prominent sites in lower Manhattan, does not have a transforming effect. If, as Vincent Scully proposed, architecture is a conversation between generations, this young intruder hasn't much to say to its neighbors. Its shape is fussy, and the glass façade is garishly reflective: Mies van der Rohe as filtered through Donald Trump. Instead of adding a lyrical counterpoint to Astor Place, the tower disrupts the neighborhood's rhythm.

In an inelegant way, Gwathmey's building has exposed a truth about this part of lower Manhattan: inside those rough-and-tumble old masonry buildings is a lot of wealth. By designing a tower with such a self-conscious shimmer, the architect has destroyed the illusion that this neighborhood, which underwent gentrification long ago, is now anything other than a place for the rich. The thirty-nine apartments inside the Gwathmey building start at $2 million.

It is a paradox of the New York real estate market that nothing breeds gentility like harsh surroundings. Once, it all happened indoors—grimy factory floors in SoHo became expensive lofts. Sleekness was a private pleasure, not a public display. But the pair of exceptionally elegant glass towers designed by Richard Meier that went up on the western reaches of Greenwich Village a few years ago changed the rules. High-gloss modernism, preferably attached to the signature of a famous architect and dropped into an old industrial streetscape, became the hottest thing in Manhattan apartment architecture since Emery Roth invented the foyer.

PAUL GOLDBERGER

Paul Goldberger joined the staff of *The New York Times* in 1972 at the age of 22, and a year later was named architecture critic of the daily paper. For nearly 10 years, Goldberger was the junior critic under the paper's esteemed senior critic, Ada Louise Huxtable. Shortly after ascending to the role of chief critic in 1982, he won a Pulitzer Prize (in 1984). As critic for nearly 25 years at the newspaper of record, Goldberger was often a champion for architectural values in the civic realm and at other times, an easy target for those who considered his views one and the same with the *Times*. During the heady 1980s, he was one of the few critics who wrote favorably about postmodernism, fueling a lively debate that pushed architecture further into the public's consciousness.

In 1997, Goldberger left his *New York Times* post to succeed Brendan Gill as the *New Yorker*'s architecture critic, a position he holds today, simultaneously serving as dean at Parsons the New School of Design. Goldberger has proven to be one of the most prolific and long-standing critical voices in New York.

He is the author of several books, including most recently *Up From Zero: Politics, Architecture, and the Rebuilding of New York* (Random House, 2004).

How did you get started in criticism?

I had been interested in architecture since I was a kid. I remember when, once for my birthday, some family friends gave me a subscription to *Progressive Architecture*, which I found amazing. I didn't understand what was in it but I read most of it and found it very enticing.

I love architecture and I love journalism. And I wasn't very good at making up my mind about which of those professions I wanted to pursue because each one seemed to exclude the other. So I was lucky enough to find the place where they intersected.

Who influenced your criticism?

I went to Yale and studied architecture with Vincent Scully, who played a huge role in shaping my sensibility. If my eye was formed by anybody, it was Scully more than any other individual.

How did you end up at the *Times*?

I went to the *Times* first as an editorial assistant on the Sunday magazine. And I really missed architecture, and then I started to do freelance architecture pieces for the *Times* and elsewhere. But I was increasingly restless being away from architecture. And then I had an amazing opportunity, which was the chance to move within the *Times*, to become the architecture critic.

That's quite a leap.

It *was* quite a leap. I use the word lucky a few times. At the time, Ada Louise Huxtable was at the *Times*. She had been there for many years but she was moving to a new assignment—part time on the editorial board, and part time, she would continue to be the senior architecture critic. So they were very deliberately looking for someone who would be a number two to her. Not someone who had a huge independent reputation. If I had had a more established reputation, I might not have gotten the job. My guess is that she

MARISA BARTOLUCCI READS THE TRADES AND SPECIAL-INTEREST MAGAZINES, AND SYMPATHIZES WITH ARCHITECTS WHO SAY THEY DON'T.

This era of kaleidoscopic change shouts out for sagacious critics. We need them to parse the shifting scene and discern imaginative and ethical architectural responses. Yet the critical offerings in general interest magazines and the architectural trades are scant. Why some choose to feature criticism, and others don't is baffling—and depressing. With so much development going on in the city, how can *New York* magazine be without a critic?

Of what's available, according to this writer's informal poll, little of it is read by architects. Why? Insipid and irrelevant is a common claim. Maybe that's why not long ago a readers' survey at *Architecture* magazine revealed that its most widely read sections were the editorial and protest pages—the only places serving up opinion on topical matters.

After perusing an admittedly haphazard sampling of criticism in trade and other special-interest media (i.e., literary, shelter, or weekly publications), I contend there is work out there that's penetrating in analysis, even pertinent to private practice, although little is exhilarating in vision.

Alas, there's no Lewis Mumford on the horizon. (And that may be the fault of magazine editors—good critics need nurturing.) The Skyline column in *The New Yorker* long served as the podium for that great thinker. From its heights, he championed Frank Lloyd Wright when others declared him dated; warned against technology dominating human purpose; and railed against the mediocrity of the design for the United Nations Headquarters. (How little things change.)

Today a critic dubbed "the great equivocator" occupies that podium. Although he wields great power, Paul Goldberger seldom strays from consensus views. On occasion, when he does advocate, people listen. A recent article urging that the present plan for Ground Zero be dumped in favor of incorporating cutting-edge residential architecture may have helped galvanize Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg to make noises about wresting control of the project.

But if we are not to find challenging architectural criticism in *The New Yorker*, where else can we look? To the online opinionmaker *Slate.com*? There, the professorial Witold Rybczynski regularly teaches Beltway readers how to evaluate buildings and understand the forces that shape them. His brief essays range from book reviews to project critiques. An article on why architect-designed emergency housing seldom works was right on the money. But his taste is stale: He applauded David Child's latest version of the Freedom Tower as the best yet.

Until recently, Martin Filler held forth at *The New Republic*. Why he has absented that post is a mystery and a loss. He is a terrific critic. Flinty principle sparks his writing, which is subtle, but mordant. He insists that great architecture encompasses more than aesthetics. He doesn't shirk from attacking big names.

If the decision makers at Ground Zero had read his review of Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum they might not have mistaken schmaltz for architecture. In a prescient line about the museum, Filler summed up all that would be wrong with Libeskind's Freedom Tower plan: "There is such a thing as architecture being too artful for its avowed function, and the Jewish Museum in Berlin is a fine illustration of that conundrum."

While at *The New Republic*, Filler tackled the usual celebrity suspects—probably the only ones his Washington-focused editors considered worthy. Every so often, for *The New York Review of Books*, he con-

encouraged her bosses to choose somebody who would be quite junior to her, so there's no question who the senior voice was. And I fit the bill.

How did you go about picking your topics?
I was young, eager, loved the opportunity to put my passions into print and would do anything. And the *Times* had, and still has, a vast appetite for copy. The needs were enormous. I recall very few instances of being told "No, it's not a good idea. Don't do it."

When you wrote a review, did they ever question your opinion?
I don't remember that happening too many times. The *Times* has traditionally been pretty good about backing its critics. I recall having two arguments with the executive editor while I was there. One was a piece about the Art and Architecture building at Yale. The editors thought it was too arcane. It was the only time I was ever told that. I was never told that about my writing any other time.

There was another thing that had nothing to do with the newspaper—a freelance piece in another magazine about the truly wretched design of the *Times* newsroom. This was the first time they re-did it to accommodate the first generation of computers. Big carpets, tile floors and horrible lighting, and fake-wood Formica furniture. It was really tacky. The executive editor was quite upset, and thought I was disloyal. As an employee, I was supposed to say positive things about newspaper, no matter what.

When you were starting out, were you self-conscious about the role or responsibility of an architecture critic?
An architecture critic has a lot of authority but not much real power. Power is a much more raw and direct force. Authority is respect and trust. I don't think architecture critics have the power. It used to be said that *The New York Times* theater critic can close a Broadway show. Well, that's power. But nobody tears down a building if an architecture critic doesn't like it.

The most important responsibility of the critic is not to be stupid, not to be vicious, and not to be ad hominem. And I don't believe I've ever been any of those things as a critic. I was never interested in attacking people as people—I only wanted to discuss the work. Negative reviews are often interpreted as personal attacks, which obviously they are not.

Frankly, as I look back at what I did at the *Times*, I am proud of all of it. The things I might redo are not the times when I was too harsh on something, but situations where I think I was too kind and too generous, too patient and too forgiving.

You're willing to admit you're wrong?
I've been wrong on some things. I think I've been a little bit too generous about good intentions. Therefore what errors in judgment I've made over the years have come from the mistake of putting too much weight on good intentions, which can bring bad results.

What's the most important quality for a critic?
I would say a combination of a passion and a thick skin—two things that don't always go together. Angry responses or reactions are part of the territory. I am the happiest when people realize I'm just doing my job. I would hope [angry readers] would not personally direct their anger to me.

Speaking of having a thick skin, are you friendly with Michael Sorkin today?
Yes, we actually are. I have great respect for him. The issue on which we probably had our nastiest arguments was Times Square, many, many years ago. And that's probably—if I were going to give you any example where my inclination to think in terms of good intentions rather than results was most manifest—it was in my writing on Times Square. I was far too slow to realize how badly conceived that project was, and how bad [Philip] Johnson's design was initially. I don't believe I was wrong in thinking that the basic premise of the master plan was basically right—it was basically right. The basic design schemes were terrible, and I was much too forgiving of them.

Was it the thick of postmodernism that clouded your judgment?
I think that might be right. And I think I was probably a bit more forgiving of postmodernism in general, too, because that, too, was about intentions. In the end, most of that stuff was no more than transition architecture to wean us away from something. Now we've come to a much more mature modernism, a more intelligent modernism.

How has the role of the critic changed since you've left the *Times*?
Everyone interprets the role differently. I don't think the role or obligation changes very much. The critic of the *Times* plays a very central role in the civic dialogue of New York.

How is your job different now writing for a weekly magazine?
It's very different. At *The New Yorker*, we don't try or aspire to be exhaustive. We don't try to cover everything. *The New York Times* has an obligation to cover everything. It's like, "If a tree falls in the forest and *Times* is not there to write about it, does it make a sound?" It can tire you out after a while. But at the *New Yorker*, we just write about what interests us, and what, over the course of the year, would make interesting types of pieces.

ANDREW YANG IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT *AN*.

MICHAEL SORKIN

Michael Sorkin started his career in criticism writing for the *Village Voice* in 1978 and went on to write the alternative weekly's architecture column for ten years. In the *Voice*'s permissive, free-wheeling editorial environment, he developed an unflinching, pugnacious writing style—indebted as much to the gonzo journalists of the 1960s as to iconoclasts in the design fields, from Archigram to Jane Jacobs to Robert Venturi. He quickly became notorious as a silver-tongued antagonist of the architectural elite. Taking Philip Johnson to task for his Nazi past, as well as admonishing *The New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger (one of his unforgettable pieces was titled "Why Paul Goldberger Is So Bad: The Case of Times Square"), Sorkin is the embodiment of the fearless critic, becoming a hero to many (and a thorn in the side of a few).

Since his *Voice* days, Sorkin, now 57, has continued to write, as well as practice and teach. In all his work, he has consistently championed environmental issues, sustainability, and social justice. With his regular contributions to the Critique column in *Architectural Record*, Sorkin continues to serve as the profession's voice of outrage—and of moral reason.

Currently, he serves as director of the Graduate Program in Urban Design at CCNY, a program that he founded. His New York–based architectural practice, Michael Sorkin Studio, continues to promulgate his idealist, socialist vision in both practical and theoretical projects. His *Village Voice* columns are anthologized in *Exquisite Corpse* (Verso, 1991) and most recent book is *Starting From Zero: Reconstructing Downtown New York* (Routledge, 2003) and he is currently preparing five other titles, including *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State* (Routledge), *Work on the City* (Monacelli), and *Fifteen Minutes in Manhattan* (Reaktion Press).

Why and how did you get started as an architecture critic?
I first started writing about architecture in college, but I had always been interested. My mother gave me a copy of [Lewis] Mumford's *The City in History* when it first came out, which was always a touchstone for me. For years I thought Vallingby [the Swedish sustainable New Town] was the omega point of urban civilization. Fortunately, I finally saw it! Having always been interested in both architecture and writing, criticism was a natural progression. When I got to New York I quickly started writing for the *Village Voice*, which allowed me to indulge another of my ardors, left-wing politics.

Do you feel that left politics was much more of a cultural motivator when you started? And did that carry over into the architecture writing of the era?
Absolutely. I was under the spell of the doughty Marxism of the day. But there was very little architecture writing at the time—almost none in the daily press. Ada Louise Huxtable was the major exception, but there was very little architectural journalism in general. There were a few influential documents around—*Archigram* magazine, *The Whole Earth Catalogue*, and *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*—that were beginning to unsettle the moribund architectural climate from very different directions.

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tributes long, probing essays on subjects like the rebuilding of Berlin or the rebuilding of Ground Zero. These pieces allow him to show off his ample erudition and his fine eye. Architects, take a subscription.

Meanwhile, in his bimonthly column for shelter magazine *House & Garden*, his choice of subjects has been eclectic, ranging from a celebration of the planned community of Radburn, New Jersey, to a trenchant critique of Yoshio Taniguichi's Museum of Modern Art. "The big new MoMA amounts to little, architecturally," he writes. "It is no small irony that the museum that codified the International Style and thus exerted a profound influence on 20th-century architecture again finds itself in a building markedly less distinguished than the unequaled modern treasures it contains."

Filler's unflinching assessment is noteworthy in light of the vacillating judgments of his peers. In *Architectural Record*, Suzanne Stephens intrepidly enumerated the $450 million building's numerous flaws, but in the end, still heaped on the praise: "It's what the Modern always wanted to be." Is it any wonder why practitioners don't read these journals? Reportedly, even Taniguchi is disappointed.

At this architecture tabloid, Julie Iovine brings bracing realism to her new Crit column. Last July, she took a detached look at the sudden wave of wildly ambitious urban development schemes being proposed for the city and their suspiciously enthusiastic civic and critical embrace. If such clear-thinking, straight-talking works are what's ahead, this column may become a must-read.

But few publications provide the gritty evaluations of what works and what doesn't—the information architects crave because it relates to their practices. This should be a service of the trades, as important as their reporting on the latest developments in materials and building science. Instead, they focus only on presenting glossy images of flashy, big-name projects. These are carefully described, but only superficially assessed. Rushing to publish as soon as the last nail is hammered, as if buildings were the latest Paris fashions, leaves little time to gather reports on how a building functions. Without such information how can true judgments be made of an architect's achievements, both aesthetic and technical?

Architectural Record's regular Critique column features alternating essays by Robert Campbell and Michael Sorkin, which ruminate more than provoke. But sometimes sparks do fly. Last April, Campbell carped about the notion of architecture as symbol. Two issues later, Sorkin ambushed him. It wasn't sporting, but in a series of dazzlingly erudite thrusts and parries, he shredded Campbell's argument.

Face-offs like these energize everyone's critical thinking. Last June, *The Prospect*, a British monthly, published a series of letters between Deyan Sudjic and Charles Jencks debating, coincidentally, the merits of iconic architecture. Following the divergence and convergence of their views on subjects ranging from aesthetics to professional ethics was fascinating.

The most brilliant critic on our shores may be Sorkin. His essays can take you on a thrill ride through learned discourse, lefty idealism, pop culture, and occasionally, Jewish shtick. Why he never won a Pulitzer when he was at the *Village Voice* is a scandal. (Huxtable, Temko, Goldberger, Campbell, and Kamin all have them.) Sorkin may be a smarty pants, but he is fearless. He skewered Philip Johnson when he was architecture's éminence grise. (Most critics waited until after his death to bury him.) A year ago, Sorkin called Frank Gehry on the moral incongruity of designing a satellite to the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem—a city with little tolerance for its

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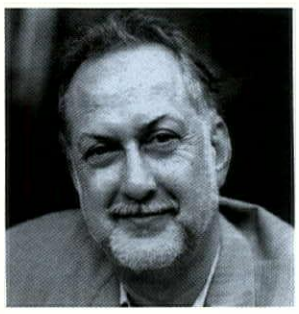


From "Let a Hundred Styles Blossom"
***The Village Voice*, March 19, 1979**
Michael Sorkin

Reports of the death of modern architecture appear to have been greatly exaggerated. This, at any rate, seems to be the drift of the Museum of Modern Art's newly hung *Transformations in Modern Architecture*. The show has been breathlessly awaited by the architecture set for many years. When, everyone wondered, would Architecture and Design director Arthur Drexler make his move? While fierce controversy roiled over the fate of the modern movement, the museum remained strangely quiescent, almost aloof. The factions raged furiously, each hoping to win the museum to its cause. After all, MoMA virtually made "modern architecture" in America with its famous show of 1932, and a likewise definitive stand could conceivably have a similar impact today. For Drexler, the opportunity was enormous.

But so was the pressure. Anybody with any sense knew that old-fashioned modern architecture, with all its imputed evils, had to go, but what would replace it? The megastructural maniacs seemed to have been suppressed but did that mean that we were to have the quaint eclecticists or the nouveau neo-classicists? All that was certain was that everyone, except the most unreconstructed Miesians, was yapping for a change...

Still, MoMA temporized, hedging its bets, keeping up but never summing up...All hope for clarification was pinned on *Transformations*. Designers trembled over drafting tables, pens nervously poised, waiting to be told what to do next. Expectation was apoplectic; fortunes hung in the balance. Seventh Avenue shows a collection every season and the air is electric every time. The Architecture and Design Department makes a major statement only a few times in a lifespan. What was the word to be?

Alas, MoMA copped out. The show is like Hamlet on matte-board: Drexler couldn't make up his mind. Instead of a Cultural Revolution we get "Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom." Instead of leadership, vacillation...

Of course what's really interesting about the compilations...is who gets left out. Here, the choices get wiggy. Virtually Philip Johnson's entire oeuvre is included but not a single Alvar Aalto. Anybody could become Philip Johnson given the right historical circumstances but only Aalto could have been Aalto. Vulgarians like Harrison and Abramowitz of Albany Mall fame survive the last cut but Pier Luigi Nervi doesn't even get the court. Is this sensible? Where are those splendid Dutchmen Herman Herzberger and Aldo van Eyck? Where are Steve Baer's Zomes and Bucky's geodesics? Where is SITE? Wasn't the Guggenheim finished in 1959? Some of this seems just plain bitchy. The whole town is asking why John Hejduk's fine work is not to be found with that of the other members of the New York Five, inexplicably reduced for the occasion to Peter Eisenman, Charles Gwathmey, Richard Meier, and Michael Graves...Ultimately, though, what do Drexler's peccadilloes matter: Group shows always entail a certain amount of grievance. Let them form a *salon des refusés* if they want.

MICHAEL SORKIN continued from page 17

Did you have any other influences?
My prose style was certainly influenced by an undergraduate subscription to *Private Eye Magazine*, which authorized a certain latitude for the ad hominem, not to mention egregious punning. And then there was the triple whammy of Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, and Rachel Carson, who provide a lovely synthesis of architecture, city, and environment.

How do you choose your subjects?
I have no specific method for choosing my subjects. Part of it is looking for the social meaning of the formal. Part of it is settling scores. And part is just defending one's taste. I've always been a designer as well as a writer so part of my project has always been to advance the agenda of my fellow travelers. And the *Voice* is a local paper, so I wrote a lot about New York.

Speaking of the *Voice*, did your editors there have much input in terms of subject matter or the tenor or your articles?
Almost no input in terms of subject matter. It was quite a free situation. They were always happy when I went for the throat, of course.

Who do you consider your audience?
The profession, for starters. Many of my books are directed a little more broadly—to the remnants of the left as well as to a wider circle engaged in urban and environmental struggles. I do feel a bit parochialized, writing primarily in the architectural, rather than more broadly-based, media.

What do you see as the primary role of the architecture critic? And how has it changed?
I see my primary role as an advocate for urban civilization and the planetary environment. That's the big picture. The smaller picture is writing about people, objects, and places I love. That hasn't changed. Of course, the performance of critics fluctuates with the seasons. The majority of critics nowadays are simply flacks: There are too many fashionistas and too few street fighters. We've been taken up into the culture of branding. I think that it is possible for architecture criticism to embody resistance, but it seems in most cases that irony and analysis stops short of availing an original position. People are too accepting of the will of the leviathan and they want their piece of the action.

Do you think that the same can be said of architecture these days? In which case how do you feel about the state of architecture?
I have mixed feelings. Most architecture and criticism is driven by motives too limited, by the bottom line or branding. But both are public projects and my architectural practice and my writing are always concerned with their social effects, their contribution to a more just environment. While I don't believe that architecture creates democracy, architects aren't mindful enough of the distributive effects of planning, the way in which architecture organizes privilege and equity. I think it's important for architecture to make propaganda for a better life, to resist the horror of Bush-world. I truly loathe the smug surfer culture that seems to be in the saddle these days.

AARON SEWARD IS PROJECTS EDITOR AT *AN*.

ROBERT CAMPBELL

Since 1973, Robert Campbell has been architecture critic of *The Boston Globe* and for many years, has been a regular contributor to *Architectural Record*'s Critique column. At 68, Campbell is a consistent, informed voice on the scene, his writing enriched by his backgrounds in journalism and architecture.

In a September 2004 *Architectural Record* column, Campbell wrote, "I've always thought that a good model for any critic is Alice, the heroine of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*. Alice is constantly running into creatures who are crazy—the Queen of Hearts, the Mad Hatter, the White Rabbit—but they're crazy in a special way. They're obsessed by ideas, and they ignore real-world experience...Alice isn't fooled or overly impressed by her crazies, and neither should any critic be." Campbell's sobriety and unique insight, as one of the field's own practioners, earned him a Pulitzer Prize for distinguished criticism in 1996 and the medal for criticism from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1980.

Why and how did you begin your career as a critic?
I was an English major and I didn't want to be a professor, so I went to Columbia University and tried journalism in New York for a few years, but I didn't like it. I decided to become an architect, and got my degree from Harvard's GSD in 1967. I had no thought of writing at that point, and didn't write for many years, while I was practicing. I met an editor from *The Boston Globe* and started writing for the newspaper in 1973. There was a great deal of enthusiasm about criticism at that time. There was an interest in preservation and the era of urban renewal was ending. Ada Louise Huxtable had begun writing for *The New York Times* in the 1960s and she essentially generated a career path for many others. Other papers were adding architecture critics to their ranks, like David Dillon at the *Dallas Morning News* and Paul Goldberger, who was already writing at the the *Times* as well.

What do you feel your role is, as an architecture critic for a major daily paper and at large—advocate, observer, something else?
The architecture critic is not a consumer guide like other critics. The chief role of an architecture critic is to stimulate and participate in an ongoing conversation about the world we build and live in and what makes [projects] good or bad. When I started, as I said, there was a lot of interest. There have been periods of less interest. Today, it's hot again, but it is all about the star performer—characteristic of the media culture we're living in. This makes it incumbent on critics not to get sucked into the media whirlwind. We must weigh in on important issues. Blair Kamin does this well in Chicago.

What do you think of "activist criticism," which Kamin, as well as Allan Temko in San Francisco, advocate?
I certainly think that activist criticism is appropriate and can be a positive force. Blair Kamin and Michael Sorkin, in different ways, are doing this. It is not my temperament to take that attitude, but it's certainly a valid strategy.

What are your feelings about what's going on in architecture

VITTORIO GREGOTTI RUMINATES ON CRITICISM IN ITALY, THE EPICENTER OF ARCHITECTURAL PUBLISHING, AND ASSERTS ITS INEXTRICABLE LINK TO HISTORY.

The state of architectural criticism in Italy—and probably in much of Europe—is rooted in a theoretical attitude that belongs to the tradition of architectural history. The members of this tradition include the critics and historians of my generation, whose most important representative was Manfredo Tafuri, who was a follower of Giulio Carlo Argan, a Marxist and one-time mayor of Rome, and the most important critic and historian of modern architecture between 1930 and 1960. Two other important critics of the 20th century, albeit ones coming from a different and opposing point of view, are Leonardo Benevolo and Bruno Zevi, who despite their scholarship, were inclined to write occasionally for non-specialized publications, such as daily newspapers and weekly magazines. A special position within this generation was occupied, too, by Ernesto Nathan Rogers, known for his accomplishments as an architect, editor of *Domus*, and *Casabella*, and cultural polemicist.

In Italy, architecture critics, in the strict sense of the term (thus excluding historians and university professors of history), operate in a relatively narrow field because the mass media are not interested in the specific problems of architecture as a practice and culture. Only two daily newspapers in Italy express an ongoing critical interest in architecture: the economics newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* and the general interest *La Repubblica*. Fulvio Irace writes for the former, while I myself have been contributing to the latter for about 10 years. Of the general-interest weekly magazines, only *L'Espresso* publishes a regular column dedicated to architecture, which was written for many years written by Bruno Zevi and has been written by architect Massimiliano Fuksas since 2000. Printed articles in other daily newspapers and weekly magazines are both rare and infrequent. Italian television offers few opportunities to speak about architecture; when it does, it is usually in relationship to exceptional exhibitions or events, and done in a very general and superficial manner. When mainstream media does look at architecture, it is to gawk at technical marvels, scandalous episodes of building speculation, and sometimes sociological issues, for example, concerning housing. In recent years, the aesthetic novelties proposed by architects have also generated interest, with special focus on bizarre elements, justified by a generic idea of creativity. Such coverage tends to make architecture resemble objects of mass consumption and entertainment.

Italy naturally boasts a vast range of specialized architectural magazines: *Area*, the newest and most luxurious publication, is solidly focused on architectural construction; *Architettura, cronaca e storia*, founded by Bruno Zevi, is now decisively on the wane; *Parametro* and *Abitare*, suspended somewhere between interior design and architecture; and *Rassegna*, which has recently returned with a more aesthetic and technological focus. *Op. Cit* is a small magazine full of critical reflections that is published in Naples. *Lotus* occupies a special position because of its thematic format and its attitude towards confronting various issues on a more theoretical level. *Giornale dell'Architettura*, directed by Carlo Olmo and published every 15 days, appears to be more innovative and aimed at uniting the criticism, discipline, and politics of architecture.

Italy can boast no relevant publications by any architecture school, despite the exorbitant number of students—roughly 60,000—which is far out of proportion to the actual demand for architects in the country. There are more fashion, furni-

today—the influence of computer technology on design, the rise of sustainable design, and other developments?
Certainly, computers are important. Young people are very good at them and they can make shapes that have never been made before. They are playing a game. It's easy to dream up new shapes, but it's difficult to give them meaning.

I am very interested in the growing importance of landscape architecture and the increasing integration of architecture and landscape. As for green buildings, many are largely symbolic. The bigger issues are sprawl and energy, I think. Certainly, symbols are important, and architects should take opportunities to make high-performance buildings that are also visually exciting in ways that are not just arbitrary. The only long-term green solution involves reorganizing the patterns by which we inhabit the earth.

How do you choose your subjects? How do you converse about a subject that many people may not understand?
I intuit what I think will be interesting. No one buys tickets to see buildings, so you have to think about what purpose you serve: to get people thinking and talking about the built environment. You might write about a building because it's great, bad, or otherwise important. I choose all my own topics. As for conversing about a subject that people care about but may not understand, I do the best I can. I enjoy making things clear.

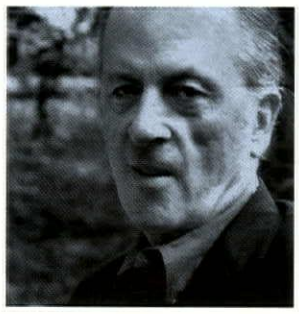
What can be done to enhance the level of architectural literacy in this country, where only 2 percent of construction involves architects?
The level of architectural literacy is going up rapidly. The subject is in the magazines and newspapers more than before. Maybe people are more interested because more of them are moving from city to city, or because they are all traveling more.

Did you ever change your mind about anything you've written?
Of course I have... many times. But I don't go back to revisit. There's not much room at a paper to say "I was wrong about that."

Do you think that having been a practicing architect gives you a special understanding as a critic?
Yes, in the same way that art historians or others bring special perspectives. I understand how collaborative architecture is, and the importance of time and money.

What critics have been significant influences for you?
Jane Jacobs was a huge influence, but beyond her, I can't really cite major architecture critics as my biggest influences. My models are from the English literature side of my background: Randall Jarrell, George Bernard Shaw, and Edmund Wilson.

You have talked about how the "single issue experts" are to blame for poorly designed cities, and that generalists—such as designers and mayors—should be running the show. Why?
I don't think traffic experts and others should be deciding issues of city design. You need a broader perspective. The age of the expert is over. I think the worship of experts is way down; even doctors and lawyers don't get the respect they once did. But I'm not sure it's been replaced by healthy collaboration. In the **continued on page 21**



From "What's Wrong With the MoMA?"
***Architectural Record*, January 2005**
Robert Campbell

A critic is supposed to stimulate a dialogue, not be one. So wrote the great Clement Greenberg.

I seem to be one of only a few critics around who wasn't crazy about the new Museum of Modern Art in New York. Maybe I'll change my tune after a few more visits—Greenberg reversed his judgments sometimes, and it's greatly to his credit—and if I do, I'll perform a mea culpa. But for now ...

It isn't that MoMA's bad. There's nothing bad about it. It's just that it isn't good enough. It's elegant, but it lacks life and imagination, and those are qualities we used to associate with modernism.

New museums often open with a blizzard of hype. It's hard for critics not to be caught up in the excitement. Years ago, that happened with I. M. Pei's East Building for the National Gallery in Washington. More recently, it happened with Herzog & de Meuron's Tate Modern in London. I didn't like either of them at the time and I still don't. And I think a consensus opinion, over the years, has borne me out. I say this despite the AIA's recent Twenty-Five Year Award to the East Building. I recall when the East Building opened, the architect Jean Paul Carlhian, who founded the AIA's Committee on Design, said, "It is an airline terminal." It was and it is, with most of the art crammed into residual spaces around the edges of a vast, self-regarding, nearly empty concourse.

Anyway, here are my problems with MoMA:

There isn't any architecture. The design architect, Yoshio Taniguchi, was quoted more than once as saying that if MoMA gave him enough money, he could make the architecture disappear. Unfortunately, he's succeeded. Most of the museum consists of an endless rabbit-warren of more or less identical white-walled galleries with track-lit ceilings. Every attempt is made to remove any sense of the presence of architecture. A typical gallery wall, for example, appears not to touch the ceiling, the floor, or the adjacent walls. Instead all surfaces are divided from one another by a thin recessed shadow line. The effect is to make the wall appear to be floating, without substance. It looks not like a wall, but like a white projection screen. The paintings on it, as a result, begin to feel like projected images. You are in the placeless, timeless world of the slide lecture. Because the wall doesn't feel real, neither does the artwork. You begin to feel unreal yourself. Architecture has failed to create a place that either the paintings or you yourself can inhabit with a sense of presence.

MoMA argues that it was trying to avoid creating a "destination building," like Frank Gehry's Bilbao, the kind of building that can upstage its contents. "It's all about the art," one curator told me. But this is a false dichotomy. The choice is not between no architecture and too much architecture. What's wanted is the right amount of architecture. Many museums—to cite a few, the Kimbell and Mellon by Kahn, the Maeght and Miro by Sert, the De Menil, Beyeler and Nasher by Piano, the Bregenz by Zumthor, the Pulitzer by Ando, the Dia: Beacon by Robert Irwin and OpenOffice—all find ways to articulate space clearly enough to give the artworks a place within which to exist.

What twins [Marilyn Monroe] and the [Guggenheim Bilbao] in my memory is that both of them stand for an American style of freedom. That style is voluptuous, emotional, intuitive, and exhibitionist. It is mobile, fluid, material, mercurial, fearless, radiant and as fragile as a newborn child. It can't resist doing a dance with all the voices that say "No." It wants to take up a lot of space. And when the impulse strikes, it likes to let its dress fly up in the air.
Herbert Muschamp, *The New York Times*, September 7, 1997

If the very idea that has, arguably more than any other, helped define Southern California for a century has been rendered obsolete, what does that mean for the region's vision of itself? Will density spell the end of the unique relationship between Angelenos and their houses? Will residential architecture simply fade as a factor in defining the city in the coming century? The great challenge for the city's residential architects over the next couple decades will be making the old model of affordable charisma fresh and relevant again for a post-sprawl (or even a post-post-sprawl) Los Angeles.
Christopher Hawthorne, *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, 2005

Even at this early stage, the [planned East River] esplanade is one of the few current projects to give voice to a young generation of architects intent on redefining our vision of the contemporary metropolis. Along with the High Line—which transforms a section of gritty elevated tracks in downtown into a public garden—it represents a clear and much-needed break from the quaint Jane Jacobs–inspired vision of New York that is threatening to transform Manhattan into a theme park version of itself, a place virtually devoid of urban tension. It proves that there are still some in the city who are culturally daring, even if their numbers at times seem to be dwindling.
Nicolai Ouroussoff, *The New York Times*, June 28, 2005

Lincoln Center has sometimes seemed less the vibrant source of the neighborhood's energy than the empty hole in the middle of the doughnut. Often there is more buzz on the sidewalk in front of the multiplex theater a couple of blocks north, or amid the parade of mall-like retail stores that now line Broadway, than there is at Lincoln Center...Lincoln Center needs, desperately, a shot of adrenaline...
Paul Goldberger, *The New Yorker*, July 7, 2003

ture, and design magazines that cover the middle ground shared by architects' activities and the problems of architecture.

The saddest story affects the country's two most important architectural magazines, which were once so influential. On the one hand, *Casabella* (which I myself edited from 1982 to 1996) has lost its traditional critical influence and position in the debate about architecture. On the other, *Domus* has assumed a conventional and modish take on architecture as fashion. *Domus* has opened itself to the strong influences of the visual arts or those who wish to substitute buildings with "events," influenced by Koolhaasian sociology of spontaneity.

If we exclude the publications that deal strictly with the history of architecture, even the history of modernist architecture, the architectural essays typically produced in Italy can be divided into two major types: monographs on currently practicing architects (Italian and non) and specifically critical essays. While the specimens in former group are over-abundant, even in the rhetoric of their editorial presentation, examples of the latter are quite rare and tend to receive much less attention. A third type of publication is the architecture exhibition catalogue. In this category, particular importance is held—in my opinion, entirely negative—by the architectural exhibitions of the Venice Biennale, the Triennale di Milano, or other elaborate, event-like productions, such the 2004 Arte e Architettura exhibition organized in Genoa by Germano Celant, who contributed to confusing architecture and the visual arts, attempting to reduce the first to the second.

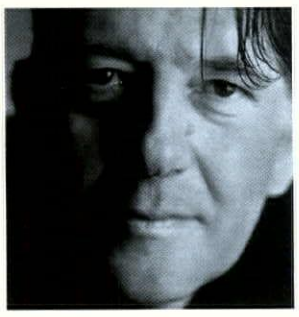
Naturally, plenty of writers are producing treatises about fashionable topics, such as computer-generated design, the politics of urban planning, ecology, or general aesthetic trends. These theoretical philosophies are, in general, hurried deductions and poorly interpreted.

The debate between ancient and modern is particularly relevant in the Italian historical-geographical context. It is contested on the one hand by the globalist and anti-contextual ideology that tends to make any work of architecture an enlarged design object, and on the other by institutions that tend to concentrate debate on single, monumental examples rather than dealing with the design of the urban environment or the landscape as an essential part of the actual construction of architecture. In this arena, Salvatore Settis is undoubtedly one of the most seriously involved figures operating at the critical level. The professor at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa and former director of the Getty Research Institute for the History of Art writes for diverse publications, including *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

Practicing architects write very little, unless it is for reasons of self-justification. If I had to name two writers who are dealing intelligently with theoretically-based issues, I would limit myself to mentioning Bernardo Secchi, who teaches urban planning at the University Institute of Architecture of Venice, for his investigations into urban and territorial issues related to the city and the landscape; and architect Franco Purini for issues dealing with the logic ofarchitectural morphology.

In any case, Italian architecture currently lives a general crisis of uncertainty. It is totally dependent on the ideologies of the global market, marginally concerned with technique and science, and hiding behind the neo-avant-gardism of the diffused aesthetic of consumerism. As a result, critical voices who understand architecture as capable of serving as the foundation for a civil society have become increasingly rare.

ARCHITECT, CITY PLANNER, AND AUTHOR, VITTORIO GREGOTTI IS THE PRINCIPAL OF GREGOTTI ASSOCIATI. HE CONTRIBUTES THE REGULAR ARCHITECTURE CRITICISM COLUMN TO *LA REPUBBLICA*.



From "Landmarks of Hope and Glory"
***The Observer*, October 26, 2003**
Deyan Sudjic

Last week the East of England Development Agency launched what it described, with Pooterish grandiloquence, as an international competition to find a "visionary plan for a landmark, or series of landmarks." The agency says it is looking for "an icon that will foster a sense of identity for the region as a whole" to underscore its message that the East of England, is "a region of ideas." All that was missing from its litany of threadbare received wisdom was a passing reference to its world-class ambitions.

No site has been specified, nor has the development agency committed any money to the project, which hardly inspires confidence, but Yasmin Shariff, an architect who is also a board member claims that this piece of wishful thinking "is a fantastic opportunity for us to come together as a region and decide how to present ourselves to the rest of the world."

It's not hard to imagine what an Angel of the East might look like, or for that matter, a Lincoln opera house, faced with titanium fish scales, designed by Frank Gehry as a free-form blob, or an eccentrically exhibitionistic Santiago Calatrava footbridge across the Cam as being the sort of structure that the agency is after. Competitions such as this have become ubiquitous, leading all but inevitably to the kind of architecture that looks best reduced to a logo on a letterhead or to the confined spaces of one of those Eiffel-Tower-in-a snow-storm paperweights. It claims to be about inspiration but ends only in the obvious. The search for the architectural icon has become the ubiquitous theme of contemporary design.

Leaving aside the wounding possibility that the rest of the world is likely to remain just as indifferent to the fate of the Fens and Humberside, however they choose to present themselves, as it has ever since the collapse of the wool trade in the Middle Ages, the agency has a fight on its hands. If it is to stand out from an endless procession of decaying industrial backwaters, rural slums, and development areas that are equally star-struck, equally determined to build the icon that will bring the world beating a path to its door, then it must come up with something really attention-grabbing.

This is the way to an architecture of diminishing returns in which every sensational new building must attempt to eclipse the last one. It leads to a kind of hyperinflation, the architectural equivalent of the Weimar Republic's debauching of its currency. Everybody wants an icon now. They want an architect to do for them what Gehry's Guggenheim did for Bilbao, Jorn Utzon's Opera House did for Sydney and Piers Gough's green-tiled public lavatory did for the Portobello Road.

DEYAN SUDJIC

Deyan Sudjic lives in an elegant Victorian house on the fringes of Regent's Park. In contrast to the opulence of the neighborhood, the room where we talk is rigorously stripped of detail, with austere white walls and a vast bleached wood table—not a book in sight. "Truth is," says Sudjic, "I'm between books right now." His latest, *The Edifice Complex* (just out in the U.S.) has, perhaps understandably, drained his formidable energies. The book, subtitled *How the Rich and Powerful Shape the World*, is a visceral, uncompromising analysis of the 21st century über-architect, whom Sudjic criticizes as venal, opportunistic, only too eager to deal with tyrants.

This critical stance is characteristic of Sudjic, who co-founded *Blueprint* in the mid-1980s precisely to provide an alternative perspective on the profession. Sudjic also made time to write books, including the highly acclaimed *100-Mile City* (Harvest/HBJ Books, 1992), a scholarly assessment of late-20th century urbanism. A supreme networker, Sudjic was named editor of *Domus* in 2000. His stewardship of the Milan-based magazine transformed it into a truly international forum for architecture, art and design, which in turn made him an obvious choice to direct the 2002 Venice Architecture Biennale. He has also curated London exhibitions at the British Museum, the Royal Academy, and the Institute of Contemporary Arts. He is currently architecture critic for *The Observer*, the Sunday edition of the daily newspaper *The Guardian*.

How did you come to write about architecture?
My father was a journalist and my mother was hell-bent I shouldn't follow in his footsteps. I guess that's why I chose to study architecture in the first place but once at university I was forced to realize the dramatic limitations of my skills—not least during my year out in the Chelsea offices of Chamberlain Powell & Bon, architects of the Barbican complex in East London. I was also editing the student newspaper—Gordon Brown, UK Chancellor and Tony Blair's right hand man, was news editor at the time! Given a dearth of architecture work-this was the early 1980s—I reckoned that writing was, despite my mother's dire warnings, the way forward for me. Peter Murray, then editor of *Building Design*, gave me my first break. After a year I realized I was having a fantastic time. I certainly learned a great deal more about architecture as a writer than I had done studying it.

It wasn't long before you started *Blueprint*. What prompted you to do it? Did you feel architecture in the UK was too polite or clubby?
Blueprint was meant to be a bit of fun, a youthful sense that the existing UK magazines were run by managers with only a limited sense of what a magazine could be. It was meant to be a co-op, run collectively. We—the writers, designers, photographers and illustrators who got together to do it—all wanted a new, challenging outlet. I was also keen to broaden architecture's perspective, to make it a part of a wider visual culture, I guess influenced by *Domus* which dealt with art, industrial design, fashion, graphics, and urbanism.

Of course we were clubby too, but every generation succeeds by trashing their predecessors, so we just started another club. Encouraging good writing was also important.

Can you pinpoint key priorities you bring to your work as a critic?
If you are not entertaining, people will not read you. But that does not mean that you should be shallow. I think that you have a duty to be interesting, and interested, to use your eyes as well as your head. It's also important not to take architecture at face value. I would also rather not accept financial support from owners or architects to travel to see projects, but in the currrent climate of reduced budgets at newspapers and ever-more far-flung projects it's hard to avoid it if you are going to keep up with the key buildings, Of course seeing them gives you a strange world view: Nobody else, not even the architects themselves, see Herzog & De Meuron in California one week, Daniel Libeskind in Tel Aviv the next, Norman Foster in Beijing the month after, followed by Rem Koolhaas in Porto.

What was the climate of criticism when you started out and how has it changed?
There were great people: Reyner Banham was a marvelous inspiration, in his style, and his range of subject matter, and I wanted to be able to write like that. I wanted to ensure that architecture could get into mainstream newspapers, and that meant having a direct approach—approaching the subject not from the preconceptions of architects or taking the work at face value.

You write today for both the general and specialized reader. How difficult is it to switch tone, frame of reference, et cetera? Do you feel a sense of responsibility to educate your lay audience?
The word "educate" really sets my teeth on edge when applied to journalism. You operate by seducing and surprising your audience into reading you. That means being as stylish a writer as you can, and trying to make sense of complex things in as direct a way as you can. I have not only written for specialists and a lay audience, but I have simultaneously been an editor and a writer—useful in terms of acquiring a sense of perspective.

Have you ever regretted a piece you've written?
I certainly regretted some headlines. By far the worst was for my obituary of Philip Johnson for which some bright spark came up with "A Nazi Piece of Work." There's no going back from that one!

Can you identify key differences between criticism in the UK and that of U.S., or Italy, where you worked?
These are three very different cultures. Doing *Domus* I was acutely aware how different the Anglo-Saxon discussion was from the Italian—I could never be sure if it was the quality of the translation, or the sometimes maddening diffusion of the Italian language. Sometimes Anglo-Saxon directness translated into Italian offended people. I remember Mario Botta complaining to the magazine's owner that I had hired a gang of English mercenaries to disparage him. I suspect that Americans think that the British are a bit limited. We do not have the same intellectual rigor. In the newspapers, the U.S. gives its critics more space—2,000 words is common in *The New York Times*, whereas 800 is a standard length here. Personally I prefer not to write a detailed architectural description, I tend to talk about what a project means, rather than how it looks.

In a recent interview, Neil MacGregor, director of the British Museum, suggested that the basic principles of a museum should celebrate John Locke's civic humanism. Can you point to leading architects whom you feel champion the notion of civic humanism?
I believe great cities are the product of an exchange of ideas. What I fear most is no conversation, no discussion. Don't get me wrong, I'm not against shift-making buildings, but let's not just grab the next tower off the shelf, dust it off, and build it. There are inspired architects, great architects who want to engage in real ideas. The key thing is to create a forum where that's possible and it's the role of the critic to build that debate.

Do you believe that criticism has a direct effect on the evolution of architecture? Is there, or should there be, a tangible link?
No. As Charles Jencks says, critics are the messenger boys.

ROBERT TORDAY IS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ING MEDIA, LONDON, AND CONTRIBUTES TO *ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL* AND *ICON* MAGAZINE.

I once heard Peter Eisenman give a stirring defense for the "honesty" of faked-up construction in C-studs and wallboard. The same line could be taken to argue that video and other light effects are as material as concrete and Cor-Ten steel. But without getting too bogged down in what is real and what is not these days (a useful sanity-preserving habit to bring with you into the second term of the Bush administration), it's safe to say that physical materials are central to physical architecture.
Philip Nobel, *Metropolis*, December 2004

Securing the base [of the Freedom Tower] is a challenging design problem, but there are many examples of beautiful massive buildings, such as the Pantheon in Rome, or the Lincoln Memorial, so it is not an insurmountable one. The base... needs a lot of work... [It] is a masonry cube tentatively supporting a tall glass shaft. The two parts need to be integrated. By making the shaft more solid and the base more glassy, Freedom Tower could celebrate its impregnability, not hide it.
Witold Rybczynski, *Slate.com*, July 6, 2005

It is not by chance that politicians and editorials repeatedly confuse the culture plans for the [WTC] site and the memorial: Pataki did just that when he vowed to make sure that programming for the cultural center would be "appropriate," saying "I view the memorial site as sacred grounds, akin to the beaches of Normandy or Pearl Harbor." If he really believed the entire site was so hallowed, he should suggest leaving it just as empty as the beaches of D-Day.
Julie V. Iovine, *The Architect's Newspaper*, September 21, 2005

ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE continued from page 14 protest my pieces. One time, a developer pulled a big advertising section because of something I wrote, but I was never blamed. The publisher only asked me, "Do you have all your facts and are they right?" It's a great lesson for all critics. You've got to have all your facts.

My feelings of insecurity were always before I wrote. I would worry, Am I going to be able to write this piece? And I'd work doubly hard. I remember one the first pieces I wrote about Colonial Williamsburg. I wrote about how much of it was wishful thinking, how much was destroyed to build it, and how it was a false form of preservation that denigrated real history. I heard that later that they put up a sign there that read "Ada Louise Huxtable is a Tory"!

Who do you consider your audience?
I don't really ask myself that question when I'm writing. If you have enough belief and pleasure in what you are writing, and write in an understandable manner, then an audience finds you.

One complaint I've heard from lay readers about architecture criticism—particularly of Herbert Muschamp's writings—is that they think they must have a background in the field to understand it.
That is the fault of the people writing it. A lot of writing has been self indulgent, really. You can imagine how I feel about it. The *Times* didn't know better, I suppose. It's as innocent about the field as anybody. Architecture criticism is still an uphill battle. That's why the responsibility of the critic is so great. It's the way my editor, Clifton Daniel, felt. He trusted me. He always said, "I knew if you got in trouble I'd hear about it soon enough."

I think my approach works for a changing field. I'm not dogmatic or doctrinaire. I stay open-minded. If you're rigid, you can't be a good critic. I wouldn't be in it if I didn't feel optimistic. I'm still full of wonder, I still love it. I like seeing what's going on with vernacular architecture now, for example. And the arguments over 2 Columbus Circle show that the preservation movement is upside down right now. When they compare its loss to that of Penn Station—I've got smoke coming out of my ears! It's not being lost, it's being transformed. I live and believe in the present. I don't live in the past and you can't live in the future. That's why I'm basically a modernist.

CATHY LANG HO IS AN EDITOR AT *AN*.

JOAN OCKMAN
continued from page 17
combines smart visual commentary with informed historical contextualization. It's hard to say whether his greater-depth approach is sufficiently accessible to the general readership. I'm impressed, though, and look forward to following his writing more closely.

It is hardly surprising that in each case the critic reflects the newspaper and city in which he writes. It is also the case that, while all four write professionally, fluently, and at times with passion and verve, none approaches the commanding intellect and culture of, say, a Mumford, or the witty acuity of a Reyner Banham. Huxtable, in her classic "Will They Ever Finish Bruckner Boulevard?" period, used her podium to galvanize a broad base of support for urban improvement, as Jane Jacobs did during the same epoch with her blockbuster *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. More recently, Muschamp, for all his excesses, was able to grab the public imagination with a maverick style that interspersed flashes of genuine insight and originality. In a more political vein, sharp critics like Mike Davis and Michael Sorkin, contributing to publications like *The Nation* and the old *Village Voice*, have attracted loyal adherents, although it's difficult to imagine either of them writing for a mainstream newspaper.

The architecture critic at the general-interest publication has the obligation to write for both a specialist and nonspecialist audience, walk a fine line between advocacy and partisanship, and do more than register new trends. Writing without benefit of historical retrospection—most of the time before the project has ceased to be a construction site or computer rendering—he or she has the job of exposing the conditions in which architecture is produced and consumed; to paraphrase Manfredo Tafuri, it's a matter of going backstage rather than continuing to observe the spectacle from a seat in the audience. Beyond this, it helps to love architecture and cities, and to write with a deep knowledge of history, a strong commitment to the public and environmental good, a precise understanding of how buildings are constructed, and (not least) a discerning eye.

JOAN OCKMAN, AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN, TEACHES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AND IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE TEMPLE HOYNE BUELL CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE.

MARISA BARTOLUCCI continued from page 17 own Palestinian citizens and neighbors. "Eminence has its responsibility," he observed, "which extends beyond the realm of professional practice." An intrepid thinker, a joker, a scholar, a moral iconoclast, Sorkin represents what every young architecture critic should aspire to be.

Certainly, he is a model for Philip Nobel, who has enlivened the pages of *Metropolis* for the past few years. Nobel sure writes well. Like adolescent love letters, Nobel's columns can ache with emotion. And that's not a bad thing. He makes you believe great buildings matter. But the trouble with adolescents, who like Nobel swing between idealism and cynicism, is they're self-absorbed. No matter what Nobel writes about, it always comes back to him. At times he verges on slipping into Muschampian territory, which can lead, as we all know, to critical oblivion.

Architecture needs smart, brave voices. Nobel's got one. If he can concentrate on substance, he might make more architects into readers. And just maybe improve the profession. **MARISA BARTOLUCCI LIVES IN NEW YORK AND WRITES ABOUT DESIGN.**

ROBERT CAMPBELL continued from page 19 the absence of experts, it is possible to get a kind of populist decision-making, or decision-preventing, in which every interest group or individual is consulted and, as a result, nobody can build anything that anyone dislikes. This leads to a kind of bland common-denominator world, punctuated by the occasional star icon.

KIRA GOULD IS A BOSTON-BASED DESIGN WRITER.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2005

NOVEMBER

WEDNESDAY 16

LECTURES

Karen Jensen, David Katz
Disaster Planning in Emergency Buildings
8:00 a.m.
Consulting for Architects
236 5th Ave.
www.sdadmin.org

David Cohen
3:15 p.m.
Parsons the New School of Design
66 5th Ave.
www.parsons.edu

Jian Zhao
5:30 p.m.
SUNY Buffalo
School of Architecture and Planning
301 Crosby Hall, South Campus
3435 Main St., Buffalo
www.ap.buffalo.edu

Michael Bell
Binocular House: Ghent, New York
6:00 p.m.
Princeton School of Architecture
Betts Auditorium
www.princeton.edu/~soa

Jacques Herzog, Michael Maltzan, Toshiko Mori, Terence Riley, et al.
Building on Barnes
6:00 p.m.
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

Alastair Gordon
Beyond the Beach: The Life and Death of Norman Jaffe
6:00 p.m.
Municipal Art Society
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

Ed Popko
6:30 p.m.
Pratt Institute Manhattan
144 West 14th St.
www.pratt.edu

EVENTS

Energy Star Contractor Recruitment Workshop
8:00 a.m.
Pratt Center for Community Development
379 DeKalb Ave., 2nd Fl.
www.nyserda.org

AIA New York Interior Architecture Design Awards
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

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

EXHIBITON OPENINGS

Empty Space with Exciting Events
Artists Space
38 Greene St., 3rd Fl.
www.artistsspace.org

Lari Pittman
Gladstone Gallery
515 West 24th St.
www.gladstonegallery.com

FILM & THEATER

Shelter
(Bill Morrison, Laurie Olinder, et al. 2005), 65 min.
7:30 p.m.
Brooklyn Academy of Music
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn
www.bam.org

THURSDAY 17

LECTURES

Sauerbruch Hutton
5:30 p.m.
SUNY Buffalo
School of Architecture and Planning
3435 Main St., Buffalo
www.ap.buffalo.edu

Preston Scott Cohen
Geometry Betrayed
6:00 p.m.
Higgins Hall
Pratt Institute
www.pratt.edu

Grahame Shane, Diana Agrest, Brian McGrath, Dennis Adams, Anthony Vidler
Architecture and Cities: Recombinant Urbanism
6:30 p.m.
Cooper Union
7 East 7th St.
www.archleague.org

Richard Rogers
The Rebirth of Cities
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

Bernard Tschumi
The Politics of Design: Competitions for Public Projects
6:30 p.m.
Van Alen Institute
30 West 22nd St., 6th Fl.
www.vanalen.org

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

Neil Chambers, Susan Szenasy, Mark Spellun, et al.
Talking Green: Green Media
7:00 p.m.
CUNY Graduate Center
365 5th Ave.
www.cuny.edu

EXHIBITON OPENINGS

James Nares
Chronophotographs
Paul Kasmin Gallery
293 10th Ave.
www.paulkasmingallery.com

Mary Ellen Mark
Marianne Boesky Gallery
535 West 22nd St.
www.marianneboesky-gallery.com

Ed Ruscha
Course of Empire
Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Ave.
www.whitney.org

FRIDAY 18

LECTURES

Alain Badiou
Art's Imperative: Speaking the Unspeakable
6:00 p.m.
The Drawing Center
35 Wooster St.
www.drawingcenter.org

Wilber Hasbrouck, John Zukowsky
The Chicago Architectural Club: Prelude to the Modern
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

SYMPOSIUM

Stan Allen, Diana Balmori, Gregg Pasquarelli, Deyan Sudjic, et al.
The Politics of Design: Competitions for Public Projects
9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Princeton University
Dodds Auditorium, Woodrow Wilson School
www.vanalen.com

EXHIBITON OPENING

Ben Butler
Plane Space
102 Charles St.
www.plane-space.com

MONDAY 21

LECTURE

Peter Zumthor, Olafur Eliasson
Architecture and Art
Cooper Union
Great Hall
7 East 7th St.
www.cooper.edu

TUESDAY 22

LECTURE

Jeff Byles
Rubble: Unearthing the History of Demolition
6:30 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.skyscraper.org

WEDNESDAY 23

EXHIBITON OPENING

In Depth: The House of Spiritual Retreat by Emilio Ambasz
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

TUESDAY 29

LECTURES

William J. Mitchell
Placing Words: Symbols, Space, and the City
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

Hent de Vries
Dialectics, Deconstruction, and the "Truth" or "Moral" of Skepticism
7:00 p.m.
New York University
Deutsches Haus
42 Washington Mews
www.nyu.edu

FILM

Themroc
(Claude Faraldo, 1972), 100 min.
Anthology Film Archives
32 Second Ave.
www.storefrontnews.org

SYMPOSIUM

AIA New York Design Awards Presentation and Symposium
Hilary Ballon, et al.
6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

WEDNESAY 30

LECTURE

Page Dickey
Gardens in the Spirit of Place
6:00 p.m.
New York School of Interior Design
170 East 70th St.
www.nysid.edu

SYMPOSIUM

Mathis Wackernagel, et al.
One Planet Budgeting
6:00 p.m.
CUNY Graduate Center
365 5th Ave.
www.cuny.edu

EXHIBITON OPENING

Standard Gauge: Film Works by Morgan Fisher Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Ave.
www.whitney.org

DECEMBER

THURSDAY 1

EXHIBITON OPENING

Cities: 10 Lines; Approaches to City and Open Territory Design
Harvard Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy St., Cambridge
www.gsd.harvard.edu

FRIDAY 2

LECTURE

Sara Caples, Everardo Jefferson, Kazi Ashraf
Architecture and Books
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

MONDAY 5

LECTURE

Jayne Merkel
Eero Saarinen
6:30 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.skyscraper.org

WEDNESDAY 7

SYMPOSIUM

Technology: Hit or Miss
Kevin Kennon, Winka Dubbeldam, et al.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

FRIDAY 9

EXHIBITION OPENING

Fashion in Colors
Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
www.cooperhewitt.org

SATURDAY 10

EXHIBITION OPENING

Breaking & Entering: Art and the Video Game
PaceWildenstein
545 West 22nd St.
www.pacewildenstein.com

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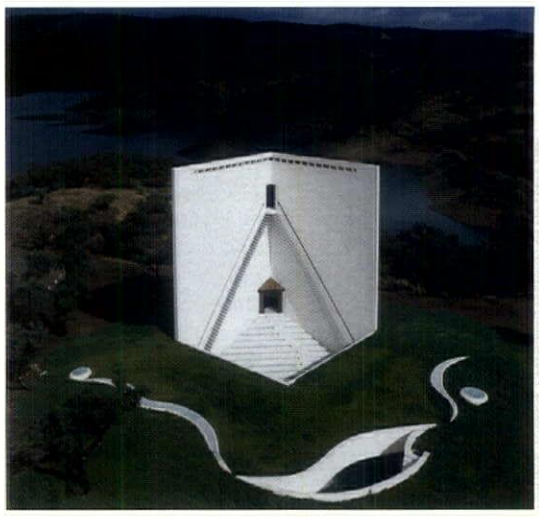


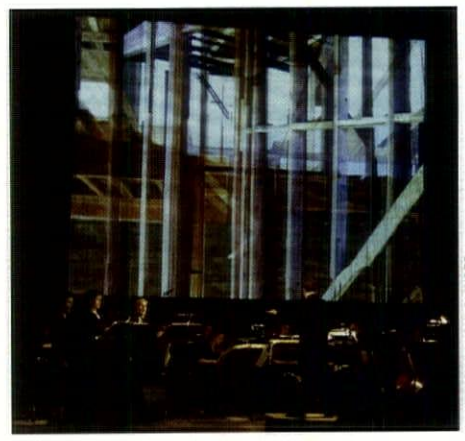
MICHELE ALASSIO / COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

IN DEPTH: THE HOUSE OF SPIRITUAL RETREAT BY EMILIO AMBASZ
Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street
November 23 to March 25

The most recent exhibition in MoMA's *In Depth* series, the complex and stunning *House of Spiritual Retreat* by New York-based architect and designer Emilio Ambasz, proves that a single building can certainly be worthy of its own show. Originally designed in 1979, the architect's private residence was finally built in 2004 in Seville, Spain amid an arid landscape of gently rolling hills. "The myth and mystery of the house is a perfect self-portrait by the architect," noted Tina di Carlo, curator of the show.

The design acknowledges regional typology while criticizing its efficiency: While the house's two giant walls suggest the archetypal Andalusian courtyard residence, this vernacular nod only goes so far as they serve little function beyond demarcating the space from the surreal landscape. The living quarters of the house are recessed below ground to use natural insulation as protection against the blistering heat of the area while thin and curving skylights let in light.

The show contains two models and several drawings of the house, documenting it from concept to execution. Some of the exhibition's serene photographs show the startling contrast between the house and the surrounding landscape while others play up its fantastical quality with images of sleek horses grazing nearby. MoMA's series is impressive in its range: Ambasz's project is following the recent closure of MoMA's first *In Depth* exhibition, on the transformation of New York's High Line into a park.



COURTESY LAURIE OLINDER

SHELTER
MUSIC BY MICHAEL GORDON, DAVID LANG, AND JULIA WOLF, WITH FILMS BY BILL MORRISON, LAURIE OLINDER, AND BOB MCGRATH
Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn
November 16 to 19, 7:30 p.m.

For a creative and possibly over-the-top take on emergency housing and sanctuary, see *Shelter*, the new theatrical production on view at the Brooklyn Academy of Art (BAM) this month. Created in collaboration with New York's Ridge Theater, the project—of obvious topical interest—began as a piece by three New York–based composers who worked with various filmmakers to add a visual element to their musical take on shelter. An 18-piece German orchestra and three Scandinavian singers perform while seven short films play on scrims behind them. In one film, *American House* (pictured above), Laurie Olinder criticizes the financing of residential projects by comparing the blueprints and building costs of suburban homes to more meager dwellings such as a run-down shack in Utah. The films' directors will speak about the production on November 17 at 6:00 p.m. at BAM.

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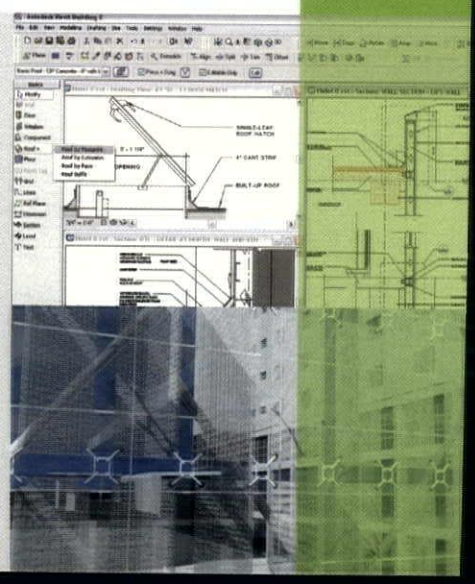
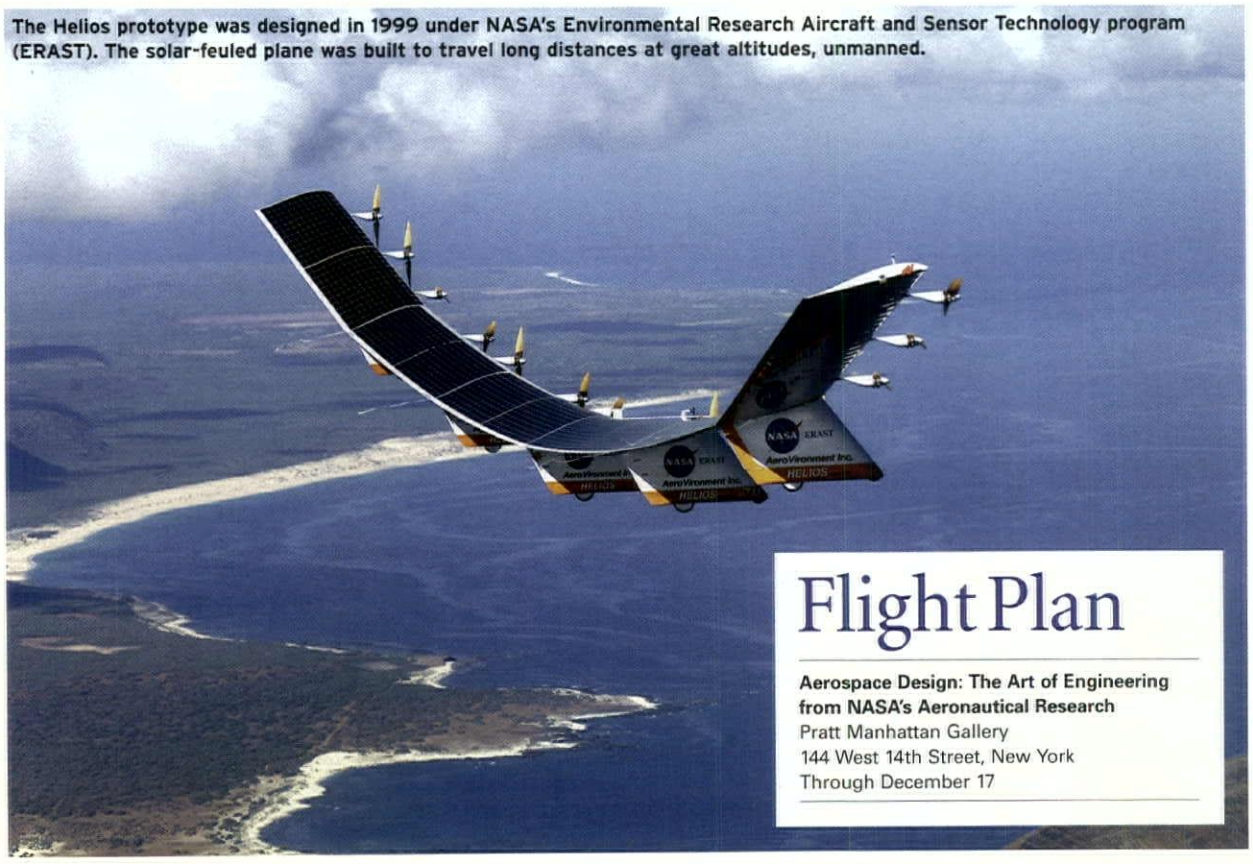




The Helios prototype was designed in 1999 under NASA's Environmental Research Aircraft and Sensor Technology program (ERAST). The solar-feuled plane was built to travel long distances at great altitudes, unmanned.

Flight Plan

Aerospace Design: The Art of Engineering from NASA's Aeronautical Research
Pratt Manhattan Gallery
144 West 14th Street, New York
Through December 17

More than a century after taking off, the concept of flight still inspires awe, an enduring symbol of human progress and optimism. *Aerospace Design* is a taut, thoughtfully edited exhibition that presents the phenomenon of modern flight as a feat of ingenuity, engineering, and ultimately, design. Organized by John Zukowsky, chief curator of the Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum, in conjunction with NASA's Tony Springer and Tom Dixon, the selection of artifacts, taken from NASA's archive, showcases the far-reaching impact of aerospace research and iconography, from the Vornado fan to modern architecture.

While *Aerospace Design* charts major milestones in NASA's history—from the 1915 founding of the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics to the 1981 space shuttle launch—chronological narrative plays second fiddle to formal explorations. Photographs, charts, and models illustrate how wing configuration, proportionality, material selection, computer-aided technologies, and other design variables abetted achievements like supersonic flight (the F-102's "wasp waist") and improved performance of warplanes at high angles of attack (the Grumman X-29's forward-swept wings). Wind-tunnel tests reveal how subtle changes in wing profile or nose curvature can make as big a difference as modifying a craft's overall form.

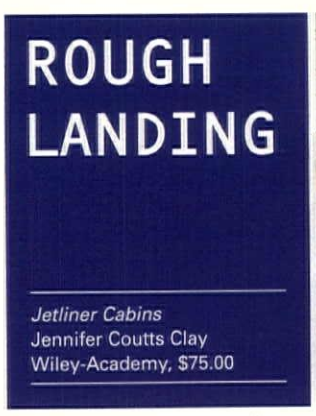
From a purely aesthetic perspective, some of the most intriguing designs on view are speculative concepts and prototypes: a noise-reducing wavy-blade helicopter rotor, zoomorphic planes influenced by birds and stingrays, an unmanned solar-powered flying wing, a commercial aircraft utilizing a triangular blended-body wing design, a space shuttle with sharp-edged nose designed for safer reentry into the atmosphere. Although highly specialized aeronautical engineers developed the vessels, architects have also played a major role in aircraft design—by building the wind tunnels that create controlled environments for testing air flow, lift, drag, and spin on detailed models under simulated flight conditions. In contrast to the more romanticized photographs of wind-tunnel interiors on display, the deadpan architectural model depicting the odd looped structure of the Langley Research Center's U.S. National Transonic Facility in Hampton, Virginia, is quietly compelling.

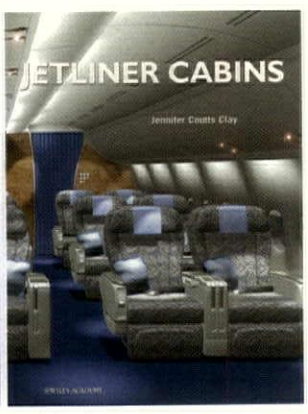
Political and economic factors—how research dollars are spent, what initiatives are funded—are as integral as aerodynamic considerations to the design of aircraft. The sheer volume of technical advancements and the high level of production during wartime "golden years" (300,000 warplanes were created under President Franklin D. Roosevelt) should come as no great surprise. And NASA was founded in direct response to the Cold War, notably as a response to the Soviet Union's 1957 launch of Sputnik. *Aerospace Design* connects the dots between such achievements and their post-war applications—safer, faster, more efficient airlines among them—although the exhibition could arguably benefit from greater coverage of civil aircraft design. Explanatory wall texts that pay lip service to NASA's commitment to the commercial aircraft industry ring a bit hollow in light of the show's bias to warplanes and space shuttles.

In a self-conscious nod to MoMA's 1934 *Machine Art* exhibit, the restrained installation by Chicago architect Jeanne Gang highlights the sculptural quality of the streamlined models, and stays thankfully clear of Star Trek-y gimmicks. Wing-shaped display platforms are joined by wavelike acrylic partitions that protect wall-mounted objects. (The partitions, while elegant, create a subtle fun-house-mirror effect, making some ill-placed wall placards a bit challenging to read.) Gang's statement at the exhibition's mid-point states the architect's intent to give concrete form to the invisible forces—gravity, airflow, drag—that literally sculpt and carve the forms of flying bodies. The surface beauty of these sleek, industrial objects ultimately suggests a potent underlying a message: Aircraft design is as much about the human lives they contain—and societies they shape—as it is about the machinery itself. **A SENIOR EDITOR AT *HOUSE + GARDEN*, JEN RENZI IS CURRENTLY WRITING A BOOK ABOUT JET DESIGN FOR EDIZIONI PRESS.**

Now retired, NASA's NB-52B aircraft first launched in 1955 as a test plane for the Air Force's B-52 fleet.

COURTESY PRATT INSTITUTE





Jennifer Coutts Clay's *Jetliner Cabins*, published in 2003 to coincide with the centennial of the Wright brothers' first sustained flights at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, expands on a series of articles the author wrote for *Aircraft Interiors* from 2000 to 2002. Recently issued in a paperback edition with an addendum on the newest wide-body and regional jets, the book is one of several to commemorate a century-plus of aviation architecture and design.

The author opens her book as a letter to Wilbur and Orville, talking about the rapid changes that their invention precipitated in the following century. In doing so, she unwittingly sets the tone for the rest of the book. The history of the design of jetliner cabins is a much richer one than the version Clay offers, just as the history of flight itself involves many more characters than the Wright brothers. To start, there is Chicago-based French civil engineer and glider enthusiast Octave Chanute, German glider designer and pilot Otto Lilienthal, and American scientist and bureaucrat Samuel Langley.

Jetliner Cabins does go a bit beyond what Keith Lovegrove did in his book *Airline: Identity, Design and Culture* (Te Neues, 2000). These works are similar in that they view the subject, including nostalgic and often campy material from the 1960s and '70s, from a designer's perspective, and group projects according to design typologies or materials. For instance, Lovegrove's book has chapters devoted to fashion, food, interiors, and identity while Clay's sections include ddentity, dining, accessibility, durability, and leather. Clay surpasses Lovegrove's work, however, with her consistent discussion of practical issues such as accessibility and durability. Examples of the former include folding wheelchairs that can navigate an airliner's narrow aisles and fold away within a coat closet and the latter category includes new textiles, hard plastics, and composites.

Likewise, she usefully includes the opinions and comments of other design professionals in this specialized field, such as Lamberto G. Morris of SWWM, who designed interiors for American Airlines 777s, and Philip George of George Design Studio who worked on branding for Pan Am, Braniff, and Air Florida. However, though her selection of specialists is a bit puzzling. For example, it is surprising that she did not include any comments from, say, Hartmut Esslinger, whose team frog design created controversially retro seating for Lufthansa in the 1990s, or established designers at Teague Aviation Studios in Everett, Washington, who have done all the Boeing interiors since 1945, or the recently retired Uwe Schneider, who shaped all of Airbus' interiors since the early 1970s. Leading branding company Landor Associates is only credited once in the book, for its 1980s work for British Air, even though it set the standard for much of airline corporate identity in the jet age, particularly after its 1967 redesign for Alitalia. In more recent years, Landor has created corporate identities for Song, Varig, Delta, British Midland, and other major carriers. There's no reason for occasionally crediting work where credit is due, then ignoring credits at other times.

The second paperback edition contains the addendum, "The Next Generation of Jetliner Cabins," a pictorial survey of new large airliners by Airbus and Boeing, namely the A380 and Boeing 787, as well as new smaller regional jets by Bombardier and Embraer. The material presented on the Airbus-Boeing rivalry goes little beyond what one can find on the companies' websites, and does not involve critical comments from any of their interior designers, such as Schneider or his successors at Airbus, or senior designer Ken Dowd at Teague Aviation Studios who designed the interiors of the 787. Even a cursory Internet search reveals design work by Dassell Cabin Interiors on new lavatories for A380s, which does not rate a mention. Clay's discussion of regional jets is similarly lacking. It ends with a short presentation of manufacturer Embraer's ideas about the next generation of air-taxi-like Very Light Jets (VLJs) without acknowledging that Eclipse and Honda, among others, have pioneered these vehicles and are testing prototypes today.

Documentation oversights, especially historical ones, are

continued on page 28

BORDER LINES

Teddy Cruz
Border Postcards: Chronicles From the Edge
Columbia University GSAPP
Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall
October 19

How can an architect mediate between city officials, banks, NGOs, and the North American Free Trade Agreement to legalize and improve the living conditions of immigrant communities? Teddy Cruz, an architect who teaches in the Visual Arts Department at the University of California in San Diego, tried to answer this question in a lecture he gave last month at Columbia, as the winner of the 2004-2005 James Stirling Memorial Lecture Competition.

Cruz sees the architect as a new kind of policymaker, obliged to act within unconventional urban systems. Since the 1990s, the Guatemalan-born, San Diego-based architect's work has centered on housing and community centers, primarily serving immigrants. In 2000 he started collaborating with Casa Familiar, a nonprofit community-based organization in San Ysidro, an American city near the U.S.-Mexico border. Cruz and Casa Familiar are currently working together on two projects that not only answer the needs of local residents but also propose strategies against gentrification, as well as ways of financing low-income housing through micro-loans. *Living Rooms at the Border*, a conceptual housing project containing 12 rental units for senior citizens, organized around a flexible green that could double as an open-air mercado; and *Mi Pueblo: Affordable Housing Overlay Zone* (AHOZ), an urban plan to reclaim the town's

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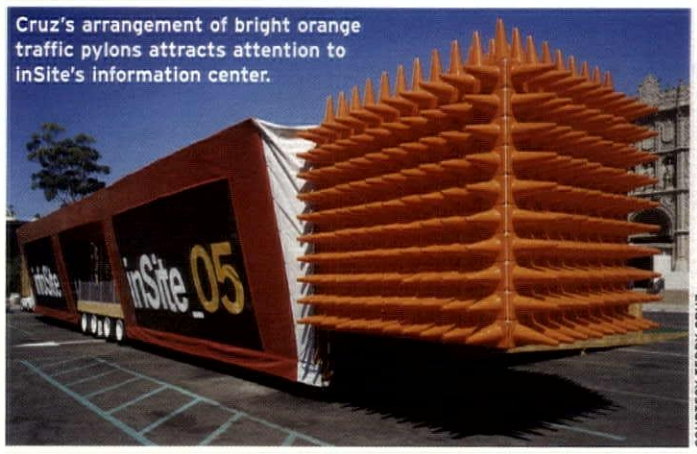
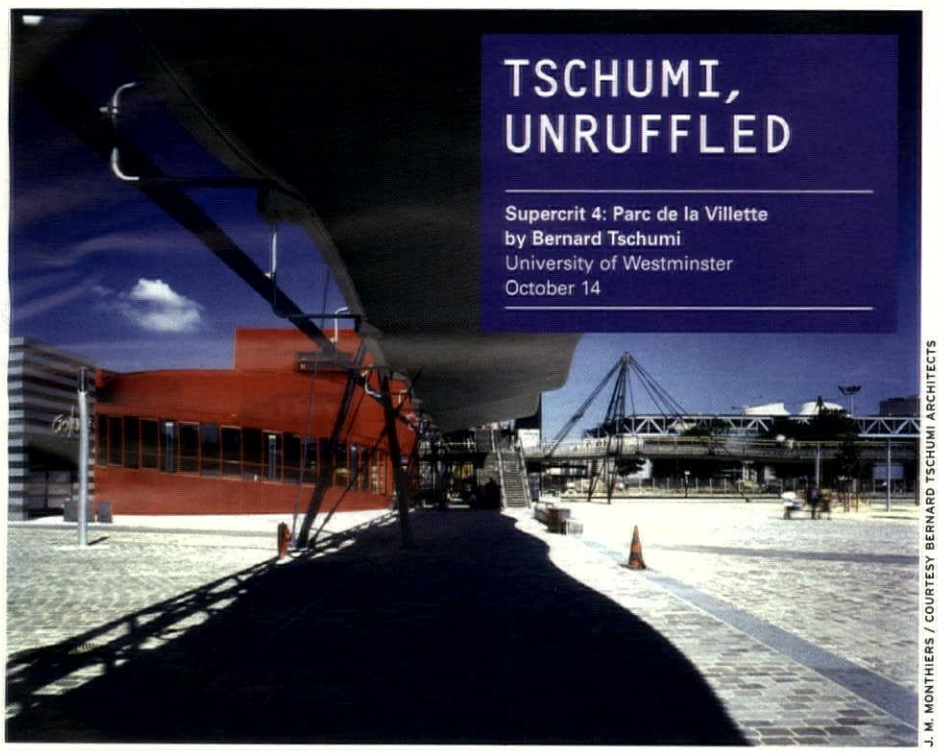


Cruz's arrangement of bright orange traffic pylons attracts attention to inSite's information center.

COURTESY TEDDY CRUZ

TSCHUMI, UNRUFFLED

Supercrit 4: Parc de la Villette by Bernard Tschumi
University of Westminster
October 14



J. M. MONTHIERS / COURTESY BERNARD TSCHUMI ARCHITECTS

"This is my first ever crit," said Bernard Tschumi, as he arranged his drawings for the benefit of 150 students and a jury of critics. The New York–based, French-Swiss architect's astonishing debut project—Parc de la Villette in Paris, completed in 1987—was the fourth in the Supercrit series held in London by the University of Westminster and the Architecture Foundation, a series intended to give critical scrutiny to the seemingly unimpeachable masters of contemporary architecture.

"That's okay, Bernard," we should have chanted back, "everyone here thinks you're a genius." The assembled jury was about as judgmental as a doting aunt. It included Peter Cook (whom Tschumi winsomely described as "like a father"), Nigel Coates ("more of a younger brother"), Bruce Mclean (whose gruff demeanor quickly melted into naked admiration for the foppishly elegant Tschumi), ex-colleague and "illegitimate something" Carlos Villanueva Brandt, and Murray Fraser, the lone outsider on the jury (and frequent contributor to *AN*). The worst Tschumi could expect here was a family-dinner-table ticking off.

But he started with all due humility. The format of Supercrit is a short presentation (mercifully free of formulaic Powerpoint), leaving maximum time for comments and critique. Tschumi gave a very enjoyable rattle through the ideas behind Parc de la Villette, particularly his extraordinary victory in the competition at a time when he had never built a building and barely even worked in an office.

At 35 hectares, the park is the largest green space in Paris. The site had been an *abbatoir*, and was pretty much a blank canvas by the time Tschumi was commissioned. His ideas still sound remarkably fresh, and the iconic three-layered drawing that describes the three systems of order residing in the project—"fields of appropriation, points of intensity, and vectors of movement"—is still evocative and beautiful. He continued, "Instead of harmonizing the constraints, we accepted that there were three independent and separate orders." His strategy was profoundly influenced by the poststructural philosophy of Jacques Derrida, which he loved for being "anti-hierarchy, anti-form, and anti-structure."

The park's most iconic feature is a grid of 22 bright red follies spread out across the landscape. These are the points of intensity, but are also conceived as reminders of the city. He ended his eloquent rattle by saying, "There is nothing greater than the city and its activities, and I actually don't like nature that much."

This comment, you would have thought, could have led to a great discussion about gardens, parks, countryside, and urbanity. But instead, Coates kicked off with some abstract and unintelligible mumbling about "tightness and looseness," and how the project tries to "hover between objects." He concluded, "This condition is very, very hard to define," leaving Tschumi to make sense of what he just said.

Fraser tried gamely to get back to the subject, but referenced a recent Tschumi competition project that no one else knew about. It took Cook to be embarrassingly explicit about the psychoanalytic implication of the makeup of this jury, suggesting that Tschumi might have been referencing his father's Beaux Arts planning, before tacking on some vague comments about Derrida, Cedric Price, Colin Rowe, constructivism, and the English picturesque, before ending by complimenting Tschumi on being "a clear thinker and clear teacher." If only Cook could learn a thing or two from him.

The Supercrit format is very revealing and a lot of fun, but here the jury and subject were far too close to really challenge one another. It reveals how the networks that hold together the international architecture scene will never really be held to account, despite the best efforts to encourage genuine critique. For the students in the room, this event was a real insight: Architecture is still an old boys' network, and you'd best find yourself one quick.

The pleasure of this occasion came from Tschumi's easy way with an anecdote and his consistently fascinating ideas. The most enduring bits of these were those mostly neglected by the jury. Behind the jargon of "points of intensity" and all that, Tschumi has a deeply cultured view of architecture, based on his view of experience as akin to literary narrative. His problem is that he rejects typology as a way of understanding form, so his architecture remains abstract, despite his protestations to the contrary.

Like all precocious students, Tschumi could be relaxed at this crit in the knowledge that his talent far outweighed any of his jurors'. It is a shame, though, that Westminster didn't pick someone for the jury who could have ruffled the feathers of the elegant Bernard Tschumi.

KIERAN LONG IS DEPUTY EDITOR OF ICON MAGAZINE IN LONDON.

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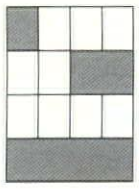

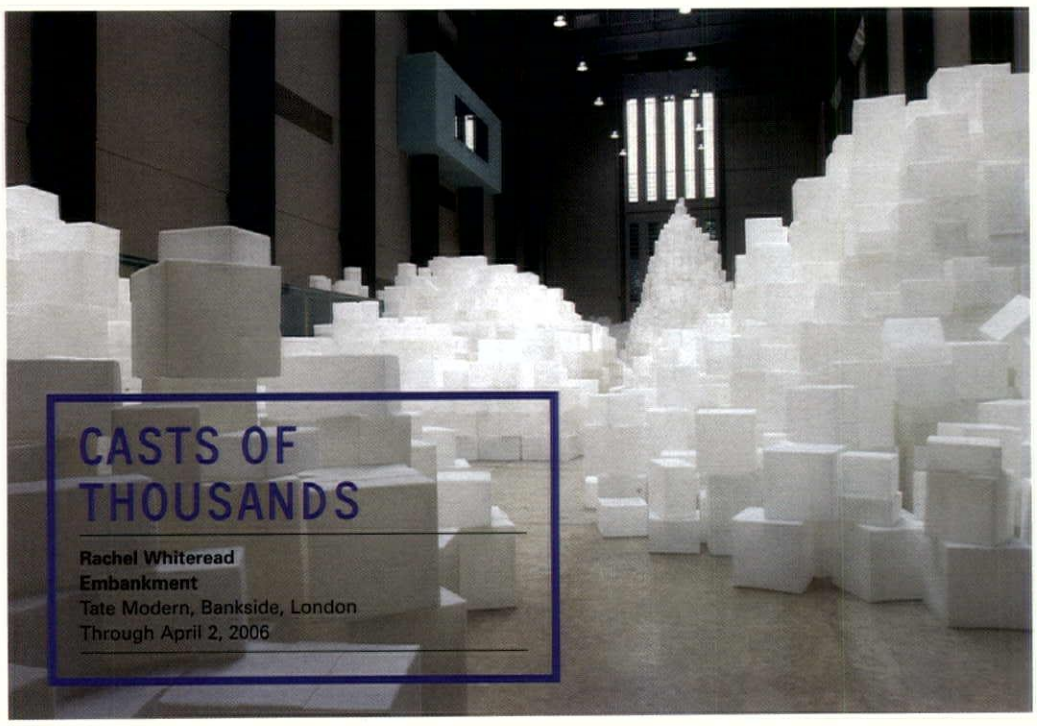

MARCUS LEITH COURTESY TATE PHOTOGRAPHY

CASTS OF THOUSANDS

Rachel Whiteread
Embankment
Tate Modern, Bankside, London
Through April 2, 2006

Within days of its unveiling, Rachel Whiteread's *Embankment*, installed in the grand turbine hall of the Tate Modern, provoked an avalanche of comment, not all flattering. Some speculated that the space forced Whiteread's hand, obliging her to respond to its grandeur. Others argued that her recurring theme of loss, so poetically expressed in her groundbreaking 1993 piece *House* (the life-size cast of the interior of a condemned house on London's East End won her the Turner Prize), and oft-repeated since, is at odds with the sheer scale of its surroundings.

In fact, the installation is beguiling. *Embankment* consists of 14,000 white, translucent polythene casts of the insides of boxes, arranged in irregular, towering, falling, scattered stacks. Whiteread conceived the installation, in part, as a response to the process of clearing out her late mother's house, an homage to the many intricacies of another woman's life. Embankment has a curious architectural quality—it's like a latter-day Teatro Olimpico, drawing one through streets and myriad crossings, tracing and retracing steps, unpeeling layers of experience. The rub is that the mazelike installation, despite its welcoming scale, cannot be wholly inhabited by the visitor. As a result, the visitor feels a bit like an intruder, rummaging unbidden through a baffling sequence of opaque spaces, struggling to find clues in a snowbound necropolis.

Whereas the Teatro's architects Andrea Palladio and Vincenzo Scamozzi resorted to tilting floors and distorted perspective to conjure visual trickery, Whiteread plays with unnerving contrasts—between fluid and static, seen and unseen, discovered and elusive. Far from repetitive, Whiteread's work over the last decade elaborates and reinterprets with increasingly layered delicacy her perceptive response to architectural space, whether the forgotten domestic rituals once played out and temporarily memorialized in *House* or her Holocaust Memorial in Vienna's Judenplatz, a cast of the interior of a library, with imprints of books visible, a powerful record of a the devastation on Jewish culture.

Embankment, too, invokes memory and absence, powerfully. But in this work, the artist goes one step further: Traces of what once existed have been expunged. The white canyons of *Embankment* offer no obvious clues about what once occupied their now-solid volumes and, like the Judenplatz monument, no consolation.

Contrary to criticism about the disconnection between the installation and the space, in fact, there are deliberate reverberations. For example, the translucent white cubes echo the box-like extrusions that architects Herzog & de Meuron provided to allow viewing galleries above the vast space—a space that Whiteread has made part warehouse, part archive.

Only the tapering, Babel-like structure against one far wall strikes an unconvincing, jarring note; it's as if Whiteread was striving to find an end note to her composition. Nonetheless, *Embankment* is an impressive, haunting, ambivalent piece. It makes us wonder, what is it exactly that we are witnessing? The attic of a half-forgotten life, or the sterile corridors of a morgue? As ever, Whiteread keeps us guessing.

ROBERT TORDAY IS AN ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AT ING MEDIA, LONDON, AND WRITES FOR *ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL* AND *ICON* MAGAZINE.

ROUGH LANDING
continued from page 24
just several of many that Clay might have easily addressed by consulting some existing design histories that dealt with commercial aviation. Other books cover this topic, from my own *Building for Air Travel* (Prestel, 1996) to the Vitra Museum's catalogue *Airworld: Design and Architecture for Air Travel* (Vitra, 2004) or Volker Fischer's *The Wings of the Crane: 50 Years of Lufthansa Design* (Edition Axel Menges, 2005). All deal relatively well with providing important historic documentation gleaned from a variety of sources, and yet maintain their own interpretive contexts. It is not an impossible task, it just takes a bit of editorial discipline.

At the very least, perhaps Clay's extensive pictorial survey of this somewhat under-analyzed subject will one day inspire a young design historian to go the extra step in sorting out who did what in the recent history of design for airliner interiors and airline corporate identity, as well as analyze design trends in a larger sociocultural context. Considering the impact of commercial aviation on our society and the work that it has provided for design professionals such as architects and industrial designers, a definitive book on jet age interiors is long overdue.

JOHN ZUKOWSKY IS CHIEF CURATOR AT THE INTREPID SEA, AIR & SPACE MUSEUM AND THE ORGANIZER OF SEVERAL EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLICATIONS ON DESIGN FOR THE AEROSPACE INDUSTRY, INCLUDING *AEROSPACE DESIGN*, NOW ON VIEW AT PRATT INSTITUTE.

BORDER LINES
continued from page 25
historical center with ready-made housing.

In January 2005, a special resolution by San Diego's mayor and city council authorized the two as pilot housing projects.

Cruz touched on these projects briefly, devoting the bulk of his lecture to discussing border conditions, particularly where San Diego meets Tijuana. His research centers on the small yet significant physical, economic, legislative, and cultural gap between these two cities, and how this gap affects the urbanism of both. Art has been a crucial way for Cruz to address what he calls a "critical threshold"; he is deeply involved in inSite, an initiative involving various nonprofit groups and cultural institutions in Mexico and the United States. Launched in 1992, inSite is a kind of art festival, with guerrilla installations spread throughout the border territory, all aimed at investigating and activating this contentious space.

The latest version, inSite_05, was up from August 27 to November 13. Cruz designed the event's information center in San Diego. His installation (unpermitted, like most of inSite's projects) converted a parking lot into "a place of people rather than cars," and included a wood-framed structure that, after the exhibition, would be transported to Tijuana and given to a family. He referred to a common practice in San Diego, whereby bungalows that are scheduled for demolition to make way for new developments are sold in Tijuana, where they are mounted on a one-story metal frame, creating a local version of Le Corbusier's Maison Domino. "Tijuana recycles the leftover buildings of San Diego," noted Cruz, "recombining them into fresh scenarios, creating countless new opportunities open to the unpredictability of time and programmatic contingency."

"Very easily, one risks romanticizing these environments and, with a sort of ethnographic gaze, patronizing their fragile conditions," he continued, while showing some of his housing studies. "We cannot forget that they are the product of resistance and transgression." We look forward to seeing Cruz's transgressions move beyond their pilot phases.

OLYMPIA KAZI, FORMERLY A JUNIOR CURATOR AT THE TRIENNALE DI MILANO, IS A NEW YORK-BASED ARCHITECT.

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ETHNIC CLEANSING, GOP-STYLE

In the weeks since President George Bush's speech in New Orlean's Jackson Square, in which he promised to spare no effort in rebuilding the area, FEMA has alarmingly failed to advance any plan for the return of evacuees to temporary housing within the city or to connect displaced locals with reconstruction jobs. In fact, new barriers are being erected against their return. In Mississippi's ruined coastal cities, as well as in metropolitan New Orleans, landlords, galvanized by rumors of gentrification and soaring land values, are beginning to institute mass evictions. (Although the oft-cited Lower Ninth Ward is actually a bastion of blue-collar homeownership, most poor New Orleanians are renters.)

Civil-rights lawyer Bill Quigley has described how renters have returned "to find furniture on the street and strangers living in their apartments at higher rents, despite an order by the Governor that no one can be evicted before October 25. Rents in the dry areas have doubled and tripled."

Secretary of Housing Alfonso Jackson, meanwhile, seems to be working to fulfill his notorious prediction that New Orleans is "not going to be as black as it was for a long time, if ever again." Charlestine Jones, spokesperson for the Forest Park Tenants Association, recently protested that the agencies in charge of these housing complexes, including HUD, "are using allegations of storm damage to these complexes as a pretext for expelling working-class African-Americans, in a blatant attempt to co-opt our homes and sell them to developers to build high-priced housing."

Minority homeowners also face relentless pressures not to return. Insurance compensation, for example, is typically too small to allow homeowners in the eastern wards of New Orleans to rebuild if and when authorities re-open their neighborhoods.

Similarly, the Small Business Administration—so efficient in recapitalizing the San Fernando Valley in the aftermath of the 1994 Los Angeles earthquake—has so far dispensed only a few million dollars despite increasingly desperate pleas from tens of thousands of homeowners and small businesspeople facing imminent foreclosure or bankruptcy.

As a result, not just the black working class but also the black professional and business middle classes are now facing economic extinction while Washington dawdles. Tens of thousands of blue-collar white, Asian, and Latino residents of afflicted Gulf communities also face de facto expulsion from the region, but only the removal of African-Americans is actually being advocated as policy. Since Katrina made landfall, conservatives—beginning with Congressman Richard H. Baker's (R-LA) infamous comment that "We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn't do it, but God did"—have openly gloated over the possibilities for remaking New Orleans in a GOP image. Republican interest in reducing the black Democratic vote in New Orleans—the balance of power in state elections—resonates with the oft-expressed desire of local elites to purge the city of "problem people." As one major French Quarter landowner told *Der Spiegel*, "The hurricane drove poor people and criminals out of the city and we hope they don't come back. The party's finally over for these people and now they're going to have to find someplace else to live in the United States."

Nor are downsizing and gentrification necessarily offensive to Democratic neoliberals who have long advocated breaking up concentrated poverty and dispersing the black poor into older suburbs. The HOPE VI program, the showpiece of Clinton-era urban policy, demolished traditional public housing and vouchered out residents in order to make way for mixed-use, market-rate developments, which have become the prototype for elite visions of the city's future.

The New Urbanism Meets the Old South

Into this fraught and sinister situation now blunders the circuslike spectacle of the Congress of New Urbanism (CNU), the architectural cult founded by Miami designers Andreas Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk of Duany Plater-Zyberk (DPZ). Twenty years ago, when Duany was first barnstorming the nation's architecture schools and preservation societies, New Urbanism seemed to offer an attractive model for building socially diverse and environmentally sustainable communities based on a systematization of older City Beautiful principles such as a pedestrian scale, traditional street grids, an abundance of open space, and a mixture of land uses, income groups, and building forms. In practice, however, this diversity has never been achieved.

Despite the populist language of the CNU manifesto, Duany has always courted corporate imaginers, mega-developers, and politicians. In the mid-1990s, HUD under Secretary Henry Cisneros incorporated New Urbanist ideas into many of its HOPE VI projects. Originally conceived as replacement housing for the poor, HOPE VI quickly morphed into a new strategy for replacing the poor themselves. Strategically sited public-housing projects like New Orleans' St. Thomas Homes were demolished to make way for neo-traditionalist townhouses and stores (in the St. Thomas case, a giant Wal-Mart) in the New Urbanist spirit.

These mixed-use, mixed-income developments were typically advertised as little utopias of diversity but, as in St. Thomas, the real dynamic was exclusionary rather than inclusionary, with only a minority of project residents being rehoused on site. Nationally, HOPE VI led to a net loss of more than 50,000 units of desperately needed low-income housing.

Smart developers have been quick to put New Urbanist halos over their otherwise rampant land grabs and neighborhood demolitions. Likewise, shrewd conservatives like Paul Weyrich have increasingly recognized the obvious congruence between political traditionalism and architectural nostalgia. Weyrich, the founding president of the Heritage Foundation, recently wrote that "New Urbanism needs to be part of the next conservatism," a conservatism that remakes cities by expelling their criminal underclasses. (On Hurricane Katrina, Weyrich strongly defended House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert's right to question whether New Orleans, with its welfare state and entitlement mentality—"a prototype for Liberals"—should be rebuilt at all.)

Weyrich was the spiritual bridesmaid, at least, during the recent nuptials between the CNU's Andreas Duany and Haley Barbour, the sleazy former tobacco lobbyist and chair of the Republican National Committee who became governor of Mississippi by wrapping himself in the Confederate battle flag.

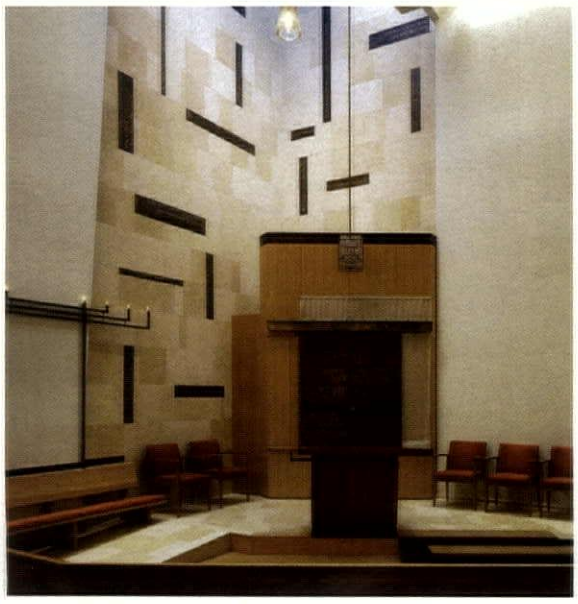
Barbour is trying to extract as much long-term political and economic advantage from Katrina as possible. One of his declared priorities, for example, is bringing the casinos ashore into larger, more Las Vegas-like settings. Another is to rapidly restore shoreline property values and squelch any debate about resettling the population on defensible higher ground. It was thus a rather brilliant stroke for Barbour to invite the CNU to help Mississippi rebuild its Gulf Coast "the right way." The first phase was a so-called mega-charrette, held October 11 to 18, which brought 120 New Urbanists together with local officials and business groups to brainstorm strategies for the physical reconstruction of their communities.

Duany whipped up a revivalistic fervor that must have been pleasing to Barbour and other descendants of slave-owners: "The architectural heritage of Mississippi is fabulous...really, really marvelous." With *Gone with the Wind* as their apparent script, the CNU teams spent a frenzied week trying to show the locals how they could replace their dismal strip malls with glorious Greek Revival casinos and townhouses that would rival those that once existed on MGM's back lot. The entire exercise stayed firmly within the parameters of a gambling-driven heritage, economy with casinos "woven into the community fabric," and neo-Taras rebuilt on the beach.

In the end, however, what was important was not the actual content of the charrette, nor the idealism of so many of its participants, but simply the legitimacy and publicity that CNU gave to Barbour's agenda. Duany, who never misses an opportunity to push his panaceas to those in power, has foolishly made himself an accomplice to the Republican's evil social experiment on the Gulf Coast.

MIKE DAVIS TEACHES IN THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT OF U.C. IRVINE. HIS FORTHCOMING BOOK IS PLANET OF SLUMS (VERSO).

A PORTION OF THIS ARTICLE APPEARED ON MOTHER JONES' BLOG ON OCTOBER 25.



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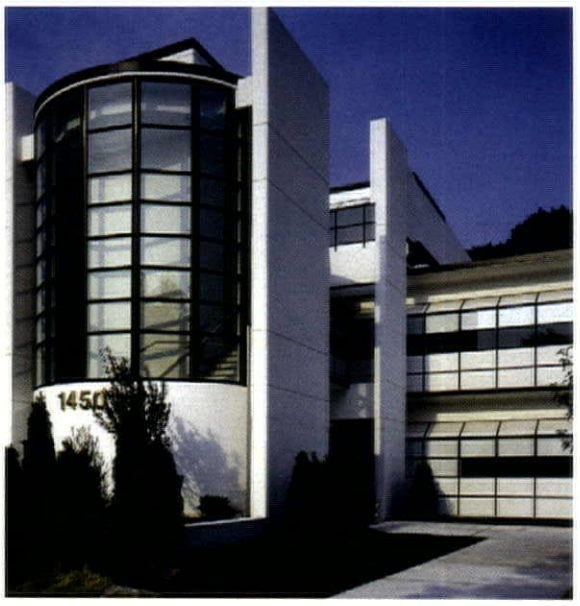

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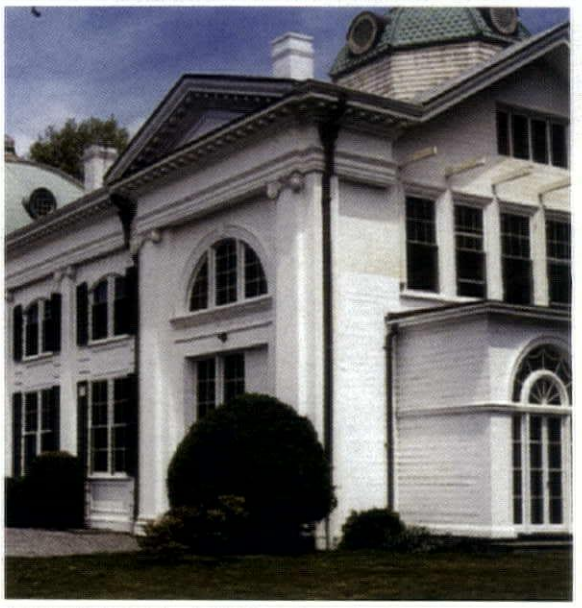

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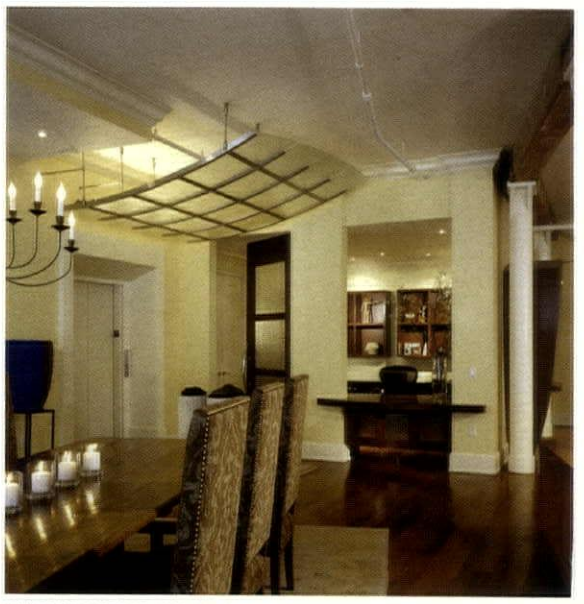

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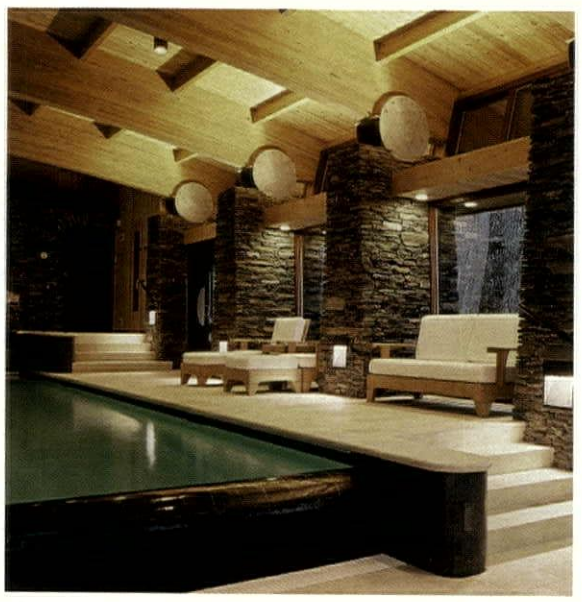

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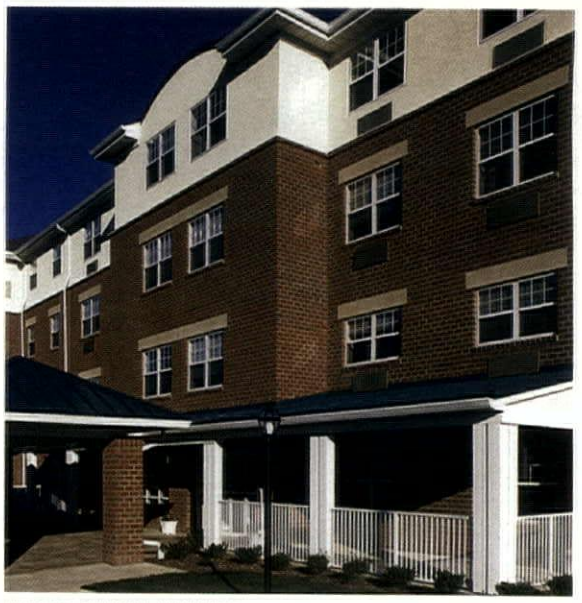

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