On November 16, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced the winner of the Flight 587 Memorial competition. Freddy Rodriguez, a Dominican Republic-born New York artist, was awarded the $2 million project, which will be located at the ocean end of Beach 116th Street in the Rockaways. Flight 587 crashed in the Belle Harbor neighborhood of Queens on November 12, 2001, just one month after 9/11. The memorial honors the 265 victims of the crash, most of whom were Dominican.

Rodriguez bested 68 proposals that responded to an open RFP issued by the city last spring. His proposal includes a central wall that will be inscribed with the victims' names and a quotation from Dominican poet Pedro Mir: "Afterwards I want only peace." The wall will also include portals for visitors to leave objects. The memorial opens up to a plaza that Rodriguez hopes will evoke a happy gathering place for family and friends. The project is to be completed in Fall 2006.

PARKS DEPARTMENT KICKS OFF DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) will be using more and more outside designers from now on: On November 21, it released a list of eight landscape architectural firms that were awarded the Requirements Contract for Landscape Architecture Consulting Services. In October, the DPR released a similar list of six firms that were awarded the Requirements Contract for Architectural Consulting Services. The pre-selected firms have been offered two-year renewable contracts, guaranteeing millions of dollars of work.

The pre-selected landscape firms are Donna Walschague LA & Urban Design, Thomas Balby Associates, MKW & Associates, MPFP Urban Design, Nancy Owens Studio, Quenstell Rothschild & Partners, Abel Baininson Butz, and Mark K. Morrison Associates. The architecture firms are Architecture Research Office (ARO), BKSK Architects, Rogers Marvel Architects, Sage and Coombe Architects, Smith-Miller + Hawkins Architects, and Kiss + Cathcart Architects. According to Donna Carmona-Grif, assistant director of architecture for capital projects with the DPR, these pre-approved firms will essentially compete with one another for DPR contracts. "For the architectural projects, which range from renovating existing buildings or designing new parks facilities, contracts may have budgets of up to $4 million.

Rockwell Group to Build Arts Center in Ex-Steel Factory

ArtsQuest, an ambitious performing arts nonprofit, recently selected the Rockwell Group to design SteelStax, a multipurpose venue facility around a colossal industrial site in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The organization decided three years ago that the area needed a performing arts, education, and media facility.

In late spring, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was issued to top design firms throughout the country. According to Kim Pyle, director of marketing and public relations at ArtsQuest, about 60 firms responded. Three

USGBC Does Some Soul-Searching

The U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) fourth annual Greenbuild conference highlighted the increasing importance and awareness of sustainable design, but during the event, it became clear that the membership organization still has a long way to go if its LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system is to become influential on a large scale. The conference, held November 8-11 in Atlanta, was the largest GreenBuild to date with more than 500 exhibitors and approximately 10,000 attendees, including architects, interior designers, and product manufacturers.

Morning plenary sessions featured speakers including Janine Benyus, the nature sciences writer, innovation consultant, and author of Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature (William Morrow, 1997); and Environmentalist Paul Hawken, author of The Ecology of Commerce (Harper Collins, 1993) and co-author of Natural Capitalism (Little Brown, 1999). Andres Duany of Duany Plater-Zyberk turned up his rhetoric meter to 11 in a morning session about sustainable urban design. In his first GreenBuild appearance, the New Urbanism guru proselytized about the need for connected communities. He was a hit among the

Continue on page 2
were pretty straightforward, we received some from front page months later, ArtsQuest narrowed list to 12 firms.

"We asked [the shortlisted firms] for comments," said Pyler. "While most were very straight-forward, we received some radically different responses." ArtsQuest, along with local community leaders and artists, reviewed the proposals and announced their selection of the Rockwell Group on November 11.

David Rockwell, founder and CEO of the Rockwell Group, said he was interested in the project because of its magnificent context, the Bethlehem Steel property. "We were thrilled about the site," he said. "It's an incredible relic of industrial grit, a monument of heroic scale."

To draw attention to the uniqueness of the site, the firm plans to create several mixed-use buildings around the site's iconic centerpiece, the Bethlehem Steel Electrical Furnace. Describing the new buildings as "a necklace around the center," Rockwell stated that "we wanted to use the existing building as a conceptual engine."

While flexible, the original program called for one large festival hall continued on page 3
IT SHAKES A VILLAGE

The far West Village is a real estate goldmine—when it's not caving in on itself, that is. Last year, the construction of the area's third Richard Meier tower caused top-to-bottom cracks next door at 163 Charles Street, the home of art dealer Kenny Schachter and his wife Ilona Rich. Things got so bad that the couple moved out and sold the house to developer Barry Leistner before heading to London. Now, it seems Leistner—who demolished the museum to make way for another condominium, by architect Daniel Goldner—has added another tile to a giant game of dominoes. Work on his project has caused the adjacent house of photographer Jan Stoller to tilt by about an inch, with the façade of his carriage house cracked to the brink of collapse. Neither Stoller nor Goldner's office wanted to comment, but Stoller has one consolation: Work has stopped on the project, and a recent downzoning may reduce its eventual height from eight stories to three.

DECK THE HOLL

Last month, we were in the otherwise tranquil town of Helsinki and checked up on Kiasma, which is not a periactric malady, but rather the contemporary art museum that Steven Holl completed in 1998. And we were shocked. Don't get us wrong; while it didn't appear to have been built to the highest standards of craftsmanship, we actually liked the building. But it seems not everybody does, since it looms high, though someone had taken a baseball bat to its exterior glass wall. Yes, you heard right: a large section of the museum's western facade, spanning perhaps 20 or 30 feet, had been smashed in dozens (dozens!) of places—bringing new meaning, perhaps, to Holl's oft-cited "porosity." "It's due to vandalism," Lina Cronqvist, a reporter who looked into the matter after we, um, broke the news to her, said. "The damage is being repaired, she added, and should be fixed by mid-January. Entirely irreparable, however, is Charles Gwathmey's new Astor Place tower. (Sorry, we just had to slip that in.)

FROM THE ZAHAS FILES

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: We love Zaha Hadid. Not just for her various morphologies—interpret that as you like—but for stories like the one we recently heard when the L.A. architect Clive Wilkinson was in town for his induction into Interior Design magazine's Hall of Fame. Flash back to London, 1980. Hadid is teaching a unit at the Architectural Association with Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zanghelis. Wilkinson is a student of theirs, but decides to transfer to Peter Cook and Ron Herron's unit at the AA. Now it's the school's end-of-year party, Hadid spots Wilkinson, and the wounds of rejection open afresh. "You stupid nitwit," she tells him. "If you had stuck with our unit, you would have gotten ten Honors." The 6-foot-4 Wilkinson, wearing a white suit and drinking a pint of Campari (give him a break; it was almost the '70s), replies, "Who cares?" Hadid's unit mid-year. Now it's the school's end-of-year party, Hadid spots Wilkinson, and the wounds of rejection open afresh. "You stupid nitwit," she tells him. "If you had stuck with our unit, you would have gotten ten Honors." The 6-foot-4 Wilkinson, wearing a white suit and drinking a pint of Campari (give him a break; it was almost the '70s), replies, "Who cares?" Wilkinson's aloofness rips a new hole in Hadid's fiery heart. In retaliation, his red mustache pulled the red nose. "Who cares?" Wilkinson's aloofness rips a new hole in Hadid's fiery heart. In retaliation, his red mustache pulled the red nose. Hadid spots Wilkinson, and the wounds of rejection open afresh. "You stupid nitwit," she tells him. "If you had stuck with our unit, you would have gotten ten Honors." The 6-foot-4 Wilkinson, wearing a white suit and drinking a pint of Campari (give him a break; it was almost the '70s), replies, "Who cares?"

PHILLY LAMBERT WINS 7TH VINCENT SCULLY PRIZE continued from front page

The Casey Kaplan Gallery is the first Manhattan project for the Los Angeles–based studio Neil M. Denari Architects (NMDA), which is also designing a slim-fit, 13-story building on 23rd Street, next to the High Line. NMDA left the two large exhibition spaces of the 4,700-square-foot gallery—a former taxi garage—almost untouched: plain walls, concrete floor, exposed beams. (The whole operation was done in nine weeks at a cost of $80 per square foot.) The primary architectural intervention is a curving dropped ceiling over the entry, a formed surface that pulls one into the gallery space. Fluorescent tubes imbedded in the ceiling spread a homogeneous, oversaturated light that seems to flatten the whiteness of the space. This rough industrial space is quite uncommon in the Chelsea art galleries district. "I am impressed by how many people said today, 'Well, it's not Richard Gluckman,'" said Marc I. Rosenbaum, NMDA's local architect.

Olympia Kazi
Until fairly recently, most of the 16-person firm Architecture Research Office's (ARO) work has been residential. The firm is clearly switching gears with three projects at Princeton University, one each at Colorado College, New York University, and Brown, and a contract with the New York City Parks Department through their Design Excellence program (see "Parks Get Boost," page 1). "We'll always want to do houses," said principal Stephen Cassell, "but we made a conscious decision to try to shift focus. Institutional work requires different approaches than residential does—you also have to look at architecture on a social level."

Their two highest-profile projects—the 1998 U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station in Times Square and their work in 2002 as architect of record on the Prada store in SoHo by the Office of Metropolitan Architecture—may have paved the way for the switch. "Prada was technically challenging, and we developed a lot of competencies on it," said principal Adam Yarinsky. "It proved that we can do complex, large-scale projects."

But not every building has a budget like the $42 million dollar Prada Store or the luxury of a long schedule, and ARO knows that they will be working under tighter constraints from now on. "The challenge with institutional work is to sustain inventiveness within projects of limited budget and scope," said Yarinsky of their current projects. "I think it is important to frame a design problem in terms under which it can be implemented, without major compromise."
1 MARTHA'S VINEYARD RESIDENCE
For a wooded site with an expansive view of the ocean on the coast of Martha's Vineyard, ARO developed a simple design that works within the contours of the glacially formed landscape. Two barns with private spaces are connected by one with public rooms; together, the three form a C-shape that defines an entry courtyard. On the outside of the C-shaped plan, other, smaller outdoor living spaces protected by extensions of the house's walls look towards water and woods. The central living spaces are clad in zinc panels that run vertically. For outer walls, ARO riffled on the traditional board-and-batten pattern with horizontally hung color siding, providing an interesting contrast with the zinc.

2 WESTON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
In 2003, ARO won an invited competition to design a performing arts center that would be a part of the local public middle school in Weston, Connecticut. Since the town plans to use the center for community events as well as academic ones, ARO developed a proposal to distinguish the entrances for both constituencies. Students will access the 24,000-square-foot hall through a link to the school, while the public will enter via a grander entrance off of a new plaza. From this plaza, the auditorium, which is wrapped in finely plywood and stained red, will be visible through the glazed lobby space that surrounds it. The rest of the exterior will be clad in metal shingles. The project is expected to go forward as fundraising progresses.

3 CENTRAL PARK WEST APARTMENT
About five years ago, Yarinsky and Cassell decided to buy a laser-cutter for the office. While the staff generally uses the machine for modelmaking, they have also harnessed its abilities to transform materials like paper and cardboard. As Yarinsky explained, it encourages them "to take prosaic materials and make them rich," i.e., to cut them into forms that would be almost impossible to do by hand. They exhibited a laser-cut paper wall at Artists Space in 2000, which led them to a client who wanted them to apply similar ideas to an apartment in Emery Roth's San Remo at 165 Central Park West. They are now renovating the entire 2,200-square-foot space through the most distinctive feature by far is a series of 18 medium-density Sheetrock panels—some sliding, others fixed—which have been carved by a computer-numerically controlled milling machine into a lattice whose pattern varies in density over their 9-foot height. The screens are set into a ceiling track with LED lighting that rakes down their surface to accentuate the variations in pattern, density, and light in each.

4 PRINCETON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE ADDITION AND RENOVATION
Cassell and Yarinsky are in the process of renovating the School of Architecture at Princeton, a particularly appropriate project as both spent many years there, Cassell as an undergrad and Yarinsky as a graduate student. "I actually like the building," said Yarinsky of the existing building—a 1963 brick and concrete block by Fisher, Nes, Campbell Architects—though he admits it does have a few drawbacks, such as the underused main lobby that links the classroom and studio wing with the administrative wing. After construction is complete in 2007, it will be a triple-height space with an upper-level lounge, with fritted glass and minimal mullions that permit views to a green beyond. As part of the renovation, ARO brought the woodshop back into the building, saving it from its current exile near the football stadium, a ten-minute walk away. Because of this act, Yarinsky laughed, "It doesn't matter what we do, (the students) will like it."
ARO is working on two other projects at Princeton, which is in the middle of a major building initiative. By the end of next year, the university will have added 1.6 million square feet of facilities and 500 additional students. The firm is part of the masterplanning team, which is led by Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and includes Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. The team is still in the early phases of work, but is charged with evaluating the projects already underway, and planning for future growth by densifying the existing campus.

To accommodate new students, Princeton has created another residential college called Whipps, which was designed by Dimitri Porphyrios in a neo-Gothic style and is currently under construction. ARO is designing the new college's master's house, which will be across the road from the Porphyrios project. While the house is still in development, it's safe to say that ARO's design will not be neo-Gothic.
MONEY SECURE, MTA LOOKS TO GET ROLLING

Transit Bond Passes

Leave it to the MTA to make billions in new money seem grim. Voters on Election Day endorsed granting $1.45 billion to the MTA as part of a $2.9 billion bond issue. Less than two weeks later, the agency reported a billion-dollar surplus, largely the benefit of stubbornly low interest rates and surprisingly high real-estate tax revenue. Yet the board adopted its 2006 budget on November 16 in a somber mood. Every dollar the MTA expects to receive in the next year has been earmarked for critical projects and pension obligations.

The MTA will split the new bond money in thirds, among general upkeep, major projects, and pension obligations. That's important, because the MTA may call again for financial help in the next few years.

Big chunks of the MTA's revenue come from taxes and subsidies. It expects 43 cents of each dollar from fares and 14 from tolls. The rest comes from taxes and, to a lesser degree, subsidies. The bond act, which the state will repay through general taxes, will help the MTA begin work on major projects. "It's a beginning," said Richard Ravitch, who as MTA chairman in the '70s saved the agency in part by promulgating a series of five-year capital plans.

Those plans never yielded a Second Avenue line, in part because state lawmakers wouldn't help the MTA cover other costs. So the MTA took on mounting debt. By 2009, the MTA expects debt service to eat 36 percent of all fare and toll revenues. It would take massive increases in ridership to plug interest gaps. "We need a new dedicated source of revenue, a piece of a new tax, something," said MTA board member Andrew Albert.

State politics make revenue forecasts rocky. Insiders say that Governor George Pataki, desperate to show off developments at Ground Zero as he eyes national politics, wanted to use the MTA to push through progress downtown. In the November 16 plan, the MTA ignored Pataki's public request to earmark $250 million of its operating surplus to develop the Manhattan rail link.

MTA to ease crowding on subways and buses. "Compared with Second Avenue and East Side Access, the benefit per number of riders is worlds apart." Still, the MTA earmarked $100 million of its new bond money to "facilitate initial elements" of a JFK-Lower Manhattan railway.

For now, the MTA has won voters' support. But changes in Albany—and handwritten signs about weekend route changes—could erase that goodwill, too.

ALEC APPELBAUM

HONORS

The U.S. Green Building Council selected the newest recipients of its annual Leadership Awards on November 4. An award was presented to one individual and one organization in each of six categories: for community, the Kresge Foundation and BNIIM Architects' Bob Berkebylle; for education, the Croxton Collaborative and Traci Ryder; for organizational excellence, Gensler Architecture and Ross Spiegel of Fletcher-Thompson; for research, Advanced Energy Design Guide for Small Office Buildings and University of Oregon professor G. Z. Brown; for advocacy, Global Green and Battery Park City Authority CEO Tim Carey; and for the LEED award, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and Paul von Paumgarten of Johnson Controls.

At the International Masonry Institute's annual Golden Trowel Awards on November 17, HP Hardy Collaboration Architecture was lauded with the best of community award and the grand prize.

On November 3, New York–based artist Tara Donovan was presented with the inaugural Calder Prize, a biannual prize from the Calder Foundation. The artist, known for her use of common industrial materials in her installations and sculptures, received $50,000 as well as assistance in placing a major work in a major public museum.

Devrouaux & Purnell Architects received an Award of Excellence for its Potomac Electric Power Company headquarters in the nation's capital. The Washington, D.C. Marketing Center, a joint program of the D.C. Economic Partnership and local business and development interests, bestowed the honor on November 2.

The Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects announced its International Fellows on November 30. The awards will be presented February 15 to: Bernard Tschumi, Massiminoi Fukas, Wolf Prix, Shigeru Ban, Peter Eisenman, and Rafael Viñoly. Virlo's firm has just awarded a research grant to Joseph Meilman, a student at Columbia University's Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science. Hagerman will research environmental performance and green roofs while in residence at the firm.

KEVIN CORSETTI

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER DECEMBER 14, 2005

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bookstore for architecture
USGBC does some soul-searching
continued from front page

already-converted green choice. Some urban designers in attendance who were already familiar with Duany, though, were disappointed that he and the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) are closely tied to the development of LEED-ND, a rating system for neighborhood development which will be released in draft form in 2007. Many voiced hope that the system will encompass qualities of simply smart, urbane urbanism and not necessarily the CNU's traditional neighborhood mantra.

In a provocative and surprisingly candid session on the state of USGBC and LEED, Rob Watson, known as the founding father of LEED, stepped over the USGBC party line. Watson, a senior scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council and chair of the LEED Steering Committee, said the council has grown in membership and raised awareness of sustainability goals, but the market penetration of LEED has not accelerated quickly enough. To date, nearly 400 million square feet (or about 3,000 projects) have been registered with USGBC to become LEED certified, but Watson noted that constitutes only about 6 percent of new commercial construction nationally. And LEED-certified projects account for only about 1.5 percent of the nation's construction.

Watson said that the adoption of LEED needs to reach 25 percent of the new construction market soon for USGBC to become more than a niche organization. USGBC currently has six ratings systems in use or development: LEED-NC for new commercial construction and major renovations; LEED-EB for existing buildings operations; LEED-CI for commercial interiors; LEED-CS for core and shell projects; LEED-H for homes; and now LEED-ND. Watson indicated that this is too much, too soon, in USGBC's development. "We're doing too much simultaneously," he said in the session. "There's no way an organization can deliver all that."

USGBC has had a bit of a wake-up call recently. First, the organization faced significant financial troubles early in the year, though Watson noted the problems have been dealt with. Then, independent authors Auden Schendler and Randy Udall published an extensive article, "LEED Is Broken, Let's Fix It," in which they point to the complexity, cost, and bureaucratic requirements of LEED as hindrance to broader implementation of the system. Watson said the article (a portion of which appears on www.grist.org) roused the USGBC board of directors and led to user-friendly refinements found in LEED 2.2, released at Greenbuild. LEED 2.2 features a simplified registration system, lowered costs, and improved standards of sustainability. The application process, still rigorous but easier to understand, is now entirely online. Version 3.0, which will be in development in 2006, will be the first version to address regional issues in sustainable design.

One of the stranger GreenBuild moments was the Thursday evening USGBC Leadership Awards Celebration, when soul diva Leela James performed. One word described the scene as members of the predominantly white, middle-aged audience got their groove on: awkward. On her web site, James says, "You can't fake or buy soul." The crowd proved that one cannot fake soul, but James' soul apparently has a price and USGBC paid it. John Czarnecki
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The fate of a lot more than who will be the next Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art has been hanging in the balance since Terence Riley announced last month that he was going to resign from the position he has held for 14 years: That role has been the primary force able to confer star status on architects (or deny it) and to define new directions in architecture, whether they exist or not.

For 75 years, ever since Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock started research for the 1932 exhibition, catalogue, and book that came to be known as The International Style, MoMA has been creating reputations and identifying trends more successfully than any critic, magazine, book, or other institution. Though the show was called Modern Architecture. International Exhibition, it described a particular kind of modern architecture which, like the paintings and sculpture the museum was showing at the time, was assertively geometric and came mostly from Europe. The catalogue’s title, Modern Architects, implied a wider reach than it had, since the technologically advanced skyscrapers of the age were not included. And although the exhibition had a section on housing, selected by Lewis Mumford, the overall emphasis was on aesthetics. No wonder the show is usually called The International Style, the title of the book published by Johnson and Hitchcock the same year, minus Mumford’s material. What had begun in Europe as a social movement was presented as a style. Hitchcock and Johnson even redrew Mies van der Rohe’s 1929 Barcelona Pavilion and 1930 Tugendhat House to emphasize the abstract, geometric qualities that they had identified as characteristic of the style.

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Four years ago, Riley and Columbia University architectural historian Barry Bergdoll redrew that distortion in MoMA’s Mies in America show by exhibiting original drawings for both buildings along with the ones that had been displayed in 1932, noting the earlier alteration in the exhibition and catalogue. That public institutional admission was only one of a series of decisions Riley made that showed he was his own man. When he was hired, in 1991, after he had organized an exhibition at Columbia University on the history of the International Style show, it was widely assumed that he was Johnson’s personal choice and, as such, Johnson’s influence would continue. Johnson had been a potent force at MoMA for years. The stars of the International Style show were given exhibitions again and again (ten on Mies, nine each on Le Corbusier and Wright), Johnson’s friends Peter Eisenman, Charles Gwathmey, Michael Graves, John Hejduk, and Richard Meier made their debuts as Five Architects in 1969. When Johnson was flinting with postmodernism, MoMA published Robert Venturi’s Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture as the first and only Museum of Modern Art Papers on Architecture (1968) and held The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts exhibition (1976), when Arthur Drexler was curator. And when Johnson lost interest in the movement, he guest-directed the Deconstructivist Architecture show (1988), an event that not only helped counter the classicizing influence of the postmodern movement but also advanced the careers of all the participants—Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind, Wolf Prix of Coop Himmelblau, Bernard Tschumi—by suggesting that they were the heirs of Russian constructivism and practitioners of a new style, rooted in history and modernism at the same time. They all denied that there was any such thing as “decon,” none louder than Eisenman who touted deconstructivist philosophy as an...
The role of the architecture and design curator has expanded considerably since the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) forged the position, shortly after its founding in 1929. If still only a handful of positions in the United States have dedicated architecture and design departments, it is still true that MoMA's chief curator, Alfred H. Barr Jr., was able to hire a chief curator for the architecture and design department in 1933-34 at a time when most museums did not even have a curator at all. The CAF has mounted fewer but more thorough and conceptually strong shows than almost any other museum in the United States, and it has probably more thoroughly revised its exhibitions in the past 12 years than any other comparable museum. The biggest news is that the Guggenheim is looking for a new architecture and design curator, a position that has been vacant for nearly six months, since Joseph Rose left to assume the architecture curator position at the Art Institute of Chicago. For his part, Rose has announced his intention to hire two associate curators in the Art Institute's design department and for its exhibitions to be international in scope, with a particular focus on hiring a chief curator. Though it's been more than a year since Rose left the Guggenheim, the appetite for reprogramming the department has freed the field from the propagandizing, taste-making role distinguished by Philip Johnson, who has not been able to cultivate a curator to join him in a postgraduate career; contemporary art, German Calcuto in pursuing a massive retrospective on Zaha Hadid, scheduled to open in June. We decided to look at the most prominent and prolific architecture and design curator in this country today, to gain a sense of how architecture and design are exhibited, and to get a sense of the way in which the role of an architecture and design curator has changed over time. Just for his career as the building curator for the University of Chicago, his post at the Art Institute of Chicago. Rose gets around. Not only has he occupied the majority of the architecture and design curator jobs in this country, but he shows his curatorial skills in the domino chain. His previous exhibitions include pieces on Gaetano Pesce and Janet Laurence. Vorster (both 1992) while he was director at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum; and contemporary Japanese and Chinese art, including Shigeru Ban's architecture and design curators, with an emphasis on Japanese and Chinese art, including prints and contemporary Japanese and Chinese art, including Shigeru Ban's architecture and design curators, with an emphasis on Japanese and Chinese art, including prints and contemporary Japanese and Chinese art, including Shigeru Ban's architecture and design curators, with an emphasis on Japanese and Chinese art, including prints and contemporary Japanese and Chinese art, including Shigeru Ban's architecture and design curators, with an emphasis on Japanese and Chinese art, including prints and contemporary Japanese and Chinese art, including Shigeru Ban's architecture and design curators, with an emphasis on Japanese and Chinese art, including prints and contemporary Japanese and Chinese art, including Shigeru Ban's architecture and design 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GIFTS

1 SOLAR AND SOLAR BACKPACK
Yes, we are always on the go, and we can't bear being disconnected. Harness the power of the sun for all your portable devices. The Solar Backpack from Voltaic Systems generates enough power to juice up cell phones, digital cameras, and the like, but not laptops, alas. The bag comes with a set of standard adapters and a battery pack to store unused power. $295. (MoMA, 81 Spring Street.)

2 HALLEY LAMP
Richard Sapper's Halley Collection for Luceco does for LEDs (light-emitting diodes) what his 1971 Tizio Lamp did for halogens—it brings the latest in lighting technology to the masses in an elegant design. Available as a compact task light, a desk lamp, and a floor lamp, Halley is energy-efficient and has a great range of movement, based entirely on counterbalanced components and springs or levers. $510 to $640. (MvA, 146 Greene Street.)

3 DEK (DESIGNER EMULATION KIT)
Now you can own a miniature of a design classic, with a simple DIY kit from New York designer Mark McKeown. Just punch out the parts, assemble, plug into a 9-volt battery, and small miniatures of Richard Sapper's Tizio Lamp, Achille Castiglioni's Arco Floor Lamp (pictured), Ingo Maurer's Lucellino come to life. $26. (www.dekmaker.com.)

4 SUPPLIE MOCHA CUPS
Ribbed and curvy, the Supple Mocha Cups designed by Greg Lynn for Alessi imbue bone china with a fresh tactility. $70. (www.unicahome.com.)

5 MOD CABINET
Mod Cabinet's fingerprint-activated locking system marries contemporary pragmatism to a retro aesthetic. PDAs with Bluetooth can control access to the cool, stackable units, which were designed and fabricated by Brooklyn-based design and technology consultancy Glide. $2,395. (www.glide-inc.com or Matter, 227 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn.)

6 CLOUD LAMP
Continuing with his experiments with paper and lightweight materials, Frank Gehry has created the Cloud Lamp, made by Bnlux for Vitra. The paperlike polyester membrane comes as flat sheets that can be snapped together and shaped around plastic rings; the lamp morphs according to its owner's whims. $498 to $698. (Design Within Reach, various locations.)

7 LEXON STICK SOUND
The Stick Sound by French company Lexon looks like a minimalist video-game joystick but is actually a radio. Toggle left and right to search for frequencies; up and down to control volume. $48.50. (Industries Stationery, 91 Crosby Street)

8 CREVASSE VASE
Zaha Hadid has brought her famous fondness for twists and torques to the Crevasse Vase, which she created for Alessi. The polished stainless steel vase is appealing individually or as a pair. $220. (Special order. Conran, 407 E. 59th Street.)

9 SCALE PEN
For the over-accessorized architect, the Scale Pen designed by Shigeru Ban for acme studios is the perfect accompaniment to our eyewear and intellectual scarves. Inspired by architects' classic triangular scales, this retractable ball-point pen is engraved on each of its three sides with different measurement scales. $86. (MoMA Store, 81 Spring Street.)

10 LOVE TANN
This season, why not give the biggest gift of all—a new home. The Love Tann, developed by Oslo-based firm Snehetta, is the latest iteration of the prefab craze, based on modules that buyers can arrange at will. Flat-packed and shippable, Love Tann is available in 10 days. From $276 to $345 per square foot (www lovettan.com)

WHAT GIVES

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN. HERE ARE OUR SUGGESTIONS OF WHAT TO GIVE YOUR FAVORITE HARD-TO-SATISFY, DESIGN-OBSESSED, ON-THE-GO,
MATERIAL CONNEXION

1000 LIGHTS

TAPE: AN EXCURSION THROUGH THE WORLD OF ADHESIVE TAPES

TAPE: AN EXCURSION THROUGH THE WORLD OF ADHESIVE TAPES

ARCHITECTURE NOW 3

THE COMPLETE CSH PROGRAM 1945-1966

ED RUSCHA: THEN & NOW

THE COMPLETE CSH PROGRAM 1945-1966

KATSURA: IMPERIAL VILLA

ED RUSCHA: CATALOGUE RAISONNE OF THE PAINTINGS VOLUME 2

THE SILVER SPOON

THE CONTEMPORARY GUESTHOUSE: BUILDING IN THE GARDEN

THE COMPLETE CSH PROGRAM 1945-1966

THE SILVER SPOON

THE SILVER SPOON

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The Deconstructivist Architecture show did, however, rekindle interest in modern (or modernist) architecture, which was good for the Modern. The museum hadn't had an architectural blockbuster since Drexler's 1979 survey, Translations in Modern Architecture. During the heyday of postmodernism, other institutions, such as the Cooper-Hewitt and the Architectural League of New York, shared the role of tastemaker. And MoMA, which had always undertaken historical exhibitions but mainly of modern masters, showed the work of Gunnar Asplund, Edwin Landseer Lutyens, Ricardo Bofill and Leon Krier as well as of Le Corbusier, Richard Neutra, and Mies as usual. Also during those years, the museum, which had always practiced what it preached, hired Cesar Pelli to design an addition, instead of Johnson who had designed the garden and the earlier new wings.

During the heyday of postmodernism, other architects to create site-specific installations (at MoMA, contributors were TEN Arquitectos with Guy Nordensen, Office dA, Smith-Miller + Hawkinson, and Munkenbeck + Marshall) and A Paper Arch (2000) by Shigeru Ban, a grand lattice canopy for the museum's garden. Riley's ambitious The Un-Private House (1999) introduced a number of new talents (Michael Bell, Thomas Hanrahan and Victoria Meyers, Harii & Harii, Winka Dubbeldam) and ways of exhibiting architecture. The gallery was arranged as rooms to sit in, including a living room in front of a large video screen and a dining table with interactive electronic images projected at each place-setting.

Riley also played an advisory role when the museum began planning another addition to almost double its size. Most, but not all, of the architects invited to compete were ones whose work he had shown—Herzog & de Meuron, Jean Nouvel, Renzo Piano, Gigon and Guyer, Nicholas Grimshaw, Toyo Ito, Fumihiko Maki, Ben van Berkel, many of whom were little known in this country at the time, were shown along with those by well-known Americans, such as Johnson, Gehry, Holl, Tschumi and Tod Williams. Billie Tsien, newcomers like Joel Sanders, Vincent Scuderi, and Tadao Ando, as well as of Mario Botta and Louis I. Kahn (his sixth at MoMA).

Riley's first show, in 1992, was the small New Furniture Prototypes by Frank Gehry. Then came his Previews series, with the Nara House (1999) introduced a number of new talents (Michael Bell, Thomas Hanrahan and Victoria Meyers, Harii & Harii, Winka Dubbeldam) and ways of exhibiting architecture. The gallery was arranged as rooms to sit in, including a living room in front of a large video screen and a dining table with interactive electronic images projected at each place-setting. Riley also played an advisory role when the museum began planning another addition to almost double its size. Most, but not all, of the architects invited to compete were ones whose work he had shown—Herzog & de Meuron, Holl, Ito, Koolhaas, Tschumi, Gehry, Williams/Tsien. Also invited were Wiel Arets, Dominique Perrault, and Yoshio Taniguchi, who won the commission. The sensibilities Riley had highlighted in his shows were very much in evidence in the museum competition, while Johnson's friends were not.

Johnson's early emphasis on aesthetics, however, has been dominant at MoMA in recent decades. The architecture shown at the MoMA, like the art, is chosen for artistic merit and originality first. From the museum's beginning, under its zealous first director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "the museum's staff saw architecture was exhibited with art, MoMA's influence in the world of architecture may have been greater than its impact on painting and sculpture, which were shown in museums and galleries throughout the world. Placing architecture and design in a fine art museum privileges aesthetics, but it also allows a consideration of their personal, private, technological, handmade, and visionary aspects. At least partly because of MoMA's influence, these dimensions of architecture and design are being celebrated today at the Canadian Center for Architecture, Georges Pompidou Center, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Netherlands Architecture Institute, and a whole host of progeny the world over. But the Museum of Modern Art is still the mother ship, so it matters very much who takes Terence Riley's job and what he or she does with it.

JAYNE KERRIS A NEW YORK WRITER WHOSE MOST RECENT BOOK IS ZERO SAAKINEN (PHAION, 2005).

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Welcome to the new Zumtobel Staff Lighting showroom!

We are pleased to announce the opening of our New York City showroom at 44 W. 18th Street (5th and 6th), Suite 701. Make our new showroom your most inspiring workspace, a place where you can meet with your customers to explore new ideas or view mock-ups — and a special space where you can join industry innovators for special exhibitions or events. To schedule a showroom appointment, please contact our Showroom Manager at (212) 243-0466, or via e-mail at zsr@zumtobelstaff.com.

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To learn more, call us today at 877-423-6728 or visit us online at www.hbcommunications.com.

RENTAL/STAGING • CONTROL ROOMS • VIRTUAL REALITY/3D
FIXED INSTALLATIONS • NETWORKING • SERVICE/SUPPORT
**THURSDAY 22 EVENT**

New York Building Foundation Theater Benefit
5:30 p.m.
Firebird Restaurant
365 West 46th St.
www.buildingcrospar.org

**WEDNESDAY 11 LECTURE**

Kate Haley
Every Citizen a Soldier: American Propaganda on the Home Front
10:00 a.m.
Bard Graduate Center
18 West 86th St.
www.bgc.bard.edu

**EXHIBITION OPENING**

Green Towers in New York:
The Imagery of Landscape Architecture
66 5th Ave.
www.bgc.bard.edu

**THURSDAY 12 LECTURE**

Lewis Erenberg, Stephen Polkani, Naizm Prevots, John Zukowsky
Made in America: Nationalism and Culture in the World War II Era
5:30 p.m.
Bard Graduate Center
18 West 86th St.
www.bgc.bard.edu

**SATURDAY 14 EXHIBITION OPENING**

Robert Adams
Turning Back
Matthew Marks Gallery
522 West 22nd St.
www.matthewmarks.com

**WEDNESDAY 18 EVENT**

Architectural League’s 125th Anniversary Benefit Dinner
7:00 p.m.
The University Club
1 West 54th St.
www.archleague.org

**THURSDAY 19 LECTURES**

Clifford Chinnin, Marilyn Cohen, Marianne Lomonaco, Barbara McClosey
The Visual Culture of War: 6:00 p.m.
Bard Graduate Center
18 West 88th St.
www.bgc.bard.edu

**SUNDAY 7 EXHIBITION OPENING**

Acute Zonal Occult Outer Drawing Room
40 Wooster St.
www.drawroom.co

**EXHIBITION OPENING**

Architecture and New York:
New York, The Brooklyn Bridge
Urban Center Gallery
457 Madison Ave.
www.urbancenter.org

**FRIYDAY 16 EVENT**

Cooper Union Art Auction
Cooper Union
7 East 7th St.
www.cooperartsale.org

**SATURDAY 17 EXHIBITION OPENING**

Bryan Savitz
Rare Gallery
521 West 28th St.
www.rare-gallery.com

**TUESDAY 20 EXHIBITION OPENING**

Neil Chambers, Robert Watson, Gail Suchman
Talking Green: Green Policy
7:00 p.m.
CUNY Graduate Center
365 5th Ave., 9th Fl.
www.cuny.edu

**TUESDAY 10 LECTURE**

Hiroshi Kashihagi
Japanese Modern Design: 1920-1940: Rationalism, Nationalism, and Total Warfare
6:00 p.m.
Bard Graduate Center
18 West 86th St.
www.bgc.bard.edu

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**

Anarchy to Influence: Design in New York, 1974-1984
Parsons The New School for Design
Arnoold and Sheila Aronson Galleries
66 5th Ave.
www.parsons.edu

**EXHIBITION OPENING**

French Photographer: France in the 1920s
365 5th Ave., 9th Fl.
www.cuny.edu

**FRIDAY 20 EXHIBITION OPENING**

Jessica Bronson
Bard Museum
521 West 28th St.
www.bard.edu

**WEDNESDAY 25 SYMPOSIUM**

Developers Forum: Getting Bold in the Boroughs
General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen
20 West 44th St.
www.gstm.org

**THURSDAY 26 SYMPOSIUM**

SPSW: State-of-the-Art Steel Design for Seismic and Blast Resistance
8:30 a.m.
McGraw-Hill Auditorium
1221 Avenue of the Americas
www.spw.org

**ARCHITECTURE AND NEW YORK:**

**NEW YORK, THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE**

December 15 through February 8
Urban Center Gallery, 457 Madison Avenue

With the face of the waterfront changing throughout New York's five boroughs, the timing couldn't have been better for the Architectural League's exhibition on the proposed Brooklyn Bridge Park. The master plan for the site, designed by landscape architecture firm Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, covers 85 acres and includes collaborative designs by firms including James Carpenter Design Associates, Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, Pentagram Design, Margie Ruddick Landscape, and Maryann Thompson Architects. The plan, which responds to the site's industrial history while introducing a new, natural landscape, proposes an integration of land and water through floating walkways, tidal marshes, and an area of the river designated for recreational uses. It has been met with both praise and criticism for its scale and the extent of its planned development.

Drawings and renderings of the master plan and proposed development and construction, as well as a large-scale site model will present the dynamic project. The show is the fourth the Architectural League's New York series, dedicated to showing new buildings projects in the city.

**PIXAR: 20 YEARS OF ANIMATION**

**Museum of Modern Art**, 11 West 53rd Street
December 14 through February 6

McAulay's 20-year retrospective of computer animation pioneer Pixar demonstrates the museum's commitment to exploring emerging technologies and art forms. Organized by the Department of Film and Media, the show includes over 500 pieces of original art from such blockbusters as Toy Story (1995), Finding Nemo (2003), and The Incredibles (2004), including conceptual drawings, oil paintings, and sculptures, illustrating the extensive production processes behind the company's extraordinary animation style.

The exhibition also includes material from Pixar's more obscure short films, such as For the Birds (2000), early sketches, at left and Luxo, Jr (1986), a short about animated office supplies and the source of the company's trademark, a hopping desk lamp.

In honor of the show, and possibly to ensure future screenings, Pixar and its estranged partner, Walt Disney Pictures, have donated new 35mm prints of the films to the museum's permanent collection.

**GREEN TOWERS IN NEW YORK:**

**FROM VISIONARY TO VERNACULAR**

**Skyscraper Museum, 39 Battery Place**
January 11 through April 10

The Skyscraper Museum's newest exhibition focuses on the growing trend of tall green construction in New York. The show includes over 14 buildings, divided into three groups—corporate, mixed-use, and residential—which allows the show's organizers to convey the differing motives behind sustainable buildings practices. For example, with residences, sustainability is a handy marketing tool; in office buildings, the use of environmentally safe materials, natural lighting, and other green technologies is regarded as a sign of good corporate citizenship and of a healthy workplace.

The show includes the Solaris at Battery Park City by Rafael Freib for the Albanian Organization, the Helena on West 31st Street by FFEW Architects for the Durst Organization and Rose Associates, the Meteor Building on West 57th Street by Foster and Partners (picture, left), and Cook - Ford's Bank of America Tower on 42nd Street. The exhibition will be accompanied by a nine-part lecture series, titled How Sustainability Succeeds in Business, which will be held at the museum.
Museums typically try to keep out the air pollution associated with urban living. But since October 26, the scent of rotting garbage and subway fumes has been wafting through the galleries of the Canadian Center for Architecture (CCA). Sense of the City, the show responsible for these unlikely sensations, is designed to challenge visitors to experience cities through our noses, ears, and other parts of our bodies.

The show, which will fill the CCA’s main galleries for nearly a year, is the first effort of the center’s new director, Mirko Zardini, since he assumed his post on November 1. Zardini has a background in the world of magazines, and is perhaps best known as the editor of the Italian publications Casabella and Lotus International. His editorial perspective comes through in the exhibition and its accompanying 350-page catalogue, which have a post-grunge, neo-modern style that is familiar to us from art-based magazines: lots of sumptuous images, edgy graphics, and pull-quotes. Sense of the City—blisters visitors with non-traditional material, and compared to most CCA exhibits, is distinctly ahistorical.

Sense of the City unfolds in six big rooms connected in an enfilade loop. The first room explains how animals’ senses far surpass those of humans. Did you know that the eye of a fly has 3,000 lenses? Each subsequent room is devoted to a different theme: “Nocturnal City,” “Seasonal City,” “Sound of the City,” “Surface of the City,” and “Air of the City.”

These sections promote a range of ideas: In “Nocturnal City,” a subway poster from a child-abuse nonprofit and Madelon Vriesendorp’s erotic Flagrant Délit of 1975 (best known as the cover of Rem Koolhaas’ Delicious New York) suggest that cities are more frightful, transgressive, and clandestine at night than during the day. “Seasonal City” is not really about all the seasons but primarily about winter, playing to its Montreal audience. It features the city’s magnificent 1920 rue Baile. Montreal亡s through our noses, ears, and other parts of our bodies.

The focus of Sense of the City is more anthropological than architectural, although buildings are part of the story. In addition to the Koolhaas bedroom scene, there’s a drawing by James Stirling showing the ventilating ducts at the Staatsspieler in Stuttgart, and a stunning 1968 photo by architectural photographer Ezra Stoller from inside CCA founder Phyllis Lambert’s beloved Seagram Building. These disconnected images remind us of the rarely mentioned mechanical guts of famous buildings. In this regard Sense of the City is remarkably different from Out of the Box, a show Zardini organized as an independent curator for the CCA in 2004, a more straightforward exhibit on the output of superstar architects Cedric Price, AldoRossi, James Stirling, and Gordon Matta-Clark.

What’s really startling about Sense of the City is how an exhibit about urban sensation—from the ways cities frighten, disturb, delight, and chill—can be so soothing. Low and changing lighting conditions in each gallery make the overall experience calming, almost like a visit to a spa. The change helps visitors through the different sensual dimensions of each space—the aromas in the small gallery, the textures of the surface gallery, the tones of the city in the sound gallery. Low-level violet lighting in the gallery devoted to the city at night slows everybody down. “You slow down in order for your eyes to adjust,” explained lighting designer Linnaea Tillet. “Otherwise you’d miss everything.” She’s right. It’s dark.

Zardini claims that the show offers a new approach to urbanism that’s less dependent on sight than the other senses. It’s a worthwhile project because it does open our ears, noses, and miscellaneous body parts to ignored aspects of urban life, but the result is not nearly nosy, stinky, dark, tasty, or gooey enough to give us a real sense of the city. ANNAHARIE ADAMS IS A PROFESSOR AT THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, MCQULL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL.

The debate at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation last month for the launch of Charles Jencks’ new book, The Iconic Building (Rizzoli), was a dialectical tango worthy of a Jack Lemmon/Walter Matthau skit. Prim and proper Jencks, the architect and author of the best-selling The Language of Post-Modern Architecture, faced off with an acerbic Peter Eisenman, whose views on the nature and value of icons are decidedly different from those of Jencks. The two provoked, teased, mocked, and ultimately gave each other a friendly pat on the shoulder.

In his opening salvo, Jencks declared, “The iconic building is here to stay.” He showed a Byzantine-era religious image as an exemplar of the complex and immediate symbolic value of icons. The Eiffel Tower and Le Corbusier’s chapel at Ronchamp aside, the phenomenon of global architectural icons has picked up steam only recently with the so-called Bilbao effect. Now that every civic leader seems to want one, iconic buildings have become ever more prominent in the media, which, after all, are their natural context. Some see architectural icons as formidable cultural landmarks of our age, the true signs of Zeitgeist; others see them as signs of our collective disgrace. Jencks didn’t take sides, though he is clearly fascinated by the trend. As he writes in the conclusion of his book, the new icons may well “usher in a new era of creativity and freedom.”

Frank, Peter, Rem, Santiago, Zaha, Danny, Norman: these are the authors of the new iconic buildings. If you don’t know who we’re talking about, you haven’t been following. Jencks argues these architects deal with “event buildings,” i.e., the monuments of an age obsessed with media. If past monuments were expressions of social and religious ideals, and ultimately symbols of ruling ideologies, today, says Jencks, commercial forces and the quest for instant fame demand that architecture be “an amazing piece of surreal sculpture as well as something that appeals to a diverse audience.” The new paradigm is what Jencks calls “the enigmatic signifier,” a “curious sign that suggests many meanings without naming any of them.” Whether intentionally or not, such new architecture conjures up many symbols—a triumph of easy, seductive, pop imagery. The symbolic richness (and shamelessness) of the new architectural iconicity is best captured by the “metaphorical analyses” of Dutch artist Madelon Vriesendorp, a series of sketches drawn for the book that reflect on iconic buildings. Jencks showed some of them at the lecture, including a rendering of Gehry’s Disney Hall as a Marilyn Monroe figure, taking pleasure in the subways puff. The presentation, his book, is “dangerous to read.”

The problem, he said, is that Jencks doesn’t qualify the properties of the enigmatic well enough. “I don’t think Foster’s building is enigmatic,” he said, referring to Norman’s Swiss Re London headquarters (nicknamed the Gherkin) which is featured theatrically on the book’s cover. “Foster’s is a pretty dumb building. Charles thinks well but he doesn’t see well.” Eisenman disagreed. For him, Jencks’ book is “dangerous to read.”

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In all my years of visiting the Guggenheim Museum, I never saw its undulating walls and glazed dome as feminine erogenous zones until I stood on a circular stage in the middle of the rotunda listening with awkward intimacy to the projected moans and painted fantasies of the performance artist Marina Abramovic as she lay beneath the floorboards masturbating. With only her voice and suggested presence, Abramovic transfixed familiar architecture into erotic metaphor. Such is the sorcery of her art.

There would be all varieties of transformation during Seven Easy Pieces, Abramovic’s punishing, enthralling seven-day rite of seven-hour performances that ran from November 9th through the 15th on the museum’s main floor. The series was itself a bold attempt at conversion—some might claim transfiguration—as it comprised the reenactment of six ground-breaking works by the early exponents of performance art: Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Valie Export, Gina Pane, Joseph Beuys, and Abramovic herself. Through her performances, Abramovic has transformed these exercises in ephemera into documented art works. Legend recalls legacy. A fitting pursuit for an artist long fascinated by ritual. The 59-year-old, darkly alluring Abramovic admits that early in her career she might have had a negative view of such a project. “The work was supposed to be in the moment,” she said. But over the years she, like some of her peers, came to feel that the relics from a performance—instructions, images, and objects—were themselves works of art.

Abramovic regrets, too, that as a young artist in her native Yugoslavia, she was unable to travel to see the performances being done elsewhere. Little was documented then or categorized later. It’s taken her years to track down original materials and sources for these historic pieces. “It’s a big mess,” she said. This dusty disorder has undoubtedly encouraged the casual plundering of early performance art’s concepts and imagery. Ten years ago, for example, Tilda Swinton created a sensation when she lay on an icy cross in view of an icon of the crucifixion. But it was if she had arrived from the “seedbed” of performance-instructions, images, and objects—were themselves works of art.

In fact, her performance marathon seemed a bit of a dare to younger artists. While they have drifted to installations, tape loops, and other technical devices to mediate experience, Abramovic continues to push herself to physical and mental extremes in order to engage the audience directly. The series required her to stare down an audience while wearing crotchless pants and holding a submachine gun; to lie on a steel bed with candles burning beneath her; and to incise a pentagram into her belly with a razor blade, lie naked on a cross made of ice blocks, and then whip herself. Even reenacting Acconci’s notorious onanistic Seedbed (1972) must have seemed a bit of a dare to younger artists. Nevertheless, Abramovic’s audience, which swelled to about 16 feet high, resplendent in a shimmering blue dress that cascaded to the floor. It was if she had been transported to the “seedbed” of performance as a form of art, and the artist as priestess. Through trials of will and the letting of blood, Abramovic gave new life to old art.

RITEMINDED

Marina Abramovic: Seven Easy Pieces
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 5th Avenue
November 9 through 15

Checkered History
Birsel + Seck proposes designating loading and unloading taxi zones.

Whaddya gonna do? Fuggedaboutit! This eternal question and its inevitable answer summarize the sublime paradox of New York: In order to live in this, the greatest city in the world, locals claim, one must put up with a number of often transit-related challenges—mystifying MTA management, bikes lanes used as loading zones, Los Angeles–grade gridlock, and the insufferable back seats of 14,000 already-lousy Ford Crown Victorias fashioned into taxis—that, taken collectively, render the city something less than great. Mediocrity, it seems, is the price of greatness. And the unlucky, invariably, becomes a measure of the urbane. Designing the Taxi, a project by the Design Trust for Public Space in cooperation with Parsons The New School for Design, resists this complacency. In workshops earlier this year, the project assembled what Parsons dean Paul Goldberger described as “a wide range of taxi stakeholders,” including the Ronart Leasing Company, which is one of the city’s largest taxi fleets, the National Resources Defense Council, and an eclectic selection of design firms. They have reimagined the taxi as infrastructural system, practical vehicle, and urban icon.

With such diverse contributors, the new proposals continued on page 19
For a brief period in October, pedestrians and eastbound traffic on Canal Street who happened to look upward between 6:30 and 11:00 p.m. were treated to the striking sight of a video projected onto a building at the intersection of Canal and Centre, in the heart of Chinatown. It was an installation by Brazilian-born, New York-based visual artist Solange Fabião, who recorded the material from a taxi coursing through the Chinese cities Manning Fabião started the series, called Transitio, in 2005, shooting a continuous video of the entire length of Broadway, also from a taxi. Last year, her Broadway footage was projected onto the City Center Dome in Beirut. Transitio is not complex or political (like Krysztof Wodiczko’s or Jenny Holzer’s building projections) but offer, simply, a slice of a place and planted outside their native land.

The ghost at the feast is, of course, the Checker. That purpose-built, high-riding, gas-guzzling behemoth became a rolling city landmark before being replaced by converted Chevy Caprices and Ford Crown Victorias in the 1980s and ’90s. Pentagram proposes a modernized “New Checker” that resembles the currently fashionable 2006 Chrysler 300 sedan. Hybrid Product Design applies the familiar Checker yellow and checkerboard stripe to a vehicle that resembles the best of French science fiction. And in what is described as a gesture that “acknowledges the diversity of origins of New York cabbies, while also professionalizes their appearance,” pedestrian rights group Citystreets applies the same pattern not only to an ear-flap hat and nautical cap worthy of Judd Hirsch but to what appears to be a Sikh turban—an alarming conflation of the mundane and sacred.

One also laments the absence, among the graphic and industrial designers and architects who contributed to the show, of an actual automotive designer—perhaps J Mays, who as the inventor of the new VW Beetle and the new Ford Thunderbird might be able to teach New Yorkers about adding a little user-friendly functionality to legendary Greatness. But some locals would remain unconvinced. Overheard from one exhibit-goer was this response: “Where do they think this is, San Francisco?” Whaddayagonnamo?
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