PORT AUTHORITY TO BUILD EXPANDED FERRY DOCK

TERMINAL CAPACITY

The World Financial Center is set to receive a new floating, five-slip ferry terminal. Currently under construction in a shipyard in Texas, the new $40 million terminal was designed by the engineering and architecture design division of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PA), and will replace a temporary two-slip facility currently in operation at the Battery Park City esplanade. Serviced by New York Waterways, the new terminal will continue to connect Lower Manhattan to Hoboken and will increase passenger capacity to an estimated 16,000 people per hour, up 7,000 from the temporary facility.

After the World Trade Center PATH station was destroyed during 9/11, ferry service to and from Lower Manhattan increased dramatically. While the temporary terminal served the extra traffic, the five-slip permanent facility was planned before 9/11, in the late 1990s, according to Donald Fram, PA's chief architect, New York Waterways has run ferry service to and from Battery Park City since 1989.

This June, the 160-by-176-foot terminal base will be tugged from Texas to the New York area via the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. In preparation for its ocean voyage, the craft is being constructed with a deeper keel—making it more like a ship than a barge. The base will arrive first in Brooklyn, where it will be outfitted with a pitched fabric roof and interior elements. The ferry terminal is expected to be completed at the end of the year, at which time it will be anchored to two steel piers at the

In relatively short order, Terence Riley vacated the post of chief architecture and design curator of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA); Joseph Rosa left the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMA) last summer to join the Art Institute of Chicago, and his old position remains unfilled; the Guggenheim, with a major retrospective on Zaha Hadid and another on Eero Saarinen on the horizon, announced that it's in the market for a senior architecture curator. And last month, Alice Rawsthorn, the gung-ho director of London's Design Museum, abruptly—and per force—resigned.

Who gets these jobs matters less than the sea change they portend. Museums, particularly those with a broad sense of mission, have at long last noticed that architecture and design are as capable of mirroring the culture as any other art form. But are museums really welcoming architecture and design into the pantheon of the arts or is this a

The Asia Society, the New York-based center for culture and commerce, was founded by John D. Rockefeller III 50 years ago to encourage dialogue about the far-flung continent. Asia might not seem as far away today as it did in Rockefeller's time, but globalization has only deepened the need for greater understanding between East and West. The nonprofit has commissioned two multi-million dollar exhibition and conference centers—one in Hong Kong, the other in Houston—by two prominent international architecture firms.

The society already has several locations in Asia and in the United States that are administered locally. The organization has been operating for 15 years in Hong Kong and 25 years in Houston, but increased interest and funding have made the expanded facilities the next logical step, according to Asia Society President Vishakha N. Desai.

Houston has one of this continued on page 4

On March 13, a team of construction workers vacated the post of chief architecture and design curator of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA); Joseph Rosa left the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMA) last summer to join the Art Institute of Chicago, and his old position remains unfilled; the Guggenheim, with a major retrospective on Zaha Hadid and another on Eero Saarinen on the horizon, announced that it's in the market for a senior architecture curator. And last month, Alice Rawsthorn, the gung-ho director of London's Design Museum, abruptly—and per force—resigned.

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In our feature "Patchwork City" (page 12) Grahame Shane observes that New York's origins as an archipelago, a network of small European settlements that grew connective tissue of roads and neighborhoods over the years. A new framework for development being implemented by the Department of City Planning (DCP) nods to that history, and is encouraging a similar pattern of "mixed uses, spaces, scales, densities and textures" throughout the boroughs.

The patchwork approach has clear benefits, as Shane points out, such as flexibility, responsiveness, variety, embodied by Amanda Burden's innovative micro-zoning. However, it has one obvious drawback, which is the lack of an overall vision of growth. We wouldn't dare suggest that the Mayor install a Robert Moses-like figure in his office, but that he simply consider a unified plan of action, like the 1992 New York City waterfront plan, which assessed and guided the development of the city's entire 587-mile waterfront. Such a plan might be able to do something about Queens West, a self-enclosed, suburban highrise district that echoes Battery Park City. It makes little sense to offer planning incentives and tax abatements to build massive towers on the waterfront, where development is likely to take place over time without incentives and which has few links to public transportation.

The truth is, Queens West responds more to Manhattan's squeezed residential market than to the real needs of the borough or the city as a whole. New York does need more housing at all income levels, but most new residential developments, like those at Queens West, are squeezing moderate- and low-income populations further out. We applaud the DCP's efforts to save "the soul" of the area with its approval of the Hunters Point Mixed-Use Sub-District and its measures to transform Jackson Avenue into an animated boulevard. But who will be left to enjoy this new mixed-use urban landscape if the area becomes too expensive for all but well-do-to New Yorkers?

Without a masterplan, the areas that will receive the DCP's focused attention are the hot development spots of the moment. Quick reflexes are a virtue but so is far-sightedness. What about the un-hot patches? For example, Sunnyside Yards begs for attention. All the DCP's encouragements for Long Island City to thrive with new businesses and residents should be integral to the creation of an intermodal transportation hub at Sunnyside Yards, a long-deliberated plan that the city and state seem to have given up on.

New York last tried to institute a masterplan in 1970 and it was rightly condemned as a "Master's plan" for its Manhattan-centricism and failure to include community participation in its formulation. The days of such lordly planning may be over, but it is hard to argue that the opposite, in which each community is left to its own devices, has ultimately been better. While Brooklyn Heights could organize itself and pay for an alternate plan to protect view corridors along its shore, poor Red Hook gets stuck with car pounds and big box stores on its waterfront. Special District zoning does not seem to lessen the sense of Manhattan-centricism; what is lost is the sense that city is thoughtfully considered as a whole. How can we plan if every person wants to speak for themselves and, at the same time, we share some big common goals as a community? A true comprehensive plan would address this conundrum.

EAVESDROP IS ON ASSIGNMENT

3 TENANTS SO FAR FOR 7 WTC
Still For Rent

Though 7 World Trade Center will officially open in May, it has signed only three tenants to date. According to Bud Perrone, vice president of Rubenstien Communications and representative of 7 WTC's developer Silverstein Properties, "The building will definitely be the full width of the site. But Silverstein Properties continues to be in serious negotiations with possible tenants and remains confident that the building will lease out rather quickly, as there is a demand for Class A commercial property."

As one of downtown's premier buildings, 7 WTC can be read as an indicator of the market for downtown commercial real estate. As a result, Larry Silverstein of Silverstein Properties, has come under fire for his plans to build additional commercial towers at Ground Zero, including the long-discussed Freedom Tower and a third tower, at 200 Greenwich, which is to be designed by Lord Norman Foster.

At present, only three tenants have signed on for space in the 1.7-million-square-foot, 52-floor 7 WTC: New York Academy of Science, 40,000 square feet of the 40th floor; Ameriprise Financial, 20,000 square feet of the 52nd floor and Bloomberg Thrust in May. But Silverstein Properties continues to be in serious negotiations with possible tenants and remains confident that the building will lease out rather quickly, as there is a demand for Class A commercial property.

"From the way they framed their analysis [of potentially adverse affects to the site], it is not even perfectly clear what will happen to the footprints," said Lane. "It may be fine, but the plans are unclear, making it hard to know."

The NTHP became involved in the rebuilding process when the WTC site was deemed eligible for protection under the National Historic Places Act of 1966. When a property slated for designation is going to be modified in any way, it triggers a review process known as Section 106. In practice, that means that local organizations are asked to provide constructive feedback on the way the plans may affect the historic resources. While the process is non-binding, preservation groups and others who wish to be involved in the site's redevelopment often exert some influence.

In sending the letters, the two groups have given ammunition to a group of family members of victims of the World Trade Center's destruction, who staged a protest at the WTC site on the day of the memorial's groundbreaking.

Members of the Coalition of 9/11 Families say that the LMCDC and Port Authority did not consult them during the design process, either. They, too, are seriously concerned that the original footprint of the north tower will be covered by the museum. The group also feels that the Red Hook protest was an injustice to stop any work on the site. While work did begin, it is only site preparation and clean-up, and the concrete for the museum's footings will not be poured for another eight weeks. ANNE GUENEY

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SOUTH BY SOUTH EAST continued from front page country's fastest growing Asian-American communities. "With its strength in the science, technology, and energy sectors, Houston has been attracting people from China, India, Vietnam, and Korea," explained Desai.

Yoshio Taniguchi, best known for his expansion of New York's Museum of Modern Art, is designing the society's $40 million Houston outpost, Asia House, which will break ground later this year and be completed by 2010. While the final design will be unveiled in mid-March, the center will include galleries, a 300-seat theater, meeting rooms, reception spaces, and gardens.

Meanwhile, ground has just been broken for a 35,000-square-foot, $52-million complex designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien and Architects (TWBTA) in the Hong Kong district known as Central. Construction is expected to be completed by 2008.

Taniguchi was selected for the Houston project by the center's local advisory board after a review of several architects' work, while TWBTA participated in a limited competition: The society considered 10 portfolios and three were shortlisted. "We wanted to work extra hard to include Asians in the process for Hong Kong, but the most important thing to us was how the designers approached the site," recalled Desai.

Williams and Tsien first saw the site in 2000, along with other shortlisted architects Kazuyo Sejima and Barcelona-based Elias Torres and José Antonio Martínez Lapeña. "It was like a jungle," said Tsien. "It was like Vietnam, with banyan trees with leaves the size of umbrellas growing out of the tops of the buildings."

On the site is a three-building compound that was an explosives and ammunition storehouse in the 19th century. An overgrown plot in the city's skyscraper-dense downtown—and a stone's throw from Norman Foster's Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank—the historic structures will be renovated to become exhibition spaces as well as a theater and offices in the architects' scheme.

The New York architects decided to take advantage of the site's horizontality in designing the new addition, a 20,000-square-foot conference center. "It is a horizontal skyscraper—a groundscraper," Tsien said of their modern glass building. Its low-slung profile hugs the landscape and engages nature in a very Wrightian way with a roof garden that becomes a dynamic, zig-zagging bridge linked to the old complex. Where the roof melds with the bridge, a quadrilateral-shaped pool will deposit water onto the lower level of the two-story complex. Described by Tsien as a "floating garden," the roof/bridge segue is the most striking and unifying aspect of the new project.

The team's initial scheme for the bridge was a straight connection to the old complex, but the palm trees—and their resident endangered fruit bats—would have been eliminated by this footprint, so the designers developed the winding bridge. And, according to Chinese tradition, bad spirits are brought on by straight lines, so the indirect link is more in keeping with local tradition.

For Tsien, the commission for the Asia Society Hong Kong has great personal significance. "I have enjoyed the commission a huge amount. For me, it is a bridge because I am Chinese-American, not one or the other," she said. "And the Asia Society's whole mission is to be a bridge between cultures." Making the commission even more bittersweet, the actual day they won was September 11, 2001.

While TWBTA is working on a house in Hong Kong, they have no additional projects in Asia. "I am not sure if we are right for Asia," Tsien explained, adding that the Asia Society was an exceptional client. "China in particular is interested in buying names and products. That is not how we work."
that penetrate the bulkhead of the esplanade. Terminal links passengers to land via two extension of the esplanade. We wanted to waterfront was important to the designers, the day it will catch daylight and radiate it temporary terminal was moved roughly centuries, architecture and design curators are making it up from scratch. So what have we seen? Collections of cool stuff presented in the manner of natural history museums (minus, alas, the dioramas), meticulously mysterious drawings, and wacky models by avant-garde architects conveying the wonders of the future to a head-scratching audience. Blockbuster retrospectives on signature architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and Frank Gehry, a show dedicated to the sneaker. When Rawsthorn stretched the definition of design so far beyond form and function to embrace Constance Spry, a flower-arranger for 1950s British society, it was the last straw for the old guard at the Design Museum. Certainly, good design is polymorphous and diffuse, but the problem is that most shows miss the chance to convey to a general audience that design is more than stuff that looks cool. Unlike painting, sculpture, video art, et cetera, architecture and design reflect the particular values of a society and the idiosyncratic perspective of the maker. But too few exhibitions convey the vast and complicated networks that architecture and design involve. As applied arts, the design fields are about function, progress, the deployment of resources on a mass scale. They have the power, unlike a Matthew Barney film or Richard Serra sculpture, to influence the way we work and live and occupy this planet.

Signs of a greater appetite for a more nuanced menu abound. Critics of recent omnibus shows have begged for more context and deeper explanations of the forces at work within already riveting panoramic surveys of, for instance, Spain and safety. Two years ago, the Prada Foundation in Milan had to turn back crowds clamoring to see an idiosyncratic but compelling collection of materials under research and development by the profession's most eccentrically thoughtful architects, Rem Koolhaas and Herzog & de Meuron. Why that show never went to a museum or wasn't conceived by one in the first place is even more perplexing. In 1968 MoMA staged a legendary show, called The Machine, curated by K.G. Pontus Hulten. Even the exhibition's catalogue, with its pressed and colorized metal cover showing the museum's façade, was memorable. The uninhibited exhibition ranged far, including paintings by Kasimir Malevich and James Rosenquist, a reconstructed model of Vladimir Tatlin's Constructivist tower, Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion car; a camera owned by the Lumiere Brothers as well as a Nam June Paik video work. Art, architecture, graphics, and design were all equal players in the mix. It must have been exhilarating. Showing us how art and architecture, design and technology cross-over and feed each other as well as nurture our collective selves will always be the best any curator can do.

The terminal will not only serve ferry passengers but the general public, with concessions and other open areas. "Anyone who wants to meander down there can do," said Fram.

While a visible, luminous presence on the waterfront was important to the designers, a bigger concern was transparency. "The key thing about it," said Fram, "is that it's an extension of the esplanade. We wanted to keep it as open as possible in terms of use and not obstruct the view of the water."

The terminal links passengers to land via two glass-covered, ADA-compliant gangways that penetrate the bulkhead of the esplanade.

Glass windscreens surround the public areas to shelter visitors, but the building itself is not environmentally sealed. Heating elements on columns, however, will keep temperatures inside the terminal comfortable throughout the winter.

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The Onishi Gallery/Gallery Memoria is a departure from the neutral white cube. With glossy white epoxy floors and drywall polished to a high sheen, the space unabashedly makes its own artistic statement. The 1,500-square-foot space, designed by Jose Salinas of Knobs Design, houses two galleries: the Onishi Gallery, devoted to Japanese contemporary art, and Gallery Memoria, which contains a permanent exhibition of Buddhist altars. To divide the two spaces, the architect created a "mediating wall," an oblong shelving unit that encourages a circular path. "Organizing the space into a circle emphasizes the theme of past and contemporary combined," said Salinas. While the Onishi Gallery is more conventional in its display of art, Gallery Memoria resembles a shrine imagined by a designer from Apple. Rows of glowing inset shelves exhibit various Japanese artifacts; as the centerpiece of the gallery, these shelves emit an ethereal, technological light that is at once hypnotic and contemplative. The unit becomes a point of reference in the space. It is unusual for a gallery to achieve a sense of spirituality, but then again Onishi Gallery/Gallery Memoria isn’t your typical Chelsea gallery.

Jesse Finkelstein

ART FESTIVAL LIGHTENS UP "SAD" TOWN

TALLINN SHINES BRIGHT

With nearly half of the Estonian population suffering from seasonally affective disorder (SAD) syndrome, a depression caused by changes in the weather, the Baltic nation’s capital, Tallinn, throws a party at the height of winter to keep spirits high. Running from Christmas to the end of February, the centerpiece of the Tallinn Light Festival is a collection of art projects whose themes reflect the essence of the event: light, ice, and fire. In the heart of Tallinn’s medieval town square, an igloo, designed by Tallin-based architecture firm Zizi & Yoyo, activates the cold public space with winter-time-oriented activities. Veronika Vaik, principal of Zizi & Yoyo, said, "Igloo suggests a more varied understanding of what street-lighting could be all about."

Instead of using the traditional ice-construction method, the architects poured snow and ice into precast molds to erect the structure. The 240-square-foot igloo could fit 15 people and served refreshments inside or via a walk-up window. An estimated 10,000 people used the space before the festival ended in February. Vaik explained that the igloo’s vision of a warm nightscape sought to retain Tallinn as a unique northern capital that is “bubbling with ideas for emerging illumination art.”

For next year, Zizi & Yoyo plan on combining this year’s installation with last year’s (See “Up, Up, and Away” AN 05, 03.23.2005). The light dome, which they designed with Winy Maas of MVRDV and featured large floating balloons, will be combined with 10 igloos to form an igloo hotel.

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The Winterhouse Writing Awards seek to increase the understanding and appreciation of design, both within the profession and throughout American life. A program of AIGA, these annual awards have been funded by William Drenttel and Jessica Helfand of the Winterhouse Institute to recognize excellence in writing about design, and to encourage the development of young voices in design writing, commentary and criticism.

The awards will be given for writing that demonstrates the greatest evidence of eloquence, analysis, perspective, insight and original thinking to further a public understanding of design in contemporary culture. Writing that advances the visual expression of a design program, argument or thesis is also eligible. Entries may address any design discipline or form, including, but not limited to: architectural, environmental, fashion, graphic, industrial, information, interactive, product and strategic.

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Diller Scofidio + Renfro's (DS+R) first museum commission, a 65,000-square-foot home for Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), is going up on the city's long underused waterfront. Slated for completion in June and opening this September, the building's massively cantilevered galleries and mixed public and private spaces will anchor the Fan Pier waterfront redevelopment. The building is the first step in the long-delayed plan to revitalize the 21-acre include a view from underneath the building's cantilevered gallery; the 65,000-square-foot home for the arts, standing outside the city's long underused waterfront. The galleries, con­­tained on the building's top floor and cantilevered 75 feet toward the water, over the grandstand and public harbor walkway, are meant to shelter an outdoor room.

Given the unstable condition of the waterfront terrain, and the soft landfill separating ground from bedrock beneath the site, the massive gallery cantilever presented a challenging structural problem. The museum's frame had to be anchored on piles reaching 160 feet down to bedrock. "It was amazing how soft the ground was," said Flavio Stigliano, ICA project manager at DS+R. "The drill went down in a matter of seconds, like a knife through melted butter." Due to the tenuous nature of the piles—according to Stigliano, up to 20 percent could fail over time—the firm had to build in redundancy between public and private structures, with a continuous floor clad in South American mahogany. The theater's transparent glass walls can be modulated with three levels of shades—acoustic, translucent, and blackout—allowing for increased performance privacy when necessary.

The fluid envelope encases classrooms and public spaces to revitalize the 21-acre stretch of properties held by the Pritzker family—owner of the Hyatt Hotel Corporation—along Boston Harbor. In this context, the building is, according to principal Elizabeth Diller, "an ally to the arts, standing outside the debate of whether a museum's architecture is protagonist or backdrop."

The ribbon-like building folds up from the harbor's edge, weaving indoor and outdoor public space into the private spaces of the museum. Adjacent to the ground floor public lobby and café, an outdoor grandstand flows into a 325-seat theater on the second floor, expressing the continuity between public and private stages with a continuous floor clad in South American mahogany. The theater's transparent glass walls can be modulated with three levels of shades—acoustic, translucent, and blackout—allowing for increased performance privacy when necessary.

The variety of spaces, ambiguously shading back and forth between public and private, reveal the firm's concern for all constituents of architecture.

DEBORAH GROSSBERG
LOWER EAST SIDE LANDMARK IS REBORN AS AN ICON

EPILOGUE FOR A SYNAGOGUE

On March 19, six finial towers were placed atop the Eldridge Street Synagogue, located on Eldridge Street between Canal and Division in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, marking the completion of the building’s façade restoration. The importance of the finial towers’ restoration is that they figuratively represent the arc that holds the torah scrolls in the main sanctuary, the most sacred feature in the entire synagogue. Originally removed in 1960 due to persistent maintenance problems, their replacement ceremoniously represents the rebirth of the landmark after a six-year restoration process.

Clockwise from top left: The Eldridge Street Project included the restoration of stonework to the 120-year-old synagogue; a view of the interior; a window showing the star of David; stained-glass windows were painstakingly cleaned and repaired.

Built in 1887, the synagogue is currently being restored to become an educational and cultural center whose focus will be on the role of architecture and immigration in New York City and in Jewish culture. Amy Stein Milford, press and community relations director at the Eldridge Street Project (ESP), said, “The synagogue

GREENPOINT AND WILLIAMSBURG WATERFRONT PLANS ADVANCE

LAST COAST STANDING

The waterfronts of Queens, Manhattan, and Brooklyn Heights are not the only waterfronts with grand plans. In mid-February, a meeting between the team planning the Greenpoint/Williamsburg waterfront and the site’s developer—the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC)—suggests that plans for the area are ready to move forward. A presentation to Brooklyn’s Community Board 1 on March 7 also seemed encouraging.

The plans, drafted by Brooklyn-based Donna Willcavage Landscape Architecture + Urban Design with architectural consultants Weisz + Yoes, lighting consultant Leni Schwendinger, and engineer Malcolm McLaren, are in early stages of design. Their basic program is to interweave and unify the coast amid a number of new high-rise developments.

“We’re trying to plan for sites that don’t have a set developer,” said Claire Weisz of Weisz + Yoes. “The whole thing has to work as a waterfront park, but it doesn’t have to be monolithic.” In 2004, the waterfront redevelopment plan consisted of just a proposal for a ferry terminal and a small park that incorporated a short esplanade at the end of Greenpoint Avenue. Now, the waterfront redevelopment has evolved into a full-scale landscaped park that covers much of the length of the rezoned site, from Broadway in Williamsburg to the northern tip of Greenpoint. The EDC is keeping the preliminary designs under wraps, but according to both Willcavage and Weisz, the project will move forward quite quickly, with several upcoming design deadlines.

JAFFER KOLB
RESPECT
On February 27, President George W. Bush designated the African Burial Ground, located at Duane and Elk streets in downtown Manhattan, a national monument. The memorial, designed by Rodney Leon, won a competition last spring to commemorate the Negroes Burial Ground, which is believed to hold the remains of nearly 15,000 people. The $3 million memorial and the $5 million visitor’s center, located adjacent to the memorial site in the Ted Weiss federal building, will be completed next fall.

NEW TOWN, OLD VALUES
Growing concern over the new town of Ave Maria in southwestern Florida has boiled over into threats of a lawsuit. The town’s developers, Barron Collier Company and Thomas S. Monaghan, the founder of Domino’s Pizza, proposed certain prohibitions that no restrictions would be placed on stores but that the town is still growing. On March 3, the developers announced in the town, including banning the proposed certain prohibitions of Ave Maria in southwestern Florida of the new town, including banning. On March 3, the developers announced that no restrictions would be placed on stores but that the town is still growing. In the town, including banning the sale of contraceptives and abortions. On March 3, the developers announced that no restrictions would be placed on stores but that the town is still growing. On March 3, the developers announced that no restrictions would be placed on stores but that the town is still growing. On March 3, the developers announced that no restrictions would be placed on stores but that the town is still growing.

FRESH FACE
On March 7, the Metropolitan Museum of Art officially finished its $12.2 million, four-year-long exterior cleaning. The limestone façade had not been cleaned since the museum’s opening 104 years ago. Only water was used to clean the building.

MCMOVES
Matilda McQuaid has been appointed the deputy curatorial director at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. McQuaid joined the institution in 2001 as the exhibitions curator. In her new position, she will lead the launch of the new Online National Design Museum.

BORDER PATROL
On March 7, the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey announced the creation of an “invisible fence” around the city’s airports. By 2007, Newark, JFK, and LaGuardia will be blanketed by a $140 million Perimeter Intrusion Detection System. The system, already in use in Baghdad and Israel, includes radar, infrared imaging, motion detectors, and surveillance cameras. The security system was designed by defense contractor Raytheon Co.

EPilogue for a Synagogue
Continued from page 9 serves as an aesthetic inspiration for the many activities that occur within it.” ESP was founded in 1986 by Roberta Brandes Gratz, an urban journalist and a member of Landmarks Preservation Commission, in order to fully restore the structure. The building underwent an emergency stabilization in 1989 and in 1990 Robert E. Meadows completed a restoration master plan for the structure. The current $12 million project was initiated in 2000. The most recent phase, the façade restoration, began last July. Gratz commented, “After a 20-year effort, the façade restoration is a milestone in our history and in the history of this community’s cultural treasures.”

Initially charged with rehabilitating the city, state, and nationally recognized historic landmark, ESP began developing its cultural and historical programs in the 1990s. Once momentum began to pick up on the preservation project. While the small congregation, K’hal Adath Jeshurun, owns and worships in the structure, Milford said that they fully support the building’s transformation and adaptive reuse. Once fully complete, the restored building will feature a ground-level history and interpretive center as well as new offices, classrooms, a multimedia area, a genealogy room, and fully restored main and downstairs sanctuaries. Jill Gotttheil, project architect for Walter Sedovic Architects, explained, “The inserted programs were designed to be flexible depending on the user because the synagogue is a part of the interpretation by the public and worship by the congregation. This is of particular concern when considering the many events ESP puts on, such as concerts, tours, lectures, and festivals.

Walter Sedovic Architects specialize in what Gotttheil calls a "philosophy of sustainable preservation." The entire façade was poured with pure lime mold instead of concrete to save water. Fly ash from power plants was recycled into the concrete mixture for the foundation, salvaged materials and fixtures were reused wherever possible, and recycled construction materials were utilized for the new kitchen and bathrooms. The preservation architects contend that the act of recycling an existing building into a new use is the most sustainable aspect of the whole project.

Predictably, the hardest challenge in the restoration project was funding. “People don’t want to fund the stuff [mechanical systems and infrastructure] that is not pretty,” said Gotttheil. During the first phase of restoration, the City of New York came through and provided nearly $4 million for infrastructure upgrades and the installation of mechanical systems. ESP still has $2.5 million left to raise in order to complete the final phase of the restoration, which it anticipates to be completed by the end of 2007.

MATILDA McQUAID

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THE FUTURE SKYLINE OF QUEENS BEARS A SUPERFICIAL RESEMBLANCE TO JERSEY CITY: MORE THAN A DOZEN TALL BUILDINGS ARE PLANNED TO RISE ALONG THE QUEENS WATERFRONT AND, AS A RESULT OF SPECIAL DISTRICT ZONING, MANY OTHERS ARE IN THE WORKS IN LONG ISLAND CITY AND HUNTERS POINT. AS D. GRAHAME SHANE REPORTS, THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING'S SURGICAL APPROACH TO ZONING IS STIMULATING STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH, PROMISING A SERIES OF DYNAMIC URBAN PATCHES—AS WELL AS SOME AWKWARD SEAMS.
While New Yorkers witnessed an epic battle for the top-down control of the World Trade Center site, replete with power players channeling Robert Moses, the New York Department of City Planning (DCP) has been quietly leading a small-scale, bottom-up approach throughout the boroughs. The unveiling last month of Richard Rogers Partnership's design of a massive mixed-use project on the Queens waterfront for Silvercup Studios portends a dense, monumental future for the low-scale, still-industrial area. But various rezonings throughout Queens—including Long Island City, Hunters Point, and a dozen other neighborhoods—are in fact setting the framework for more incremental development in the borough, encouraging a unique fabric of mixed uses, spaces, scales, densities, and textures.

From its colonial beginning New York was part of an archipelago, a network of small patches of European settlements connected by boats, New Amsterdam, Brooklyn, Hoboken, and Harlem. The large open spaces of Queens have always attracted those unable to find accommodation in Manhattan, from the farmers and fishermen of the colonial period to the industrialists of the 19th and 20th centuries who depopulated their ports, factories, warehouses, oil refineries, cement plants, and more in the marshy headland bound by the East River and Newtown Creek. With its evolving transportation links—bridges, tunnels, ferries, and rail—head industry thrived in the area. The huge spaces that were carved out by industrial uses have taken on new meaning today, with Manhattan's squeezed housing market and changed attitudes about commuting. Suddenly, the rust-belt patches around Long Island City are attractive real estate.

In 2001, the Museum of Modern Art's temporary move to LIC highlighted the area's nascent as a cultural district. The same year, the Group of 35, a panel created by Senator Charles Schumer representing public and private interests, issued a report calling for the creation of a new business district in LIC, suggesting 15 million square feet of office space and citing the benefits of a planned—though sadly now defunct—"word-class intermodal transit station" at Sunnyside Yards. (The yard has a small LIRR stop and a ferry terminal nearby; the plan for the hub would have folded in stops for Amtrak, NJ Transit, and the MTA, whose routes all cross there.)

The intensification of development in Queens has actually been in process for some time. In 1984, the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PA) took over a large portion of the Queens docklands and, together with the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), created a 74-acre development patch under the auspices of the Queens West Development Corporation (QWDC). QWDC follows the Battery Park City model of development (also created by the ESDC), with phased parcels bid to separate developers. Two buildings have been completed (one by Cesar Pelli, 1998, and another by Perkins Eastman, 2001), and more than a dozen more are planned. Though far from complete, Queens West already appears to be isolated and out of scale with its surroundings, despite well-intentioned efforts to create open spaces and waterfront views.

By contrast, the DCP has adopted a more targeted approach to the rest of Queens, with especially keen responses to particular urban actors in particular locations. The DCP is actually building on an approach that was pioneered in the 1960s by Mayor John Lindsay's Urban Design Group (members included Jonathan Barnett, Alexander Cooper, Jaquelin Robertson, Richard Weinstein, and Richard Dattner), which abandoned masterplanning on a city-wide, regional scale and introduced Special District zoning. Based on a 1916 zoning ordinance addressing skyscrapers downtown, Special Districts under the Urban Design Group began as relatively simple mechanisms to protect small residential communities like Little Italy and Chinatown from large-scale development. Later, the concept was applied to create a Theater Special District, to protect Broadway theaters and allow the transfer of their valuable air rights to neighboring sites. This system of controlled zoning patches evolved into a complex, three-dimensional, multifunctional, incentive-based design methodology that paved the way for Cooper and Eckstut's 1976 masterplan of Battery Park City.

Under Amanda Burden, who has been planning commissioner and director of the DCP since 2002, Special Districts zoning has evolved further still, to encompass micro-patches of upzoning, downzoning, mixed-use, and historic and industrial preservation. Her LIC Mixed-Use Special District was in fact her first exercise, and presaged similar strategies in Greenpoint-Williamsburg, East Harlem, and Chelsea.

This finely calibrated approach to zoning can be seen in three of current "hot patches" of development in Queens:

Queens Plaza Special Improvement District
The city selected Margie Ruddick as a lead consultant (on a team that initially included Michael Sorkin and Michael Singer) to develop a landscape design that would improve the public spaces, lighting, traffic flow, and general streetscape of Queens Plaza. Ruddick, who is now collaborating with Marnipiero/Pollak, described her intention to make "the left-over spaces legible as a landscape that helps you get from one place to another, making connections across the space under the bridge."

Her scheme emphasizes improved circulation; bicycle and pedestrian paths and crossings abound. Near the waterfront section, she has proposed a cathedral-like space under the bridge, which will act as a seam between the planned Silvercup West project and the Queenbridge Houses, a massive housing project built by the New York City Housing Authority in 1941. The plan is currently under review by the Fine Arts Commission.

Long Island City Mixed-Use Special District
The city has also responded to pressure from public interest groups, like the Municipal Arts Society, the Regional Plan Association, and the Van Alen Institute. The latter organized the Queens Plaza competition in 2001–2002, which addressed the need to do something about the gloomy stretch of roadway beneath the noisy Queensborough Bridge. In 2002, the city selected Margie Ruddick as a lead consultant (on a team that initially included Michael Sorkin and Michael Singer) to develop a landscape design that would improve the public spaces, lighting, traffic flow, and general streetscape of Queens Plaza. Ruddick, who is now collaborating with Marnipiero/Pollak, described her intention to make "the left-over spaces legible as a landscape that helps you get from one place to another, making connections across the space under the bridge."

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The development of the Queens waterfront is modeled after that of Battery Park City. New on the drawing boards are (from left to right) residential highrises by David Adjaye, LLP, and Perkins Eastman; and Industry City, by Sweco Architects and Landini Associates.
Plaza, the LIC Mixed-Use Special District is revised to include a site divided into three sub-districts, which form a triangle around a gritty industrial core that will be preserved. The Long Island City Community Board is a small end-of-the-road developers and already contains Citigroup’s skyscraper at Court Square, the borough’s first major mixed-use development. A third lot on the waterfront is being converted to residential lofts and offices.

The upzoning to FAR 7 and Urban Design Guidelines under study by the team at the Gantry is being remade at Jackson Avenue into a densely built commercial corridor, containing a mix of one- and twofloor office buildings. The goal is to create a vibrant, walkable, connected urban environment.

Queens Waterfront (1980s to present)

The small-scale flexibility of LIC’s new mixed-use subdistricts is nonexistent on the waterfront. As a state agency, the ESDC formulated Queens West with almost no community input, though pressure from Hunters Point Residents led to the creation of a continuous landscaped riverfront that will be publicly accessible.

The completion of the 42-story City Lights Tower by Pelli Cerrai for Manhattan Overlook Associates (1998) and 32-floor tower by Perkins Eastman for Avalon Bay (2001) have sky-scrapered local residents into paying attention to what is happening to the rest of the waterfront. Local groups are starting to pressure the ESDC to break down Queens Plaza as a state agency, the ESDC formulated Queens West with almost no community input, though pressure from Hunters Point Residents led to the creation of a continuous landscaped riverfront that will be publicly accessible.

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Joc the site of the most recency proposed Omp.c V.l^age^ ,,st .ts plan by Mo^P^°^'''-^se offered a vision of the Olympic b.d, ^'^^^^^f^'^'etghborhood. area as a new "Negotiating with Frances Burden is currently neg ^^^^ get Huppert. the des^g n d. ej;^^ oU e.r the corporation to breaK ° patches, development into n^ore manager ^^^^ ^^^^^ mders Po 't Specia> District^ to the surrounding ^^^^^ ^^^egions, to connect the Queens West esplanade across Burden also ^^^I'^^l^Zs connect the Queens esplanade designed by p^^^iclc s Laurie Olin that will link to Margie Rudick's Queens Plaza park underneath the bridge. Stuart SUna boasted of riverfront cafes and ground-flou elevator that would animate the esplanade, as well as an outside escalator to the esplanade, as well as an outside escalator to the Queens borough Bridge beneath the bridge. Laurie Olin designed the Queens esplanade for the Woolworth Building. The scheme offers several civic amenities, such as a publicly accessible waterfront esplanade designed by landscape architect Laurie Olin that will link to Margie Rudick's Queens Plaza park underneath the bridge. The Sunas film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanade, designed by Laurie Olin. Suna's film and Productions took advantage of an extension to the Queens Borough Bridge esplanad...
Gail Pease
Alvar Aalto. William Wurster, and Modern Architecture's 'New Humanism'
7:00 p.m.
Columbia University GSAPP Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

TUESDAY 28
LECTURES
Alfred Friedman
Frank Lloyd Wright and Feminism
1:00 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP Buell Center
114 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu/buell

Eva Lajer-Burcharth
Video Selves:
Bill Viola and Pipilotti Rist
5:15 p.m.
Cornell University School of Architecture
Sibley Hall, Ithaca
www.architecture.cornell.edu

Gregory Chow
Globalization and China's Economic Transformation
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

FRIDAY 31
SYMPOSIUM
On the Waterfront
Richard Burdett, Tom Elghanayan, Jesse delany, Christopher Glaisek, Elghanayan, Alexander Garvin, Gary Hack
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

FILM
Corridor X
(Metropolis, 2006), 90 min.
7:00 p.m.
Anthology Film Archives
32 2nd Ave.
www.studiofront.org/news

SATURDAY 25
LECTURE
Jack Pierson
Chaim & Reid
5:30 p.m.
Centre for Architecture
15 East 53rd St.
www.chaimread.com

Cinemateque

RICHARD MISRACH: CHRONOLOGIES
Pace/MacGill Gallery
534 West 25th Street
March 25 through April 22

The exhibition Richard Misrach: Chronologies coincides with the recent publication of the same name (Fraenkel Gallery/D.A.P.), a carefully curated, beautifully produced compilation of 125 images taken by the Berkeley photographer over the last three decades. The monograph and the exhibition at Pace/MacGill (plus a concurrent show at his San Francisco gallery, Fraenkel) have the air of a retrospective, giving viewers the chance to see the evolution of his interests, his eye, and his technique. Misrach defined contemporary American landscape photography with his important early work documenting the Western desert—color-saturated portraits of the desert on fire, flooded, littered with unexploded military test bombs and poisoned animals, and territorialized by car-croquet players, a shuttle landing, speed racers. (Pictured above, Submerged Lamppost, Salton Sea, 1988.) His work consistently elicits horror, wonder, and other, deep emotional responses. No one has captured the reach and nature of humankind's impact on the environment with more mesmerizing beauty than Misrach.

ENRIQUE PENALOSA
A NEW URBAN PARADIGM:
BUILDING A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE METROPOLIS
March 23, 6:30 p.m.
Shepard Hall, Convent Avenue and 138th Street

Following the enormous success of City College's first two Lewis Mumford Lectures—the first, in 2004, was given by Jane Jacobs, and the second in 2005 was by Mike Davis—Enrique Penalosa, the former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, will deliver a presentation of the same name (Fraenkel Gallery/D.A.P.), a carefully curated, beautifully produced compilation of 125 images taken by the Berkeley photographer over the last three decades. The monograph and the exhibition at Pace/MacGill (plus a concurrent show at his San Francisco gallery, Fraenkel) have the air of a retrospective, giving viewers the chance to see the evolution of his interests, his eye, and his technique. Misrach defined contemporary American landscape photography with his important early work documenting the Western desert—color-saturated portraits of the desert on fire, flooded, littered with unexploded military test bombs and poisoned animals, and territorialized by car-croquet players, a shuttle landing, speed racers. (Pictured above, Submerged Lamppost, Salton Sea, 1988.) His work consistently elicits horror, wonder, and other, deep emotional responses. No one has captured the reach and nature of humankind's impact on the environment with more mesmerizing beauty than Misrach.
On-Site: New Architecture in Spain is a colorful snapshot of contemporary architecture in Spain, and convincingly demonstrates just how much good architecture is being built there today. It is also Terence Riley’s final exhibition as Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art, so it is in some ways a more personal reflection of his interests than earlier shows. Riley traveled extensively in Spain throughout the past year, visiting some 40 cities in order to whittle down the short list of projects to just 53. The exhibition features work from two generations of architects native to the country as well as a handful of famous firms from abroad; 35 of the projects are or will be under construction in 2006, and the remaining 18 were completed in the last six years. Framed in the context of the period after the dissolution of the authoritarian regime following Franco’s death in 1975 and Spain’s admission into the European Union in 1986, the exhibition represents the enormous diversity of work in Spain, as well as the high degree of public interest and support for architecture there.

The projects Riley chose to include raise a number of questions about the nature of contemporary architecture in Spain, not all of which are answered. Namely, besides aesthetic quality, quantity, and diversity, what, if anything, specifically characterizes contemporary Spanish architecture? The works in the show highlight several issues that almost every architect working in Spain has to address, among them, the layered historical fabric, the relationship to the local landscape, and the growth of cultural tourism.

With origins dating back to the 9th century B.C., and passing through the periods of the Iberians, Celts, Visigoths, Romans, Moors, Jews, Christians, Hapsburgs and Bourbons, Spain has a long and rich history that varies from region to region. Two of the opening projects in the exhibition, Rafael Moneo’s Murcia Town Hall Extension (1998) and EMBT Arquitectes’ Santa Caterina Market (2005) are careful, sensitive, and strong responses to the issue of the historical context. As finished buildings, both projects are represented in the exhibition by both a panel of text and images and a mural-size photograph taken by the German photographer Roland Halbe, who was commissioned to shoot all of the completed projects in the show.

The Murcia Town Hall Extension, situated on the only open side of a historic plaza facing the 18th-century façade of the Murcia Cathedral, plays with Baroque ideals of order and ornament by offering a minimal box constructed out of local sandstone. The façade, while mimicking the surrounding buildings in height and scale, is devoid of all ornament except for the irregular rhythm of thin piers, arranged along the floor slabs and highlighting a single, off-center balcony. Moneo, trained by Spanish master Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oiza and Danish modernist Jørn Utzon, is undoubtedly one of Spain’s most renowned architects. He recently completed the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (2000) and the Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral in Los Angeles (2002), his major extension for the Museo del Prado opens this year in Madrid. It is interesting that Riley opted to show the Murcia Town Hall Extension, despite the fact that it was completed before the period featured in the exhibition, in 1998. While this was perhaps a personal choice, the Town Hall Extension very aptly represents Moneo’s ability to engage in a dialogue with the past in a manner that is both respectful and playful.

The Santa Caterina Market similarly deals with a complex continued on page 19
Exhibiting architecture is always an enormous challenge. It is possible to communicate buildings through photographs, drawings, and models, but how does one convey qualities of space such as scale or light? The Amsterdam-based architecture office UN Studio, led by Ben Van Berkel and Caroline Bos, deftly meet the challenge in their current exhibition, Holiday Home, at the Institute for Contemporary Art in Philadelphia. Van Berkel and Bos have revisited a building type that is often wrapped in nostalgia—the vacation or second house—and stripped it bare. They have created an environment devoid of objects or anything else associated with living spaces. Instead, Holiday Home is presented as an autonomous object without an imagined site or context other than the gallery. It is a white vessel hollowed out with apertures that reveal a prismatic, pink interior suffused with a warm light whose quality is close to that magical moment just before sunset, favored by photographer and filmmakers. A great deal of Holiday Home's power inheres in the way it extends this evocative, fleeting moment into a state of being. Designers from the multiform imaginary Forces add another layer to this suspended feeling. As visitors enter into the space, images are projected in fragmented, ghostlike form onto the faceted interior surfaces of Home. This project achieves something nearly impossible in an architecture exhibition—the experience of a project at its own scale. Visitors understand the Holiday Home not through reading texts, drawings, or viewing other forms of representation but walking barefoot through its pink inner belly. At one particularly intriguing point, eleven different planes converge inside the space. One can easily imagine visitors looking up at it and coming to a new understanding of how that space works and, potentially, other spaces they'll see someday.

The structure is comprised of over 82 different planes, manufactured in Europe by P+F Holzbau GmbH and shipped to the ICA. All told, the house contains 2,200 pieces which were assembled on the ICA's second-floor balcony gallery. The flawlessness of the installation belies the Herculean effort necessary to produce something at this scale. Institutions rarely have the resources or the willingness to take a risk that is necessary to accomplish such a task. Holiday Home is the first of two major exhibitions at the ICA this year showcasing developments in architecture and design. This fall, the museum will present a landscape installation by Peter Eisenman and Laurie Olin featuring physical and perceptual elements of the pair's unbuilt environments.

SARA HERDA IS THE DIRECTOR OF STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN NEW YORK. IN JULY, SHE WILL ASSUME THE DIRECTORSHIP OF THE GRAHAM FOUNDATION IN CHICAGO.
SNAPSHOTS OF SPAIN continued from page 17

historical context in a sensitive yet light-hearted way. Located in a dilapidated part of Barcelona's Gothic Quarter, this work modernizes a 19th-century market while maintaining a clear connection to the previous structure and neighborhood. Spanning the original market walls, a wooden roof covered with bright hexagonal tiles ripples over a treelike metal-and-concrete support structure, advertising the shops inside. EMBT's proposal was originally developed as an alternative to the city government's haphazard urban renewal campaign projects.

Contemporary architects choose to reflect on Spain's unique landscape in different ways—one of the projects most literally received to resemble the region's distinctive nautical character provides breathtaking views. In the South Street Seaport at 241 Water Street, this RCP Arquitectes' building by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill is notable for its design and plaza. The top (10th) floor location affords spectacular views.

Although the projects in the exhibition represent some of the best work being built in Spain at the moment, their presentation is too superficial to substantiate their greatness. Lacking a comprehensive narrative and grouping projects haphazardly, the show avoids answering the question of "Why Spain, why now?" in favor of a broad survey of works. Furthermore, while each unbuilt project is illustrated by a beautifully-crafted model worthy of MoMA's permanent collection, the exhibition panels favor text over large images and plans, but offer little historical context or biographical information on the architects. There is no discussion, for instance, of the experimentation that was cultivated in Spain even under Franco's reign, from the 1950s onward, by such masters as Sáenz de Oiza, Alejandro de la Sota, Miguel Fasci, and José Antonio Coderch. For that visitors will have to turn to the supplementary catalogue, Spain Builds, by the editors of Madrid's Arquitectura Viva.

What the exhibition does offer is a glimpse of the best contemporary architecture in Spain from the point of view of an outsider who, like Riley, backpacked through Spain in 1975. During this trip, Riley was struck by how eager young architects were to publicize their work abroad, although they worked in what was then still a relatively closed society. Now, more than 30 years since Franco's death and 20 since Spain's admission into the European Union, the country is well on its way to a more open but perhaps homogenized future, as the presence of projects by starchitects as Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, and Rem Koolhaas suggests. The difference today is that young Spanish architects are also contributing significantly to the global flow of architectural culture. Riley seems to recognize the importance of such quality, quantity, and diversity in architecture, which is why the exhibition is valuable, even if there is little thematic structure to guide the viewer through it.

ELISE S. YOUN IS A WRITER AND CURATOR IN NEW YORK AND A FORMER EDITOR AT AV MONOGRAPHS/ARQUITECTURA VIVA IN MADRID.

The Alliance for Downtown New York presents

Downtown Third Thursdays 2006

A lecture series featuring prominent architects, authors and historians exploring themes and issues of particular relevance to Lower Manhattan.

All in architecturally significant Downtown locations.

Date: Thursday, January 19 – 6pm
Speaker: Santiago Calatrava
Topic: Recent Work
Location: DirecTV Manhattan Plaza on Floor (off 44th Street between 3rd and 4th Aves)
At Lenny/Nancy Kass Press, this 1960 building by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill is notable for its design and plaza. The top (10th) floor location affords spectacular views.

Date: Thursday, February 16 – 7pm
Speaker: Kenneth T. Jackson
Professor of History, Columbia University; editor, The Encyclopedia of New York City
Topic: From Dutch Outpost to World Capital: The Past and Future of Lower Manhattan
Location: John Street Methodist Church
At 321 East 3rd Street, this is the oldest Methodist congregation in North America. The George-Washington Revival exterior and magnificent Edwardian interior, is the oldest private club in Lower Manhattan.

All lectures are free. Doors open one hour prior to lecture. A separate reservation is required for each lecture. To reserve please call 212.835.2773 beginning the first day of each month for that month's lecture only. Seating is limited and reservations will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis. For more information visit www.DowntownNY.com

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On the cover of Simon Sadler’s new book Archigram: Architecture without Architecture (MIT Press, 2005) is a bleached gray version of Dennis Crompton’s 1964 drawing Computer City. It’s just barely visible, mostly covered by a big white patch, presumably allowing the provocation of the subtitle to sink in. Quite cute, assuming that is the message. With Sadler’s previous book, The Situationist City (MIT Press, 1999), he successfully transmitted what he describes as the Situationist International’s “passion for maps,” with an image of one of Guy Debord’s psycho-geographic maps on the cover. So we have to take our book cover as a strategic statement.

Being on the receiving end of any number of discussions of time, memory, categorization, assumption, and most of all, intellectual convenience, we—Archigram—are constantly bracing ourselves for people getting it wrong. After all, it was a long time ago when the world was perhaps a bit flatter and architecture was a bit less pretentious—or at least when architecture talk seemed to be mostly about, well, architecture.

Sadler has done a nice job and was exemplary in his phoning and checking and all that “cub reporter” stuff that makes (in books of this sort anyway) reading the footnotes as amusing as reading the main text. It parallels, surely, the strategy of the front cover, which suggests that the primary value of the Archigram Group was to explode architecture from within. Assuming this message, the book tries to explain to another generation how such a preposterous activity came not from a coterie of revolutionaries or intellectuals but from some blokes who met in an egg-and-chip chip in Swiss Cottage and got wind of a certain set of London kinds who bought Ivy League suits and smoked Lucky Strikes.

To explain such a phenomenon, Sadler had to reconstruct the mood and prejudices of the time and of the place. He had to reconstruct the architectural world of London and paint in the key figures. Rightly and inevitably, Reyner Banham and Cedric Price come across as pivotal. It is quite correct for Sadler to identify the Independent Situationists and Situationists as the most important group. Kevin Lynch, Reyner Banham, and Cedric Price come across as pivotal. However, this is the message, the situation of the book. The Situationists are, indeed, the most important group. Kevin Lynch, Reyner Banham, and Cedric Price come across as pivotal.

The Archigram Group was a coalition that benefited from the “variousness” of its members. Thereby, there was an inconsistency among its drawn references that didn’t (or couldn’t) shoot at a narrow range of targets. I would have thought that this notion would come through in the book, but perhaps you can’t comprehend it unless you drew yourself. Banham knew, because he’d worked his way around aeronautical engines and theater stages. Colin Rowe had designed houses (probably not very well, but that’s not the point). These guys could guess at some of the moves, the tweaks, the little jumps that the designer makes almost instinctively and makes again when drawing a conscious statement image. Not that anyone would easily admit to such a thing.

Nowadays, one can most easily talk about the ideas and the pitch of the ideas to other people who draw. Lebbeus Woods understands. Neil Denari understands. Bill MacDonald understands. Toyo Ito understands. C. J. Lim understands. Some kid in Lund, Taipei, or Dublin who draws, understands—without the chit-chat, because in the corner of the half-finished Webb drawing of, say, 1991, there’s this little gadget that...?

So here’s a final complaint that I have to get off my chest, especially as I peruse the index. Archigram was far more interested in non-English inspiration than in just hitting or fitting the English scene. We were heaving ourselves out of the creek and heading for the sea. That was the point. Curious, and irritating, perhaps for both Frampton and the current batch of mealy-mouthed hijackers, is the revived interest in the work itself in so many places. It has become part of architecture. It was never without architecture. Archigram was about stuff and things. Stuff and things that can jump.

Computer City (1964), by Dennis Crompton, which appears in the background of Sadler’s book cover (above).
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