

THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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ARQUITECTONICA GIVES 35-YEAR-OLD INSTITUTION NEW FACADE AND 50 PERCENT MORE PUBLIC SPACE



MARTHA COOPER

New and Improved Bronx Museum

The Bronx's Grand Concourse is no stranger to great architecture, though it has been nearly three-quarters of a century since the Champs-Élysée-inspired boulevard has seen the likes of Bronx Borough Hall, near Yankee Stadium, and the countless art deco and art moderne apartment buildings that

make it one of New York's most impressive thoroughfares.

With its centennial three years away, the Grand Concourse is undergoing a renaissance anchored by new developments targeted at revitalizing the South Bronx. One of the first and most **continued on page 6**

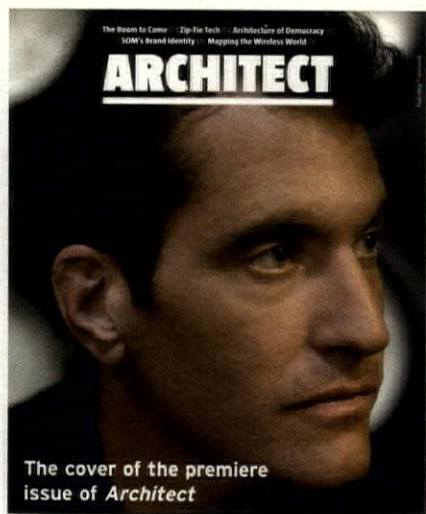
COOPER-HEWITT COMBINES INAUGURAL NATIONAL DESIGN WEEK WITH NATIONAL DESIGN AWARDS



COURTESY COOPER-HEWITT

LESS SURPRISE, MORE DESIGN

The usual gala-night suspense has been lifted for this year's seventh-annual Cooper-Hewitt National Design Awards, which was held on October 18. The winners in each of the major categories were announced in a comparatively anti-climactic press release in June. But where there is less anticipation, there is more recognition: The traditional award categories of lifetime achievement, corporate achievement, architecture, fashion, product and communication design have expanded to acknowledge three new areas—design mind, landscape design, and interior design—making ten juried categories total. **continued on page 7**



COURTESY HANLEY WOOD

ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE SOLD AND MERGED WITH NEW TITLE

Death to Architecture

Rumored to be on the auction block for several years, *Architecture* magazine has finally been sold. On September 29, Hanley Wood, the Washington, D.C.-based publisher of business-to-business housing and construction titles including *Residential Architect*, *Builder*, and *Concrete Construction*, announced its purchase of both *Architecture* and *Architectural Lighting* (AL) from VNU Business Media, which publishes *Contract* and *Hospitality Design* but began shedding its design titles when it abruptly shuttered *Interiors* in 2001. In a statement, VNU Business Media CEO Robert **continued on page 3**

NEW AGENCY TO BRING GREEN STANDARDS TO CITY OPERATIONS

BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced on September 21 the creation of the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, the unit of his staff that will be charged with planning and implementing principles to make New York City's growth ecologically sound. As mayoral spokesman Matt Kelly described it, the office will merge three tasks to help the city absorb what demographers expect to be a million or so new residents over the next 30 years: It will chart ways to manage and dispose of underused land, encourage clean mass transit, and measure the city's emissions of the gases that **continued on page 3**

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FORMER VAN ALLEN CURATOR TO HEAD NEW DEPARTMENT AT CHICAGO INSTITUTION

ZOË RYAN APPOINTED DESIGN CURATOR OF THE ART INSTITUTE

The Art Institute of Chicago, one of the nation's major art museums, announced the appointment of Zoë Ryan as the Neville Bryan Curator of Design. For the last six years, Ryan, 29, has been curator at the Van Alen Institute in New York, and most recently curated *The Good Life: New Public Spaces for Recreation*. Joseph Rosa, who became the Art Institute's curator of architecture and design in September 2005, created Ryan's position as part of his effort to expand the museum's architecture and design department.

"Zoë was the first person who came to mind when we started discussing filling this position," said Rosa. He first worked with her in 2002, when he brought the Van Alen show, *Architecture + Water*, curated by Paul Lewis, to the Carnegie Museum of Art. "I've always been impressed by her. She's someone **continued on page 11**



COURTESY ZOË RYAN



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CORRECTIONS

The story "New Practices, New York" (AN 14_09.11.2006) incorrectly noted that Mark Foster Gage and Marc Clemenceau, principals of Gage Clemenceau Architects, previously worked for Stan Allen. Also, the article says that Gage co-taught studios at Yale; in fact, he is a full tenure-track faculty member.

In AN 15_9.22.2006, our article on 9/11 memorials included the SEIU Local 32B-32J Memorial, dedicated to the members of the local chapter of the Service Employees Union, located in Midtown Manhattan. The piece neglected to mention the memorial's designers, New York-based Furnstahl & Simon Architects.

The story "A New Stage of Life" (AN 14_9.11.2006), about the conversion of an abandoned Harlem water pump house into the Aaron Davis Gate House performing arts complex, designed by Olhausen DuBois Architects, neglected to note that New York WASA Studio served as the preservation architects on the project.

The news that *Architecture* magazine—which accounts for one half of the national monthly architecture trade publications in the U.S.—has folded is sad news for the profession. Although the magazine, which was founded in 1913 as *The Journal of the AIA*, had been struggling in recent years, and although a new magazine, *Architect*, is poised to provide some competition in what would seem to be a wide open field, the disappearance of one of the field's mainstays reflects a profession lacking in forums for discourse, criticism, and learning.

Why can't a country with 102,000 practicing architects sustain more than two professional magazines? (We won't even mention journals, which have all but disappeared.) In England, which has only 30,399 architects, publications thrive—*Architectural Review*, *Blueprint*, *Building Design*, *Architect's Journal*, *RIBA Journal*—providing an array of perspectives from which architects may choose. Italy beats all as a producer of architecture and design magazines (perhaps not astonishing given that it has 111,063 architects), though countries with far fewer architects, like the Netherlands (8,350) and Spain (40,741), also manage to sustain publications that are so impressive they have substantial international readerships. (These statistics come from the interesting website www.coac.net/internacional/estadisticas/.)

Each of these countries has a higher ratio of architects to the general population than the U.S., by far. Furthermore, in these places, architecture and design are more deeply integrated in general culture, addressed in the public sphere through other media such as newspapers, as well as civic building processes. In these publication-rich countries, "architecture is looked at as a subject of great political, economic, and social interest," notes Reed Kroloff, the former *Architecture* editor-in-chief who spent his Rome Prize fellowship studying architectural publications. "In Italy, non-architects read architecture magazines as a way to take part in the country's cultural debates. In England, you have a minister in charge of architecture, so it's part of political consciousness."

Even the editors of the dominant American magazine, *Architectural Record*, will likely express the belief that the lack of competition isn't good for anyone—least of all architects, who want to be exposed to a range of ideas. (Apparently, *Architect* will avoid projects by boutique firms, focusing instead on the work of large and mid-sized firms, thus targeting a demographic distinct from *Record*'s.)

The American architectural publishing scene wasn't always so feeble. *Record* dates to 1891, founded by Harry Desmond, a poet and novelist who, according to *Record* editor Suzanne Stephens, had ambitions for a literary approach to architecture. There were also *Architecture*, *Progressive Architecture* (which evolved from *Pencil Points*), *Architectural Forum*, *Inland Architect* in the Midwest, and *Arts + Architecture* on the West Coast. So what happened? People joke that, in the U.S., people don't read, they mostly look at pictures. There's truth to this. American architects have also never appreciated—to the level epitomized by the Brits, for example—the notion of civil debate. Criticism can induce irrational behavior on the part of many architects, like grudge-holding, black-balling, and boycotting. Kroloff attributes the profession's fear of criticism in part to the AIA, which attacks anything that portrays the profession in a negative light. "But you can't totally blame them because they're responding to architecture's weak political and social standing," he allows. When the profession becomes fortified in the minds of political and business leaders, not to mention the general population, the profession might just manage to see healthier publications devoted to documenting and digesting their work.

DEATH TO ARCHITECTURE continued from front page
Kroloff explained, "Since we have a very limited footprint in the architectural market, we have sold *Architecture* and *Architectural Lighting* to Hanley Wood, which has a strong building and construction franchise."

While Hanley Wood will continue to publish *AL* and has retained three of its current staff members, *Architecture*, which has suffered declining ad pages and circulation over the past several years (see "Architecture Editor Ousted," AN 14_9.7.2005), will be discontinued following its October issue. Its entire staff was let go.

Architecture's final issue coincides with the debut of Hanley Wood's trade title, *Architect*, which mails at the end of the month (see "New Magazine To Launch," AN 9_5.24.2006). *Architect* editor-in-chief Ned Cramer explained that the acquisition of *Architecture* was "a chance [for us] to strengthen our market position." The new magazine will fulfill *Architecture*'s existing subscriptions.

Architecture's current circulation is 88,000 while *AL*, which is published seven times yearly, has a circulation of 25,000. Long before the sale was finalized, Hanley Wood had announced a target circulation for *Architect* of 60,000. Issues will be mailed free to registered architects and architects working in firms with more than two employees, engaged in nonresidential work, which accounts for 90 percent of all billings in the industry, according to Hanley Wood's research. Said spokesperson Ann Seltz, "From *Architecture*'s circulation, we will take only those firms that match that profile; firms outside our targeted profile may receive the magazine on a paid-subscription basis."

Architect will also preserve the venerated P/A Awards. Ironically, *Architecture* magazine is now facing the same fate it imposed on *Progressive Architecture* (P/A) in January 1996: BPI Communications, the publishers of *Architecture*, then the official magazine of the AIA, bought P/A for \$1 million, and kept only its subscriber list and awards program. (BPI was folded into VNU in 1998.) "The P/A Awards is an important institution in the profession and its fate shouldn't be tied to that of magazines that have fallen on hard times," said Cramer. "At *Architect*, we can allocate the resources to it and bring it back to what it was ten years ago."

Cramer also expressed his desire to preserve other strengths of *Architecture*, such as "its incredible minds, including a great pool of contributors." As of yet, none of the magazine's staffers have been retained, nor could they comment for this article due to a clause in their severance contracts. The staff was given one week's notice, and spent their final week of work overseeing the P/A Awards. The awards will appear in the January issue of *Architect*. The news of the sale came as a surprise to the staff, which had unveiled a redesigned, reformulated magazine in June. At the time, editor-in-chief Emilie Sommerhoff, executive editor Abby Bussel, and art director Casey Maher were upbeat about VNU's support of their efforts to push *Architecture* in a new direction.

Maher will continue on a contract basis as art director for *AL*. Cramer will assume the role of editor-in-chief for *AL*, in addition to *Architect*. Designed by Pentagram's Abbott Miller, *Architect* will take a different approach to covering the profession, "focusing not just on buildings but on people and their processes," said Cramer. **CATHY LANG HO**

BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE continued from front page

The new office will also promote a market for ecologically sound products, said Kelly, by instituting "green" purchasing in the 300,000-member city workforce. "We're going to look at how to make the city's operations more sustainable," explained Kelly, "and then figure out the entire city's carbon emissions." The office will be overseen by Jeff Kay, who is currently the Mayor's head of operations, and its director will be Rohit Aggarwala, a well-regarded former McKinsey consultant. Aggarwala has already received good marks from smart-growth advocates: He has run long-term planning for the Transportation Review Board of the National Academies, which advises the federal government on transportation policy. But it's unclear how the office will shape budgeting decisions.

"I really like that they're linking together long-term strategic land use planning and sustainability," said Brad Lander, director of the Pratt Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED). At

the same time, Lander noted, the office's advisory board—which convened for the first time on September 27—is heavier on eco-thinkers like Cook + Fox's Robert Fox and Natural Resources Defense Council's Ashok Gupta than on planners like Robert Yaro, who is director of the Regional Plan Association.

What's more, fostering a sustainable city requires financial expertise to reconcile the startup costs of buying energy-efficient building systems with the operating savings those systems can bring. Rafael Pelli, a partner in Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects and a member of the United States Green Building Council, reserves judgment on how Bloomberg's move can stoke sustainable design until he sees real proposals. "The tax structure of these buildings is so important," said Pelli, "and developers worry so much about first costs." Until the office produces concrete incentives for developers, Pelli added, architects should adopt a wait-and-see attitude toward its promise for encouraging good, sustainable design.

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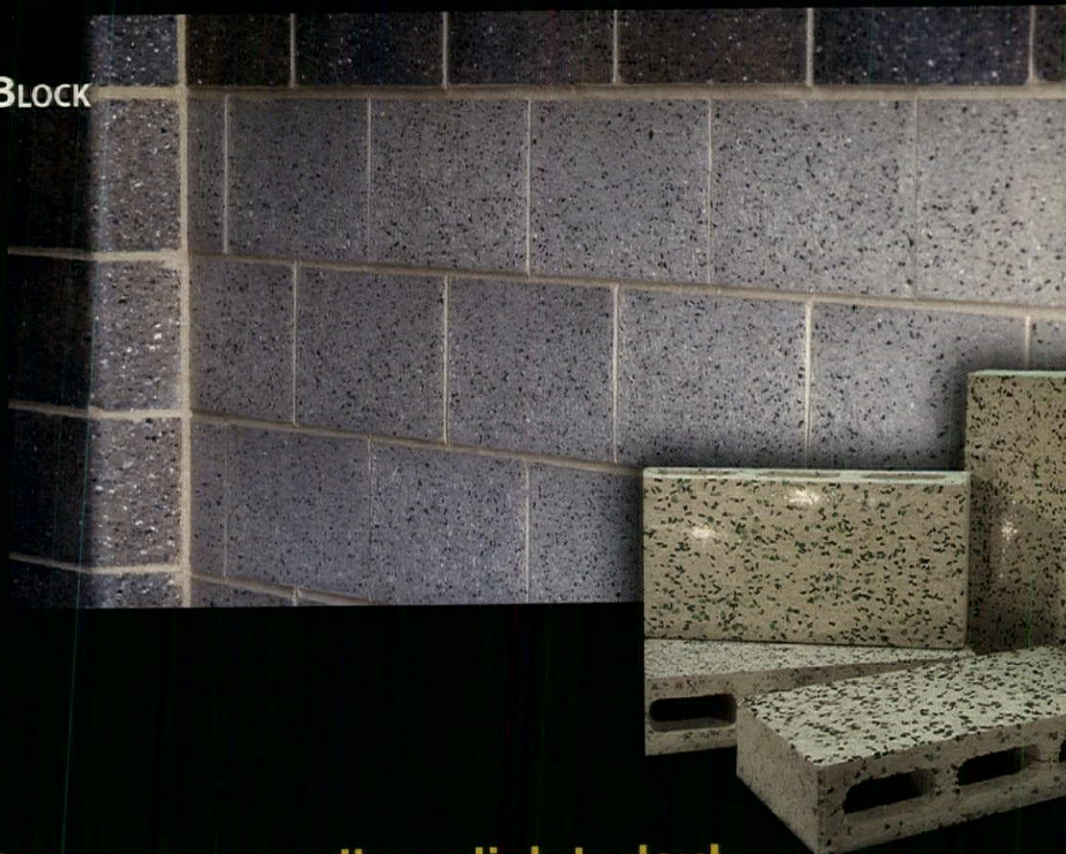
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PUSH TO PRESERVE PEARLROTH HOUSE

With a risky move underway, Andrew Geller's Pearlroth house in Westhampton, New York, faces an uncertain future and a last-ditch effort for preservation. The architect's grandson, Jake Gorst, has teamed up with David Shearer, director of Exhibitions International, to raise \$175,000 to relocate and refurbish the structure, which will form the core of a new community arts center aimed at preserving the East End's role as an incubator of experimental mid-century design. New York's Center for Architecture will host a cocktail reception—with special guests 82-year-old Geller and historian Alastair Gordon, who wrote the book *Beach Houses: Andrew Geller* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2003)—on Friday, October 27 to help raise funds.

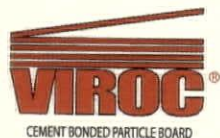
Gorst has been working to save the house since 2005, when current owner Jonathan Pearlroth offered to donate it to the Township of Southampton after local building codes revealed that renovation would be impossible without compromising the integrity of Geller's original design. The town has donated a new site in East Quogue but requires that restoration is completed within 15 months or risk demolition.

The move, which involves bisecting the house and driving it several miles up the road, began in late September, but \$25,000 is needed immediately to secure a successful effort by early November. Restoration by spring 2007 is further contingent on donations of cedar wood planks for the interior and exterior, copper panels for the roof, and brick-sized hollow cinderblocks for reconstructing the fireplace, as well as period furnishings, which will complete the conversion to a living museum. "Visitors will be able to tour it and see what a beach house by Andrew Geller was like in the 1950s. And the township is looking to build additional buildings, including an exhibition space that Exhibitions International would be involved in curating," said Shearer.

Undeniably optimistic about the new site, Gorst said, "It's a long stretch of beach with no other houses near it. It's going to look very close to the way it did when it was first built."

LAURIE MANFRA

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If you went to Coney Island over Labor Day weekend or happened by Chelsea Piers or Central Park in recent weeks, you may have seen a bright blue or yellow shipping container doing brisk business in colorful T-shirts, hoodies, and other basics. Yes, it has LOT-EK's signature all over it: The New York firm created two mobile shopping outlets for UNIQLO—"a sort of Japanese H&M," in principal Ada Tolla's words—which is opening a flagship store on Broadway in SoHo in late October. UNIQLO didn't want to miss the chance to welcome the fall season so, with creative agency MP Creative, they hit upon the concept of a roving billboard-cum-store-sampler. LOT-EK sliced out a front door of the mobile units, with the upper-half of the cut folding up to serve as an awning and the lower-half folding down to serve as an entrance ramp. They also cut vertical windowed slits on the units' front and back, inspired by the stacks of clothing that are something of a brand trademark. "UNIQLO always stacks everything," said Tolla. "So all you see in their stores are these colored horizontal lines." Though tiny, at 20-by-8-by-8-feet, the stores are also equipped with a changing room: a clever adaptation of a standard AC duct. The duct scrunches or stretches like an accordion, via a hand-crank. "Very low-tech," said Tolla, wryly.

NEW AND IMPROVED BRONX MUSEUM

continued from front page notable additions is a \$19 million expansion of the Bronx Museum of Art, designed by Bernardo Fort-Brescia and his firm Arquitectonica.

Rising three towering stories above the busy street, the northern wing of the museum is the first phase of a project that will literally unfold to the corner, eventually replacing the squat former-synagogue the museum has occupied since 1982. It adds 16,700 square feet to an existing 33,000.

The aluminum-clad façade resembles an

abstract paper fan, comprising seven irregular masses that are broken vertically by columns of fritted glass that spill light into the galleries. The dynamism created by the folds is heightened by diagonal incisions into the aluminum. Fort-Brescia explained that the crinkled frontispiece admits the dominant western light indirectly so it will not damage the art.

"Through the innovations of this pleated façade, it is our belief that it will not only serve to heighten the positive profile of the Bronx but also establish the county as a vibrant cultural destination," Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said during the ribbon cutting ceremony on October 3.

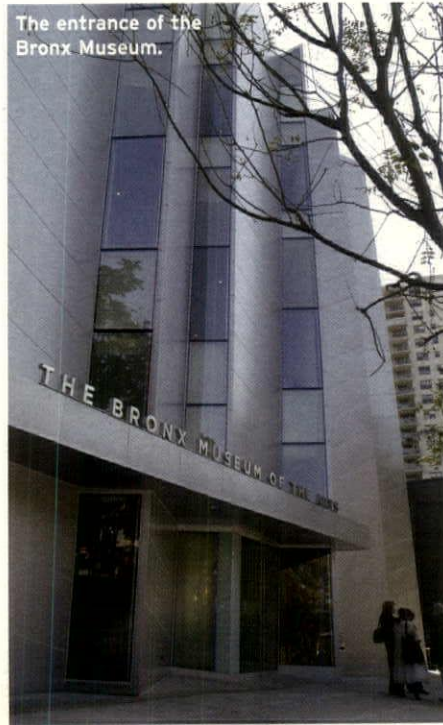
Perhaps the greatest service the glass provides is a "storefront" atmosphere. The two-floor lobby will house a public gallery, allowing pedestrians to steal a quick peak of art and maybe even be tempted inside.

"It's folding, it's gesturing, it's three dimensional," Fort-Brescia said. "We wanted people from the street to look in. Part of the point is to make the cultural building the center of the city."

Behind the lobby is one of the new large gallery spaces; designed with four flat walls, it may be closed off for projections and other installations. Above this sits the main gallery, which stretches from the jagged but functional wall out to an enclosed rear terrace that seems to float above the ground.

At the very top is a new classroom and media lab. "We were in the basement before," Education Department Director Lynn Pono said. "It's such a contrast. The light is amazing."

MATT CHABAN



The entrance of the Bronx Museum.

MARTHA COOPER



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2006 National Design Award Winners (left to right, top to bottom): Dodgers Stages coat-check signage by 2x4, 2004; dress from Maria Cornejo's collection Zero, Fall 2003; Top of the Rock Grand Atrium by Michael Gabellini, 2005; camouflage made of football player silhouettes by Nike, Inc.; Bill Stumpf's Caper Chair, 1999; illustration for Seoul arcade by Syd Mead, 1991; Thom Mayne's CalTrans District 7 Headquarters, 2004; rendering for Grand Canal Square, Dublin, by Martha Schwartz, currently under construction; Paolo Soleri (whose experimental town Arcosanti is pictured on the front page); Craig Robins; Paola Antonelli

LESS SURPRISE, MORE DESIGN continued from front page

The early announcement is tied to a new Cooper-Hewitt initiative called National Design Week, which takes place from October 15 to 21. Museum admission is free all week and education outreach programs aim to bring designers, teachers, and students into contact with each other. By announcing the winners in advance, the winners are able to participate in the education programs during their tenure, including studio visits, and a panel they will host at the Cooper-Hewitt the day after the gala.

There will be one surprise announcement for the crowd on October 18: the recipient of the newly inaugurated People's Design Awards. "We've had a fantastic response," said museum spokesperson Laurie Olivieri. "In just a couple of weeks, we had more than 300 nominations." There are no restrictions on the type of object that can be nominated, and users can suggest as many entries as they want but can only vote once. The nominees represent design of every shape and size, from a temporary shelter built in New Orleans by Marianne Cusato, to Deborah Adler's revision of the prescription bottle for Target, to classics like the Eames lounge chair, and under-recognized everyday design like contact lenses. For some of the NDA finalists, the People's Design Awards is a second chance to win. Designs from Chip Kidd, Apple, and Peter Som have all popped up in this category.

A handful of this year's winners have been nominated in years past. According to juror Michael Beirut, a partner at Pentagram, "Sometimes the biggest surprise as a juror was that some of the finalists had never won before." If there's a bonus to the awards being announced early this year, it's that pioneering designer Bill Stumpf's 40-year career was recognized before he passed away on August 30 at the age of 70. **SAMANTHA TOPOL**

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2x4; finalists Jake Barton and Chip Kidd

Fashion Design:

Maria Cornejo; finalists Thom Browne and Peter Som

Landscape Design:

Martha Schwartz; finalists Andrea Cochran and Ken Smith

Product Design:

Bill Stumpf; finalists Jonathan Ive and Antenna Design

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Michael Gabellini; finalists Annabelle Selldorf and Tsao and McKown

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CATHY LANG HO

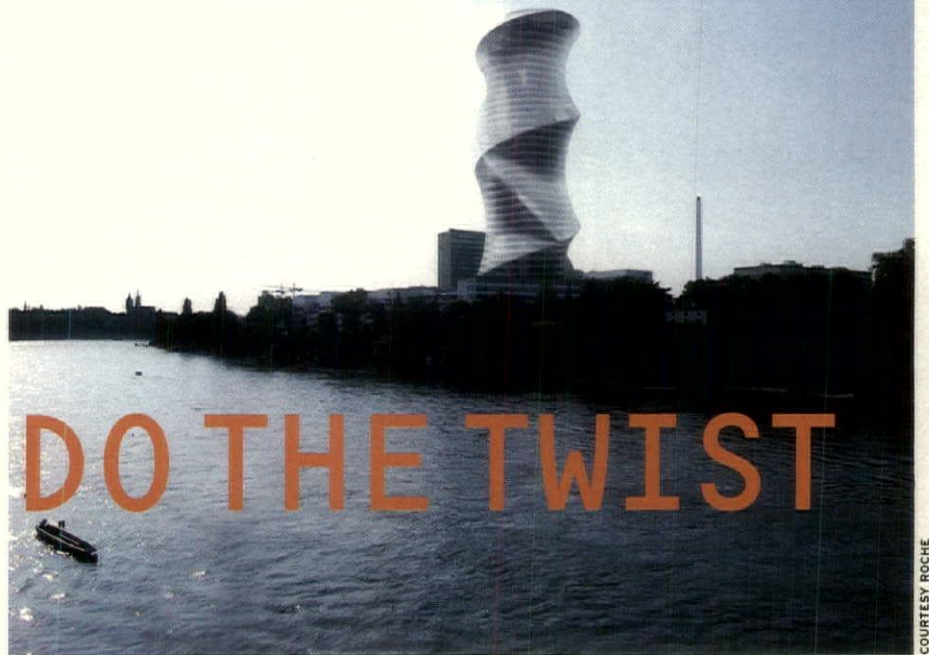
With the arrival of Peter Gelb as its new director, the Metropolitan Opera has launched a blitzkrieg effort to make opera more accessible to the public. It's had open dress rehearsals and live simulcasts of its performances, and recently opened a gallery devoted to opera-inspired art at the south corner of Wallace K. Harrison-designed building. "Opera has a long relationship with the visual arts," said Lindy Roy, who designed the gallery. "Think of the set designs by David Hockney and the murals that the Met commissioned from Marc Chagall." The gallery, which is free and open to the public everyday, is directed by *Vogue* arts editor-at-large Dodie Kazanjian; now on view is a show devoted to the theme *Heroines*. Though Gelb and Kazanjian were open to Roy pushing the profile of the space, the architect preferred to keep her gestures low-key, respectful of the historic building. The idiosyncrasy of her design is subtle, noticeable when one approaches the building: Roy has applied a reflective film to the windows, which not only protects the gallery interior from heat and light, but also gives the corner of the building the appearance of a negative space. During the day, the windows reflect the scenes of the plaza; at night, it becomes a glowing lantern (much brighter than the rest of the warmly lit Met). The gallery is just off the central lobby; a large wall section pivots to open or close off the gallery as needed. The wall is made of panels of resin imbedded with a digitally printed fabric bearing a magnified image of Lincoln Plaza's unmistakable travertine.

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TRACING THE HISTORY OF TORQUED SKYSCRAPERS, FROM NOGUCHI TO HERZOG & DE MEURON



COURTESY ROCHE

Architecture has always been subject to shifting trends, just like that other design discipline, fashion. In the realm of skyscraper design, it seems that architects are moving away from creating iconic tops for skyscrapers, and are now experimenting with ways to create an iconic body.

The first skyscraper to feature a dramatic torque is Santiago Calatrava's Turning Torso in Malmö, Sweden, completed last year. Since the tower was designed in 2000, a series of skyscrapers have emerged that give a new twist to the twist. To name a few: FXFowle's towers in Tianjin, China and Dubai; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Infinity Tower, also in Dubai; Herzog & de Meuron's tower for the De Young Museum in San Francisco, and their recently unveiled Roche Tower in Basel, Switzerland. Not to forget the most publicized torqued tower of all—the original Freedom Tower design by SOM, which has since changed drastically.

Structural engineer Guy Nordenson, who worked on the original Freedom Tower, acknowledges that Frank Gehry virtually has the patent for torqued and twisted volumes. "The first guy who started to play with this is Frank Gehry," said Nordenson, citing a silver, nine-story building with a very gentle turn in Hannover, Germany. "I am pretty sure that's the first case of an architect picking up the idea," he said. (Gehry was doubtless influenced by the work of Richard Serra, whose *Torqued Ellipse* sculptures are echoed in the architect's buildings.)

Nordenson traces torqued forms all the way back to the designs of Buckminster Fuller and Isamu Noguchi. "I worked for Fuller and Noguchi in 1976," said Nordenson. "At the time Noguchi was producing the Akari lights, which were torqued, and Bucky was interested in how you get a torqued form when you stack tetrahedra."

Beyond their obvious sculptural qualities, twisting towers have structural benefits like increased rigidity and reduced wind load. The twist creates aerodynamic efficiency—a determining factor when designing towers of great height. Of the Infinity Tower in Dubai, SOM partner Ross Wimer said, "We discovered that the twisted shape has benefits in terms of the way the tower behaves in the wind." Noting that wind tunnel tests are routine for towers of this height, he continued, "It doesn't present a continuous sail." They also found that the diagrid structure of the Freedom Tower reinforced the building's strength. "The geometry helped stiffen the tower," said Wimer, who worked on the original design.

One of the reasons cited by architects for twisting their towers is to maximize views. If a building's footprint or site sits flush against the street, architects might try to reorient the top of the tower in another direction, such as toward the water or scenic vistas.

FXFowle's tower in Dubai was one case where the torqued tower solution maximized views from the sky-

scraper. Partner Sudhir Jambhekar said, "The building is oriented toward the street, while up above, we wanted to relate to the city at large. Once you get up there, the views are spectacular."

For SOM's tower in Dubai, views also played a crucial role. "The logic of this twist came less from the sculptural form than the desire to take advantage of views," said Wimer. "We decided the best orientation for the tower would be east-west, facing the marina."

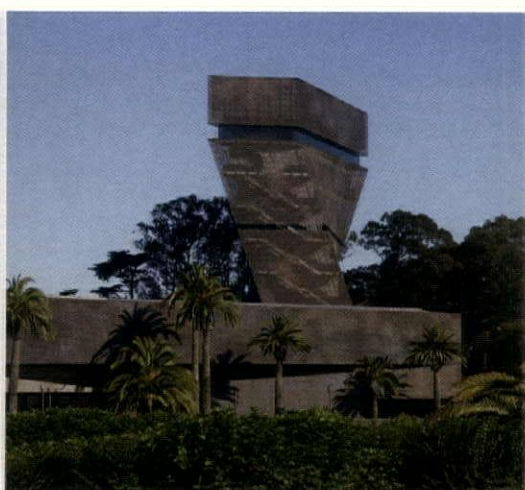
Of course, the prevailing fear is that the current fashion will go out of fashion. Nordenson has a theory on why architects have been attracted to these twisting forms: "There's a beauty to taking a simple geometry and turning it to create something more complex," he said. "When Bucky was experimenting with the four-sided tetrahedral volumes, stacking them—it looked like a DNA. That's maybe why people were excited. It was like a rebirth and recovery."

AY

Top: The Roche Tower in Basel, Switzerland, by Herzog & de Meuron. Below: Isamu Noguchi's Challenger Memorial, 1986, in Miami, Florida.

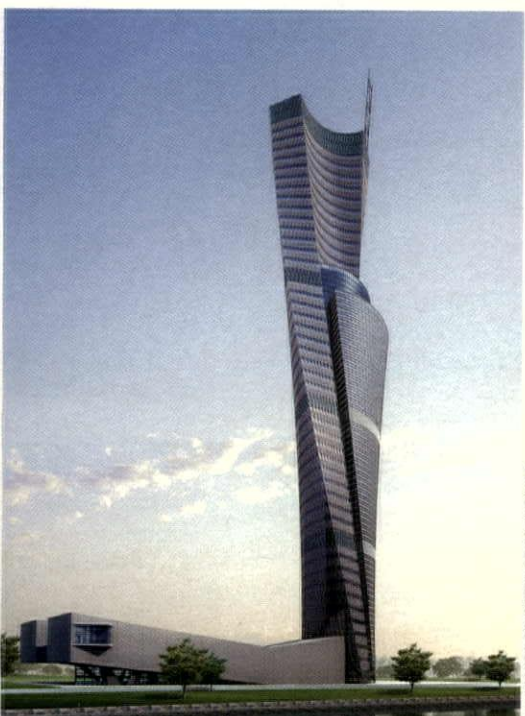
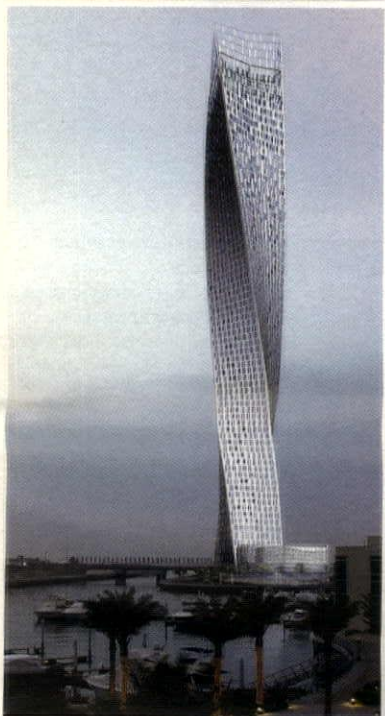


KOZO WATABIKI / COURTESY THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM, NY



Clockwise, from left: the Deyaar Tower in Dubai, by FXFowle; the De Young Museum in San Francisco, by Herzog & de Meuron; the Tianjin Tower in Tianjin, China, by FXFowle; Santiago Calatrava's Turning Torso in Malmö, Sweden; the Infinity Tower in Dubai, by Skidmore Owings & Merrill.

MARK DARLEY / COURTESY DE YOUNG MUSEUM



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OLE JAI / COURTESY HSB MALMÖ

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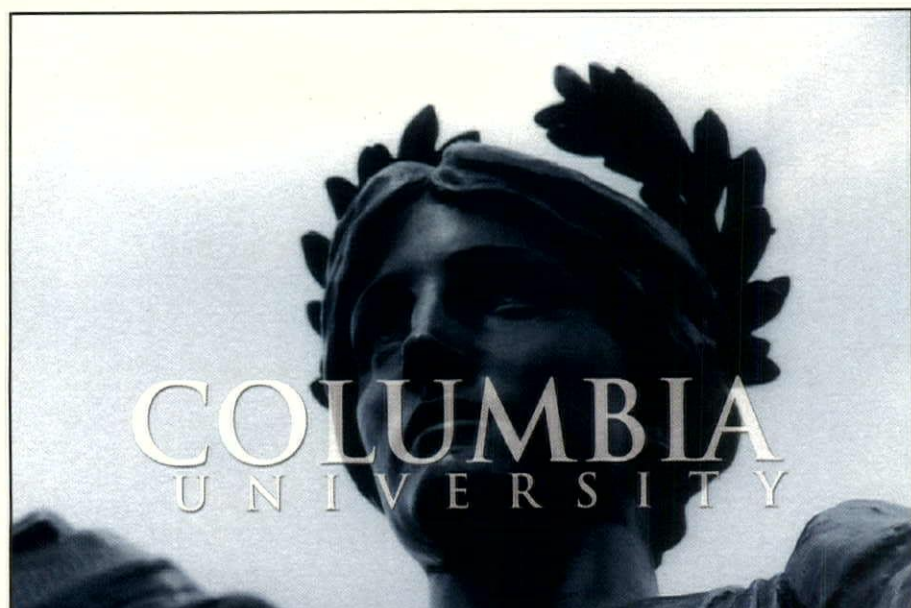
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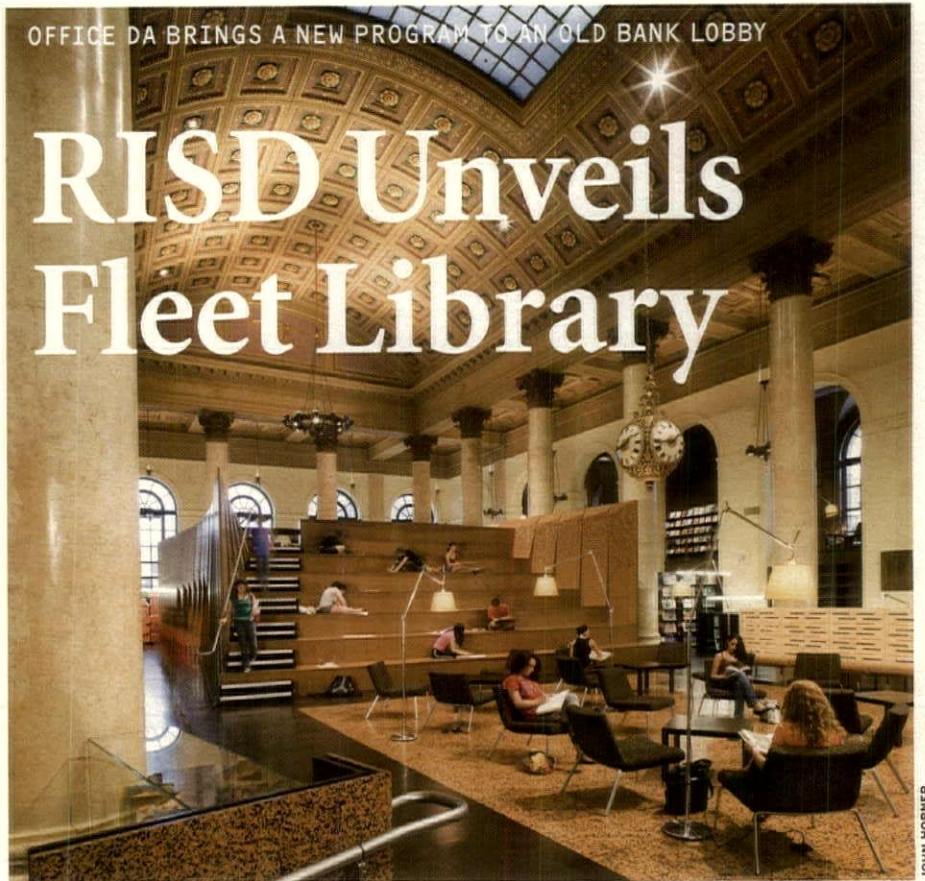
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RISD Unveils Fleet Library



On October 7, the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) dedicated a new library, known as the Fleet Library at RISD, in the soaring two-story lobby of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Building in downtown Providence. Designed by RISD alumnus Nader Tehrani and partner Monica Ponce de Leon, principals of Boston-based firm Office dA, the 55,000-square-foot Fleet Library centralizes RISD's collections in one facility. The space, which was donated by FleetBoston Financial Corporation, sits below ten stories currently being leased to the school for use as student housing. Design and construction of the project were funded by RISD's Future by Design capital campaign, which raised \$87.7 million to foster RISD's presence in the downtown area.

Tehrani said that accommodating RISD's growing program required some versatility on their part: In addition to updating the original 1917 systems to modern standards, the design had to

consolidate 130,000 volumes and 400 periodical subscriptions. They also needed to create seating for more than 200 in the main reading room, and provide dedicated viewing and reading rooms for special collections.

"The program drawn up by RISD's librarian exceeded the square footage available," said Tehrani. To fit everything in, the designers took advantage of the height of the cathedral-like Beaux-Arts lobby by inserting two structures—one a study pavilion, the other a circulation center—within the main volume. The study pavilion, a steel structure clad with medium density fiberboard (MDF), encloses study carrels and private reading rooms. It also increases the square footage of the lobby by creating a group study area on the top of the pavilion, reached by bleacher-style seating that steps down to the lounge-like main reading room. In addition to checkout, the circulation center houses staff offices and shelving and computer

work stations in a mill-worked MDF structure. Open MDF stacks surround these installations, and periodicals are located on the second-floor mezzanine.

In spite of these structural interventions, Fleet Library rests lightly within the lobby. Construction manager and Construction prefabricated the study pavilion and circulation center off site. This not only made for a quick erection in the space, but also ensures that when RISD's needs change again the installation can be easily removed. In the meantime, Office dA's new library sits comfortably within the historic lobby, employing a similar color palette to make the connection between old and new.

AARON SEWARD



LEFT: JOHN HORNER. RIGHT: DAVID O'CONNOR

CURTAIN CLOSES ON WEST SIDE STORY

The Bloomberg Administration and the MTA came to an agreement on the West Side Yards in the final days of September after weeks of back-and-forthing over the Mayor's July proposal to buy the site's development rights for \$500 million. Under the new plan, the city will rezone the 13-acre plot between 11th and 12th avenues and 30th and 33rd streets. The development rights will then be jointly auctioned by the city and the MTA, with monies from sales and leases going to the MTA to pay for an extension of the number 7 subway line. Also, developers will make payments to the MTA in lieu of taxes to the city. Uncertainty arose around Bloomberg's plan after would-be governor Eliot Spitzer criticized the plan as, "woefully inadequate."

ADRIAN SMITH LEAVES SOM

Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill is known for the work of its various partners, and the announcement that Adrian Smith is leaving the firm's home in Chicago to begin his own practice will no doubt shake this architectural powerhouse. As influential and prolific as the firm's New York counterpart David Childs, Smith was instrumental in the firm's move from modernist boxes to more postmodern projects, designing such projects as Chicago's NBC building and the Jinmao Tower in Shanghai. SOM being an institutional firm, Smith, 62, faced mandatory retirement at 65 and had been moved out of the business side of the firm three years ago. He was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* on October 4 saying, "I want to work another 10 or 15 years and I felt I wouldn't be able to work at SOM during that time frame. So I thought it would be better to start my own firm." Smith insists he is leaving on good terms, but there is speculation that he may take employees and clients with him to his new Chicago-based firm.

MOMA EXPANDS-TWICE

With the opening of the Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building, the Museum of Modern Art's six-year expansion comes to a close. Set to open on November 28, the eight-story building, the last part of Yoshio Taniguchi's design to be finished, abuts the western edge of the sculpture garden. The building houses three curatorial study centers, a library, the museum's extensive archives, as well as spaces for student programs, adult workshops, symposia, and new theaters to accommodate the museum's renowned film collection. In other news, MoMA has announced that the Film and Media Department will be spinning off into two separate departments with the creation of a new curatorial department, simply called Media. Klaus Biesenbach, a curator in the soon-to-be-divided department and chief curator of MoMA affiliate P.S. 1, will take over as chief curator for the new department, which will cover the museum's ever-growing media holdings.

MOYNIHAN STATION STALLED?

Following a war of letters between Empire State Development Chairman Charles Gargano and State Comptroller Alan Hevesi, Governor George Pataki has withdrawn his latest plans for Moynihan Station, at least for the time being. The plan, which initially involved extending Penn Station to include the largely unused Farley Post Office next door, has become embroiled in a real estate shuffle that includes the Vornado Realty Trust, The Related Companies, and Madison Square Garden. Along with Hevesi, State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver also demurred on the plans, with both men taking issue with Pataki's phased approach that would have begun work on the commuter station before the entire deal was worked out. Their move has been called politically motivated in light of fellow Democrat Eliot Spitzer's likely ascent to Albany.

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ZOÉ RYAN APPOINTED DESIGN CURATOR OF THE DESIGN INSTITUTE continued from front page who can represent the department and is easy to be in synch with," said Rosa. "This is a great place where she can come into her own, while helping us to expand and make our presence."

In her position at the Van Alen, Ryan has curated several large shows devoted to role of architecture and urban space, the primary focus of the institution. Some of these were the first Van Alen shows to travel to other institutions, such as *Open: New Designs for Public Space*, which went to the National Building Museum. *The Good Life: New Public Spaces for Recreation* opened last month in a temporary exhibition space at the end of Pier 40 on the Hudson River.

"My background is in museums and the

Art Institute is in such an exciting place right now," said Ryan, who officially assumes her post on October 31. "One of the most exciting things is to see how the Art Institute will be transformed." Prior to the Van Alen, Ryan held positions at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. She has written for publications, including *Blueprint*, *Surface*, and *The Architect's Newspaper*.

Last year, when Rosa arrived at the Art Institute after being hired away from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), he announced his plan to hire two junior curators, to grow his architecture and design department into one comparable to that of MoMA and SFMOMA. He is still seeking a junior curator of architecture.

ANDREW YANG

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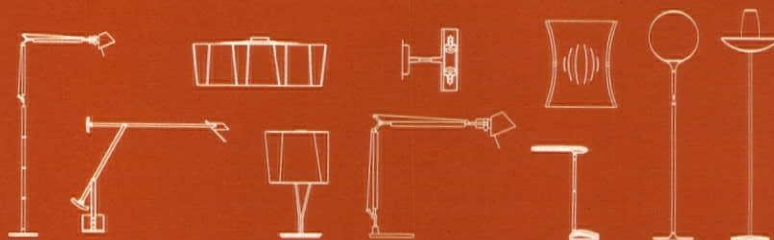


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NINE
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DEMOGRAPHERS SAY THAT NEW YORK WILL GROW BY A MILLION RESIDENTS WITHIN THE NEXT 25 YEARS, AND MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG WANTS TO PLAN FOR THEM. AN AS-YET UNRELEASED REPORT COMMISSIONED BY DEPUTY MAYOR DANIEL DOCTOROFF MAKES SOME INTERESTING RECOMMENDATIONS—LIKE DECKING OVER THE SUNNYSIDE YARDS AND PARTS OF THE BROOKLYN-QUEENS EXPRESSWAY—BUT DOESN'T GET INTO THE NITTY GRITTY OF WHO MIGHT ACTUALLY PAY FOR THEM. IS THE REPORT, VISIONS FOR NEW YORK CITY, REALLY THAT, OR IS IT A MAP FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF DEVELOPERS? BY WILLIAM MENKING AND ANNE GUINEY. PHOTOGRAPHY BY M. E. SMITH.



Opposite: Red Hook, 2005
Above, left: Sunnyside Yards, 2001
Above, right: Red Hook, 2003

In his 2006 State of the City address, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg promised to deliver a strategic land-use plan that would encompass housing, transportation, and infrastructure for all five boroughs, and would be closely tied to redevelopment initiatives already underway. For a city whose planning process has historically been decentralized, it was welcome news. Word of the report began circulating several months later, and this August, a copy appeared on the website Streetsblog.com. *Visions for New York City: Housing in the Public Realm* (which has not been officially released yet, and is therefore presumably still in draft form) covers much of what the mayor suggested it would, but comes from a different quarter than many expected: It was commissioned by Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff and prepared by Alex Garvin & Associates for the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC). (The two worked very closely together on NYC2012, the bid to bring the Olympics to New York.) As it makes explicitly clear, *Visions for New York City* is not official policy, but when it is ultimately released, will nonetheless likely provide the framework for coming discussions about what New York will look like in 25 years, and how the city will get there.

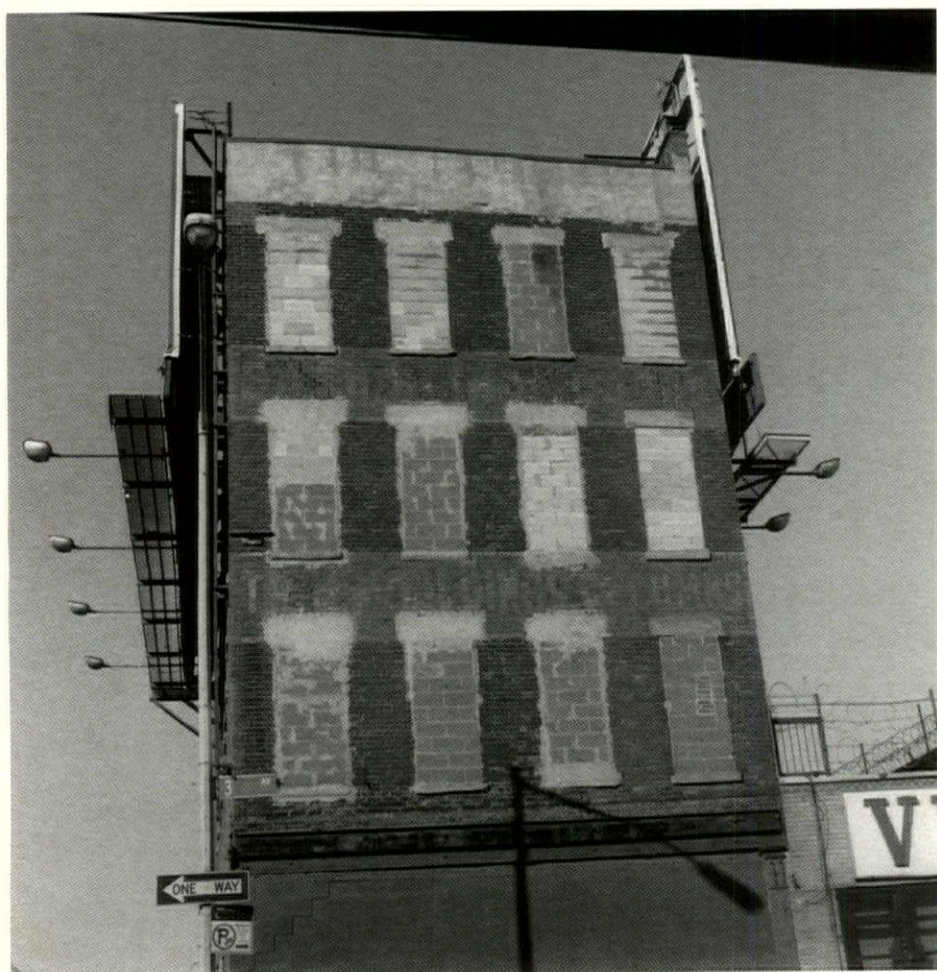
The introduction to *Visions for New York City* cites a projection from the Department of City Planning (DCP) that by 2030, New York City's "existing population of over 8 million will exceed 9 million...if not sooner." It makes the reasonable argument that while the city's current economy is strong and has "a well-planned infrastructure and a high quality of life," this cannot be ensured if growth happens in an unplanned fashion. The report thus makes a series of recommendations on where the city might house this population and how to improve its infrastructure.

Visions for New York City is divided into two sections: "Increasing the Housing Supply" and "Improving the Public Realm." The first, and more comprehensive, section essentially looks at what developers call "soft sites" in all five boroughs, i.e., areas that are now either underutilized, such as neighborhoods zoned for industrial uses where little industry still occurs, or rail yards or highways which could be decked over and turned into blank development sites. Some of the many sites Garvin & Associates studied are the Sunnyside Yards in Queens, portions of the Bronx and Harlem Rivers in the Bronx, Staten Island's north shore, and the sunken section of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway in Cobble Hill. The report further suggests that increasing mass transit into underserved areas will stimulate development. It also acknowledges the unlikelihood of securing major public investments to extend existing subway lines, and concedes that the creation of light rail or bus rapid transit systems is far more feasible.

These potential building sites would allow for the creation of between 160,000 to 325,000 new residential units "with virtually no residential displacement," depending on how densely each site is zoned. Such a significant amount of new housing without any displacement is politically appealing, but of course there is a catch: The largest and most promising site is the Sunnyside Rail Yards in Queens, which would need to be decked over before it could be developed as housing. It is close to Manhattan, and if developed, would reconnect Astoria to Sunnyside Gardens, which, from an urban planning standpoint, would be an additional benefit. But at 166 acres, the very aspect that makes it so appealing—its size—is likely to make it politically and economically difficult to pull off. The site has been coveted for

development since the Regional Plan Association's 1929 Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs proposed it as a place for an intermodal train station to relieve overcrowding in Manhattan. And while the Metropolitan Transit Authority owns the majority of the site, this summer, real estate attorney Michael Bailkin purchased a development option on part of it, which raises the financial stakes for anything that happens on the site. Without massive city subsidies, the cost of building such a large deck—the relatively diminutive 13-acre deck planned for Manhattan's Hudson Yards is estimated to cost \$350 million—is likely to discourage anything but extremely high-density or luxury housing. According to Vishaan Chakrabarti, a senior vice president at The Related Companies who served for two years as the Manhattan director for the DCP, making some of that new housing affordable will be difficult. "The implication of the report is that all of the housing will be market-rate, but when you are talking about building housing on platforms, there are economic drivers that make [building any of it as affordable] difficult," Chakrabarti said. "We have not yet perfected the mechanism to harness market forces to build affordable housing, though it is not for a lack of trying." He added, "I was hoping to see something about this in the report."

The Sunnyside Yards are not the only familiar item on the list of suggestions: as D. Grahame Shane, a professor of urban design at Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (and a contributor to AN) said, "The list of development opportunities reads like a record of every university urban design studio for the last 15 years." That said, the report does represent an effort on the part of Mayor Bloomberg and Deputy Mayor Doctoroff to think spatially about the future of the city.



Above, left: Sunset Park, 2005
Above, right: Sunset Park, 2005

When photographer M. E. Smith noticed one day about 10 years ago that the subway station at the corner of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues in Brooklyn had been torn down, he decided to start documenting the changes in the city around him. As the pace of development picks up and once-desolate areas fill with commerce and people, his photographs have inevitably taken on a documentary quality. A show of his work in and around New York was recently on view at Cooke Contemporary in Jersey City (see "Functional Shift," AN 16_10.06.2006).

This is something architects and planners have long hoped would be true of city politicians. But Ronald Shiffman, a former City Planning Commissioner himself under Mayor David Dinkins and director of the Pratt Center for Community Development, nonetheless had reservations about *Visions*. "These same politicians are afraid to engage the public in a discussion to flesh out its finer points," said Shiffman. "They have come up with a proposal but don't discuss the social infrastructure: They don't say how this million new people will make a living. I'm glad that they are looking at it, but they also need to engage the broader community on other levels—this whole new population won't work in offices."

This oversight on the part of the report has serious drawbacks, according to other observers. Laura Wolf-Powers, chair of Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment at the Pratt Institute, believes that *Visions* uses a "narrow and shallow definition of the public realm" since it only discusses housing and to a lesser account some transportation issues. "There are many important quality of life issues that are not acknowledged in this report, like sanitation and waste water remediation facilities. Not only that," she added, "these uses are often located in the very manufacturing zones like those along the Bronx and Harlem Rivers that the report would give over entirely to housing." While these sites might be better used as housing, these functions must go somewhere. It's not news that manufacturers and industrial businesses that want to remain in the city are having trouble finding affordable space. The East Williamsburg Industrial Park, for example, which is home to over 2,500 small businesses, is facing residential encroachment from gentrifying sections of Williamsburg and Bushwick. One of the areas cited in the report as worthy

of future study is the Sunset Park waterfront, which is mostly industrial today and has been recently designated as an area that the city has committed to keeping that way. While *Visions* acknowledges the value of the area's current character and only recommends converting 90 acres of surface parking (operated by the Department of Small Businesses) into sites for development, it still proposes 27,400 new units of housing, which would undoubtedly put pressure on the area's industrial functions.

Infrastructure capacity is a looming issue, said Chakrabarti, and one that cannot be ignored. Nor should it preclude the kinds of conversation that *Visions* will surely raise: "Energy capacity and wastewater treatment are real problems. We have capacity now, but not for another million people. Still, I don't think you can say, 'We don't have the infrastructure, so we can't fulfill the demand for housing.' It just means that housing will get more expensive."

The very fact that the report was commissioned from a private planning firm and did not come out of DCP is telling about the nature of its recommendations. There is an underlying assumption that public investment will allow for private sector development; the ultimate feasibility of finding these public monies is skated over. In the past, the city's planning reports have come out of the DCP, or people engaged with the Planning Commission—like Robert Wagner, Jr.'s 1984 New York Ascendant under Mayor Ed Koch—but *Visions* rarely mentions the DCP and any role it might play in planning for the future. (Doctoroff's office and the DCP both declined to comment for this article.) In fact, the report details a list of government agencies that must coordinate to make such far-reaching new policies work, like the EDC, the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD), the Department of

Transportation, but goes on to suggest, "The Mayor's Office must delegate management for these projects, as doing so is integral to their execution and ultimate success." While some might see this as a cession of public authority, Chakrabarti points out that sometimes, outsiders can say things that City Hall cannot. "There are often conflicting goals in terms of what is good for the city as a whole and what an individual neighborhood may want, especially in regards to density," he said. "An outside consultant can make important suggestions that are politically difficult."

One wonders if the secretive nature of the process, and its stress on the primacy of the private sector, is a product of Doctoroff's recent trouble with getting the West Side Stadium built, which was the *sine qua non* for bringing the Olympics to New York City. Several of the larger sites mentioned in *Visions for New York City* are on land that is at least partially owned by the state, not the city, which means that they are exempt from the Universal Land Review Process (ULURP) and thus due much less public review. But the controversy and public acrimony surrounding Forest City Ratner's Atlantic Yards proposal—which also involves decking over infrastructure, public subsidy, and no ULURP—the now-defunct West Side Stadium project, and the World Trade Center site should suggest that proposals with only a nominal amount of involvement are no less immune to trouble than those which involve public input. When *Visions* is released, no doubt in a modified form, we hope that it is treated not as an identification of development sites across the city, but the starting point for a comprehensive and very public conversation about New York City's long-term needs.

WILLIAM MENKING AND ANNE GUINEY ARE EDITORS AT AN.

CENTERS FOR ARCHITECTURE MULTIPLY

FOLLOWING NEW YORK'S LEAD, CIVIC-MINDED AIA CHAPTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE OPENING THEIR OWN CENTERS TO REACH OUT TO THEIR MEMBERS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES ALIKE. DAVID SOKOL REPORTS.

A couple of weeks ago, several hundred well-wishers, including San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and 2007 AIA national president R. K. Stewart, poured into the sixth floor of San Francisco's historic Hallidie Building to fête the local AIA chapter's newly renovated home. More than improved digs, the renovation also inaugurates the Center for Architecture + Design, a gallery, lecture, and multipurpose space. This is the first West Coast forum for professional dialogue about and public appreciation for architecture as well as design.

A week and a half earlier, members of the Portland, Oregon, component were looking forward to their own celebration: Participants selected to design its new center in a 5,000-square-foot former horse stable gathered on site to check out office furniture and systems. The test drive was part of a two-day-long charrette to devise big-idea concepts that would define the large-scale redo to come. And throughout the fall, four Texas chapters of the AIA will be opening their own centers for architecture.

Beyond these six snapshots, centers for architecture are sprouting up across the country. The phenomenon reflects architecture's popularization as much as it responds to current events. Sally Ann Fly, executive director of AIA Austin, said, "You can't avoid TV programming on everything from small space design to a complete home construction. With the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita last year, the more basic issues of urban

planning have become cocktail-party conversation."

AIA New York executive director Rick Bell traces the impetus further back, noting, "After 9/11, people were increasingly aware that good design impacts the livability of a community. Public interest in architecture was probably mounting even before that, as a result of greater awareness of branding and the rise of star architects." Portland AIA president Nancy Merryman also acknowledged, "We've been a victim of our own success. Combine our growing internship and continuing education programs with our aspiration to attract the public to our gallery, and we've outgrown our current office."

AIA-shepherded centers for architecture date to 1991, when the Seattle chapter renovated its 2,000-square-foot downtown office to face the street and, correspondingly, launched the Resource Center for Architecture. According to Marga Rose Hancock, interim executive vice president of the Seattle AIA, the storefront reorientation "immediately transformed the operation. Not only did it pique people's curiosity but they could actually walk in and put their hands on architects' stuff. We started seminars about how to select an architect, which we've been giving once a month basically ever since. We've educated thousands of people."

The Seattle chapter renovated its space again, in 2004. This time, AIA Seattle Young Architects Forum radically transformed the interior, but the mission remained the same.

Most centers in this current crop, though, are taking programmatic cues from the Center for Architecture in New York. Hancock described the different approaches: "I very much admire the New York Center for Architecture; their general credo is 'Architecture as Public Policy,' which dovetails well with how they operate their space. [It's also the official theme of this year's AIA president Mark Strauss.] The philosophy that has guided us since 1991 was 'Architect as a Resource,' which tries to convey a sense of accessibility. It's a different dialogue from that promulgated by the New York center, and I think they're complementary."

Indeed, Fly remembers attending a conference in which Bell described the development of the Center for Architecture, and thinking, "By golly, it was just what we had imagined!" Bell later visited the Austin strategic planning committee, and Fly said the component is actively emulating many elements of the New York predecessor. The center, which will operate under a five-year lease in an Art Deco service station, will take occupancy in late November with an official grand opening shortly thereafter.

AIA national president Kate Schwennsen noted, "The success of the New York center has not gone unnoticed by those considering starting their own centers." However, "centers are specific not only to the profession of architecture but to their respective locales," she observed.

So while Seattle continues to reach out to potential clients and

the year-old Virginia Center for Architecture, located in a restored John Russell Pope mansion in Richmond, functions more like a museum, other centers are choosing a path somewhere in the middle.

"I think we're a hybrid," said Margie O'Driscoll, executive director of the San Francisco chapter of the AIA. "We are a very active chapter in terms of public outreach, but we're also about our members having the most up-to-date information about products, services, and techniques."

Echoes of New York will resonate to visitors of the San Francisco center, who will immediately notice that the AIA is sharing its space with other related associations, including the California chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council and local chapter of the AIGA. While O'Driscoll noted that many Bay Area designers cross disciplines, the move is similar to Bell's signing on what he calls "partner organizations" in New York—groups he has invited to use the space for events ranging from book launches to continuing education classes to public lectures. He reasoned that such a strategy is "effective in public policy and engaging civic life—you don't isolate yourself." O'Driscoll further hopes to link exhibitions with those that appear in centers like New York's.

O'Driscoll, like many other AIA leaders, also see the new centers as a chance to lead by example. As in Seattle, the San Francisco center, designed by local architect Alfred Quezada, Jr., is aiming for a minimum LEED-Silver rating. (The New York center employed many

SF AIA opened its 5,700-square-foot Center for Architecture October 4. Its green features include a double curtain wall that provides insulation, PV cells, and dimming controls.

sustainable measures, notably, a geothermal heating system, and is considering getting a LEED rating retroactively.) "Clients say green costs too much money or they question the look. They don't understand the rich variety of products and services available that meet a very high aesthetic as well as meet sustainable criteria," said O'Driscoll. "Here our members can take potential clients and clients into the space and say, 'Look, this is the best of modern design and it's highly sustainable.'"

Bell emphasized that while New York's Center for Architecture established a precedent, other chapters are forging their own paths. He also acknowledged that New York's isn't perfect. Given their heavy exhibition load, the building has become tight for the New York chapter's growing staff. Bell added that a bookstore and bar/café would be nice.

Despite any latent faults, New York's and other cities' new AIA centers are reflecting a sea change not only for a public curious about architecture but for the AIA itself. "The AIA has stopped looking so fat and gray," Bell said. "Any organization that wants to be self-perpetuating after 149 years has to bring in young people."

While the proliferation of new convergence points for the architecture community and the public proves that the centers' movement has gone mainstream, two new efforts hint at its future evolution. At this year's AIA national convention, members learned that a new committee, which includes Bell, is planning a center for architecture at its Washington, D.C., headquarters—a literal "American Institute of Architecture," he noted. Also, in Seattle, Hancock has begun work on a project called "the de-center for architecture," in which she makes long-term visits at members' offices, which she hopes will yield new initiatives. "What's the future of the organization in our changing world when people go to chat rooms rather than meetings? Maybe we want an AIA-mobile. It's been kind of a joke, but I have begun to take it more seriously."

Ironically, Hancock's project couldn't have been inspired without a center for architecture. "During the 2004 remodel, we relocated for eight or nine months while the construction was going on. We lived with [local architecture firm] Arai Jackson Ellison Murakami, and it was wonderful. We've all been around, but we hadn't really spent all that much time directly in architects' offices. We really got insights into how what we do and what they do are related. It was fascinating."

DAVID SOKOL IS A NEW YORK-BASED WRITER AND TEACHES AT THE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

TIM GRIFFITH

OCTOBER

FRIDAY 20
LECTURE

Paolo Soleri
7:30 p.m.
Parsons the New School
for Design
Swayduck Auditorium
65 5th Ave.
www.parsons.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Carlos Garaicoa:
**The Drawing, The Writing,
The Abstraction**
Lombard-Freid Projects
531 West 26th St.
www.lombard-freid.com

John Bock
Mit Schisslaveng
Anton Kern Gallery
532 West 20th St.
www.antonkerngallery.com

SATURDAY 21
EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Christian Jankowski
Us and Them
The Kitchen
512 West 19th St.
www.thekitchen.org

Ignacio Mangano-Ovalle
Max Protetch Gallery
511 West 22nd St.
www.maxprotetch.com

Arturo Herra
Sikkema Jenkins & Co.
530 West 22nd St.
www.sikkemajenkinsco.com

Rosemarie Trockel
Gladstone Gallery
515 West 24th St.
www.gladstonegallery.com

MONDAY 23
SYMPOSIUM

**P.A.N. [progressive
architecture network]**
**Winka Dubbeldam,
Helene Furján, Sadar Vuga,
Jürgen Mayer H., et al.**
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

TUESDAY 24
LECTURES

Lebbeus Woods
Zaha Hadid:
Drawn into Space
6:30 p.m.
Solomon R. Guggenheim
Museum
1071 5th Ave.
www.guggenheim.org

Paulo Mendes da Rocha
6:30 p.m.
Cooper Union
Great Hall
7 East 7th St.
www.cooper.edu

Dan Graham
On New Jersey...
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
On New Jersey...
Columbia GSAPP
Buell Hall
Arthur Ross Gallery
www.arch.columbia.edu

WEDNESDAY 25
LECTURE

Sean Griffiths
Ad Hoc Urbanism
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

THURSDAY 26
LECTURES

John M. Johansen
**The New Species of
Architecture**
6:00 p.m.
City College
Shepard Hall
Convent Ave. and 138th St.
www.cuny.cuny.edu

Lars Danielsson
**Ecological Building in
Sweden**
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

Alex Wall
**Commerce is the
Engine of Urbanity**
7:30 p.m.
Parsons the New School
for Design
Glass Corner
25 East 13th St., 2nd Fl.
www.parsons.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
**P.A.N. [progressive
architecture network]**
Frederieke Taylor Gallery
535 West 22nd St., 6th Fl.
www.frederiketaylor
gallery.com

The World Is Round
MetroTech Center
Jay St. and Myrtle Ave.,
Brooklyn
www.publicartfund.org

FRIDAY 27
SYMPOSIUM

**Building (In) the Future:
Recasting Labor in
Architecture**
**Phillip Bernstein, Peggy
Deamer, James Carpenter,
Klaus Bollinger, et al.**
Yale School of Architecture
180 York St., New Haven
www.architecture.yale.edu

Louis Sullivan: Terra Cotta
**Tim Samuelson,
Susan Tunick, et al.**
Cooper Union
Great Hall
7 East 7th St.
www.aptnet.org

**Public Space and
Sustainable Development:**
The Future of an Old City
The New School
Teresa Lang Community
Center
55 West 13th St.
www.newschool.edu

LECTURE
William M. Voelke
**The Architectural Sources
of Mr. Morgan's Library and
its Ceiling Paintings**
6:30 p.m.
The Morgan Library
and Museum
225 Madison Ave.
www.themorgan.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Some Assembly Required:
Contemporary Prefabricated
Houses

Yale School of Architecture
180 York St., New Haven
www.architecture.yale.edu

SATURDAY 28
SYMPOSIUM

**Speed of Light:
New Materials and
Technologies Conference**
**Dr. Michio Kaku, Julie Fisher,
Murray Moss, et al.**
Parsons the New School
for Design
Tishman Auditorium
66 West 12th St.
www.parsons.edu

Visualizing the City
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Christian Patterson:
Sound Affects
Yancey Richardson Gallery
535 West 22nd St.
www.yanceyrichardson.com

Barry LeVa
Mary Boone Gallery
541 West 24th St.
www.maryboonegallery.com

Brice Marden
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

SUNDAY 29
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Katrin Sigurdardóttir:
High Plane V
P.S.1 Contemporary Art
Center
22-25 Jackson Ave., Queens
www.ps1.org

MONDAY 30
LECTURES
Renzo Piano
**Architecture and the
Environment**
6:00 p.m.
Cooper Union
The Great Hall
7 East 7th St.
www.archleague.org

**Louis Désy, Richard Pare,
Reinhold Martin**
**Capturing Architecture:
Creating, Collecting, and
Curating Images of the
Built Environment**
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

TUESDAY 31
FILM
Pia Lindeman:
Mediated Gestures
7:30 p.m.
Anthology Film Archives
32 2nd Ave.
www.storefrontnews.org

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NOVEMBER

WEDNESDAY 1
LECTURES

**Kazuyo Sejima,
Ryue Nishizawa**
Recent Work
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

**David Rockwell,
Bruce Mau, Chee Pearlman**
**Architecture and Books:
Spectacle**
6:30 p.m.
Baruch Performing Arts
Center
55 Lexington Ave.
www.archleague.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Shin Banraisha:
A Cultural Memory
Noguchi Museum
9-01 33rd Rd., Queens
www.noguchi.org

THURSDAY 2
LECTURES

G. Phillip Smith
A Narrative
6:00 p.m.
City College
Shepard Hall
Convent Ave. and 138th St.
www.cuny.cuny.edu

Walter Hood
Epheeriod Community Space
6:30 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
**Josef Hoffmann: Interiors,
1902-1913**
Neue Galerie New York
1048 5th Ave.
www.neuegalerie.org

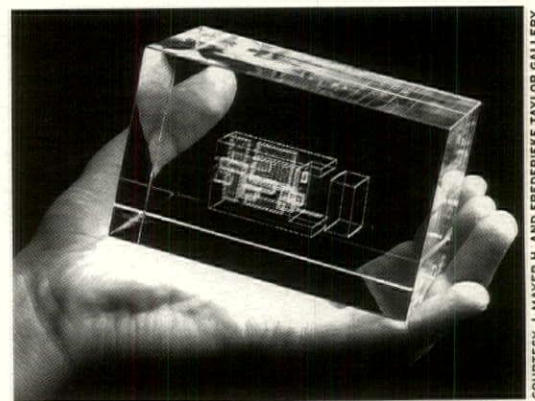
**Josef Albers,
László Moholy-Nagy**
**From the Bauhaus to the
New World**
Whitney Museum of
American Art
945 Madison Ave.
www.whitney.org

Robert Longo
**Outward Signs of
Invisible Space**
Metro Pictures
519 West 24th St.
www.metropictures
gallery.com

EVENT
Color Invasion
7:00 p.m.
Puck Building
295 Lafayette St.
www.aiany.org

FRIDAY 3
EVENT

**Clarity Through Crisis:
Designing for the Gulf Coast**
5:30 p.m.
Institute of Classical
Architecture
20 West 44th St.
www.classicist.org



P.A.N. [PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE NETWORK]
Frederieke Taylor Gallery
535 West 22nd Street, 6th Floor
October 27 to December 2

"We're not promoting any new styles," said Winka Dubbeldam, architect and curator of P.A.N. [progressive architecture network], a show of five young international architecture firms co-curated by Helene Furján. "This show intends to throw open the idea of what a network is, how it can work, and what it can be." The five firms that form P.A.N. and whose work will be on display at Frederieke Taylor Gallery—Sadar Vuga Architects from Slovenia, R&S(n) from France, Jürgen Mayer H. Architects from Germany, laN+ from Italy, and Dubbeldam's New York firm Archi-technics—met originally at the Archilab conferences in Orléans, France. (A model of Mayer H.'s project *E.gram* is pictured above.) They do not work together on specific projects, per se, but share an evolving approach and attitude toward architecture. The installation was inspired by the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, where art is hung on every available surface to show as much of the collection as possible. "It's a whole other idea of intensity," said Dubbeldam. Catch all five firms in conversation with Frédéric Migayrou, curator of architecture and design at the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris, at Columbia University on October 23.



JOSEF HOFFMANN: INTERIORS, 1902-1913
Neue Galerie New York,
1048 Fifth Avenue
November 2 to February 26, 2007

An original member of the Vienna Secession and later founder of the Wiener Werkstätte, Josef Hoffmann's rigorously abstracted forms epitomized early 20th-century Viennese design. His work, which encompassed architecture, furniture, textiles, and more, remains little-known in the United States, however. Thankfully, the Neue Galerie is providing the first opportunity to view his work state-side by completely rebuilding four of his interiors in New York. Curated by Christian Witt-Döring, the exhibition will feature two Viennese bedrooms, one for a young girl from the Max Biach residence (1902), the other from the Hans Salzer residence (1902), in Vienna, and two dining rooms, one from Berlin (1905) and the other from Geneva (1913). The faithfully reproduced rooms will feature original furniture, such as the card table designed for Karl Wittgenstein in 1907 (above right), wall and floor coverings, textiles (a 1906 work, above left), lighting, ceramics, and metalwork. The Neue Galerie's recent prize acquisition, *Adele Bloch-Bauer I* (1907), a painting by Hoffmann's contemporary Gustav Klimt and framed in an original Hoffmann design, will also remain on view.

WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM

The Everyday Out of Reach

Simply Droog: 10 + 3 Years of Creating
Museum of Arts & Design
40 West 53rd Street
Through January 14

It's always alarming when you realize that something once so vigorous and ahead of its time now belongs to the past. *Simply Droog*, a traveling show currently being hosted by the Museum of Arts & Design, made me feel its age. One of the byproducts of this retrospective of the experimental Dutch design collective is that it offers a window on 1990s design. Laid out for the intrepid design time traveler are all the theoretical concerns of that period, such as hybridization, the use of recycled materials, ironical detachment, and commentary on the nature of products

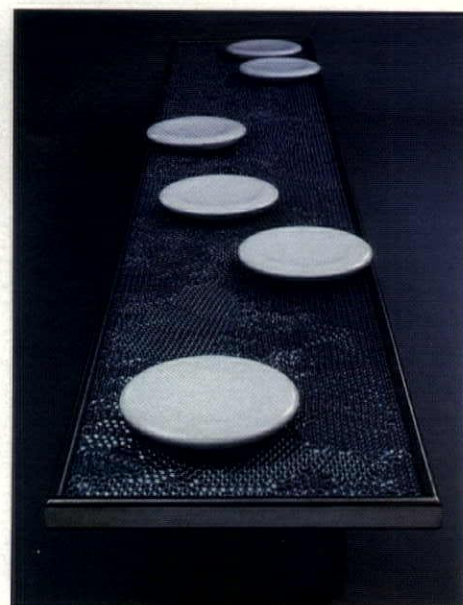
themselves. Contributing to this distancing effect is the exhibition's design. The 120 exhibits, selected by Droog's founders to represent their 13 years of existence, are kept at arm's length by plastic red-and-white-striped warning tape. Droog, a movement that fed from the detritus of the everyday, is now out of reach.

My previous experience of Droog products consists of owning some of its smaller, cheaper pieces—such as NL Architects' brightly colored silicon rubber straps with which you can pinion belongings to the wall—and

playing with others at the Dutch collective's showroom in Amsterdam. Here you can slide up and down the length of Nina Farkache's bench of rolling marbles and caress the enticingly textured surfaces of a knitted coffee pot cozy or the perforated pattern of a tablecloth. Whether pinging the straps, squeezing Hella Jongerius' soft polyurethane vase, or bumping into your neighbor on the marble bench, the experience was always physical.

Designing an exhibition structure to contain Droog's unruly output must have been a daunting challenge for Studio Jurgen Bey. So much of Droog's culture is about people and how they interact with the objects in their environment as well as with one another. How to show such a quality in the context of a don't-touch-the-objects-let-alone-one-another museum? The designers' solution was to map the exhibition's nine main themes onto a range of room settings, each of which has implied fictional inhabitants. The theme of "Simplicity" finds its correspondence in a "Student Residence," for example. And the objects that use recycled parts, grouped in "Use It Again," are arranged in a setting titled "Garage and Pantry in a Semi-detached House." The room settings are indicated through tape on the floor, a bit like the set design in Lars von Trier's film *Dogville*. Here, things are taken several steps further: The outlines of potted plants, toilets, fruit bowls, and a dog, as seen from above, are all used to further populate the room settings.

Droog design is also about the deliberate exposure of the process of making. Who wouldn't want to know more about the making of Wallpaper by Rats, for example—a scenario orchestrated by Front in which rats gnaw a roll of wallpaper and thus create its unique pattern? It's really interesting to know the back stories of such thoughtful and witty products as Droog's: the tests that were carried out, the mistakes that were made (and perhaps incorporated), and the discussions that took place with bemused manufacturers. Hella Jongerius, for example, had a hard time convincing the producer of her polyurethane rubber vases that she didn't want the gas bubbles to be removed from the translucent material because they provided a lively look. We find this illuminating anecdote in the excellent catalogue that accompanies the show, but such insights are not available to an exhibition visitor. This is regrettable, especially considering that the Museum of Arts &



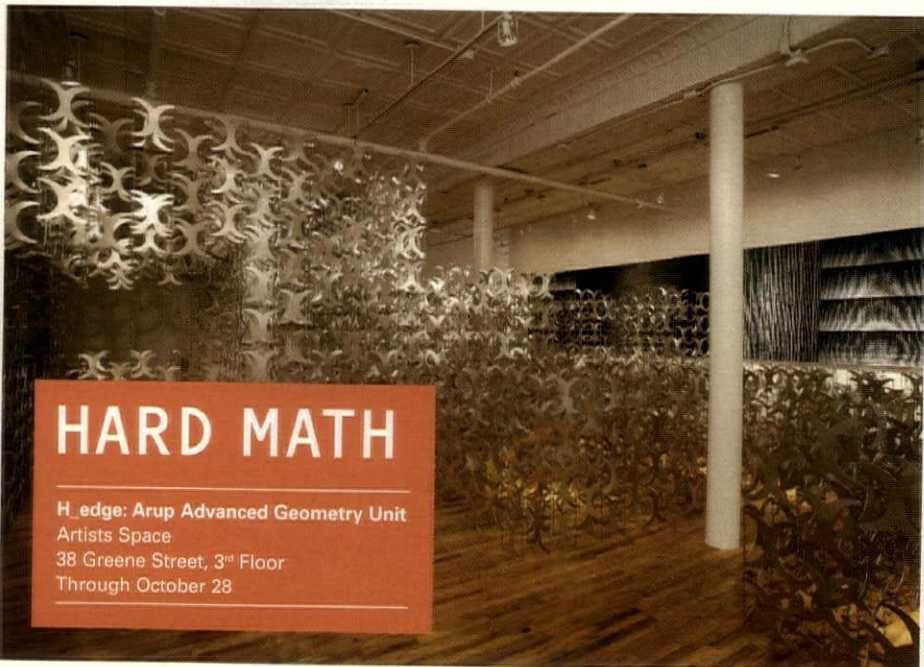
Left: Hella Jongerius' polyurethane vase, *Soft Urn* (1999). Top: Come a Little Bit Closer bench of marbles by Nina Farkache (2001). Above: NL Architects' Wall Straps (2000).

Design positions itself very deliberately through its "celebration of materials and processes." This lack of contextual background is not the museum's fault, however—they did not have a hand in its curation—and should not stop anyone from visiting. (Organized by Droog, the show has been traveling around Europe for the past two years.) Just be sure to also read the catalogue, which has contributions by Aaron Betsky, Ole Bouman, Ellen Lupton, and Louise Schouwenberg. And while you're doing so, take some time to consider how differently we now see milk bottles, rags, light switches, and chairs with wobbly legs.

ALICE TWEMLOW IS A NEW YORK-BASED WRITER AND CURATOR.

HARD MATH

H_edge: Arup Advanced Geometry Unit
Artists Space
38 Greene Street, 3rd Floor
Through October 28



H_edge, a lacey, shimmering three-dimensional metal sculpture, seems as if it popped out of the computer screen directly on the floor of Artists Space. Conceived by what is called the Advanced Geometry Unit at Ove Arup & Partners, a group of mathematicians and engineers led by Cecil Balmond and Daniel Bosia, *H_edge* was fabricated and erected with the assistance of Balmond's research studio for graduate students in architecture at PennDesign (the design schools at the University of Pennsylvania) that's now in its second year. Comprised of repetitive rows of back-to-back aluminum crescent shapes (resembling rounded Hs) imbedded in

metal chains, the installation, which was overseen by Artists Space curator Christian Rattemeyer, conveys the unexpected beauty of geometry.

At first glance, metal chains appear hung from the ceiling, but there is no wire, and when you touch structures, they are totally stiff. The panels are placed in the holes of chain link, each set one millimeter off from one another, so there is an overlap that creates stiffness allowing the entire mesh to stand up on its own. Based on a fractal system, the result is a pattern that forms its own structure. The concept begins with the Menger Sponge, a modular and self-similar tiling pattern (seen before at Steven Holl's MIT dorm), which is

eaten away via an algorithm fractal in a regular repetitive sequence.

What does *H_Edge* aspire to be—a sculpture, a 3D rendition of a mathematical equation, a decorative effect, or all of the above? One could imagine a building using this system for a structural skin, like an exposed structural diagrid. Given Balmond's adventurous collaborations with Rem Koolhaas (he worked on the Bordeaux House, Porto Music Hall, and the CCTV headquarters) and the architects of London's Serpentine Gallery's summer pavilions, one could presume that his research at Arup and with his *H_edge* is a mazelike

continued on page 23

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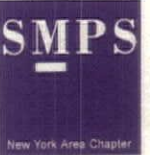
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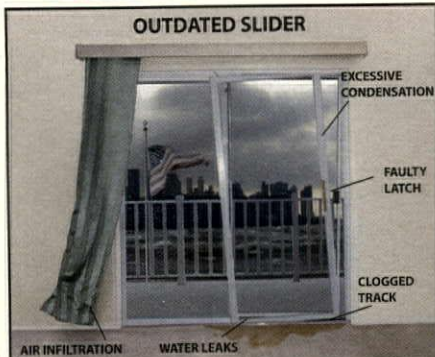
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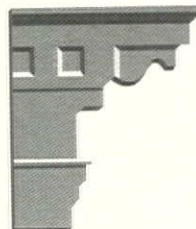
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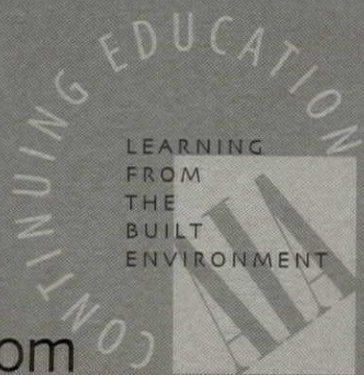
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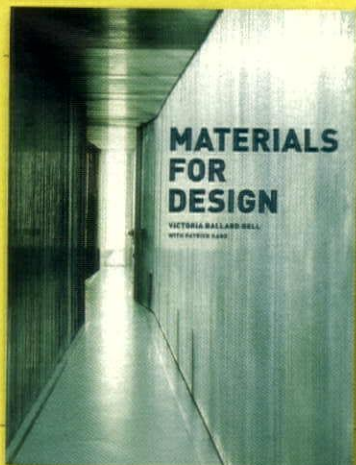
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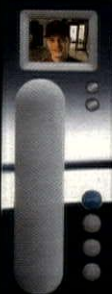
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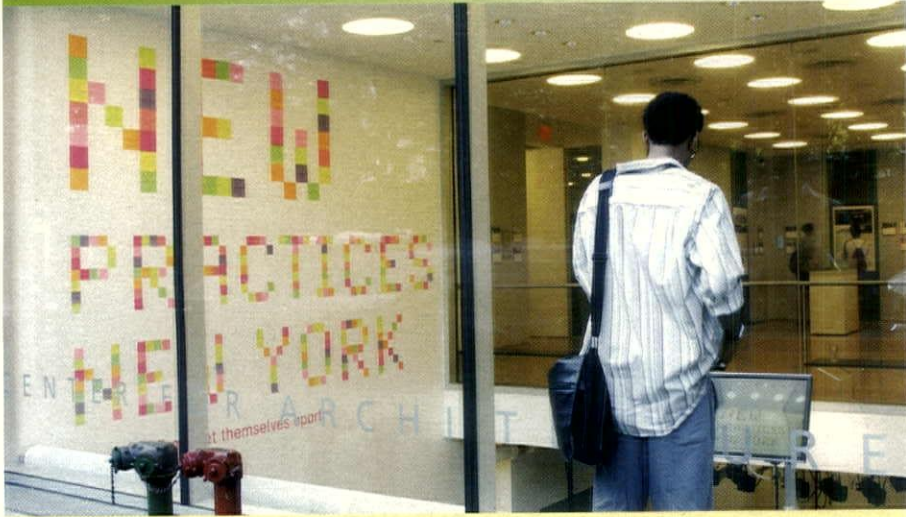


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RESOURCES

Death to Architecture (p. 1): Web site for
Architect is www.architectmagazine.com.
New and Improved Bronx Museum (p. 1):
Aluminum skin for Bronx Museum exten-
sion fabricated by Firestone Metal
Products/UNA-CLAD, 1001 Lund Blvd.,
Anoka, MN 55303, www.unaclad.com.
Open: Gallery Met (p. 5): Translucent
ceiling by Newmat, 25 Surryhill Place,
Huntington, NY, 11734, [www.newma-
tusa.com](http://www.newma-
tusa.com). Lighting design by Studio
James Long, 21 Murray St., 3rd Fl., New
York, NY, 212.346.9063. Wall paneling
and pivoting door material from 3form,
www.3-form.com.
Open: UNIQLO (p. 6): Shipping container

fabricated by TRS Containers, 301 East
Essex Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001,
www.shippingcontainers.com.
Nu-Poly shelving material from
Nudo Products, Inc., 1500 Taylor Ave.,
Springfield, IL 62703, www.nudo.com.
RISD Unveils Fleet Library (p. 10): The
MDF study pavilion and other fixtures
fabricated by Shawmut Design and
Construction by the Legere Group,
80 Darling Drive, Avon, CT 06001,
www.legergroup.com.
Push to Preserve Pearlroth House (p. 11):
Exhibitions International, 200 Park Avenue
South, Suite 1406, New York, NY 10003,
www.ei-ny.org.

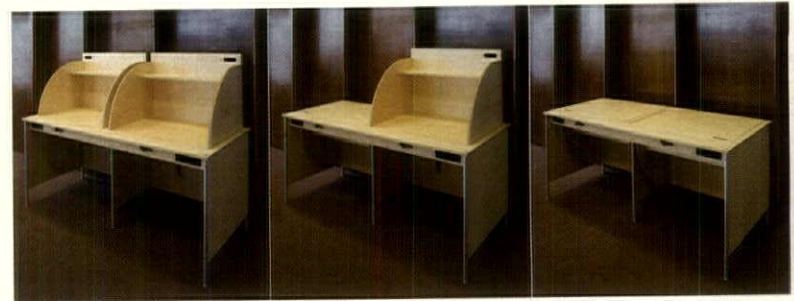
PRODUCTS



Ron Arad Chair and Issey Miyake Wearable Covering

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Issey Miyake takes its inspiration from the
first thing most people do after walking in
the door: They take off a layer of clothing
and lay it on a chair. The covering uses
Dai Fujiwara and Miyake's patented A-POC
(A Piece of Cloth) technology, which gener-
ates a knit or woven fabric and a garment
from it in a single process. They've devel-

oped two clothing/cover designs: the
Trampoline, a knitted top, and the Gemini
(pictured above), a woven vest. If you're not
drawn to the life-jacket orange and laven-
der color scheme, both also come in grey-
black. Fans of Ron Arad's 1998 Tom Vac
design for Vitra may recognize similarities
in this design for Moroso, The Ripple Chair,
though this new chair takes an embracing,
figure-eight shape and is available in a
variety of colors, including red, yellow,
and white.



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www.wallpaperlab.com
Douglas Gordon, Fred Tomaselli, and
Phoebe Washburn are among the dozen
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ings, the papers are generated from huge
digital files and printed on 40-inch rolls of
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Minutes: Playing Dead* reproduces each
frame of his video *Playing Dead: Real Time*,
while *Genetic Engineering* by Oliver
Horden replaces the ribbon in traditional
decorative patterns with a DNA strand.
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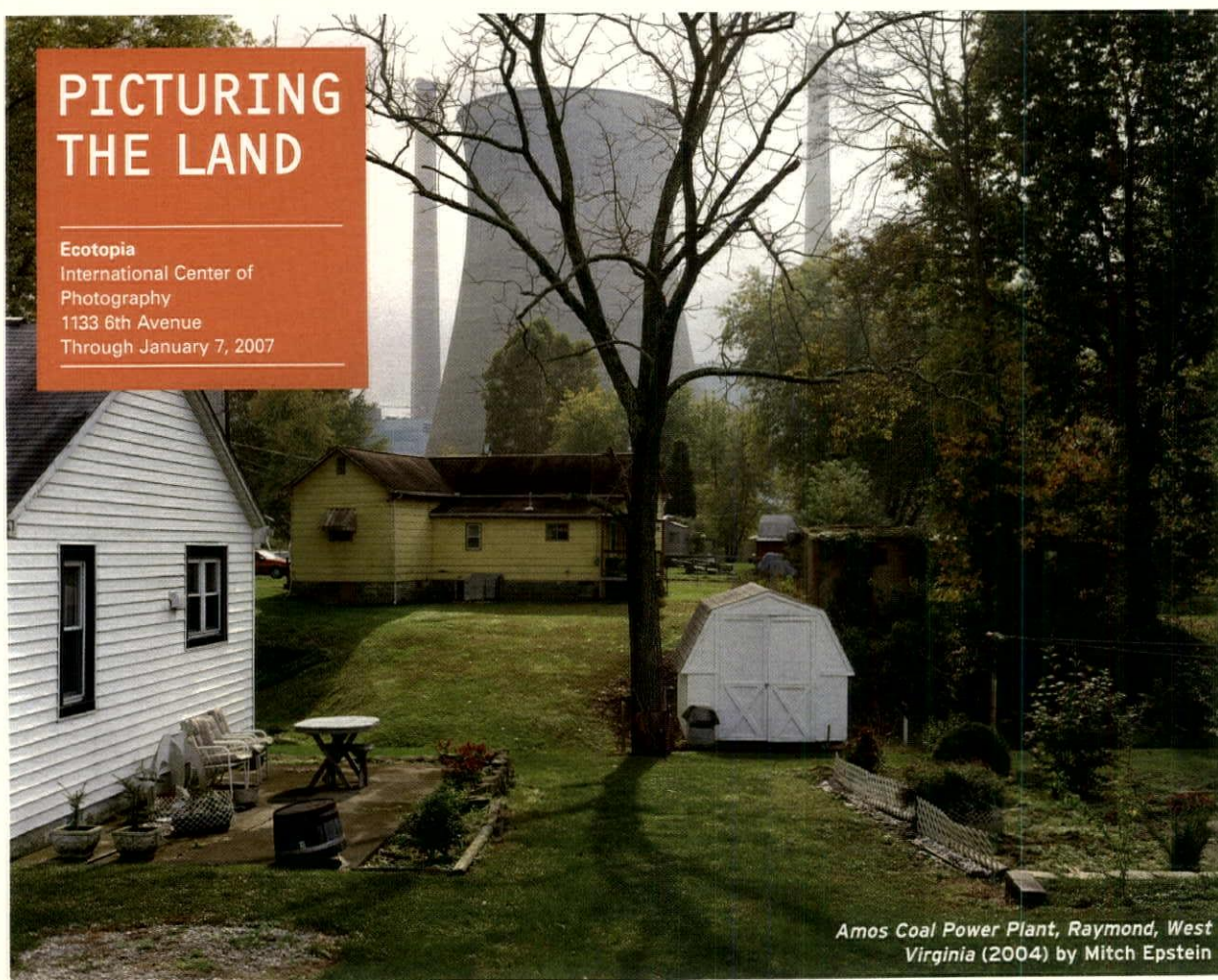
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PICTURING THE LAND

Ecotopia
International Center of
Photography
1133 6th Avenue
Through January 7, 2007



Amos Coal Power Plant, Raymond, West Virginia (2004) by Mitch Epstein

The suggestion of *Ecotopia*, the title of the International Center of Photography's second photography triennial, is the chance to imagine an environmental ideal, whatever that might look like. But if the opening series in this international survey—Robert Adams' black-and-white, documentary-style shots of clear cut forests in Oregon—tells you anything about what the show proposes, it's that such idyllic possibilities

have been severed at the root.

In this post-*Inconvenient Truth* moment, it's no surprise that the exhibition's premise of showing "perspectives on humanity's relation to nature" would yield responses more skeptical than credulous, more foreboding than inspired. Not every inclusion is so grim, but even these few pieces seemed to be a function of the curators' effort to satisfy a

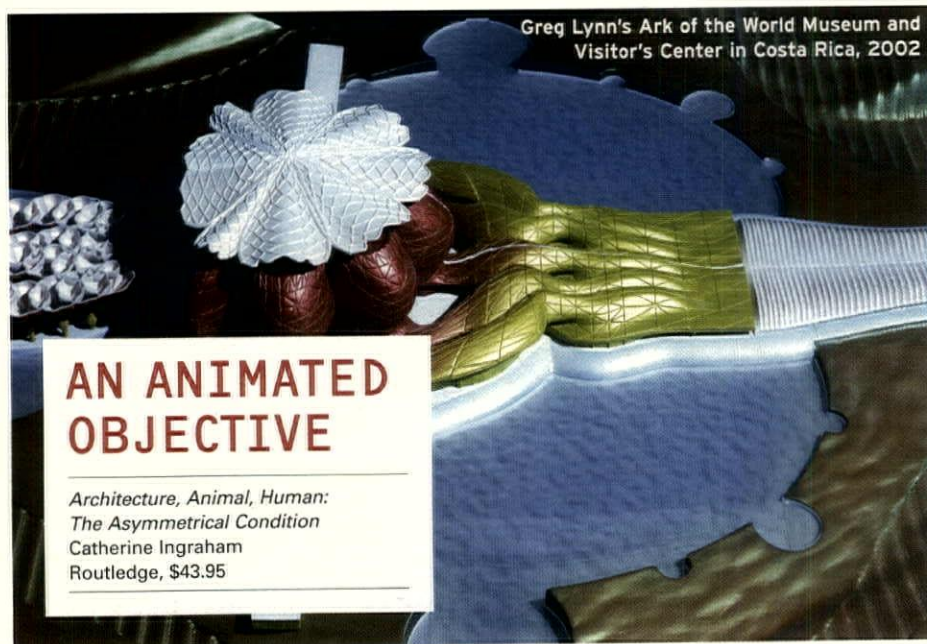
demanding program, one that asks for relevance to the topic, quality in execution, innovation, and international representation. (The show was organized by the ICP curators Brian Wallis, Edward Earle, Christopher Phillips, Carol Squiers, and Joanna Lehan.) Rarely were all of these qualities present in one piece. *Natural Selection* (2005) by Canadian team Carlos and Jason Sanchez, an image of a body being pulled from the mud, might have been impactful if it were real. An-My Lê's *29 Palms* (2005), a two-screen video projection of soldiers preparing for combat, though poignant, seemed off topic.

There were pieces that seemed to strike a better balance. Mitch Epstein's haunting, gorgeous *Amos Coal Power Plant, Raymond, West Virginia* (2004) almost convinces you of the reality of pastoral suburban life until the power-plant neighbor in the background shows through the haze. Thomas Ruff's abstracted digital image *jpeg bo02* (2004) viewed up close looks almost like clouds above a mountainscape but from a distance reveals itself to be smoking oil fields in Iraq. David Maisel's aerial shots of military storage facilities in Nevada, *Surveillance* (2005), resemble giant brands burned into the earth's surface. And Doug Aitken's *Plateau* (2002) gives us a miniature landscape built out of FedEx boxes—a microcosm for birds in a corporate cage.

Landscape photography is one of the medium's deepest traditions; in light of this weighty precedent, this triennial marks an interesting turn in the way images have come to represent nature. The more straightforward works are almost all large-scale, but often images alone are not enough: Installations incorporating photographs have a big presence in this show. Video is part of the ICP triennial protocol, but this year even a website has been included. Artists are writing their own computer programs to generate images of a natural world that doesn't exist.

It is clear walking through the show that the curators attempted a balanced presentation of an important topic, a medium, and a world view, but trying to do so much in 100 or so works amounts to a show with a low sound-to-noise ratio—one short on brilliant pieces of art that reveal, inspire, and stay with you. If these images say something collectively about ecotopia, it is that we're nowhere near it.

SAMANTHA TOPOL IS AN ASSISTANT EDITOR AT AN.



AN ANIMATED OBJECTIVE

Architecture, Animal, Human: The Asymmetrical Condition
Catherine Ingraham
Routledge, \$43.95

Anyone who has ever dwelled on the existential contradiction between the supple, sentient flesh of their body and the inanimate wood, glass, metal, and plastic their hand clutches when opening the door of a swank new restaurant or while pushing pixels at the office should read Catherine Ingraham's new book. *Architecture, Animal, Human: The Asymmetrical Condition* is an immensely pleasurable (though by no means breezy) excursion through the annals of biological life and the ways of thinking demarcated by humanism as they both relate to architecture. The book argues that while our understand-

ing of lived change and the flow of life, or more simply, evolution, has advanced within sciences like genetics or cybernetics, our application of such innovative thinking to architecture has lagged. As a result, the discipline has remained relatively inert. Optimistically, Ingraham, who teaches architectural theory at Pratt and Columbia, posits that through the parameters and realities of the computer, we—and architecture with us—appear to be on the verge of escaping this destiny.

Ingraham coins a neologism, "post-animal life," that refers to the long period following the birth of Renaissance humanism and unfold-

ing through the ever-extending *pas-de-deux* between man and technology that has led to the present. The term serves as a thread to explore architecture's captivation—both its fascination and its entrapment—with form. She relates the tale of how architecture since the Renaissance has been treated as a literal thing, a cage of sorts, both modeled on bodies (animal and human) and aiming to exceed them. Through such thinking, we have intellectually boxed ourselves in, choosing to turn architecture into a force for disciplining (rather than expanding) our horizons. Ingraham ultimately contemplates the possibility that humanism's greatest contradiction—that man is both a subset within and the dominating class of all living, animate beings—may, thanks to digital technology, be yielding a parallel, equally paradoxical logic through which architecture could be reengineered, so to speak, "outside the box."

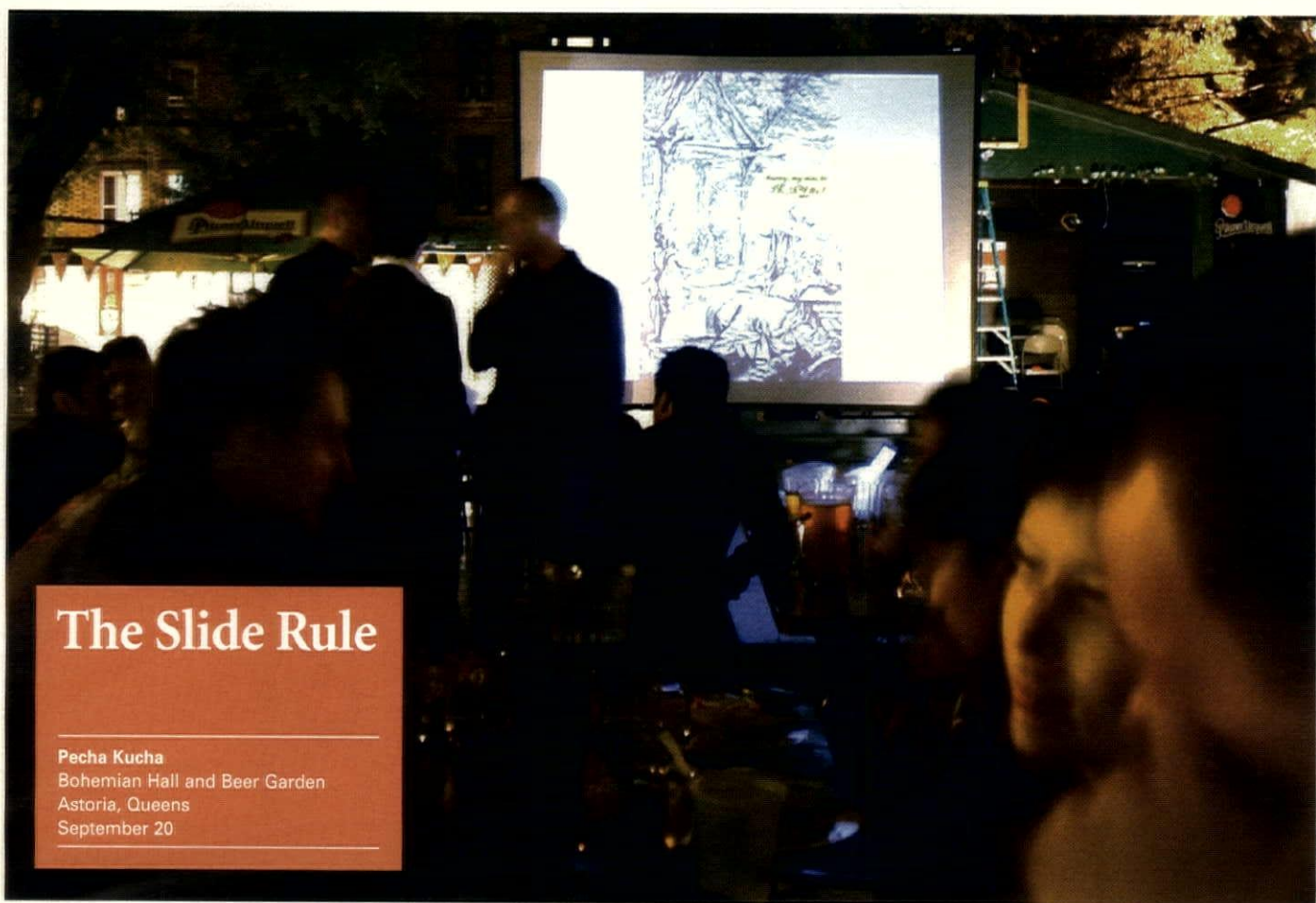
The author's keen precision provides a new perspective on the subjects she visits, especially in the more leisurely, descriptive first two-thirds of the book, which gives way suddenly to the speculative, virtuosic last third. Brief but vivid sojourns, interesting all, through the work of pioneer cyberneticist Norbert Wiener, philosopher Giorgio Agamben, and structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, among numerous others, pass by as her itinerary glides from discussions of Darwin, totems, trading floors and slaughterhouses, to recent developments in genetics, computation, and engineering.

What Ingraham sees through her dark glass, less by fixating on recent computer design and

more by looking beyond Greg Lynn's forms and Rem Koolhaas' tomes, is a potentially liberating wave approaching our shores; though for some, its immanent arrival might not yet register as enough of a material event. Equal parts collage, hallucination, and prophecy, *Architecture, Animal, Human* will be of interest to those concerned with architecture's future. Along the way, it contains enough juicy conjectures about so many topics that scientists, scholars, programmers, graphic designers, and hackers should all find it as intriguing as architects likely will. Relying on two very different modes of thought, namely a deconstructive analysis of oppositional binaries (e.g., animate/inert, inside/outside, life/death) and a Deleuzian investigation of her topic's undulating flows, the book gives body to her animated thought, moving at times smoothly and other times unexpectedly.

If this book is post-anything, it looks beyond any naïve return to program as a means of revivifying architectural design, suggesting there are ways to think of use and inhabitation that contemporary design has only started to recognize and discover. In this sense, hers is a prescient book and an antidote to the many post-theory arguments circulating today. Interrogating a certain contemporary mood, dependent simultaneously upon the failed promise of avant-gardist aesthetics and the covert platitudes of third-wave, new-age user-friendliness, Ingraham proposes a new life for animating architectural thought and design, just when it is most needed. **BRENDAN D.**

MORAN TEACHES AT NJIT AND IS A PHD CANDIDATE AT HARVARD'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN.



The Slide Rule

Pecha Kucha
Bohemian Hall and Beer Garden
Astoria, Queens
September 20

On a cool fall evening at the Bohemian Beer Garden in Queens, 500 architects and related aficionados ponied up \$4 each to see a roster of artists and architects deliver rapid-fire presentations—20 slides, 20 seconds per. Pecha Kucha, which means “chitchat” in Japanese, began in the Tokyo offices of young design firm Klein Dytham and has since grown into a global phenomenon that has spun off—“virally,” according to founder Mark Dytham—with events in almost 20 cities, including Bogotá, Helsinki, and Melbourne. The speedy, conversational presentations by such young guns as Eric Bunge and Mimi Hoang of nARCHITECTS, Ben Aranda and Chris Lasch of Aranda/Lasch, Charles Renfro of Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and surprise guest Gregg Pasquarelli of SHoP were a fantastic antidote to the standard lecture format and perfect for our current generation of knowledge-hungry yet attention-deficient minds. **ANDREW YANG IS AN EDITOR AT AN.**

HARD MATH continued from page environment with openings you can walk through and sections that rise high and entrap you. One could imagine a system wherein the panels are a wall system and the half-circle voids are windows. But the designers have not yet made this leap.

Accompanying the installation is a video documenting the fabrication and assembly process of *H_edge*'s 5,000 pieces, which were made in Pennsylvania and brought to the gallery for installation. Also part of the exhibition is *Fourier Carpet*, a jacquard tapestry by Jenny Sabin, who teaches at PennDesign with Balmond. The piece both contrasts and relates to *H_edge*, but visitors won't know its significance until reading the insightful catalogue essay by David Ruy, another faculty colleague. The tapestry, made with a digital loom, follows Fourier's mathematical pattern, which was generated by the computer algorithm that relates to Jean Falcon's 1728 punch card system and later used by Joseph Marie Jacquard in his mechanical loom. The loom then inspired English mathematician's Charles Babbage's calculating machine, a precursor to the computer.

Balmond's installation makes explicit the art and beauty of math and geometry as engineering for structure, and the notion—which has immense implications for architecture—that structure can be an integral part of decoration.

NINA RAPPAPORT IS A NEW YORK-BASED WRITER, CURATOR, IS PUBLICATIONS EDITOR AT THE YALE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE. HER ESSAY “DEEP DECORATION” APPEARS IN THE CURRENT ISSUE OF 306090.

LESS IS MORE? NOT IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

As a consultancy that specializes in outsourced information technology for architecture, engineering, and design practices, my firm Control Group is often approached by new clients after a technical catastrophe or as they prepare to move offices. One of the first questions they typically ask is, “Are we spending too much or too little on IT?” My response is always the same: definitely too little. If I don't get a masonry sample thrown at me, I then try to explain why productivity returns on IT rarely seem cost effective. For firms hoping to develop a long-term technology plan and spending profile, I believe that it helps to understand where architecture stands in relation to the developing world of technology.

In the late 1980s, the economist Robert Solow said, “You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics.” Better known as the Productivity Paradox, the idea was that technology has made great gains for the mechanized world of manufacturing, but had yet to pay off in the service sectors. For example, in the latter, technology has often been applied to trivial inefficiencies like typing letters individually; it had poor results in terms of time saved versus the investment in a computer and printer required to produce that letter.

By contrast, fully integrated systems (such as those created by SAP and Siebel) have allowed for enormous advances in industries like finance and healthcare that have economies of scale and can exploit the technology. They allow employees a managed view of any part of the company, and help them to determine things like how much time they should spend on a project, what resources they have on their team, and the cost and size of a particular inventory.

Those industries pay dearly though; SAP can take a year or more to implement, and annual upkeep is typically 50 percent of its initial cost. In general, IT expenses per employee in the financial sector can exceed \$135,000

per year. At around \$35,000, the insurance industry has the next highest expenditure per person. In these measures, architecture and engineering are included in the “professional services” category, which usually ranges between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per employee per year.

In my view, these numbers put a sharp point on the challenge for design-oriented firms: They must perform complex computing tasks such as CAD, graphics, and collaboration, while using technology products and resources designed for bigger-budget but similarly litigious industries. A good illustration of this can be found in file storage expenses. An average 50- to 100- person architecture firm might have 1,000 gigabytes of large file storage—i.e., one terabyte, though it is common to discover as many as five more tucked into individual nooks and crannies—whereas a comparably sized law firm might only have 100 or 200 gigabytes for smaller types of files. To say that the architecture firm will incur five to ten times the cost would be incorrect. The additional systems and methods required to handle disaster recovery, support, and distribution of larger file storage and types must be borrowed from the financial/manufacturing industry. This pushes the architect into a higher price range, which in turn forces him to search for savings in the form of technology products that haven't been widely tested within the industry. While this storage example is by no means universal—it may be even a little extreme—it illustrates the challenge for architects looking to employ the best practice methods in IT for their firms.

There are two basic areas in any IT operation: Tactical services such as a help desk keep the system up and running, while strategic or development resources advance systems beyond their out-of-the-box functionality. (The latter might include buying software, for instance.) Conventional wisdom says that 25 percent of

an IT budget should go towards the tactical, and 75 percent towards strategic services. In fact, many firms spend 50 percent of their budgets on hardware and software and the remainder to keep their systems running.

Many design firms I've met are somewhat aware of this conundrum, but the question still comes up: “How much should I spend, and on what?” The strategy any good consultant will give is to first contain tactical costs, and then implement strategic investments. It starts with a long-term view—as far out as five and ten years—but requires tiny steps. One good approach is to subscribe to software licenses, and pay an annual fee for software rather than purchase a new package every three years or so. But this can take several years to show a financial benefit. A phone system based on Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) can save money, but it usually isn't practical until you outgrow your existing system.

Probably the biggest strategic leap for many CAD-based industries is Building Information Modeling (BIM), which is known as Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) in other manufacturing industries. BIM uses CAD software that allows a designer to create interactive 3D models with objects that have data-rich text descriptions, such as manufacturer specifications and inventory details. Unlike past variations on this theme—which were all fiascos, unfortunately—parametric CAD software has been developed within the framework and standards of the greater IT ecosystem. While BIM technology is still in its nascent stages, it is evolving rapidly and grows more convincing as a solution all the time.

For some clients, all of this is nice information to keep in mind for less busy times. For others, it can help them frame their IT problem so that they can attack the elephant one bite at a time. While it's still a big challenge, at least architects know that it's an elephant that they are eating.

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