PIANO TO BUILD AT RONCHAMP

With a plan afoot for Renzo Piano to add buildings to the site of Le Corbusier’s famed Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, France, a perfect storm of good intentions in conflict is brewing. At issue are ultimately two types of pilgrimage: the original religious one of contemplation and prayer, and the latter-day architectural version.

HARLEM’S FUTURE?

Harlem has long been a divided community, between color and creed, between have and have-nots. The Bloomberg administration’s recent proposal to rezone 125th Street, Harlem’s historic, cultural, and economic epicenter, has brought some of those groups together while pushing others further apart. On January 30, during a hearing of the City Planning Commission on the project, these division and alliances came into full focus.

HARLEM’S MEMORIAL IN BERLIN IS CRUMBLING

Barely three years old, Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is looking a little worse for wear. The German magazine Cicero has reported that the memorial, a rolling gray sea of massive concrete pillars, is cracking. Joachim Schulz, a structural engineer, has said the cracks were formed by tension to crack the sunny sides of the five-acre site, where the sun falls the most directly. As the sunny sides heat up and expand, the opposite faces stay cool in the shade, building enough tension to crack the concrete. The memorial foundation, is that most of the 400 or so originally thought to be blocks to their breaking point. The clue, found that 1,361 of the monument’s 2,711 blocks were cracked, a startling jump from the 460 or so originally thought to be damaged as of last year. “All these facts are new to us,” said Felizitas Borzym, a spokesperson for the memorial foundation, “No one knows for sure what to do, or why this happened.”

SUGAR COATING DOMINO

Only months after its designation as a city landmark, the Domino Sugar refinery on the Williamsburg waterfront is already back before the Landmarks Preservation Commission, now with plans for its renovation. On February 5, the Community Preservation Corporation (CPC) unveiled a design by Beyer Blinder Belle for the 1890 refinery building that would convert it to residences and community space while adding a five-story glass addition. The repurposed refinery is meant to be the centerpiece of the New Domino, an 11-acre residential project on the former sugar factory site that has angered numerous preservationists. They fear that has angered numerous preservationists.

FOLLY AT FULTON ST.

In the face of budget shortfalls and mounting construction costs, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has essentially abandoned its plans for the Fulton Street Transit Center have been all but discarded. The glassy, conical transit hub designed by Grimshaw and James Carpenter Design Associates was meant to be the MTA’s showpiece at the new World Trade Center, an elegant solution to a mess of subway lines, but cost overruns could leave the site vacant for some time to come. The decision to rethink the transit center, announced on January 28, arose when the MTA received only one bid for the aboveground portion of the project, a $870 million offer that far exceeded the $390 million budgeted for the project. (The underground portion of the project, which streamlines connections between a tangle of subway lines and was designed by ARUP) will be continued on page 8

DESPITE SOME SUPPORT, MANY FEAR WORST FROM REZONING

Though the Landmarks Preservation Commission only has power over the refinery, the entire New Domino project worries preservationists. The addition, as well as a number of proposed 30- and 40-story towers, would all but erase the refinery’s significance as a relic of Brooklyn’s industrial past. continued on page 8

HOUSING ADVOCATES STAND BY DOMINO’S NEW PLANS DISMAY PRESERVATIONISTS

The Association Œuvre Notre-Dame du Haut that owns Ronchamp is within weeks of seeking a permit to build a new visitor center, a cluster of 12 habitats for nuns, and a building permit is granted, the Fondation Le Corbusier, the Paris continued on page 8

PRESERVATIONISTS

For landlords, continued on page 7

PRINTED IN USA
The Architect’s Newspaper
21 Murray St., 5th Floor
New York, NY 10007

MTA BACK TO DRAWING BOARD FOR DOWNTOWN TRANSIT HUB

The repurposed refinery is meant to be the New Domino, a cluster of 12 habitats for nuns, and the addition, as well as a number of proposed 30- and 40-story towers, would all but erase the refinery’s significance as a relic of Brooklyn’s industrial past. continued on page 8
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Francis Rubinstein
Staff Scientist
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At the dedication of his extraordinary chapel Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp, the avowed atheist Le Corbusier spoke of the "all-embracing mathematics that is the creator of that space which cannot be described in words." This wonder beyond words, be it from mathematics or some even more abstract force, is palpable for the 100,000 visitors who visit every year, and so the concern over Renzo Piano's proposed addition to house a small group of Clarissines nuns is understandable. But it is that very sense of the sublime that those who support the building of a convent are hoping to protect. As today’s secular tourists vastly outnumber parishioners, the chapel’s power as a place of worship is increasingly endangered.

This point was underscored during a recent trip to Sri Lanka, where I was a good architect and tourist and packed in as many temples, ruins, and ancient cities as time permitted. One of the most striking was Anuradhapura, the vast ruined capital of the Sinhalese kings, which has been slowly reclaimed from the encroachments of the jungle and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. Surrounded by dozens of monastic complexes, the city is still considered sacred in Theravada Buddhism. Its most dramatic features are a series of brick dagobas, solid bell-shaped structures that tower hundreds of feet in the air. One marvels at their presence, but, absent any sense of their place in ritual, they have the quality of an object preserved in a vitrine: Even on a holy day, only a few quiet monks stood in attendance, as well as tinket sellers, donkeys, and some hopeful stray dogs.

A short bike ride away is a shrine that is visually less impressive but has been in constant use since the time of the Buddha. By tradition, Sri Maha Bodhi is a tree grown from a cutting of the one under which the Buddha gained enlightenment. It is flanked by protective courtyards, chapels, statues, and shade structures to accommodate visitors. Hundreds upon hundreds of white-clad pilgrims approached the altars with offerings of water lilies, frangipani blossoms, and incense; so many, in fact, that attendants regularly swept the altars clear of them to make room for more. The entire shrine has a vitality that makes it far more compelling than its museum-like neighbor nearby.

In A Time to Keep Silence, Patrick Leigh Fermor wrote a moving account of visiting a few of the great monasteries of Europe during the 1950s. Though he was not a believer himself, he came to appreciate the nature of contemplative life and the extraordinary buildings that have historically sheltered it, and could later take no pleasure in the sight of ruins: “It is impossible for me to see these monasteries without fear, at the sight of empty monasteries, a sorrow sharper than the regret of an antiquarian.”

The disagreement at Ronchamp is not over whether the presence of nuns is good or bad, but over the presence of new buildings to house them. Piano’s design seems to be as sensitive as one could hope for: A visitor’s center is tucked off in the trees, and the cells for nuns are cut unobtrusively out of the side of the hill. A vertical shaft to bring light into each cell could disappear under foliage. The intrusion seems a small one in exchange for what could be gained, which is an assurance that the chapel will always maintain a strong sense of its contemplative purpose.

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REFORMATION REVISION
You’ve got to be kidding! The article “Remsidential Units” (AN 01_01.23.2008) makes the outrageous claim that One Madison Park is responsible for the residential transformation of the area and that Sky House is another ground-breaking residential development on the north end of Madison Park. Had the writer bothered to look a few feet west, he would have found Madison Green, a 423-unit luxury condominium that began the residential transformation of Madison Square Park. It was built by Rose Associates in 1983.

On East 29th Street, directly across the street from and south of Sky House is another apparently invisible residential tower called the Madison Belvedere. It was built by Rose Associates in 1998. Just because both of these buildings were designed by so-called developer’s architects (Costas Kondylis and SLCE, respectively) is no reason for AN to pretend they don’t exist.

In “Dig This” (AN 01_01.23.2008), the writer has a short idea of what’s new. Green roofs are an old strategy for peasant buildings in Europe, reaching back at least to the 17th century and undoubtedly much farther than that. Also, Corbu was using green roofs in the ’50s, if not earlier. I think Ronchamp has a green roof, and I know La Tourette. Sedling Halen near Beme has a green roof, as do the later buildings of Atelier 5. Most “new” ideas are not new, only the ignorant are slow catching up. And in America, we’re simply too insular.

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BLOOMBERG ET AL PUT BEST FACE ON ‘PARSIMONIOUS’ BUDGET PLANS

FISCAL SPIGOTS RUNNING DRY?

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s proposed budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1 leaves everyone in suspense. The mayor promised his budget on fickle revenues from financial companies and real estate deals. But the uncertainty just begins there. While banks’ layoffs and developers’ retrenchment may thwart city social spending, budget decisions in Albany and Washington will fatefully shape capital investment.

Key variables in the coming weeks for architects and planners to watch depend on political moves by New York state lawmakers, experts say. The state legislature will vote on a much-debated congestion pricing plan that, if approved by federal officials by March 31, could send the city $352 million for mass-transit investment. The legislature will also set its own budget, with more than a billion dollars at stake for city school construction and other projects.

Yet federal action will shape other major works. While Bloomberg and Governor Eliot Spitzer have poured over how fully the state will fund local capital needs, both men vocally support key projects from the Second Avenue subway to the reinvention of Penn Station. For its part, the Building Congress, which represents the construction and development trades, has backed Spitzer’s plan and urged the New York Building Congress on January 29, called runaway costs a huge worry and pledged to make the state a more “parsimonious” bidder for architectural and contracting work. But he also promised to deliver on all major projects underway in the five boroughs, calling them basic to New York’s credibility as a world capital. This means the city will have to look beyond real estate transfer taxes—and the housing market’s financial crisis that erased $660 million in anticipated Wall Street tax revenue from the city’s income statement. For its part, the Building Congress, which represents the construction and development trades, has backed Spitzer’s plan and urged officials to push for energy reform.

While the city’s funds from Washington and Albany went through their channels, Bloomberg, too, looks to gain efficiencies through technology. His budget speech invoked a citywide Wi-Fi network that would help residents monitor their own water use. “There are very few businesses that have 60,000 employees and 8.2 million customers without major investments in technology,” he said. There are even fewer such businesses that have financed their growth on capitalist excess and now need public investment.

ALEC APPELBAUM
FISCAL SPIGOTS RUNNING DRY?

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s proposed budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1 leaves everyone in suspense. The mayor promised his budget would result from a $1.5 billion budget gap forecast to look beyond real estate transfer taxes—or the city’s income statement. And despite a $1.5 billion budget gap forecast for the following fiscal year, he vowed that the city’s infrastructure increases with population.

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“The cuts on the transportation side don’t seem too significant,” said Allison L. de Borja, who runs the Rudin Center for Transportation at New York University. “The worry is that federal money won’t come.”

Bloomberg made clear in his budget presentation that capital investment must continue to create parks and a thriving business district in Long Island City. He called out the resilient strength of commercial real estate and hotel occupancy as a payoff for that focus, and insisted that no fiscal trouble would justify short-changing the public realm.

“If economic activity slows down, [commercial and hotel] numbers won’t be as robust, he said. “But if we continue to reduce crime, improve public education, and build great parks, then people will want to live here.”

Bloomberg also noted that pressure on the city’s infrastructure increases with population. And despite a $1.5 billion budget gap forecast for the following fiscal year, he vowed that the city’s sewers and schools would go on. “We made the mistake of walking away from those obligations in the 1970s,” the mayor said, “and we are not going to make that mistake today.”

That focus puts construction and real estate companies in the spotlight, exposing their struggles with scarce labor and increasing materials costs. Indeed Spitzer, in a speech to the New York Building Congress on January 29, called runaway costs a huge worry and pledged to make the state a more “parsimonious” bidder for architectural and contracting work. But he also promised to deliver on all major projects underway in the five boroughs, calling them basic to New York’s credibility as a world capital. This means the city will have to look beyond real estate transfer taxes—and the housing market’s financial crisis that erased $660 million in anticipated Wall Street tax revenue from the city’s income statement. For its part, the Building Congress, which represents the construction and real estate trades, has backed Spitzer’s plan and urged officials to push for energy reform.

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ALICE APPERTBAUM
Larry Silverstein’s plans to transform downtown into New York’s next Class-A business/cultural/residential/hospitality neighborhood have long been in the works. On January 29, he filled in yet another piece of the puzzle. At a breakfast at Cipriani Wall Street, the president and CEO of Silverstein Properties announced that Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts has agreed to operate a hotel and condominium development at 99 Church Street, a mere two blocks from the World Trade Center site. The agreement with Four Seasons solidified funding for the project, and Tishman Construction is scheduled to begin erecting the new structure in June, with completion expected in early 2011.

Silverstein also unveiled renderings of the project, designed by Robert A. M. Stern Architects. At 80 stories and approximately 912 feet tall, the limestone- and cast stone-clad building will be the tallest residential structure in New York when completed. It will also be about 120 feet taller than the Woolworth Building, Cass Gilbert’s ineluctable 1913 gothic revival skyscraper, on whose block it sits. This proximity raised concerns from many observers, who worried that the taller building will overwhelm this icon of New York architecture. “I think it’s a good neighbor,” Stern told AN. “It will be taller, but it’s like in color, and its fenestration pattern and needle-like shape are comparable to the Woolworth Building’s.”

Prior to the release of the renderings, observers also questioned whether the new development would follow the glass-clad uber-modernism of the World Trade Center towers, or if it would defer to the vocabulary of a previous generation of New York skyscrapers, exemplified by the Woolworth Building. Stern’s response seems to ride the line. “It’s modern in that it’s up-to-date, but it’s not modernist,” he said. “On the other hand, it’s not in any way intending to be a gothic building. It will have a strong but subtle presence on the skyline and, I hope, provide a good transition.”

Occupying the first 22 floors of the building, the hotel will consist of 175 rooms, a restaurant, lounge, and spa and health club with a 75-foot pool. The residential portion of the building, consisting of 143 luxury condos, will share these amenities, and Four Seasons services will be available to homeowners. The project will also add a landscaped public plaza between Park and Barclay streets.

This project is only one among many new residential and hotel projects underway in Lower Manhattan. According to the Downtown Alliance, which advocates for business and property owners in the area, over 5,400 new residential units are in development and more than 3,700 new hotel rooms are currently under construction or planned. The alliance also estimates that 1.27 million unique hotel guests will stay downtown beginning in 2009.
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HARLEM'S FUTURE

continued from front page

developers, and the street's numerous arts institutions, the city's plan is an opportunity to secure their economic triumph in a long-suffering neighborhood. But local residents, businesses, and some politicians fear the changes may threaten those who have stood by Harlem through the highs and lows by choice, circumstance, or both.

Relative to the recent spate of rezonings across the five boroughs, the 125th Street plan is modest in size, covering only 24 blocks running along a 1.6-mile strip from Broadway to Second Avenue, but it stands to have a major impact, for good or ill, on a community already under duress.

As City Planning Commission Chair Amanda Burden declared back in March when the plan was certified, “This comprehensive initiative will fulfill the promise of Harlem’s Main Street’ as a vibrant corridor and a premier arts, entertainment, and commercial destination in the city.”

But others see it as the latest tremors of gentrification. Craig Schley, who founded VOTE People to oppose the rezoning, said Harlemites would never accept the city’s proposal. “With the stroke of a pen, you will achieve as much destruction as Hurricane Katrina,” he told commissioners, under-scoring the racial sensitivity of the project.

Many, however, are excited by the proposal, perhaps none more so than local arts organizations such as the Apollo Theater, the Studio Museum, and the National Jazz Museum. They stand to benefit because the rezoning creates a special arts and cultural sub-district at the center of 125th Street. They remain of its space to an arts organization in order to achieve maximum square-footage on the site. “I want to go back to a time when I couldn’t count the arts and cultural institutions on two hands, there were so many,” JoAnn Price, vice chair of the Apollo Theater Foundation, told AN.

To create new commercial space, much of which is underutilized because of 125th Street’s generally small lots, the street has been upzoned to allow for larger and denser buildings; to counteract overdevelopment, height caps have also been instituted for the first time. These concentrate development between Adam Clayton Powell and Malcolm X boulevards and the Metro-North station at Park Avenue. This and similar measures have gained the support of the 125th Street Business Improvement District and other economic groups hoping to capitalize on the projected 6,000 jobs the new commercial buildings will create.

But some developers still want more, such as the Vornado Realty Trust, whose representatives asked the commission during the hearing for an exception in order to build the Harlem Park, a high-end office tower at 125th Street and Park Avenue. This request drew jeers from the crowd, who see it as emblematic of the overdevelopment threatening the area.

For Nelly Bailey, director of the Coalition to Save Harlem, Harlem Park is precisely the sort of project she is defending against. “They are handing us something that will destroy Harlem,” Bailey told the commission. She then described the proposal as “Mayor Bloomberg’s masterplan, on a scale that has not been seen since Robert Moses. It is a plan that seeks to replace a working class community of color with an affluent white community.”

Franc Perry, chair of Community Board 10, which voted against the rezoning, said that Harlem is not opposed to development, and in many cases needs it. Instead, the concern is whether Harlemites will be driven out. “We understand that change is inevitable,” he told AN, “but there has to be change with conscience, with consensus from the community.”

FOLLY AT FULTON ST.

continued from front page

The MTA has gone back to the drawing board to consider all its options. “I would not say it can’t be done, but clearly we have to find a way to redistribute the costs of the current project or come up with a new one,” he told AN. Sander declined to say whether Grimshaw was still involved with the project, and a MTA spokesperson, Jeremy Soffin, said he was not sure. A source with knowledge of the MTA’s plans, or at least what remains of them, did tell AN that the British firm was still involved with the project, but did not know what that involvement would entail, or even if the MTA did. “I don’t think they really know what they’re doing right now,” the source said of the MTA’s intentions. Grimshaw declined to comment.

Across the street, there had been speculation that Santiago Calatrava’s PATH station at the World Trade Center site could be sapping funds from the Fulton Street project, especially as its price tag has skyrocketed from $2.2 billion to $3.4 billion. Soffin insisted this was not the case and, whatever gets built, a high level of design would be maintained. Initial reports from the hearings claimed that only Carpenter’s towering Oculus, which is meant to bring natural light down into the bowels of the project, would be lost, but now the MTA is considering every available option, even nothing at all.

Carpenter said the MTA has kept him in the dark so far. No matter what happens, MTA board chair H. Dale Hemmerdinger stressed that the site would not remain barren. “Rather than leave an empty lot, I thought we could put something there that would be useful to the community,” Hemmerdinger told the Daily News on January 31. His alternative, a public park or plaza, did not leave much hope for the sort of design the previous plans presented, but that may be the best the MTA has to offer.

Carpenter’s original design for the Fulton Street transit hub is sure to be scaled way back, and may not get built at all.
New Jersey-based designer Paul Vega invokes the character of Tribeca in his interiors for the recently opened Duane St. Hotel, which meant adding lofty industrial-edge ceilings and discreet touches to a prominently modern design. The guest room decor is unmistakably residential with walnut and ash wood floors, and the niches and closets echo top of the architect's original floorplan. In the narrow lobby, four vertical columns of black Mylar panels form a subtle partition between the restaurant, Beca, and the hotel reception area. Buttressing floor to ceiling windows is a row of ladder-back chairs recalling those of 19th century architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Sitting opposite each other across walnut tables, the high-back chairs shelter restaurant patrons in a permeable nook. “It’s nice to have your own little niche,” Vega said. Agree, especially when the bustling streetscape is only a thin pane of glass away.

PIANO TO BUILD AT RONCHAMP continued from front page

based keeper of the master’s flame,” Piano said. It said that it will sue, reluctantly.

“We are trying to make sure the site is preserved for eternity,” said Michel Richard, the foundation’s director. “We are afraid that in 50 years, the sisters will go away and they will be replaced by a B&B.”

“It is the most poetic building by Corbusier,” said Piano in an interview in his Manhattan office. “But he made it to be a place of worship, not just a sculpture. It proves that a secular person could create a place of religious feeling.”

According to association director Jean-Francois Matheny, son of Francois Mathey, who was involved in hiring Corbusier in 1950 to build the chapel (on the site of a 1799 church destroyed by World War II bombs), the idea to invite a group of nuns to live on the site came about a few years ago as a bulwark against creeping tourism. The site attracts some 100,000 people a year. “We feared that with so much traffic, the spiritual quality of the chapel—not the architecture itself—would little by little disappear,” Mathey said. “It should be a place of silence and prayer, not a fun fair.”

The association decided to invite a “praying presence” of nuns from the Clarissine order (more commonly known as the Poor Clareis) who would be tucked into Piano-designed cells on the far side of the hill. Corbusier himself had consulted with the association about adding a monastery, but concrete plans were never developed.

Since Ronchamp is a cultural landmark, the French Ministry of Culture is required to approve plans for change and they did, unanimously, six months ago. The association, however, did not seek the benediction of the foundation. “That was probably a mistake,” said Piano. There have been three or four meetings between the architect and foundation that Piano described as very helpful, especially about measurements and materials. For its part, the foundation said that it was not flatly opposed to a new proposal, and not against Piano. “We are well aware that Renzo Piano will take all precautions called for,” said Richard. “They should just build farther away.”

The association consulted several architects besides Piano, including Tadao Ando, Glenn Murcutt, and Jean Nouvel. In the end, the first two were deemed too far away, while the idea of Nouvel was rejected because “he would only design something Jean Nouvel,” said Matheny. “We loved Piano’s museums in Basel and Berne. He is a poet and a philosopher, too.”

Piano himself was somewhat hesitant, and not because of the complexities of building a chapel respectfully next to an icon. After all, he has designed additions to several icons, including Louis Kahn’s Kimbell Art Museum, and Richard Meier’s Atlanta High Museum (2005). But the Ronchamp project is by far the smallest in his office, very sensitive, and with a relatively minuscule budget of $13 million. “There would be no reason to put myself in this funny situation were not a work of passion,” he said.

Piano did not even start to design until he had walked the site last winter, driving staked into the ground where it would be possible to build without being seen from the top of the hill where the chapel sits. According to French law, any changes within in 500 meters of a designated landmark are open to the scrutiny of the Ministry of Culture, but the grounds around the chapel building are not subject to landmark protection. Thus, although the new structures will be invisible, they do come to within 60 meters of the chapel. Piano plans to reforest the flanks of the hill with some 800 evergreens and native deciduous trees, spending one-third the entire budget on landscaping.

Jean Louis Cohen, the preeminent Corbusier scholar who is on the board of the foundation, also walked around the site last summer. “Maybe you wouldn’t see it, but you would feel it,” said Cohen in an interview in which he showed slides documenting the chapel from every possible angle from below the hilltop. “The harmony of the place would be disturbed; it would lose the sense of being a pilgrimage and impoverish the experience.”

The plan includes a new visitor center to replace the current one—a makeshift pink box at the base of the hill. Renderings show a simple split shed with a dynamic bifurcated roof jutting in directions that echo the swoops of the chapel’s roof. The titling roof planes would be made of both zinc and green-roof materials, making it appear as if it were rising from the forest floor. It has been positioned to allow people parking their cars to get a glimpse of the chapel up the steep hill. The nun’s cells are even simpler at 120 square feet, bermed into the hillside in the woods just below the knoll’s clearing and invisible from the top. Piano is thinking of giving each cell a high-tech light scoop, similar to those at the High Museum, but here atop 20-foot columns that would draw light through the trees into each cell.

Matheny explained the foundation’s opposition is the only barrier to going ahead. “They thought someday of recovering the chapel. Now, since Renzo Piano is going to put his mark on the hill, they don’t like it,” he said.

Getting a permit to build will not be difficult, as the Ministry of Culture has already approved the plans. Once a building permit is issued, there is a two-month period, something like a marital banns, when the open period can step forward. “The foundation is well aware that we have to do something,” said Richard.

While presenting the plans for Ronchamp in his Meatpacking District office overlooking the site of the new Whitney museum he is designing, Piano took a break from simultaneously meeting with representa- tives of The New York Times about the trees on the roof of their new building and taking an interview with Newsweek about the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. At lunchtime, his old colleague and friend Richard Rogers and his wife Ruth arrived. Asked if this was a project he would consider incredible.

“I am mad, aren’t I?” Piano said, with a laugh. “But I like risk.”

Section through proposed nuns’ cells with light columns.
The long-stalled redesign of the northern section on Union Square is on track to break ground later this winter. A $19.6 million plan designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates and the Architectural Research Office (ARO) calls for the renovation of an existing historic Palladian-style park pavilion building, which during the 1970s and 1980s housed a Parks Department-operated children's recreation program and would now accommodate a restaurant. The building is still used as storage for Parks Department maintenance crews, a little-used public toilet, and a seasonal restaurant (now closed) called Luna Park.

Although the planned redesign has been modified from an earlier version developed in 2004, local elected officials, the Union Square Community Coalition, and various other groups are still up in arms about it. They say that the proposed restaurant will result in the privatization of the northern end of Union Square and compromise the quality of the square's public open space, including a playground for children and the square's northern plaza where the Union Square Greenmarket operates.

“Many also question the Union Square Partnership’s role in the project. In addition to contributing $8 million toward the redesign, the organization, which includes prominent local businesspeople, is listed as the client on architectural renderings. Supporters counter that the Greenmarket has little of the infrastructure it needs, that the public restrooms are almost unused, that the play space will be dramatically expanded in size, and that the pavilion has long hosted a restaurant.”

The Van Valkenburgh/ARO plan will result in some striking changes to the aesthetic of Union Square, which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1997. On the northern plaza in front of the pavilion, three-inch-thick hex block pavers will be placed on concrete sub-stone in a scatter-shot pattern that is intended to symbolize the movement of people through the plaza. Existing public restrooms in the pavilion would be transferred to a new adjacent facility, which according to the Fine Arts Federation is dissonant in mass and location to the classical symmetry of the pavilion.

“One of the most controversial aspects of the redesign is its change to the two playgrounds currently at grade level with the park. The playgrounds will be connected and submerged at levels ranging from 36 inches to a little over four feet. In addition, the overall playground space will increase in size from 5,100 square feet to 15,300 square feet. While applauding the increase in play space, critics say that the playground is being submerged to accommodate the restaurant. “They are depressing the playground so that people in the restaurant can have a better view,” says Geoffrey Croft, president of New York City Park Advocates. “You don’t put children into a pit.”

However, New York City Parks Department spokesperson Cristina DeLuca says that the playgrounds are being submerged so that an existing below-grade area can be incorporated that will connect them and enlarge the overall playground area. Further, she says that bringing the enlarged playground up to grade with the rest of the park is not an option, in that it would block sunlight from reaching windows, which are on the south side of the pavilion.

But many say that the public interest would be better served and the Square’s redesign improved if the pavilion were returned to its earlier use as a center for a children’s recreation program, instead of being renovated as a restaurant. “There are something like 180 restaurants within a two-block radius in any direction of Union Square,” said Ernest Raab, vice-chairman of the Union Square Community Coalition, “and this park is one of the most underserved in terms of playground space.”

ALEX ULAM
WHERE THE ART IS

For everyone from the culturally adept Manhattanite to newbie New Yorker, the ManhattanArtNOW map will be an invaluable tool and spur to discovery. Three years in the making, cultureNOW’s two-sided 96-inch-by-18-inch art map is the largest survey of artwork, collections, and art resources in Manhattan to date, consisting of nearly 1,500 works of art in public spaces. In addition to documenting artwork in commonplace settings such as museums and galleries, the map promotes the idea of the city as an urban gallery by including art in churches, cemeteries, hotels, restaurants, schools, hospitals, and courts. Pieces range from a Pablo Picasso Mercurio reproduction at 125th Street and Avenue to eagle gargoyles on the Chrysler Building. The map is categorized by the type of work (art in museums, landscape, or architecture) or by its medium (sculpture, relief, mural). Artwork is organized alphabetically by artist on the front of the map and geographically on the back. Because the map is organized this way, an observer can look up “Keith Haring” to find all of that artist’s works on view in Manhattan or search by location, such as “the West Side,” to find artwork in a specific area. Art-rich areas, such as Chelsea, are enlarged on the bottom of the map. Abby Suckle founded cultureNOW in 2002 as a response to the events of September 11, in an attempt to demonstrate the cultural resources of downtown Manhattan. Previous projects include five editions of the DowntownNOW map. According to Suckle, “We thought it would be really interesting to document all of the public art in New York City. What we found was that there is a lot more out there than we initially thought.”

The ManhattanArtNOW map is the first phase of cultureNOW’s larger project to map art in all five boroughs of New York City. A guidebook will soon follow. ManhattanArtNOW is available for $14.95 at cultureNOW.org. Urban Center Books, the Museum of the City of New York, and the Center for Architecture. The map is also viewable online, and a comprehensive, searchable database featuring more than 1,000 pieces of art will soon be available. DANIELLE RAGO

FIRE DESTROYS VILLA NM

The Villa NM, a landmark house in Bethel, New York, designed by UN Studio, burned down on February 5 in a fire that was still under investigation a week later. Sullivan County Fire Coordinator Richard Martinikovic said the cause did not seem suspicious, but nothing was being ruled out, especially given the size and stature of the house. Because of an ice storm on the night of the fire, first responders had increased difficulty reaching the house. “There wasn’t a lot left for the fire department to save,” Martinikovic said. He also said that the house’s construction materials could have caused it to burn more quickly. (For updates and pictures, visit www.archpaper.com/villanm.)

WORK FARM

Work AC won this year’s PSI Young Architects Program competition with a design that brings an ambitious ecological agenda to the annual summer party. Their entry, “Public Farm 1.0,” calls for a butterfly roof shelter of linked planters. Heavy-duty cardboard tubes, some filled with plants and some open to let light through, will be bolted together to form the shelter. Intended to be a working farm, Work designed the pavilion as “a neighborhood-based ecological infrastructure,” principal Dan Wood told AN. Work AC was selected over finalists Matter Architecture Practice, Monad Architects, sfl architecture & design, and Them, all of New York.

GROWING PAINS

Thanks to the interminable expansion of New York University, Greenwich Village has slowly transformed from a bohemian enclave into the city’s very own frat house. In an effort to put an end to the school’s ameba-like takeover, a group of local politicians, led by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, have negotiated a set of principals to guide the growth of the institution, which hopes to nearly double in size to 6 million square feet over the coming decades. The deal, announced on January 30, stipulates that the university will seek to adapt and reuse existing buildings before developing new ones and search for new property outside the Washington Square area. Construction must be minimal and contextual, and involve renewed community outreach.

TWO PROPOSALS FAIL TO WIN CONFIDENCE OF PARK TRUST

As the first major public park in New York City required by state law to pay the whole of its own maintenance and operation costs, Hudson River Park depends upon commercial development for funding. The problematic nature of this new model became evident at a board meeting on January 31, when the Hudson River Park Trust, the quasi-public agency that runs the park, once again failed to select a redevelopment plan for Pier 40, the 14-acre pier in Greenwich Village, which is one of the park’s three designated revenue generating sites. The vote was delayed until March in the hopes that the two proposals under consideration can be reworked in ways that make them both financially feasible and acceptable to the community.

The two proposals, one by the Camp Group and the other by Related Companies, have already been modified in response to earlier criticism. However, they were once again deemed inadequate in their current form by the Trust’s board, which since 2003 has been attempting to establish a suitable redevelopment plan for the pier. The Trust’s board also rejected a new alternative concept plan developed by the Pier 40 Partnership, a non-profit group founded by parents whose children use the pier’s public recreational fields. The Partnership sought to stop the Request For Proposals (RFP) process altogether, and called upon the Trust’s board to allow it to create a non-profit entity charged with renovating and managing the operation of the pier. However, the Trust’s board questioned the viability of the Pier 40 Partnership’s financing.

Noting that its August 2006 RFP for Pier 40 had elicited only two responses that minimally met requirements, Diana Taylor, the board chairwoman, called attention to the dilemma the Trust faced. “It would not be in the best interest of the Trust to accept or reject either of the two proposals,” said Taylor, “But doing nothing is not an option either.” Time is running out for Pier 40. The dilapidated superstructure could face condemnation in the next few years, and it will need an estimated $120 million for a new roof and pilings. The redevelopment of the pier is also critical for the Trust’s budget. It houses a long-term parking facility used primarily by Greenwich Village residents that generates approximately $6 million in annual revenues, which cover about 40 percent of the operating costs of the unfinished park.

The Related Companies proposal, a $616 million plan designed by the team of Arquitectonica, Elkus Manfredi, and Rockwell Group, calls for an entertainment complex that would include venues such as a 1,800-seat theater for the Cirque du Soleil and a 12-screen movie theater for the Tribeca Film Festival. Opponents claim that its commercial component is far too large, and that it shortchanges the sports leagues that use the pier by placing many of the public recreational fields on the exposed roof of the complex. The Camp Group proposal, a $203 million plan designed by Dattner Architects, would preserve much of the existing facility in a slightly altered configuration. A private camp, school, and 75,000 square feet of retail space would generate income for the park. However, at the board meeting, Trust officials questioned the financial viability of the Camp Group plan in view of the costs of renovating the pier.

With strong community opposition to the privatization of the pier on one side and the imperative to make money on the other, the Trust is facing a difficult decision. “We have been at this for a very long time and there is nobody who is clamoring to put a lot of money into developing this pier and get nothing back,” Taylor said. “So we are very limited in the alternatives that we actually have.”
Oval Washbasin Set by Gessi

OVATIONS!

Drawing inspiration from the simple beauty of water, Ovale’s gentle curves trace clean, crisp lines. Its spare, refined oval shape appeals to the architectural purist for form and function. Discover Ovale, one of many innovative designs from Gessi's exclusive collection of bathroom and kitchen faucets and fittings.
Teaching has always been an inseparable part of architectural practice for Sunil Bald and Yolande Daniels, partners in the firm studio SUMO, in part because theoretical and cultural questions have always been as important to them as formal ones. Daniels is an assistant professor at Columbia University and Bald currently teaches at Parsons and Yale.

The studio was launched in 1995, but for the first few years, Bald and Daniels worked primarily on speculative projects, installations, and exhibition design. However, when they were selected by the Architectural League of New York in 1999 to receive the Young Architects Award, their thinking about their practice changed: “That was the point when we started to take ourselves more seriously as an architecture firm,” said Daniels.

Although more projects followed, most of them continued to be exhibition work. The real break for the studio happened two years later when they were commissioned to design two small buildings for Josai University in Sakado, Japan. Located on opposite ends of the campus, the two sites were planned to house a visitor and a student information building. Although the university was ultimately not able to acquire the land and the project was halted, during the two years of working together a relationship was formed, and the university later asked SUMO to design a 70,000-square-foot business school for its Sakado campus.

The size, location, and program of this major project were an important test for the firm, and it committed SUMO to keep building. But academia will never be far away: As Daniels explained it, “architectural education encourages us to be more creative, flexible, open, and organized in our mindset.”

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BUSINESS SCHOOL AT JOSAI UNIVERSITY
SAKADO, JAPAN

SUMO designed all the aspects of this 70,000-square-foot building, which contains classrooms, offices, two auditoria, a media lab, and a cafe; it is the firm’s largest built project to date. Responding to the complex, multi-leveled site, the building’s shape follows the outline of its single-loaded circulation zone, turning back onto itself. The site also determined the main feature of the building—a continuous path that links major spaces and also allows visitors to access the roof without having to enter the building.

The multiple levels of the site also defined the location of the sloping floors of the auditoria that extend the connection between the building and the path. Another challenge of the site was an existing power line: its voltage was so high that the architects had to set the building back almost 30 meters. However, they looked at it as an advantage: “That helped shape the building as well,” said Bald.

MIZUTA MUSEUM OF ART
UNIVERSITY MUSEUM
SAITAMA, JAPAN

Originally the project was commissioned as a conversion of an old office building into an art museum, but the renovation proved too expensive and the university accepted SUMO’s proposal for a new building. “When working in Japan, the program of the project is often very open-ended. We even got to choose our own site,” said Daniels. However, one requirement—to house a university founder’s collection of traditional woodcuts—ultimately determined the building’s plan. The woodcuts required a light-controlled environment, but the museum also had to provide a flexible exhibition space with natural light for university collections and temporary exhibitions. SUMO’s solution was to design a 2-in-1 museum, while providing a continual circulation flow between two halves. Since the prohibitive cost element in this low-budget project would have been a freight elevator, the architects eliminated it by incorporating a ramp connecting two levels of galleries and a sunken glass public space 2 meters below grade.

Slits in the facade accommodate the various light requirements of the building: glazed openings above the walkway provide views for the visitors; openings in the ceiling of the temporary galleries are glazed with translucent material for diffused light; in the dark woodcut galleries the slits function as ventilation for mechanical equipment.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING BLOCK
MIAMI, FL

The site of this competition-winning project is in the middle of shrinking Little Haiti, traditionally an old industrial neighborhood, which is now a rapidly gentrifying area succumbing to the growing art district of Miami. Owners will be chosen based on income, but should they ever sell, units will be sold at market rate. One of the challenges of designing low-income housing with a “luxury” future was to incorporate parking. The solution was to raise the building above ground, providing enough double-decker parking spaces underneath. The apartments themselves were inspired by the traditional Creole shotgun house, featuring cross-ventilation and private outdoor spaces for each unit.

MINIMAX
MANUFACTURED HOUSING PROTOTYPE,
CITY DESIGN CENTER
CHICAGO, IL

This self-contained, pre-fabricated PVC home is delivered to the site compressed. Once unfolded, the void in the center forms an internal green space, while its interior is defined by customized program elements that slide along motorized tracks to allow for easy reconfiguration. All elements are of the same size and attached to a wired bellows exterior shell that distributes energy throughout the house.
Salone Internazionale del Mobile: excellence makes a come-back!

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Milan Fairgrounds, Rho 16/21.04.08
INNOVATION ON SALE

HOW DO INTERNATIONAL BRANDS ROLL OUT STORES THAT REINFORCE THEIR IDENTITIES WHILE PROVIDING VARIED EXPERIENCES FOR CONSUMERS? HOW DOES EDGY RETAIL DESIGN TRANSLATE AT THE MALL?

ALAN G. BRAKE SHOP FOR ANSWERS.

If, as someone once wrote, fashion has a flair for the topical, then it follows that the business of fashion, including retail design, reflects the front lines of the marketplace and the cultural moment. For architects designing for international brands, reading the zeitgeist can be challenging. As design becomes increasingly democratized and brands simultaneously seek greater levels of refinement and differentiation, some younger urban designers are ending up where they least expected—back at the mall. And while shopping has arguably consumed more than its share of architectural thought since the 1990s, retail environments remain an important testing ground for design ideas and a significant source of work for emerging firms.

Robin Kramer, the self-described “Grand Poobah” of a multidisciplinary branding and design firm, sums up the present moment this way: “There was a time when the idea was that environments had to be exactly the same anywhere in the world in order to support the brand. Today you want to provide something unique, so that each location is tailored to its place,” she said. “Customers will feel more compelled to go in. You have to find the breadth within the brand.” Many international companies are looking for varied customer experiences—from malls to urban stores, often with unique architectural features—coupled with enough consistency to make those experiences recognizable.

Kramer’s New York-based firm, the Robin Kramer Design Group (RKDG), includes market researchers,
branding consultants, graphic, industrial, and interior designers, and architects. “For us, sometimes the solution is architecture, but it could just as easily be music or staffing,” she said. Sometimes RKDG takes the lead in designing retail spaces, while other times it serves as consultant to other design firms, such as the Rockwell Group. The firm provided branding, design, and marketing consultation for Ivanka Trump’s new jewelry and accessories line, and for a lingerie line currently in development called Journelle that hopes to attract the kid sisters of Victoria’s Secret shoppers. RKDG is also redesigning stores for Club Monaco, combining historic architectural features, where possible, with modern design elements, or bringing reproductions into more modern spaces. “The mix of styles reinforces the idea that Club Monaco sells updated, modern classics,” Kramer said.

Working for international brands can present small firms with a steep learning curve. New York-based Lynch Eisinger Design (L/E/D) started by doing one-off “VIP lounges” for Nike. “It was based around the idea of The Tipping Point, where Nike would invite celebrities, fashion people, and trend mavens to the spaces to preview new products and get custom designs,” said Christian Lynch, a principal at L/E/D. He and co-principal Simon Eisinger thrived under the demands of the footwear behemoth, which wanted high-quality, custom design produced at lightning speed. In New York they designed a facade on Elizabeth Street with an interior window screen made of shoebox shelving and custom furniture in powder coated white aluminum with dark walnut tops. The stores were temporary, but some ideas stuck around: Lynch and Eisinger began seeing white and walnut used in common Niketown stores. “They reproduced standardized versions of our furniture in their stores,” said Eisinger. “One division doesn’t always talk to another,” Lynch said, “so we’d be shown our own work by marketing who didn’t know it had been commissioned by retail.” He added that some companies treat all designers as “creatives,” so whether they produced graphics or architecture, the companies assume total ownership of the designs. “We’ve discussed trying to find a different billing structure, something more based on royalties,” Lynch said.

Now seasoned, L/E/D has recently taken on a bigger retail project, the design of a new line of upper mid-market stores for Calvin Klein, with an expected 125 stores worldwide. The first two recently opened in Atlanta and Detroit, and feature a distinctive slotted ceiling that conceals standard fluorescent lighting and adds variety to an otherwise monotonous mall space. “How do you create a site in an interior?” Eisinger
asked. “You have to discover a sense of context so that you can think architecturally.” Sliding glass panels created a layered effect at the storefront and can be adjusted by in-store stylists. The architects chose classic modern furniture paired with custom pieces that they had fabricated, such as carbon fiber benches that look like cobwebs woven into rectilinear forms.

As the stores proliferate, L/E/D plans to stay involved in the design of each location. They acknowledge the pressures of value engineering, and instead of using faux materials to cut corners, as has been suggested, they hope to convince the company to substitute less expensive materials that they feel maintain the same level of tectonics. “You have to become the brand police and say, ‘That’s not Calvin,’” Lynch said.

For the firm Work AC, retail projects also provided an early way to build their portfolio and try on new ideas. After working for OMA on the Prada Epicenter in Soho, one of their first projects as Work AC, principals Amale Andraos and Dan Wood were asked to design a “pop-up store” for Target, a temporary space in a vacant storefront in Rockefeller Center. Though Work AC took a different approach than they did with Prada, designing a glossy white interior with Pop accents such as bulls-eye-shaped lighting, at least one lesson got lost in the translation from luxury to mass-market. “Luxury is all about scarcity, so Prada places three to four inches between each garment, but Target loaded the racks with clothes, so on the second day we had to reinforce them,” Andraos said. This glitch aside, the store was successful enough that the firm was approached by Anthropologie to update their pleasantly cluttered, flea-market look. “At first it seemed like an odd fit, because their aesthetic is all about nostalgia,” she said. “But we found them very receptive to our approach, which was helping to focus their product line.” Work AC pushed a lot of the “clutter” to the periphery, creating niches for “vignettes,” while in the center of the stores they called for a large display element that included a natural feature, such as in Corona, California, where a skylight shines over a terrarium with a live tree surrounded by stepped platforms.

The firm’s biggest break, however, came through a personal introduction to an iconic name, Diane von Furstenberg. “A friend met Diane and found out that she was interviewing architects,” Andraos said. After beating out the competition, Work was asked to design a new headquarters in the Meatpacking District for von Furstenberg’s company, DVF. “The store was just
a small piece of the puzzle,” Andraos said. Work is designing 20 new all-white stores, all featuring an angled partition that snakes through the store, which the architect’s call “the wrap wall,” in honor of von Furstenburg’s famed frock. “Working with Diane is very personal. It’s not so corporate,” Andraos said. “In London, the interior is landmarked, so the wrap doesn’t touch the moldings. In Brussels, it’s a larger element that becomes the architecture,” she said.

Though Work plans to stay involved with DVF, they have turned down other potential retail clients. “Retail is very interesting. You get to test ideas very quickly,” she said. “But just to be new and to sell gets exhausting. Retail is a very specific world. You can fall into it and never get out.” That said, Work AC is completing a new store for a young designer, Maria Cornejo, which they think typifies where a certain tier of the market is headed: no design. “Simplicity is a good thing after all the hype, after stores feeling like they need to be more than stores. Rawness can be such a relief. Let the clothes do the job.”

For Diane von Furstenberg, Work AC designed curved white “wrap walls” that are different in every location (top). The carpeted dressing room lounges have a relaxed, intimate look, and translucent fabric curtains add a slinky element (above).
SUPPLEMENT 01

hardware

Published by The Architect's Newspaper

INDEX-D

PRODUCTS: Monitor Tracks; Adjustable Hinges; Cabinet Pulls /
TRENDS: Digital Smart Locks / New Approaches to Sliding Doors

Profile

Index-d
For architects, hardware can be a sleeping giant that rears its expensive head when a contractor can’t figure out a custom-designed sliding door or when an offset pivot hinge needs more than a little modifying. And when European manufactured products enter the mix, a lack of familiarity can have architects up to their necks in foreign installation requirements and instructions.

Recognizing this, architect Nils Wiesenmuller and civil engineer Matthew Preston combined their exasperation and design sensibility to offer a solution: Index-d. A distributor of around 20 European and American manufacturers, the Connecticut-based firm also offers services—from hardware customization to installation support—that make the specification process a walk in the park.

After only a year of full-fledged operation, their resume includes co-designing a modified sliding panel system for Harvard University and providing Simonswerk concealed hinges for the new Prada store in Las Vegas.

It might have been fate that brought the two together, when Preston answered a roommate ad in a Berlin newspaper in 1991. Originally from Connecticut, Preston had gone to Germany to travel but ended up spending four years studying and working there while his German-born roommate studied architecture. In 1998, after returning to America and attending graduate school, Preston encouraged Wiesenmuller to come to Connecticut to form the Bridgeport Design Group, an architecture firm specializing in high-end professional office and boutique retail spaces.

In 2002, the group began work on the design for the Progressive Medicine Center in Kent, Connecticut, whose complex foreign hardware specifications gave birth to Index-d. Since its founding, the company has grown from two to five employees and from providing products solely for their own architecture firm to filling a niche that could be altered to be more inconspicuous. The firm also helped design several customized hardware products and generated the entire hardware schedule for an addition to a home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that will be completed this year. “They effectively worked as a hardware consultant,” said Catherine Truman, an associate at Antehba Architects.

“The recent project for Harvard University highlights one of the company’s specialties: customization.” Last month, it modified an Astec exposed sliding door system to support a set of glass marker boards and framed Forbo panels that would glide over each other for the entire length of a 27-foot conference room wall; the modified carriage wheels have an integrated panel stop, which, unlike a rail stop, allows the system a full range of movement.

“Customization is just a huge issue for architects who are trying to stretch the design dollar,” said Humberto Cordero, marketing director at Index-d. The firm also helped design several customized hardware products and generated the entire hardware schedule for an addition to a home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that will be completed this year. “They effectively worked as a hardware consultant,” said Catherine Truman, an associate at Antehba Architects.

“But what really sets them apart from other companies is their background in design,” said Truman, who envisioned a minimalist hinge for a set of large over-lay china cabinet doors that was not available through any manufacturer. It had to be custom designed through a collaboration between Index-d and Thoughtforms, their contractor.

“Coming from a design background, Preston understood what I was talking about,” said Graham Grallert, the shop supervisor of the millwork department at Thoughtforms. He sent a few sketches to Index-d and Preston offered a solution. Accurate Lock & Hardware, based in Connecticut, fabricated a similar hinge that could be altered to be more inconspicuous.

“With our expertise and design sensibility, we can help in the specification process so the architect can hand over the drawings and the schedule and we can provide a detailed spec that offers not only the architect but the contractor a very simple and straightforward solution,” said Cordero. Last year, Preston chose to devote himself entirely to Index-d, and Wiesenmuller took over Bridgeport Design Group. They currently have about 40 open projects, including another contemporary residential project with Thoughtforms and the new Prada store in Las Vegas. The age of the hardware consultant has arrived.
Nearly 100 Levers and Over 100 Finishes

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A Drop Ring Pull
NANZ

Designed to operate a mortise latchset, this pull combines Georgian simplicity with Baroque compound curves. On its lip, the 3-inch-diameter ring sports a plain astragal, also available with beaded or roped detailing. A back-to-back application can be used with doors thicker than 2 inches. With its refined look and hidden fasteners, this new pull is appropriate for a variety of interiors. Pick from more than one hundred plated and patinated finishes from Nan’s Brooklyn factory, including light pewter, dark oxidized bronze, dark oxidized factory, including light from Nanz’s Brooklyn one hundred plated finishes, plus soffits mounts, and optional custom cables, speaker applications from knob entry and multipoint sets to sliding doors, the Metro line runs from the pristine white bronze (pictured) to a rusty-hued silicon bronze that looks impeccably ravaged. As a bonus, Rocky Mountain’s waves are certified to contain 72 percent minimum recycled content, of which 50 percent is post-consumer. www.nanz.com

B Metro Thumbslatch Entry Set
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HARDWARE

Hand-rubbed bronze gets squeaky clean with this new brushed-finish collection from Rocky Mountain Hardware. Melding old-world casting techniques with precise CNC machining, the Idaho-made, solid bronze hardware is finished by hand, giving each piece its own panache. Serving applications from knob entry and multipoint sets to sliding doors, the Metro line runs from pristine white bronze (pictured) to a rusty-hued silicon bronze that looks impeccably ravaged. As a bonus, Rocky Mountain’s waves are certified to contain 72 percent minimum recycled content, of which 50 percent is post-consumer. www.rockymountainhardware.com

C TRAK-KIT
SHADI + COMPANY

Is that luxurious 50-inch plasma TV bolted to the living room floor just when you want to watch movies in bed? Architect and videophile Shadi Shahrkhi, who trained at SCI-Arc and Columbia University’s GSAPP, devised a mobile media solution for flat-screen TVs and computer monitors ranging up to 80 inches wide and weighing up to 800 pounds. Available in robotic and nonrobotic versions, Trak-kit’s ceiling-mounted, anodized-aluminum rail assembly whisks screens any linear distance and rotates them 359 degrees. Choose custom cables, speaker mounts, and optional finishes, plus softith with spot lights for kicks. You can even slide the sucker out of sight into a pre-designed cabinet. www.trak-kit.com

D No. 443
OMNIA INDUSTRIES

For clients with a conservative bent, Omnia’s new Traditions line offers classic looks in 14 knobs and levers, including a mix of new and existing designs. Doorknob No. 443 (pictured, in the polished nickel finish) features subtle scalloped details. Traditional round, beaded round, and rectangular rose options are available in two sizes. Finishes include a mix of traditional and contemporary looks, ranging from antique bronze to polished chrome. www.omniaindustries.com

E Door Gems
GEORGE RANALLI DESIGNS

These Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired door handles were originally commissioned by a Japanese manufacturer and have only recently become available in the United States. Known for his snazzy Italian modernist designs, New York architect George Ranalli riff on geometric form while highlighting modern functionality. Radiating tactility and warmth, the Lock-it (pictured) and Charm levers are said to be more ergonomic than a plain doorknob. Made of three cast aluminum pieces, the Lock-it comes in an electro-coated matte clear finish; as does the Charm, made of cast brass; and the larger Pendant, a push plate/pull bar in brass and brushed nickel. www.georgeranalli.com

F A 2029 Cabinet Pull
VALLU & VALLI

The angled grip on this rectangular cabinet pull is enticingly grabable. It comes with a single satin chrome finish or a split satin- and polished-chrome (pictured), which provides a bit of visual and tactile pizzazz. Made of zinc alloy and brass, the pull comes in three sizes, 6½ inches, 8⅞ inches, and 12½ inches from center to center; the largest can even be used on your refrigerator. www.vallievalli.com

G Tectus 3D
SIMONSWERK

This adjustable concealed hinge makes it possible to get a completely flush surface on the hinge side of a door. It’s three-dimensionally adjustable to move the door a few millimeters horizontally, vertically, and depth-wise, keeping it even and level with the wall. At 8.2 inches, the largest of three available sizes of the stainless-steel hinge can support a door weighing almost 400 pounds. www.simonswerk.co.uk

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don’t settle.
The last 30 years have brought an explosion of options in hardware. There are products to suit nearly every use and aesthetic—even niche novelties such as doorknobs that smell good or light up in the dark. But, said experts in the field, several overarching trends are shaping today’s market. For architectural hardware, moving parts are gaining popularity. In the world of locks, security concerns have made high-tech hot. And when it comes to items that make a design statement, clients are willing to shell out more for the perfect look to punctuate their space.

John Risch, business and showroom manager of Häfele, has found for the perfect look to punctuate clients are willing to shell out more for the perfect look to punctuate their space.

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In a project for one company, for example, Ted Mondis Associates project designer Kimberly Sharpe recently faced the challenge of helping to create a conference room that could be transformed into a café area when meetings weren’t in session. Through Häfele, her firm specified the Hawa Super 250, a hardware system for top-hung sliding doors. Surrounding three sides of the pentagon-shaped conference space, several glass panels slide behind a stationary panel or into pockets to the side, out of the way. “Now we have a conference room that can suddenly—presto change-o—become something else. It’s sort of James Bond-like,” Sharpe said. Her firm’s own office has a Hawa Cornertec sliding door system in its elevator lobby area, which closes to provide security at night. Versatility is the name of the game in locks, too, leading to the rise of electronic access control (EAC) systems in office buildings, hotels, and residential towers, among other places. EACs come in many varieties, including ones that scan fingerprints or read chips embedded in access cards. These smart locks not only secure doors and cabinets, they can be programmed to do so selectively—only during certain hours and for specific people. They also gather information about who has used the lock when. Thus a business could use the electronic records to figure out who was present at the time of a theft, which is helpful for insurance purposes, said Joey Dalessio, director of business development for Marks USA. Another advantage is the heightened security such locks offer. Manhattan’s Bellevue Hospital switched from Simplex locks—a mechanical push-button type that accepts one code from everyone—to Marks USA’s IQ Access Control system. Some locks in the new system can accept more than 3,000 users, each with a unique electronic access card or code to enter on a keypad. As a result, the hospital’s security is now much tighter, said Martin Murphy, the hospital’s supervisor for the locksmith’s shop. But the fastest-growing area of EACs—and those with the highest potential for security—are biometric: systems that read body parts such as retinas or fingerprints. Of course, you probably don’t want the spaces you design to end up looking like high-tech fortresses straight out of the sci-fi film Gattaca. Luckily, some EAC locks come in architectural finishes to blend with their surroundings. Or architects might choose to hide card-reading EACs behind flat surfaces, their locations known only to those who need to use them.

For hardware that’s designed to be on display—doors, knobs, or handles, cabinet pulls—and the like—there is enormous variety on the market, and with the rising popularity of home-design TV shows, many clients are increasingly savvy and willing to pay more than before for just the right look. “It’s changed a lot over the last ten years: With HGTV and Extreme Makeover, you see all these crazy things,” said Steve Hertzberg, national account manager for Topex Hardware. When clients see hardware, paint, or moldings they like on a design show, they often ask architects to emulate it, he added.

Fortunately, there’s also been an explosion of products to match the demand (though some firms still favor of their own custom designs). For many years, brass was the default finish, then occasionally chrome in the 1970s and ’80s, Hertzberg added, but now, the options are numerous: stainless steel, satin nickel, and distressed finishes, to name just a few. For years, Valli & Valli has offered door levers by top designers and architects that, naturally, cost top dollar. “There’s a stratification going on in the market,” remarked Matthew Preston, managing director of Index-d. While builders may be inclined to go for the cheap stuff, architects tend to be pickier and to spend more—and high-end hardware companies such as Nanz, E.R. Butler & Co., FSB, and d line hardware companies such as Nanz, E.R. Butler & Co., FSB, and d line are reaping the benefits, he said. However, “not all the projects that an architect gets involved with have the budgets to pay for that kind of stuff. In those situations I think it’s pretty difficult for the architect to get what he wants these days. You have to make compromises and do your best.”

BY AUDREY JAYNES
WITH ADDITIONAL RESEARCH BY LISA BELLGARD
Häfele brings you HEWI, a high quality, functional line of bathroom support products. Häfele carries a broad selection, from hooks and grab bars to seats, shower supports and other bathroom accessories. The HEWI system will help you bring together all the details to complete your inspired design. For more information call 800-423-3531 or visit www.hafele.com.
FEBRUARY 2008

WEDNESDAY 20

LECTURES

Martin Lane Fox
Reflections of a Garden Designer
6:00 p.m.
New York School of Interior Design
69th Street Gallery
161 East 69th St.
www.nysid.edu

Juan Herneres
Risky Business
6:30 p.m.
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

Frida Kahlo
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Benjamin Franklin Parkway and 26th St., Philadelphia
www.philamuseum.org

THURSDAY 21

LECTURES

Michael Minkenberg
New Capital in New Comparatives
6:00 p.m.
New York University
Grand Room
19 University Pl.
www.nyu.edu/deutscheshaus

Kent Barnick
City of Water: Examining the Past and Future of New York’s Waterfront
7:00 p.m.
Museum of American Finance
48 Wall St.
www.downtowntowny.com

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Ry Fyan
I Can Give You What You Want
Perry Rubenstein Gallery
527 West 23rd St.
www.perryrubenstein.com

Muzi Guenveur
Pull Back the Shade
Yossi Milo Gallery
525 West 25th St.
www.yossimilo.com

Poblins Isuau
Home
Yancey Richardson Gallery
535 West 22nd St.
www.yanceyrichter.com

Carlo Mollino, Barry X Ball
Casal Del Sol
Salon 94
12 East 94th St.
www.salond94.com

FRIDAY 22

LECTURE

Cai Guo-Qiang
I Want to Believe
7:00 p.m.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
Peter B. Lewis Theater
1071 5th Ave.
www.guggenheim.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Cai Guo-Qiang
I Want to Believe
7:00 p.m.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
1071 5th Ave.
www.guggenheim.org

Rashid Johnson
Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery
526 W. 26th St.
www.nicoleklagsbrun.com

NYC Chairs
Lucas Samaras
PaceWildenstein
534 West 25th St.
www.pacificwildenstein.com

SATURDAY 23

LECTURE

Bettina Funcke
On Joseph Beuys
1:00 p.m.
Dia:Beacon
Riggio Galleries
3 Beckman St., Beacon
www.diabeacon.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Chimneys and Towers: Charles Demuth’s Late Paintings of Lancaster
Whitney Museum of American Art
354 Madison Ave.
www.whitney.org

Dave Mike
Wallpaper
619 West 27th St.
www.wallpapermag.com

FILM

Himea
(Dennis Karlson, 2007), 91 min.
6:30 p.m.
Scandinavia House
58 Park Ave.
www.scandinavi.house.com

SUNDAY 24

EXHIBITION OPENING

Design and the Elastic Mind Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

MONDAY 25

LECTURES

Mabel Wilson
Time/Space/Place—
The Electronic Image of Architecture
6:30 p.m.
McNair Lecture Hall
Yale University Art Gallery
1111 Chapel St., New Haven
www.architecture.yale.edu

Anthony Vidler
History and theory in a “Post-Critical” Age
6:30 p.m.
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

TUESDAY 26

EXHIBITION OPENING

Radiance from the Rain Forest: Featherwork in Ancient Peru
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metruseum.org

WEDNESDAY 27

LECTURES

Diebokun (and Others): Early and Late
6:30 p.m.
Gray Art Gallery
Silver Center, Room 300
www.grayart.columbia.edu

Moongyu Choi
Questioning the Border
6:30 p.m.
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

Gustave Courbet
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metruseum.org

THURSDAY 28

EVENT

Kenneth Frampton
6:30 p.m.
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

FRIDAY 29

LECTURE

Vito Acconci
From Word to Action to Architecture
5:00 p.m.
University of Pennsylvania
B-1 Meyerison Hall
3191 Walnut St., Philadelphia
www.design.upenn.edu/arch

SYMPOSIUM

Part Animal Part Two: Architecture, the Arts, and Biological Life
10:00 a.m.
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

Jean Michel Othoniel
Sikkema Jenkins & Co.
530 West 22nd St.
www.sikkemajenkinsco.com

MARCH

SATURDAY 1

LECTURE

Trisha Brown, Merce Cunningham, and Friends
1:00 p.m.
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Benjamin Franklin Parkway and 26th St., Philadelphia
www.philamuseum.org

SYMPOSIUM

Vito Acconci: Public Usances
10:30 a.m.
Slooth Foundation
4071 Walnut St, Philadelphia
www.slooth.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Jean Michel Othoniel
Sikkema Jenkins & Co.
530 West 22nd St.
www.sikkemajenkinsco.com

TUESDAY 4

LECTURE

Ralf Segal, Elis Verbakel
Architecture and Collective Space
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center Books
41 Madison Ave.
www.mac.org

WEDNESDAY 5

LECTURE

Rahaf Multasr
Architecture and Cultural Significance
6:30 p.m.
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

THURSDAY 6

LECTURE

Panels Pending
Bond Street Reborn
6:30 p.m.
NYPL Donnell Library Auditorium
20 West 53rd St.
www.aksyrcapar.org

FRIDAY 7

SYMPOSIUM

Preservation 2030
Parish Hall, St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery
331 East 10th St.
www.hdc.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Ronecose:
The Continuum Curve,
1730–2008
Cooper Hewitt, National Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
www.cooperhewitt.org

SATURDAY 8

SYMPOSIUM

Rodolphe Töpffer & the Word/Image Problem
Parsons the New School for Design
11:00 a.m.
Theresa Lang Community and Student Center
55 West 13th St.
www.parsons.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

Nicola Mueller
Masquerade
New York University
Deutches Haus
42 Washington Mews
www.nyu.edu/deutscheshaus

TUESDAY 11

EXHIBITION OPENING

Beauty and Learning: Korean Painted Screens
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metruseum.org

WEDNESDAY 12

LECTURE

David Cedman
The Sally Henderson Memorial Lecture on Green Design
6:00 p.m.
New York School of Interior Design
68th Street Gallery
61 East 68th St.
www.nysid.edu

TUESDAY 18

LECTURE

Archiv Granet
The Papercut Haggadah
Yeshiva University Museum
15 West 16th St.
www.yu.edu/museum

In the Forest of Fontainbleu: Photographers and Painters from Const to Monet
National Gallery of Art
National Mall and 3rd St., Washington, D.C.
www.nga.gov

TUESDAY 25

LECTURE

Ralf Segal, Elis Verbakel
Architecture and Collective Space
6:30 p.m.
Urban Center Books
41 Madison Ave.
www.mac.org

WEDNESDAY 5

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Architecture and Cultural Significance
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LIST YOUR EVENT AT www.diaryarch.com
To an outsider, art and architectural history fall neatly into periods: Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance, for example. With this formula, nearly everything can be placed in a convenient timeline, sized perfectly for the appendix of a textbook. It is the historian’s task to take aim at these divisions, unpack assumptions, and reconstruct a deeper and truer understanding of history taking into account newly discovered details. Architectural modernism, long understood as falling within a discrete span of time and advanced by select canonical figures, has become ripe for re-evaluation. Some of its most entrenched boundaries came into the crosshairs at a recent conference, Return Emigrations at Columbia University. On January 24 to 25, the Department of Art History and Archaeology hosted the symposium, which explored new research in postwar German architecture, beginning with the question of what it means to be “postwar” and “German.”

For the most part, architectural modernism has put in place an automatic relationship: I say “postwar German,” you say, “Walter Gropius” or “Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.” But conference participants suggested new relationships. Gropius and Mies, after all, both moved to the United States in 1937. While none of the research doubled their central significance, it did attempt to more closely understand broader contexts in terms of other architects and their country of origin. How can Gropius, with Mies, after all, both moved to new relationships. Gropius and Mies represent those who left, and those who returned. One of the main topics throughout the conference was immigration, a term first used to describe German authors who stayed in Germany throughout the Third Reich. The speakers argued that many of modern architecture’s most salient tenets were outlined by German émigrés practicing and teaching in the United States. It was therefore incumbent on those still in Germany to maintain a continuity despite quite separate conditions. Jeffrey Diefendorf, professor in European and Holocaust Studies at the University of New Hampshire, delivered the keynote lecture, outlining the German contributions to architectural modernism. As a historian, his research has largely focused on the reconstruction of German cities after World War II. This was one of the main endeavors that brought together different constituencies, and it was a point of convergence that would recur throughout the conference. Others included the Bauhaus and Harvard’s Graduate School of Design—two where institutions Gropius and Mies played a central role. Gropius aimed to re-evaluate the Bauhaus and Harvard’s Graduate School of Design—two where institutions Gropius and Mies played a key role.

At the beginning of 2008, it may seem anachronistic to question the nature of authorship in architecture. Any practicing architect recognizes the disconnect between the way architecture operates as a contemporary discipline and the way it is usually portrayed by the media (trade publications aside). While architecture by its very complexity demands teamwork with multiple participants, non-professionals seem to insist relentlessly that a building and its singular creator are synonymous. This is one of the underlying themes of the compendium of essays entitled Architecture and Authorship. Editors Tim Anstey, Katja Grillner, and Rolf Hughes aim to explore actual approaches to design and construction. The questions are valid, but the focus is broad; the collection features a series of historical case studies that span five centuries. Although the final essays bring the subject up to the present, the book might have greater impact by putting more contemporary issues into play. Essays in the book trace the modern definition of the architect to the Renaissance. At that time, the master builder’s role was divided into independent professions for individuals engaged in design and construction. The architect’s contribution was the “intention” or intellect that he brought to bear on a project. He was also considered the source for the design and, consequently, for a work’s truth and meaning. Since then, this definition has served to simplify what was, and still is, a collaborative and complex process. The notion of the architect elevated above the fray of construction, is a historical myth. Creativity is not sacrosanct. Design intent denotes a determined, focused effort, but cause does not necessarily accomplish effect. Indeed, architecture has always assumed a certain degree of messiness. The editors argue for re-orienting the notion of authorship, based on the many new processes that have underwritten its hegemony in the last half-century, including user-oriented design, systems design, and computer-aided design. Some authors cite novel approaches, such as collaboration across disciplines and global networking. One author even explains how living/robot hybrids that are engaged in production are destabilizing traditional notions of creativity and intention. It is true that many current practices permeate the boundaries of authorship, and in many ways not cited in this book. For example, in the United States, green building practices and the rise of LEED standards have prompted many architects to share once proprietary ideas and information in the collective cause to save the Earth. With the advent of building information modeling, design and construction have become almost synchronous activities, since architects can better anticipate the final outcome of a building before continu continued on page 29
DESERT STORM
With/Without: Spatial Products, Practices and Politics in the Middle East
Edited by ShumonBasar, AntoniaCarver and Markus Miessen
Biblio Books, $25

In his quintet of novels Cities of Salt, Abdulrahman Munif tells the story of a Bedouin community located in the Middle East that becomes hopelessly corrupt once it strikes oil. The city consumes its newfound commodity while simultaneously consuming itself. Today’s authorities in Dubai are determined to avoid precisely that fate, aiming to turn their fleeting economic power. Oil revenues dropped from 90 percent of the emirate’s GDP in 1985 to under 6 percent in 2004, and should dip to 1 percent in 2010. Credit this decline to the savvy use of spellbinding architectural excess to lure tourists and businesses to an instant skyline in the desert. With/Without: Spatial Products, Practices and Politics in the Middle East tones down both Dubai’s glossy official story and the harsh criticism of its outlandish buildings. Editors ShumonBasar, Antonia Carver, and Markus Miessen also attempt to avoid relying on unexamined Western paradigms on the one hand, and to stay away from “obsessing over cultural difference” on the other. This dual effort has been a major point of post-colonial theory for two decades now, and in the pages of With/Without, it proves an important but elusive objective. This volume brings together descriptive essays and informative interviews with the likes of PhilippMisselewitz, Rem Koolhaas, and L.E.FT, all engaged by Markus Miessen’s sharp and intelligent questions. Also included is another useful interview of Keller Easterling by Nader Vossoughian, and images that deliberately contrast with glossy publications about Dubai, such as Armin Linke’s photographs that direct the camera’s focus away from trophy buildings. Though the book is about the so-called Middle East—not just Dubai—the editors hardly explain how the one relates to the other. And articles about other sites are so small in number, so uneven in quality and method, and so randomly scattered that, as a reader, it is impossible to piece together any substantial information from those fragmented texts. This makes the book, at best, unfinished, even if we excuse the dangerous metonymy relation the editors suggest between Dubai and the Middle East. To provide a framework for their material, the editors have organized essays under typological categories: street, park, villa, housing block, museum, business park, reli-furbishment, mall, university, village, site, suburb, skyscraper. The choice of these seemingly neutral categories contradicts the book’s intentions, however. One editor states that “many Western critics appear baffled, unable to make sense of (Dubai’s) development, precisely because they attempt to judge it against spatial products, developments, and realities in their respective home countries.” Yet doesn’t the book’s set of categories also extend a familiar frame of reference to its object of analysis? For instance, residential spaces of the Middle East are discussed under the typological categories of villa, housing block, and suburb, which would seem to reflect the same epistemic imperialism the editors had criticized. Elsewhere, the book celebrates free-market capitalism in Dubai to the point of equating freedom in the market with freedom in human rights. And many writers seem reluctant to pin down the very power mechanisms behind Dubai’s development that they profess to critique. Namely, there is no discussion about the limitless ambitions of Dubai’s monarchical rulers. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, or the paradoxes of European and North American relations with nondemocratic states. One telling revelation when one compares their foreign policies for Dubai and, say, Iraq. As a result, many important architectural issues are bracketed in this book, and some are dismissed as “neo-left moralizing.” Thousands of construction workers migrate to Dubai, mostly from South Asia, with hopes of finding employment even though investors do not seem legally obliged to respect the migrant workers’ rights or standards. In a city of 1.4 million, construction workers hold the highest percentage of foreigners among other professions, with approximately 150,000 people. Yet the destitute housing conditions of these workers is here almost wholly overlooked, except when it is raised for a brief moment by Rem Koolhaas (yes, him). Moreover, class-based hierarchies are not at all separate from ethnic-based divides in Dubai. There is an explicit ethnic caste system in employment that puts South Asian residents (around 65 percent of the overall population) on the fringes of the class pyramid and thus the edges of city life.

Ecological problems are another major topic that remains unexplored. After reaching its city limits on the shoreline, the authorities in Dubai have decided to expand literally onto the Persian Gulf. Estimates for the size of these projects are alarming: 1.1 billion cubic meters of sand and stone are to be dumped to create 1000 islands on the fringes of Mussa al-Fahal’s beaches are on tap for the Palms. How are these super-sized artificial islands affecting the ecology of the Gulf’s water, a natural resource equally precious as oil? What do the rich1.1 billion cubic meters of sand and stone compete with nondemocratic states?”-
obtaining from these frag-ments in the oil which will be dumped for the Palms. How are these super-sized artificial islands affecting the ecology of the Gulf’s water, a natural resource equally precious as oil? What do the rich1.1 billion cubic meters of sand and stone compete with nondemocratic states?”-
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As Michelangelo’s Drawings: The Science of Attraction, Drawing, and Composition (2003) shows, the book’s set of categories also extend a familiar frame of reference to its object of analysis? For instance, residential spaces of the Middle East are discussed under the typological categories of villa, housing block, and suburb, which would seem to reflect the same epistemic imperialism the editors had criticized. Elsewhere, the book celebrates free-market capitalism in Dubai to the point of equating freedom in the market with freedom in human rights. And many writers seem reluctant to pin down the very power mechanisms behind Dubai’s development that they profess to critique. Namely, there is no discussion about the limitless ambitions of Dubai’s monarchical rulers. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, or the paradoxes of European and North American relations with nondemocratic states. One telling revelation when one compares their foreign policies for Dubai and, say, Iraq. As a result, many important architectural issues are bracketed in this book, and some are dismissed as “neo-left moralizing.” Thousands of construction workers migrate to Dubai, mostly from South Asia, with hopes of finding employment even though investors do not seem legally obliged to respect the migrant workers’ rights or standards. In a city of 1.4 million, construction workers hold the highest percentage of foreigners among other professions, with approximately 150,000 people. Yet the destitute housing conditions of these workers is here almost wholly overlooked, except when it is raised for a brief moment by Rem Koolhaas (yes, him). Moreover, class-based hierarchies are not at all

Pantheon’s Two Studies of Male Figures (1523), by instructors who prefer impersonal digi-tized rendering. The organizational clarity of the show—conceived by former Uffizi director Annamaria Petrioli Tofani and curated by the Morgan’s Rhoda Eitel Porter—makes it possible to see how each work belongs to its time and yet is uniquely expres-sive of its maker’s vision and style. The excellent reproductions in the fine catalog provide necessary insight into the line quality and tooth of the paper in a way that images on the screen cannot.

The first section, “Masterpieces,” includes exquisite drawings by well-known artists such as Michelangelo, Andrea del Sarto, and Bronzino. The haunting pieces by Rosso Fiorentino and startlingly loose sketches by Pontormo seem oddly modern in their emo-tive intimacy. The second section, “Vasari and His Collaborators,” focuses on the artist’s own drawings as well as those of others, many of whom are perhaps less known to an American audience but whose work rounds out our understanding of the period. The final section, “From the Studio,” reveals how many artists under Vasari’s guidance collaborated in the production of Francesco I de’ Medici’s elaborate project, a chamber that housed small “wonders” and provided a place for personal contemplation and possibly for alchemical practices.

This exhibition is designed for all who still cherish drawings, and demonstrates the truth of what Alexander Perri so aptly expressed in his work Michelangelo’s Drawings: The Science of Attraction, Drawing, and Composition (2003), “is not a bone displayed for veneration. It embodies a piece of the imaginative world of its creator. It makes visible the intimate mental spheres otherwise closed to all biogra-phers. It can offer insight into modalities of artistic thought and processes of compo-sition into methods of differentiation, into ways of assimilating reality, and into the secrets of the birth of an idea.”

The Morgan exhibition calls attention to the remarkable diversity of style and range of themes in this brief period of exceptional artistic production, suggesting to the viewer the possible applications of drawing for artists of all time. As such, this show power-fully affirms the growth of a personal vision and voice so necessary in our contemporary world.
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design with technology and architecture and interior 40 professionals who mix International, engages structure “the world’s first
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tasks as both table and bed. Long before the iPad, pioneers such as Cedric Price tried to dismantle the concept of the built object as an absolute form. But though Price consistently emphasized his collabora-
tion with an expert team on the Fun Palace, his name remains indelibly attached to it. “Because the traditions of architectural discourse, with all its conflated conven-
tions of social responsibility and personal fame, are deeply implicated in their actions, understanding their intention will always be a complex issue,” the editors write. And while this book suggests many reasons why it is not tenable, the notion of authorship is still very much alive.

Ten years ago, architects were invisible to most non-professionals. Today’s celebrity architects are household names. Although many of these top designers, like Price before them, emphasize the collaborative process that fuels their work, the public general has either refused to accept this con-
cept or has not caught on. For this reason alone, per-
haps it serves the profession to propagate the myth of the author, however insidious. For once, architects and their work are finally receiving the credit that is their due.

In another presentation, Kai Krauskopf, from the TU Dresden, presented research on the Stadtlandschaft, a method of town planning inspired by the Garden City method, most closely affiliated with the English planners Ebeneezer Howard and Raymond Unwin. In England, their projects such as Letchworth and Welwyn achieved a sort of canonical status, closely associating the approach with the country. Germany, on the other hand, typically conjures images of orthogonal planning favored by Ludwig Hilberseimer and Le Corbusier. Krauskopf showed, however, that German architects and planners successfully implemented the Stadtlandschaft strategy during the reconstruction of northern Germany, notably with Hans Scharoun’s plan for Berlin and Konstanty Gutschow’s plan for Hamburg. This was done, in part, to undo Hitler’s axial strategies planned by Albert Speer. Scholars struggled to place architects into stylistic categories. Roland May, who teaches at the TU Darmstadt, presented Paul Bonatz, a Stuttgart-based architect who practiced in Germany during World War II. Though some of his work aligns with mod-
emist principles, his eclectic and sometimes traditionalist designs defy what is normally understood as postwar German modernism.

The symposium was convened by two architectural scholars, Lynnette Widder, principal of aardvarchitecture, a RISD graduate student, and Andreas Kusterer, of Art History and Archaeology. Widder has

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Return Emigrations is by no means the only venue for engaging these sorts of ques-
tions. Seventy-five years ago, the Museum of Modern Art put forth one of the period’s most lasting definitions when Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock codified the International Style in an exhib-

Widder said, “The sky’s the limit.” Pointing out that she translated from German many of the sources she used in her project, she emphasized that most of this work is completely unavailable to English readers. “Even for readers of German, this work is quite unknown, so there is just so much left to do.”

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Anyone who has watched the radical changes in Times Square over the last 20 years knows that zoning and urban design guidelines set in place by City Hall have repercussions that may take decades to fully materialize. The Times Square of 1979, the year new zoning was put in place, in Midnight Cowboy, the Dustin Hoffman/John Voight movie filmed there a decade before. Other than the neon—brighter than ever, by fiat of the Department of City Planning (DCP)—little connects these two Times Squares, but the transformation has been a purposeful and planned one. As a series of sunken railway tracks, the Hudson Yards on the far West Side is a different sort of neighborhood, but if the City’s long-term planning ideas come to fruition in the next decade or so, the transformation will undoubtedly be even more dramatic. This is a welcome development, but one must still ask if the underlying assumption—that the rails yards must be decked over, and remain active throughout—is the right one. The recently created Hudson Yards Development Corporation (HYDC), part of the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) together with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) controls the 26-acre site. These two agencies commissioned FXFowle and WRT to design the zoning envelope and urban design guidelines. The plan incorporated pre-existing plans for development of 5.4 million square feet of offices around the intended site of the unbuilt Olympic Stadium on the eastern end of the yards.

Five major New York developers submitted bids this fall, and each worked within the framework of this urban design master plan that formed a T shaped junction to three adjoining areas, one to the north, one to the east, and one to the west. In the north and east, DCP had recently rezoned districts. Competitors were also asked to link to the Hudson River Park in the west (and the High Line Park in the south). The obvious question is why do we need these rail yards in Manhattan? If there were no decks, would we still want the nearly 50 million square feet of office space proposed on the Westside that will be necessary to pay for it? The Port Authority is building extra New Jersey Transit (NJT) tracks from Penn Station to Secaucus. Why can’t the Long Island Railroad run straight through this High Line Park on the elevated platform. The City could rethink the urban design and massing envelopes of the Westside without the platforms, still aiming for a super dense matrix of mixed uses, parks and green buildings close to a great new transit hub. The Port Authority and Related have bought up sites around the station to gain air rights. DCP and the ESDC created a micro-district planning operation plan for Brookfield Properties challenged the logic of this decking extravaganza, breaking the rules, preserving the High Line and making a distinction between the ground and the overhead.

In the north, DCP proposed decks over the access tunnels to the Lincoln Tunnel that cut of the Javits Center frin the west of Manhattan. The 2005 plan attempted to mask this monstrosity building which takes up valuable riverfront real estate, breaks the grid, leaks, is “too small” for exhibitors. It proposed a high level north-south funneled shaped “Hudson Boulevard” park on the elevated platform. To pay for this platform (and the extension to the 7 train below) the zoning envelope included towers with 28 million square feet of office space and 12 million square foot of residential, matching the Upper Eastside in scale (40+ stories high). This huge raised platform proposal creates enormous problems for all the Westside Yard entries that have to bring it back down to the ground in the west towards the river and link back up to the east to Penn Station. Only the Field Operations plan for Brookfield Properties challenged the logic of this decking extravaganza, breaking the rules, preserving the High Line and making a distinction between the ground and the overhead.

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