SOHO Flagship Store Reopens with an Exhibition by Miuccia Prada and AMO

A skirt designed by Miuccia Prada.

Prada Post-Fire

Since suffering a five-alarm fire on January 22, the Prada's flagship SoHo interior has been nearly completely restored. The fire, which caused significant water damage to the multimedia-heavy $40 million, 23,000-square-foot interior designed by Rem Koolhaas (see AN 03_02.15.2006), shut down the store’s activities for seven weeks while it underwent a restoration supervised by Ole Scheeren, the Beijing-based partner of OMA, Koolhaas’ firm. While the store had a soft opening in late

continued on page 5

DESIGNERS UNVEIL LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR GREAT FALLS PARK IN PATerson, NEW JERSEY

GARDEN STATE GREEN WAVE

New Jersey is passionate about its greenways, so it was a tough, needling crowd at the Paterson Museum that greeted five well-known environmental design teams, all finalists in New Jersey’s Urban Parks Master Plan Competition. They are vying for the commission for the $10 million rehabilitation of Great Falls State Park, currently a 7-acre, post-industrial eyesore that surrounds a natural wonder: a 77-foot waterfall surging from a rocky cliff into the Passaic River, which feeds a vintage hydropower plant. “The falls are the center of our history,” said Paterson Mayor Jose Torres. “We are looking for an opportunity to capitalize on a view, and make this a tourist destination.” Announced in late 2005, the New Jersey Urban Parks Design Competition drew concepts and submissions continued on page 7

ARCHITECTS BATTLE IT OUT IN THE SECOND ANNUAL MASTER-DISASTER ARCHITECT DUEL. FOR FULL STORY, SEE PAGE 10

ART DECO STRUCTURE TO BE RAZED DESPITE PRESERVATION-IST PLEAS

GARAGE DISBAND

While Joni Mitchell may have bemoaned the paving of paradise for the construction of a parking lot, a coalition of preservation groups and numerous concerned citizens are now clamoring at the 11th hour to save the Tunnel Garage. Located at the corner of Broome and Thompson Streets in SoHo, the building's owners have begun demolition of this early 20th-century parking garage, which is located near the entrance to the Holland Tunnel. It will be replaced by an eight-story residential condominium building by designed by Stephen B. Jacobs, who also designed the continued on page 3
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fees were determined to ensure the entire 150-acre project area options cost $250. Paul Kelly, interim president of GIPEC, said, "The GWOULD-BE GOVERNORS ISLAND DEVELOPERS PROPOSITION $10K

We've just returned from the International Furniture Fair (Salone Internazionale del Mobile), which took place in Milan's new trade design/developer teams, and ed to allow for a range of development proposals from different developers and architecture firms are charged, many smaller development is yet to be determined, the cost will ultimately be based on the type and size of proposals. The rezoned district of the island alone is estimated to require $650 million in infrastructural restoration and upgrades. Regardless, the five-figure application fee only gets propos outside the project. Kelly explained that GIEPEC wanted to allow for a range of development proposals from different design/developer teams, and thus split the entries into several categories. "We didn't want to foreclose any development options that included several pro-

While application fees are standard practice for RFPs and competitions, they rarely exceed a few hundred dollars. With such an exorbitant amount being charged, many smaller developments and architecture firms are being excluded from the project. Kelly explained that GIEPEC aimed to allow for a range of development proposals from different design/developer teams, and thus split the entries into several categories. "We didn't want to foreclose any development options that included several pro-

er," said Kelly. According to him, the application fees are nominal when compared to the projected cost of the entire project. The total budget for the island's development is yet to be determined, the cost will ultimately be based on the type and size of proposals. The rezoned district of the island alone is estimated to require $650 million in infrastructural restoration and upgrades. Regardless, the five-figure application fee only gets proposals considered, with no guarantee that teams will come remotely close to working on the project. Markus Dochantschi, principal of New York firm stuDO, said, "I am going to spend $20,000 to produce this proposal, and as a professional to have to pay an extra $10,000 to have my design reviewed is insulting." Dochantschi intends to submit a proposal but refuses, on principle, to pay a fee.

On March 22, the GIEPEC board approved two additional RFPs—Development Advisory Services and Master Planning Services—for consultants to assist for the duration of the project. Architecture and planning firm EDAW was selected for master planning, while Hamilton, Robinsott & Aischler were retained to con-

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When the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC) issued a Request For Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of Governors Island in February, the application came with a hefty price tag. Those looking to submit proposals for the entire 150-acre project area must pony up $10,000; those who want to submit a partial development proposal must spend $1,000, while all nonprofit submissions cost $250. Paul Kelly, interim president of GIPEC, said, "The WOULD-BE GOVERNORS ISLAND DEVELOPERS PROPOSITION $10K

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It's true. Renzo Piano thinks he's a god. Norman Foster has a thing for sheep, and architecture is going down the toilet. If you don't believe us, then head to this summer's London Architecture Biennale where, from June 16 to 25, the proof will be in the English pudding. Spanning locations along a 5-kilometer route, the event is being called the "World's Longest Architecture Exhibition." But it gets even scarier than that. As earlier reported by our colleagues at the Gutter, Piano is giving a talk that's being billed as a "sermon." And, as we've now learned, the biennial will feature merrymakers dressed up as buildings at its opening day blowout and, speaking of blowouts, "toilet interventions" including an open-air communal loo. Meanwhile, Foster will make an appearance by herding sheep across the Millennium Bridge. Seriously. What's going on? Is this what they call "British humor"? Here's an explanation: The toilets, potty planners tell us, "focus on the need for public conveniences and tell of their historical and contemporary uses." And Foster's newfound infatuation with livestock is not something that Lady Foster, a well-known sex expert, should be concerned about, but is rather meant as a tribute to the old markets that are among the exhibition's venues. But given the track record of Foster's Millennium Bridge—which, you might recall, has had its share of engineering problems—we have a baah'd feeling about all this.

LEISURE SUIT KARIM

Karim Rashid is a dirty, dirty boy. Hitting stores next month is Rashid's Design Your Self (Rogan), a self-help book that reminds us why, against our better judgment, we can't help but like the guy. With unflappable earnestness, the man best known for designing a trash can named Garbo offers 300-plus pages of advice on everything from diet and fitness to shopping, finances and, of course, how you can get his Barbarella-meets-Miami Vice look, too. We, however, skipped straight to the section on sex and got the punishment we deserved: "Sex is a completely different experience on a couch or on a rocking chair," Rashid reports. "My favorite 'public' sex was in a public library," he adds. "Remember that multiple partners or polyamory is also very natural," he goes on, before recalling that "[a friend] once told me over breakfast that his wife wanted to sleep with me. I was attracted to her and I did." And our favorite: "Feel each other's muscles, smell each other's sweat, move, gyrate, push, lift, get it on." A note to Rashid's wife, Megan Lang: There is help out there.

PRADA POST FIRE continued from front page

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 19, 2006

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 19, 2006

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BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS continued from front page winners include Julie Beckman and Keith Kaseman of KBAS (Alexandria, Virginia), David Benjamin and Soo-in Yang of The Living (New York), Craig Borum and Karl Daubmann of PLY Architecture (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Yansong Ma and Yosuke Hayano of MAD (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Julio Salcedo (New York), and Betsy and Shane Williamson of Williamson Williamson (Toronto).

Unlike the League's Emerging Voices program, which selects architects further along in their career, the Young Architects program looks for less practiced talent. "Emerging Voices is an invited competition, and is about recognizing built work and an architect's professional trajectory," said Anne Rieselbach, program director at the Architectural League. "Young Architects is a blind competition, limited to architects ten years or less out of school." The program has had a laudable track record; previous winners include Steven Holl and Alexander Gorlin (1981), Billie Tsien (1984), and David and Paul Lewis (1997). Each year, the competition is organized around a theme, decided upon by past participants. This year's theme is Instability, and winners were by chosen by a jury that included Snøhetta's Craig Dykers, Craig Konyk of Konyk Architecture, Office dA's Monica Ponce de Leon, artist Sarah Sze, and members of the Young Architects committee, Douglas Gathier, Naji Moujaes, and Beth Weinstein. In addition to the lecture and exhibition, winners receive $1,000 and inclusion in a catalogue on the series published by Princeton Architectural Press.

The Ann Arbor-based, Chinese- and Japanese-born team of MAD architecture and design works primarily in China. Yansong Ma and Yosuke Hayano are currently overseeing the construction of the Beijing Huairou Hanging Lake Club House and a home for the family of the Beijing-based developers behind SOHO China. Fellow Ann Arbor-based architects Craig Borum and Karl Daubmann of PLY work closer to home. According to principal Karl Daubmann, "Because we both teach [at the University of Michigan], we try to implement ideas discussed in our classroom, applying our research." The firm is preoccupied with material experimentation, in particular the use of mathematical models to manipulate perspectives and textures.

New York-based Julio Salcedo works internationally and at a range of scales. The Madrid-born architect's work ranges from an adaptable housing model in Maine—the Ball House—to a waterfront planning project in Hamar, Norway.

Toronto firm WilliamsonWilliamson uses digital fabrication and generation to design work that includes street lights, desks, doors, wall systems, museums, and houses. The partners have participated in a number of interior design exhibitions as well as architectural competitions, and have been named finalists in competitions to design the WTC Memorial, the Holocaust Education Resource Center, and the Pentagon Memorial. Competitions are also prominent in the work of KBAS. The firm won the Pentagon Memorial Competition, which will begin work this May, and the 2004 Columbia Space Shuttle Memorial in Nacogdoches.

This year's theme well suits The Living, founded by Columbia classmates David Benjamin and Soo-in Yang. With an interest in materials research, the firm devised "Living Glass," a silicone-based transparent sheet that, triggered by motion sensors, bends via cut gills in response to movement.

The lecture series and exhibition will be held at the Urban Center and begins April 27. See www.archleague.org for more information.

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Finalist proposals for the redesign of the Great Falls Park in Paterson, New Jersey advocate combining natural and built environments in the landscape. A. WRT’s submission weaves a California-style landscape, while instituting a glass-walled cultural center and incorporating the remnants of Paterson’s industrial mills into a garden. B. Field Operations’ proposal includes a restaurant and an apartment complex as well as an open park area, or “outdoor exercise room,” for athletic activities. C. EDAWN’s plan also encourages physical activities such as rock climbing, jogging, and kayaking, and restores a historic stadium to be used as a public facility. D. The proposal by Freidric Schwartz Architects emphasizes the natural elements of the site, while including an open plaza with an observation tower, a nature center, and a commercial brew pub.

GARDEN STATE GREEN WAVE continued from front page from 36 national and international firms for a juried competition for Great Falls and for a master plan to link a group of smaller parks in Trenton. The Paterson location is a waterfront obscured with crumbling ruins of textile and steel mills, some of which date to 1794, and was named a state park only in 2004.

The imaginative plans gather inspiration far beyond the history of a water-powered mill town, and most emphasize outdoor mood lighting and airy uses of glass. Architect Frederick Schwartz suggested a broad plaza-viewing area with a corkscREW glaSS tower that would rise to the same height as the falls. To get a closer look, visitors might cross an old trestle above the torrent to the outcroppings and then amble down a crevice to the base of the falls. While the overall plan recalls projects in Germany that reclaim industrial ruins, Schwartz’s presentation leaned heavily on his team’s local work on the 9/11 Memorial in Hoboken and Brooklyn’s MetroTech.

Another dramatic redesign of the park was presented by Ralph Lerner and Kate Orff, who presented as RLAPC/SCAPE. Together, they imagine an ambitious botanical garden, with a fanciful glass conservatory and “butterfly parterre.” “The grandeur of the place needs a big, new idea,” urged Orff. The promontory and area north would become a natural habitat for native plants.

Both proposals were a stark contrast to Wallace, Rogers and Todd’s (WRT) California-style landscape that weaves seasonal color (mauve redbuds and tan grasses) to complement crumbling brick buildings. In WRT’s plan, the falls and the ruins are not met but viewed from green terraces north of the river and a paved pathway to the south. A note of whimsy and nodd to the region’s climate is an “ice path” for skating in winter.

EDAWN’s concept is a stroller’s park among the ruins, with the old raceway (paved canals for the mill water) gaining the grandeur of Moorish-style hills, with tiled paths and teaching stations among the preserved foundations. North of the river, EDAWN’s plan calls for active play—rock climbing, jogging, kayaking, and the re-use of the historic Hinchliff stadium.

A winner will be selected in June. For more information: www.nj.gov/dep/urbanparks.
Drop into Daniel Goldner's office at his eponymous Manhattan firm, and the first thing you might see on his uncluttered desk is a well-worn copy of De Stijl 1917-1931: Visions of Utopia (Abbeville, 1982), a giant tome presenting the history and key figures of the movement. Flip through the book and you'll find a dog-eared section on Gerrit Rietveld's Schroeder House. It's an appropriate preface to Goldner's work, which over the past 25 years has explored and developed floating planes and intersecting geometries with an almost over-enthusiastic consistency.

However, Goldner cites not architects so much as artists, ranging from the 16th-century Italian Mannerists to Kazimir Malevich and the Russian Constructivists, as sources for inspiration. Their presence is equally apparent in his work, which often playfully manipulates perspective and perception through small details that render space ambiguous and plastic.

Daniel Goldner Architects completed its first project in 1981, an apartment renovation that earned the firm Architectural Record's Interior of the Year Award, which in turn generated good exposure and more work for the practice. In the following years, the firm took on countless small projects of all types. Only in the past six or seven years did the firm expand from a staff of 4 to 14, taking on larger ground-up projects. This month, ground broke on the firm's largest project to date, a 32,000-square-foot residential mid-rise in Chelsea, and Goldner just started designing a 140,000-square-foot residential project in Greenpoint.

163 CHARLES STREET
In 2005, Barry Leistner, a private developer, bought the lot at 163 Charles Street, a site that's notable not only because its neighbor is the third Richard Meier tower on the West Side but because its previous owner had planned to build a shark-fin-shaped residence by Zaha Hadid. Leistner hired Goldner, an old friend, to design an eight-story, 14,000-square-foot condo, the top three floors of which would become Leistner's home. The first two floors are planned as commercial space, and in between will be either one triplex or two duplex apartments that will share a floor. After the Far West Village was rezoned last October, the firm had to present the plans for the building to the Board of Standard and Appeals in order to continue with construction.

Fortunately for Leistner, enough of the foundation was in place and the board approved the building's plans without reducing its height. Sensitive to preservationists and those opposed to large-scale projects in the area, Goldner tried to give the building a more human scale, noting, "By creating a setback two floors up, which was not required, we tried to mitigate the height and give the building the sense of a Dutch house—albeit a contemporary one."

350 WEST 23RD STREET
The firm's 16-unit, 32,000-square-foot condominium in Chelsea began construction early this month. The project demonstrates Goldner's desire to experiment with new materials while adhering to simple geometries as ornament. Goldner described the exterior's "keynote," a black brick "ribbon" that travels around the perimeter of the façade: "The bottom never actually meets the ground, which enhances the idea of the disconnect between what is functional and what is sculptural. We're disjointing the façade and creating asymmetry that covers the building, but not completely."

Steel square balconies break up the glass curtain wall, as do orange-glass ventilation windows and asymmetrical, non-contiguous vertical mullions. Goldner's firm is also designing the interiors, which will employ similar materials as the exterior. The project should be completed by summer 2007.

CORPORATE OFFICE
Goldner's stylistic consistency extends to his interiors, expressed in an office for a local construction company located on the Avenue of Americas in Manhattan that was completed in mid-2005. The original space, according to Goldner, contained "a matrix of awkward and unevenly spaced columns" which the firm had to design around. Rather than trying to hide the columns, Goldner and project architect Ashley Wilson made them into vertical, lanternlike lighting fixtures that match the rear-fit panels behind the reception area and offset the darkness of the receptionist's desk and mahogany volumes that border the front entryway. The floor, which is the same throughout the 12,000-square-foot space, is comprised of precast cement tiles that are color treated, then sealed and shined.

IRONWORKERS LOCAL 580 TRAINING FACILITY
In 2002, Goldner Architects designed a training facility for the Ironworkers Local 40 and 360 in Astoria, Queens. The union's members were so happy with the result that he was immediately asked by Local 580 to design a similar space in Long Island City. The result, completed in 2004, earned the firm much attention for its interior and exterior overhaul. In obvious response to the client, Goldner, with partner and project manager Davis Iszard, employed 13 kinds of metals on the façade and in the lobby, using fabrication methods and patinas to further vary the color and quality of the surfaces. On the exterior, the designers used stainless steel mesh as screens to partially mask the yellow brick of the existing building on the upper floors, opting for sheets of brushed steel and colored glass on the ground level. Inside, part of the floor consists of glass in order to allow natural light into the basement, where many of the classrooms and workshops are located.

A floating screen of patinated copper extends the exterior's linear geometry into the lobby while sectioning off a basement stairway: it's an example of the planar ornamental details that have come to represent the firm's work.
It's clear: The Freedom Tower is a stunningly brilliant concept worthy of its difficult mandate. It should, it must be built immediately, not only to remind us of what happened on 9/11 but also to the greater glory of Governor Pataki. This beautiful, soaring icon of liberty and justice will stand gracefully astride Lower Manhattan, a colossus of righteousness and a beacon of our way of life that will dwarf that tired figment of "Old America" out in New York Harbor, the so-called Statue of Liberty.

Who needs a Statue of Liberty when we can have a Tower of Freedom? And speaking of icons, Larry Silverstein should build it. He is an icon not only of tenacity but also of wily American entrepreneurship. The public-spirited insurance companies, with whom he has forged an intense camaraderie, are his perfect partners, because they, too, represent American business at its most magnanimous.

Much as The Media, that all powerful group, are concealing the story, the truth is that the colossi of American corporate life have been banging on Larry's door for space in the Freedom Tower. Despite doomsayers who claim it will be a see-through building, an empty gesture, as it were, we can say definitively that its vibrancy is assured, and that it will spark the renaissance of Lower Manhattan as the capital of world capitalist. Indeed, real estate market sources tell us the real reason leasing activity at 7 World Trade is moving so slowly is that candidates for space there simply want to be in the Freedom Tower, and are willing to wait for the privilege—however long it takes.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, long rumored to be planning to move to Freedom Tower or to one of the other towers slotted for Ground Zero, is quietly (very quietly) planning its own headquarters. But not downtown. Maybe the Port will revive the scheme that it set in motion early in the decade to build a 1 million-square-foot tower atop its legendary bus terminal at 8th Avenue and 42nd Street. That investment would go a long way toward energizing the city's plan to push commercial development westward. The only problem with that scheme is that the corporate clamor for prime space at Ground Zero could drown out any hope for further growth on the Far West Side.

Not to worry, though. The Related Companies, Vornado, Extell Development, Forest City Ratner, and the city's Department of Housing Preservation & Development have secretly signed a pact with the Jacob Javits Convention Center board to build a string of luxury affordable hotel condominiums, set to a master plan and design guidelines by Douny Pater-Zyberk and designed by Zaha Hadid with Costas Kondylis. The entire project will be financed by an ingenious combination of Liberty Bond derivatives and a dedicated portion of the revenues from the holding company operating the ports that Dubai Ports World had to surrender. In an especially exciting innovation, the entire project will have an especially sensitive telecommunication infrastructure to ease the challenges of warrant-less wiretapping.

Which leads us back to Ground Zero and the Freedom Tower. Stop the bickering and build. Let Freedom Ring Hollow!

PETER SLATIN HAS CLEARLY LOST HIS MIND. FOR MORE SANE RAMBLINGS SEE WWW.THESLATINREPORT.COM.

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On February 22, Tom Kundig, a principal of Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects in Seattle, was awarded a 2006 Fellowship from the MacDowell Colony. The colony, founded in 1907 and located in the mountains of New Hampshire, awards residencies to artists in six disciplines: writing, filmmaking, photography, music, architecture, and performance.

Fashion Architecture and Taste (FAT) was awarded the 2006 Next Generation Award from Pipers Projects and The Architecture Foundation in London on March 2. The award, which goes to a firm that has not yet built a large-scale commercial space, offers the recipient a chance to win a commercial job by sending the firm to MIPIM, the international property fair in Cannes, and by putting them in touch with local commercial developers.

On January 27, Mark Harbick, of Huntsman Architectural Group, received Contract Magazine's 2006 Designer of the Year award at the 27th Annual Interior Design Awards breakfast in New York.

The 2006 Palladio Awards were presented on April 5 at the Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference in Chicago. The awards program, produced by Traditional Building and Period Homes, is now in its fifth year. In the Commercial, Civic, and Institutional Projects category, Einhorn Yaffee Prescott Architecture & Engineering of Albany won for restoration and renovation; Dallas' Architects won for sympathetic additions; Chael, Cooper & Associates of Coral Gables won for new design and construction (under 30,000 square feet); and Atlanta's National Monuments Foundation won for public spaces. In the Residential category, Isthmus Architecture of Madison, Wisconsin, took the award for restoration and renovation; Peter Zimmerman Architects of Bryn, Pennsylvania won for sympathetic additions; Historical Concepts, of Peach Tree, Georgia, won for new design and construction (less than 5,000 square feet) while Washington, D.C.'s David Jones Architects won for spaces over 5,000 square feet; Hartman-Cox Architects, also of D.C., won for a multi-unit residential building; and Pittsburgh's Urban Design Associates were presented with a special award.
ADVICE FOR NONPROFITS

At a conference held at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) on April 4, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the creation of a nonprofit help desk at the city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The new office, to be formed by the end of this summer, will cater to the needs of existing and future nonprofits, specifically those concerning arts and culture. Its services will include assistance navigating the real estate market, technical advice, and attracting financing. Help desks for the financial, media, real estate, biotechnology, and retail industries already exist at the EDC.

HOUSING ARTISTS

On April 4, New York City Housing Preservation and Development commissioners Shaun Donovan announced the creation of a new housing fund to help artists. The proposed $100 million fund would assist area artists to buy and hold their property. This initiative recognizes that artists create real estate value as they have done in such neighborhoods as SoHo, TriBeCa, and DUMBO. Although still in preliminary stages, the fund is expected to help thousands of artists remain in the neighborhoods that they help gentrify.

YANKEESTATION

On April 5, Governor George Pataki and Mayor Michael Bloomberg publicly announced their support for a new Metro-North station to serve the new Yankee Stadium. Once built, the station would serve the Harlem, New Haven, and Hudson lines, and provide ten trains each game day. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) will review the plan at its next board meeting on April 26. If approved by the MTA, it will then go to the State Capital Program Review Board for a final decision.

COOPER-HEWITT NAMES AWARDS JURY

Paul Warwick Thompson, director of the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, announced the jury selected to judge the National Design Awards, which will be held on October 18 at the museum's landmark home in New York. Now in its seventh year, the awards program honors the nation's most important design accomplishments and seeks to boost awareness about the design disciplines. Jurors include Cindy Allen, editor-in-chief of Interior Design magazine; industrial designer Yves Behar of fuseproject; graphic designer Michael Bierut of Pentagram; art historian Roger Mandle, president of the Rhode Island School of Design; architect Enrique Norten of TEN Arquitectos; landscape architect Janet Rosenberg and Janet Rosenberg Associates; and Stefano Tonchi, style editor for The New York Times Magazine. The 2006 National Design Award finalists will be announced in May.

GRZYWINSKI PONS TRIUMPHS OVER ARQUITECTONICA

IRON ARCHITECT

This year, the second annual architects' duel pitted Arquitectonica against Grzywinski Pons Architects, best known for its design of the Hotel on Rivington. While sold as a grudge match between a corporate Iron Goliath and an indie David, the event was called off at the last minute without explanation. Last year's duel ended in a deadlock (with some claims of ballot stuffing) between architects from Smith-Miller + Hawkinson and Diller Scofidio + Renfro.

The brief this year was to create an arts center that would be amphibious, in anticipation of the earth's rising sea level. Armed with little more than foamboard and glue, Arquitectonica's Eric Hofmann and Daniel Colvard created a saucerlike building on pontoons while Matthew Grzywinski and Amador Pons built a campuslike structure that accommodated water-bound vehicles. The highlight of the night was the moment during the presentations when Colvard discreetly pulled apart their model to reveal an interior cutaway of their structure—to a rowdy audience which replied with oohs and aahs and "That's hot!" At the end of the evening, DJ/designer team Andrew Andrew, who served as emcees, announced the winner—"not Arquitectonica." Grzywinski Pons ultimately garnered the most audience votes for their well-executed and complex schemes. ANDREW YANG

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RENZO PIANO COMPLETES HIS FIRST NEW YORK COMMISSION—THE THREE-YEAR, $106 MILLION RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF THE PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY.

JULIE V. IOVINE OBSERVES HOW PIANO PRESERVES THE INTIMACY OF THE ORIGINAL BUT RISKS LOSING SOME OF ITS IMMEDIACY BY MAKING IT A CROWD-PLEASER.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN BIBB.
On April 29, a transformed Pierpont Morgan Library rejoins the Manhattan museum scene, a landscape much-altered itself, both physically and psychically, since the Morgan closed for renovation three years ago. In that time, the beloved, ebulliently gaudy house-museum has undergone a vast makeover by Italian architect Renzo Piano who, when commissioned for the job in 2000, had an avid insider following and has since become a bona fide international superstar. Meanwhile, the newly gargantuan Museum of Modern Art has shown that critical skepticism has no bearing at all on popularity. Culture in general has taken a drubbing at Ground Zero (Drawing Center evicted; Frank Gehry’s performance hall aborted; Snøhetta’s Freedom Center nullified), underscoring the reality that no one puts particular stock any more in the power of art to uplift. J. P. Morgan would have been mortified. After all, the Morgan Library was the rich man’s sanctum and treasure turned tenderly over to New Yorkers so that they might be bet­tered through contact. And people have been passionate and person­al about the place ever since. In the early 1990s, Paul Goldberger, then architecture critic at the The New York Times, described the experience of visiting as both tranquil and intense. Who wouldn’t be entranced by the McKim, Mead & White portico and rotunda, the lavish H. Siddons Mowbray murals, the brocaded walls and gilded swags? John Russell, former art critic of The New York Times, dreamed of being locked overnight inside its walls. It’s no surprise considering what it contains: drawings by Rembrandt, da Vinci, Dürer, and Degas; three Gutenberg bibles; one of only two extant copies of Sir Thomas Malory’s Le Morte d’Arthur; Mary Shelley’s own annotated copy of Frankenstein; architectural plans by Inigo Jones; etchings by Piranesi; J.R.R. Tolkien kvetching in letters about the Hobbit; jeweled bindings; illu­minated manuscripts galore; and on and on.

Piano was charged not with enlarging but rather, as he put it, rebalancing and rethinking the institution which had grown somewhat haphazardly over the years into a three-plus-building sprawl. He called his method “micro-surgery.” Adding 75,000 square feet, even with more than half of it underground and the rest in the shape of a glazed-shed-covered piazza plus pavilions jimmed around the extant buildings, is hardly micro. The medical analogy is, however, apt because like cosmetic surgery, Piano has master­fully preserved the original while partially smoothing, even immobi­lizing, its vital lifelines.

The Morgan Library is new and improved all right; in fact, Piano (with the local collaboration of Beyer Blinder Belle) has rendered it perfectly into one of the most au­courant of building types: the des­tination museum. Whether Piano’s Morgan has the power to incite passionate allegiance, much less a desire to be locked inside overnight, is more doubtful. It could not have been an easy job. Bartholomew Voorsanger tried in 1981 with a $40 million expansion and courtyard. And let’s not forget the ill-fated invitational competition of the late 1990s with Steven Holl Architects, Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates, and Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, which was abruptly cancelled. Piano had declined to participate but offered his services in case perfect solutions didn’t materialize. Now, 15 years and $106 million later—Voorsanger’s and a few other minor additions razed without a trace—the library has been transformed again. Voorsanger’s glass court might have been unloved, but it could not be considered a total failure; it did brisk business in party rentals, net­ting as much as $15,000 for evening events. Piano’s renovation is not about adding square footage but, as director Charles E. Pierce, Jr., said in
2002, about "providing greater public access." The Morgan’s new high-rise spaces are bound to be in great demand (and the fee for rentals sure to be higher)—a goal that many institutions have come to share.

Piano’s scheme is sublimely serene. He has treated the Morgan’s three main buildings—an 1852 Renaissance Revival brownstone, the 1906 McKim mini-Met and its pared down twin, the annex of 1928—as the corner anchors to his central focus, a glass-enclosed, light-filled piazza.

At the edges of the atrium space, he has inserted several elements, varied in scale, homogenous in material, and visible as connective tissue between old and new. The inserts are made of rolled steel panels painted off-white (press material says they are rose-hued but on a sunny afternoon it looked powdery white to me). The largest piece encompasses the new entrance on Madison Avenue, which leads through a spacious cherry-wood clad tunnel directly to the piazza. A new gallery and reading room are located on the floors above this entrance volume. The smallest addition is a 20-foot cube, containing a gallery, tucked between the original McKim library and the annex. Though it’s been cited in earlier articles as a climactic moment in Piano’s design, it does not have the incalculable impact promised by its perfect dimensions, at least not for this visitor. And curators may be hard pressed to take full advantage of its modest space in any way other than as a showcase for one singular item at a time, albeit, displayed to shine in all its glory.

Before making a beeline for an unoccupied cafe table in the piazza, visitors will be tempted to descend a wide stair gaping downward at the lip of the entrance passage. Those who give into the urge will view a steel-encased treasure-holding vault sunk three stories into Manhattan’s bedrock schist. Neat. Sunk below, too, is a new 280-seat performance hall. One enters at the top row of a steeply inclined auditorium baffle in slightly curved chips of cherry wood. The space is more elegant than expressionistic, a wonderfully intimate spoken-word stage.

So what’s missing then? Crowd-pleasing (event-friendly) piazza and cafe—check. Sculptural object cube—check. Cool performance space, naturally. A fancy restaurant and much-expanded shop are a quick detour right off the entrance—good plan. Oh, yes, the collection. Barely encountered. To actually find the prizes for which the library is so well known, one must wander a bit. A narrow vaulted passage to the right and set back from the entrance leads past an old elevator bank to two spacious galleries (and a gallery hall, once the museum entrance) in the old annex. In the far corner off the piazza, J. P.’s original library and study have been restored to full robber-baron Rococo style. And then there’s the new gallery on the second floor of the entrance pavilion. For the inaugural greatest hits exhibition, some 300 objects will be on display through out the museum—that’s less than 0.09 percent of the 350,000-piece-strong collection. So much for increased public access.

The new Morgan oozes the calm elegance of maestoso modernism. On a smaller scale, it employs many of the same moves as Yoshio Taniguchi’s MoMA, such as a vertically compressed, horizontally expansive entrance giving way to breathtaking volume. Instead of procession, the experience is more like scaling levels and discovering views of where you were a moment ago. Whereas Taniguchi used bridges, Piano has two balconies alongside a Hyatt-esque glass elevator peering over the piazza. Both capture unexpected and refreshing views of the buildings beyond (though the balcony off the reading room is accessible only to those with reading room passes).

And like the Museum Tower coming down to ground undisguised in the main lobby of MoMA (as if to holler, "Don’t forget me!"), so too do the three old Morgan buildings reveal themselves in the new atrium space. It’s a bit like catching a glimpse, from the knee down, of a giant whose head is in the clouds. While MoMA is all about pumping visiting hordes out of the central chamber into the building’s arteries and galleries, Piano, despite having been called “a poet of circulation,” seems content for people to stay put in the voluminous piazza. Unquestionably, the Morgan will become a cool place to meet and hang out (although at the moment, the only seating seems to be at the cafe’s tables). The light filtering in through complex but not particularly high-tech skylights (another Piano trademark) will be delicious. Staff offices have been allocated generous spaces in the 1852 Italianate brownstone with some walls sheered off and glazed over in order to give some lucky employees vistas of their own; a conservation studio is tucked up and out of sight at roof-top level.

The new Morgan is puree-perfect, blemish-free. People will flock to get in. And yet on a recent sunny afternoon, the piazza—surrounded by limestone, electronically shaded glass, powder-coated steel—looked deadly calm. The Morgan has acquired a seamless, beautiful new mask. What may be lost is the quickening, possibly even vulgar, feeling of excitement that one man wanted to impart to others by sharing his precious treasures with the world.

Julie V. Iovine writes frequently for the New York Times and other publications. She is the Features Director at Elle Décor and Architecture Critic for AN.
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MONDAY 24

SYMPOSIUM

Museum of the City of New York Spring Symposium
Museum of the City of New York
1200 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

EVENT

Congress of International Modern Architects
Art and Architecture Auction
6:00 p.m.
Paul Rodgers/SW Gallery
520 West 20th St., 9th Fl.
www.paulrodgerssw.com

TUESDAY 25

LECTURE

William Cronon
Saving Nature in Time
6:30 p.m.
Parsons the New School for Design
Tishman Auditorium
66 West 12th St.
www.newschool.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Cai Guo-Qiang
On the Roof
Transfiguration of Art
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

FILM

La Jura del rock’n’roll
(Fernando Mendes, 1996), 86 min.
7:30 p.m.
Film Archive
32nd Avenue
www.storefrontnyc.org

WEDNESDAY 26

LECTURES

Robert F. Fox
Green Design
6:00 p.m.
New York School of Interior Design
81 East 61st St.
www.nyisd.edu

Farshid Moussavi
Work in Progress
8:00 p.m.
Pratt Institute School of Architecture
Betts Auditorium
www.princeton.edu/~soa

Katherine and Michael McCoy
Design Discourse
6:30 p.m.
Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
www.cooperhewitt.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Vaults of Heaven: Sanctuaries of Byzantium
World Monuments Fund Gallery
15 East 27th St.
www.wmf.org

THURSDAY 27

LECTURE

Don Cannon
Who Controls the City?
The Struggle Over New York City Building Standards
6:30 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

PHOTOVOLTAICS IN BUILDINGS

Steven Strong, et al.
CUNY Graduate Center
365 5th Ave., 9th Fl.
www.cuny.edu

FRIDAY 28

LECTURE

Sarah Sze
Refashioning Urban Spaces
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.aiany.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

The High Style of Dorothy Draper
Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

Terence Gower
Ciudad Moderna
Storefront for Art and Architecture
97 Kenmare St.
www.storefrontnyc.com

SUNDAY 30

LECTURE

Julie Beckman, Keith Kamin, David Benjamin
Instability
Young Architects Forum
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.aiany.org

THE HIGH STYLE OF DOROTHY DRAPER

Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Avenue
May 2 through August 27

Before Martha Stewart, America had Dorothy Draper, an interior designer who launched a series of books as well as a product line of home goods that were sold at Macy’s. A new exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York, The High Style of Dorothy Draper, recalls her career, focusing on six of her most memorable projects: the Carlyle Hotel (New York, 1936), the Ambassador Hotel (New York, 1937), the Arrowhead Springs Hotel (San Bernardino, California, 1939), the Drake Hotel (Chicago, 1941), the Greenbrier Resort (White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, 1948, pictured above), and the interior of the Conrail 880 jet (1960). Draper was known for her bold patterns, textured carpets, romantic furniture, and brilliant colors. The exhibition, curated by Donald Albrecht, will include her best-selling books, photographs, furnishings, and her 1957 television interview with CBS reporter Edward Morrow. Albrecht has also produced a catalogue for the show, published by Pointed Leaf Press.

IN PROCESS: CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE IN SPAIN

MAURICIO ANGEL CORTEZ, JORGE LUBEYVID, THOM MAYNE, CARME PINOS, TERENCE RILEY, JOAN ROIG

Center for Architecture, 536 La Guardia Place
April 22, 7:00 p.m.

New York has on the brain. Complementing MoMA’s Oh-So-Site: New Architecture in Spain show and the Barcelona in Progress exhibition at the Center for Architecture, the Center has organized a symposium that will focus on issues of architectural design in Spain that are being studied in the context of the Barcelona Biennale, the Venice Architecture Biennale, and in other architectural forums around the world. Through a series of presentations, the symposium will explore questions of contemporary architectural practice in Spain, including topics such as the relationship of architecture to the city, the role of the government in encouraging architectural experimentation, and the impact of the global economy on architectural practice. The symposium will feature a panel discussion with architects from the Barcelona Biennale, as well as a series of short talks by architects and designers who are working on projects in Spain. The symposium will be held at Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, 2 East 91st St., www.cooperhewitt.org

SATURDAY 29

SYMPOSIUM

Searching for the Just City
University of British Columbia
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EVENT

Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
Open Studio Weekend
12:00 p.m.
www.lmcc.net

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Feeding Desire: Design and the Tools of the Table, 1500-2005
Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
www.cooperhewitt.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

An Atlas of Drawings, 1500-2005
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

WEDNESDAY 10

LECTURE

Eva Hesse, Stephen Penz
 dims drawingcenter.org
35 Wooster St.
www.drawingcenter.org

WEDNESDAY 10

EXHIBITION OPENING

Photovoltaics in Buildings
Steven Strong, et al.
CUNY Graduate Center
365 5th Ave., 9th Fl.
www.cuny.edu

THURSDAY 11

LECTURE

Julie Beckman, Keith Kamin, David Benjamin
Instability
Young Architects Forum
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center
457 Madison Ave.
www.aiany.org

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Corner Plot
Sarah Sze
38 Water St., Brooklyn
www.sva.edu

THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER APRIL 19, 2006

DIARY 16
Ready For Their Close-Ups

The International Festival of Films on Art (FIFA) in Montreal offers one of the broadest selections of films on architecture anywhere. The program varies in quality but offers enough interest to keep people coming back year after year.

Films on architecture are proliferating, since the same people who have discovered the power of architecture have also discovered the power of cinema to sell architecture. Line items in construction budgets now fund project documentaries. Often the films are sponsored by local television channels promoting cultural tourism. Among the independent "project films" at FIFA this year is Building the Gherkin, directed by Swiss journalist and documentary filmmaker Mirjam von Arx (89 minutes) who narrates the commentary filmmaker Miriam von Arx. Their sub-genre of architecture films has also emerged: the runaway-project film, which probes the case of a building whose costs soar out of control. BBC alumnus Stuart Gregg's The Hollywood Files (87 minutes) is an uncomfortable case history of the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh, which cost some $800 million over six years, but not before its architect Enric Miralles and the project's champion, Scottish leader Donald Dewar, both died. The film is an on-the-ground report of the warm and gregarious Miralles in Edinburgh and in his studio. (Miralles's wife and partner, Benedetta Tagliabue, continued the project with Scottish collaborators.) There's also footage of Miralles and Dewar defending the project against parliamentarians who derided it as a symbol of vanity and against parliamentarians who demanded audits and investigations when costs rose. Yet this overpriced Tower of Babel continued on page 21

The Socialist, the Architect, and the Twisted Tower: How the architect, dependent on the sponsor, and the author of the plan become the guides to the design of their own lives. The protagonist of this film is Santiago Calatrava. In a new era of postmodernism, Calatrava is a true populist. His work is a popular gospel, and his followers are his true believers. In this film, Calatrava is depicted as a warm and gregarious man, who is able to connect with the people and make them believe in his vision.

The Age of Innocence

In an age when the assertion of virtue masks all manner of culpability, the title of Keller Easterling's latest book, Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and Its Masquerades, may make skeptical viewers ask whether innocence is that which endures or that which must be endured. However, Easterling resists an easy answer. Her new book shares its title with an essay that the architect and urbanist published in the journal Grey Room. After September 11, 2001, in which she interpreted the geopolitics of that and subsequent days in terms of the patterns of conflict and learning within organizations identified by ethnologist/anthropologist Gregory Bateson. These were, in particular, the strange symmetries and mutually reinforcing reciprocities that emerge between nominally opposed elements.

"Mimicry and righteous innocence," wrote Easterling in that essay, "dependent on an exemption or exclusion of information, reduce the resilience of an organization and often precede violence and destruction." For Easterling, identified a newly organized encounter not only among the conventional cultural and political constituencies arrayed around September 11, but between the Design World and the World-at-Large: "By translating the static envelopes of buildings and the conventions of urbanism into an architecture of conflict and warfare, Easterling identifies a latent political agency for architecture, a global urbanism that extends the territory of that discipline."

Easterling's approach, while necessitating a sober lesson: "You can't set out to build a landmark."

She concludes her book with that chasm that marks the political and cultural divide between architecture and urbanism, a divide that is ethically, ecologically, and economically problematic in, which architects, for all their talk of "firmness," are actually building things that are unsustainable. She places this condition alongside an unsettling range of possibilities in which "demolishing areas deemed to be blighted...may hide within the folds of legality, but this covert destruction may be as devastating as war or natural disasters." Rather than metaphorically insulating demolition from disaster, Easterling identifies an interrelated continuum of "systematic subtrac-_ and "urban deletion" from the practice of architecture. It's a bracing and timely approach. It resists what Sanford Kwinter, in a recent issue of 32, called, "the abdication of design into a passive...the most self-defeating exercises in our ostensibly irresolutely self-designing world. It frees us from the bankruptcy notion that, as designers, we can merely ventriloquize to consider ethics and aesthetics as zero-sum alternatives.

Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and Its Masquerades
Keller Easterling, MIT Press, 244 pp., $24.95.

The kilometer-long ECT Delta terminal in Rotterdam is one of the most automated container ports in the world, and operates 24 hours a day.

After the 1950s, urbanist Jane Jacobs was placing the analysis of cities within the history of scientific thought, specifically the methodology of interrelated variables. She concludes her 1961 book The Death and Life of Great American Cities by observing, "A growing number of people have begun, gradually, to think of cities as problems of organized complexity—organisms that are replete with unexamined, but obviously intricately interconnected, and surely understandable, relationships." Easterling's approach, while necessarily tangential, discursive, contingent, and obtuse in contrast to Jacobs's materialist storytelling, traces newly emergent forms of this interconnected intricacy.

One way of dismissing Jacobs' unsettlingly organic complexity has been to so simplify it that it is all very well for the squishy actions of living bodies or the vast abstractions of living landscapes, but that at the in-between scale of architecture, individual buildings remain determined and definitive, designable and objective in a way that leaves them innocent of the disturbing material or social conditions one finds at the scale of person or planet. The desire to locate Jacobs' intricacy at the exact scale of architectural events, and to link distantly interconnected networks of ecological, economic, and ethical responsibility back toward the scale, substance, and surfaces of buildings themselves. And therefore back to the practice of architecture. It's a bracing and timely approach. It resists what Sanford Kwinter, in a recent issue of 32, called, "the abdication of design into an aesthetically irreversibly self-designing world. It frees us from the bankruptcy notion that, as designers, we can merely ventriloquize to consider ethics and aesthetics as zero-sum alternatives.

Thomas de Monchaux is a New York-based writer and designer.
Michael Wolf, Architecture of Density
Lynn Cohen, Mixed Messages
Hasted Hunt, 529 West 20th St.
Closed April 8

Michael Wolf: Architecture of Density


In the introduction to Lynn Cohen's photographic compendium Occupied Territory (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1988), David Byrne wrote of her work, "It's beautiful, it's efficient, it's terrifying, it's funny." One can't help but agree with his take when viewing Mixed Messages, her recent show at the new Hasted Hunt Gallery, and that of her gallery partner Michael Wolf, Architecture of Density. (Owners Sarah Hasted and Bill Hunt were co-directors of the Ricco/Maresca Gallery in the same location before opening their new gallery, which is devoted to photography.) Though Cohen and Wolf work at dramatically different scales, both cast a shrewd (and sometimes ironic) eye on the sterility that so often characterizes contemporary built spaces.

Cohen's photographs depict an unambiguously eerie picture of modern hospitality. Her pictures are of various uninhabited interiors—a spa or swimming pool, for example—each dominated by a small spectrum of colors illuminated by artificial light. Although they are supposed to be spaces for comfort and relaxation, they have an inexplicably menacing quality, as if the highest aspiration of modern design is to create spaces that seemingly remove any evidence of life.

In this respect, the pictures of spas (like #0070 and #0075) are the most successful because they hinge on the irony that we often seek relaxation as a means of staying efficient, and that those spaces themselves are the picture of mechanistic efficiency. Though they are just as ironic and frightening as Cohen's, Michael Wolf's photographs are less ominous. Wolf considers the efficiency and homogeneity of modern exteriors—specifically the massive housing projects typical of Hong Kong—in a way that grants them a sort of elegance and minimalist beauty. His photographs depict row upon row of windows and concrete, repetitive to the point where familiar forms lose their descriptive power and become relentless patterns. Each of Wolf's pictures contain a tension between a celebration of abstract beauty and an awareness of the strangeness of the subject. Like the sterile rooms depicted in Cohen's work, these massive towers may make beautiful photographs, but probably not good living quarters.

JESSE FINKELSTEIN IS AN EDITORIAL INTERN AT AR.

CRAFT WORKS

March 23-26

Pasadena, best known for Arts and Crafts houses and the Rose Parade, is also the most adventurous place in greater Los Angeles. Cal Tech is advancing the frontiers of science and technology, NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL) explores the universe, and the Art Center College of Design has branched out from its sequestered hillsides complex. Phase one of its new South Campus, which energizes a decrepit industrial zone and offers classes to a broad public, hosted its second biennial Design Conference from March 23 to 26. It was organized by Chee Pearlman, a New York-based consultant, author, and former editor of I.D. Magazine. This fledgling event drew 800 participants from 19 countries and has become a worthy challenger to the Aspen Design Conference, now in its 56th year.

Though the San Gabriel mountains are no match for the Rockies, Art Center's Wind Tunnel is as uplifting as Aspen's tent. Built in 1942 by a consortium of airplane manufacturers, the complex was remodelled by the L.A. firm of Daly Genik Architects into the school's satellite campus. The architects retained the functional beauty of the raw concrete shell, while adding workshops and classrooms, a flying steel staircase and high-tech skylights. Construction of a residence hall designed by the same firm on an adjoining site should begin by the year's end while Frank Gehry is developing his designs for a new library on the old campus.

The conference expressed the free-spirited, multidisciplinary approach that Richard Koshalek, Art Center's President, has brought to this 76-year-old institution. Refreshingly unpretentious and full of surprises, the event was joyful and stimulating. The theme, Stories From the Source: Radical Craft, was embraced by 26 speakers and several entertainers in a fast-paced show that could have been transmitted, live and uncut, on PBS—if public broadcasting weren't so timid and politically cowed.

Pearlman, who spent two years planning the event, made audacious casting choices, and had the good sense to invite John Hockenberry, the Emmy award-winning journalist, to return as moderator. As before, it was an inspired choice, for this warm and witty man puts everyone at ease. At the start of every session he rolled his wheelchair on stage while telling stories and introducing the next guest, exited, and re-emerged 20 minutes later to ask probing questions. New Yorker writer Adam Gopnik delivered the eloquent keynote address, and magician Ricky Jay, stand-up comedian Andy Borowitz and country-western singer Tift Merritt provided moments of relaxation.

Radical Craft was broadly interpreted by scientists and the
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A new film probes the influence of Sir John Soane (whose London house is pictured here) on American architects.

Ready for their close-ups continued from page 17 turned out to be what it was intended to be (and what other cities envy)—a symbol of local pride that's become a magnet for tourists. Will it also be a signal for other cities to undertake architectural follies?

Architect biopics are also gaining popularity, in pace with architects' evolution as celebrities. The oft-screened Sketches of Frank Gehry by Sydney Pollack (87 minutes) opened this year's festival, a logical choice for a Canadian event though Gehry has yet to finish a building in the country of his birth. Pollack's film is finally going into general release in the U.S. starting May 9.

Other celebrations of contemporary architects included Magician of Light: Richard Meier, a German documentary, and Arthur Erickson: Poet of Concrete, a salute to the designer of the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver and the Canadian Embassy in Washington, both admiring career profiles in TV-doc style.

Other admiring profiles at FIFA dealt with work that has stood the test of time. Sir John Soane: An English Architect, An American Legacy (62 minutes), produced by Edgar Howard and directed by Murray Girgor and narrated by Charles Jencks, is conventional in its PBS style and in its observation that Soane was a muse for American architects who chaffed at the modernist straitjacket. From Robert Venturi to Michael Graves. Even Richard Meier claims to have been touched by Soane's attitudes toward light, as does Philip Johnson, who gives a charming tour of the vaulted interior in his New Canaan guesthouse he designed in homage to the breakfast room in Soane's house.

An earthy counterpart to the Soane film was I Build the Tower (87 minutes), about Sabato "Simon" Rodia, the inveterate Italian mason who spent more than 30 years building the quirky Watts Towers in Los Angeles. Directed by Edward Landler and Brad Byer, a great-nephew of Rodia, the film has newsreel and home movie footage of Rodia, family photos, and recordings of his broken English. It assembles these eclectic elements with a handmade roughness that fits its subject. With parallel stories of wrekker-bot urbanism in Los Angeles and the neglect of an artist who might now be anointed an "outsider," this portrait was a relief from the boosterism of the other profile films.

Most of these films won't play in theaters, especially not in American theaters. Most are TV-length, and Building the Gherkin and I Build the Towers compete with thousands of documentaries for independent screens. It's the rare

Craft works continued from page 18 former U.S. poet laureate Billy Collins, by architect Wolf Prix. Apple designer Jimmy Wales, fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi, and lexicographer Erin McKean. Every speaker seemed eager to communicate a personal passion. JPL director Charles Elachi reviewed the past two years of activity on Mars and on the frontiers of space, presenting a month-by-month succession of breathtaking images. Constance Adams described how she employed her architectural experience to develop Trans-Hab, an inflatable space dwelling for NASA astronauts. David Gallo explored another frontier, showing the strange life forms that flourish in boiling springs of hydrogen chloride on the ocean floor, at pressures that would crush a diver in a nanosecond. Theo Jansen demonstrated how his huge mechanical creatures, constructed of PVC tubing, roam Dutch beaches, powered by the wind. Techno-visionary Danny Hills demonstrated a computer-driven device that can turn a sheet of silicon into a colored relief map of any place on earth. Prix showed a short video in which analogue and digital imagery was combined to provide a dizzying virtual tour of the new BMW center in Munich. Described a computer-driven device that can turn a sheet of silicon into a colored relief map of any place on earth.
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A PLEA FOR
YANKEE STADIUM

Last year, while New York's preservation community was rallying to "save" 2 Columbus Circle, plans were announced that called for the destruction of another 20th-century New York landmark, this one a few miles to the north: Yankee Stadium. Did this news cause shock? Outrage? Hardly. The prospect of losing a largely unloved work of mid-century kitsch was enough to draw the DOCOMOMO folks to the barricades. But the demolition of one New York's most cherished and historic public spaces—albeit not the prettiest or most fashionable—well, no one seemed to care about that. Indeed, the architectural critic at the paper of record all but endorsed the idea. "There are those, no doubt, who will complain about the loss of the site of some of the most memorable moments in the history of sports," Nicolai Ouroussoff wrote in The New York Times. "I am not one of them. The current stadium, which was severely altered in the mid-1970s, has little architectural merit."

Well, now, is Yankee Stadium ugly?

From the outside, damn ugly. Are the circulation spaces awful? Yeah, and they stink of beer. Is that famous white frieze up at the top a tack-ed-on sham? Yup. Does any of this matter? No, not one bit.

Make no mistake: Yankee Stadium is a magical place. There are few greater thrills, for a baseball fan or player, than emerging from one of its grumpy tunnels to spot that green jewel of a diamond below, historic home to the likes of Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, and Mickey Mantle. Baseball, like no other sport, trades on its past, and Yankee Stadium is its most hallowed shrine. But it is no ossified monument. Indeed, the architectural secret of Yankee Stadium is its structural design, which crams an immense population into close quarters and in great proximity to the playing field. With its large upper deck—home of the "cheap seats"—Yankee Stadium is one of New York's most egalitarian public spaces. The ballpark proposed as a replacement will not be as planned, the new stadium will have a considerably reduced capacity, and the upper deck will be cut disproportionately in order to increase more lucrative field-level seating. One of the many positive aspects of the present stadium's large size is that the team has to work hard to fill it. That means lots of reasonably priced tickets for a star-studded show. Those bargains will be a lot harder to come by in the future.

Those who do shell out for tickets will undoubtedly be more comfortable in their more luxurious, less constricted environment. But is this a good thing? Though it may be, at times, unpleasant to have Jerome from the Bronx leaning over into your airspace, it is that very closeness that lends the stadium its unique spark. In our velvet-robe society, there are fewer and fewer places where New Yorkers of different backgrounds come together, side by side, united behind a single cause. Yankee Stadium is one of them. We don't need a glorified mall, where the game on the field is an afterthought.

There has been resistance to the plans for a new Yankee Stadium. Local Bronx community groups, led by Save Our Parks, have spearheaded the movement, arguing with some persuasiveness that it is a misuse of public parkland, that it will be a drain on public coffers (despite assurances that the project is being funded by the team), and that it will create a slush fund for local politics. These are all valid issues, though they have gained little public traction. Most New Yorkers are in no position to debate the finer points of Bronx parks usage, and have good reason to trust their mayor when it comes to issues of economics. Having secured the approval of City Council, it seems altogether unlikely that the rag-tag group of dissenters currently fighting the good fight will have the wherewithal to stop the plans to replace the House that Ruth Built. They need help, and they need it from the architectural community. Yankee Stadium, the great ballpark in the Bronx, most assuredly has merit, architectural and otherwise. Saving this cherished structure is a cause for architecture, and one that architects are well suited to make. Now's the time.
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