Since the Metropolitan Transportation Authority announced five bidders to buy air rights over its Hudson Yards that span the lower West 30s from 10th Avenue to the river, the Brookfield Properties bid has stood apart from the others. It rejected the MTA’s guideline to create a platform over the yard, arguing that it could keep the rail lines in service by locating buildings on the avenues and their entrances at street level. It also employed 11 architecture firms, including SHoP Architects and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, in a joint architecture and engineering team, as well as new air rights over its own Hudson Yards site.

One reason that Brookfield may have continued on page 6

The plan designates $20 billion for major initiatives, including $10 billion for subway and station upgrades, $4 billion for the long-planned Second Avenue subway, $2 billion for the East Side Access project, and $6 billion for other projects. The MTA has not yet released its capital plan for the next five years.

On February 27, the Metropolitan Transit Authority released its capital spending plan for the next five years. Coming in at $29.5 billion, it’s nothing if not ambitious. MTA Executive Director Elliot G. Sander told The New York Times, “The stakes are as high as they can be.” If passed, the improvement plans will push the transit system into the future. If not, it could return to the dark and broken-down days of the 1980s.

The group achieved a major victory in December, when much of the area was designated a historic district by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The hearing, which featured testimony from representatives of the Municipal Art Society and New York Building Congress, raised all the issues on which Solow and the city have already come to terms. These included expanding a public playground from 5,500 to 10,000 square feet, reducing building heights, and shrinking the proposed office building’s overall.

On February 25, a City Council hearing began the last phase of public review on Sheldon Solow’s eight-building megaplan for the East 30s, and considered the urban conditions within the six-block river view site. However, changes to the waterfront across the FDR Drive from Solow’s project may drive more horse-trading over the project’s specifics. The hearing, which featured testimony from representatives of the Municipal Art Society and New York Building Congress, raised all the issues on which Solow and the city have already come to terms. These included expanding a public playground from 5,500 to 10,000 square feet, reducing building heights, and shrinking the proposed office building’s over.
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With its gently curved roof and grand scale, the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Natatorium and Ice Rink resembles a wave breaking through the park. "The sensuous shape of the building is evocative of the movement" of the swimmers and skaters who will soon inhabit the space, said Blake Middleton, partner at Handel Architects. The 110,000-square-foot facility was part of the city’s bid to host the 2012 Summer Olympics, and it is now the largest recreational complex in a New York City park. The architects’ use of a subtle curve to join together two primary spaces, the pool and the rink, proved to be “a simple way to dramatically express a straightforward gesture,” Middleton remarked. The roofing system also echoes the 1939 and 1964 World’s Fair pavilions in the same park. The Olympic-size indoor pool features an adjustable floor that can move vertically over one-third of the pool, providing the ability to host both public swim and competitive meets. The rink is scheduled to open this fall, but the pool is now open to the public. This is one wave that everybody can catch.
Seeking to hire a replacement for outgoing director Philippe de Montebello, insiders say that the Guggenheim Board and any future director will refocus the museum away from expensive architectural globalization and toward its New York site and neglected collection. The rhetoric echoes an approach suggested by Peter Lewis, the insurance tycoon and former board chairman, who left the board in 2005 after Krens refused to abandon plans for more expansion. Lewis was the Guggenheim’s most important donor since the death of its founder. After leaving, he kept his promise to fund the conservation of the Frank Lloyd Wright pavilion’s exterior on 5th Avenue. To date, the combined Guggenheim board and director Philippe de Montebello. The pool features an adjustable floor that can move vertically through the park. “The sensuous shape of the building is evocative of the movement” of the swimmers and skaters who will soon inhabit the space, said Blake Middleton, partner at Handel Architects.

KRENS LEAVES—WHAT’S LEFT? continued from front page

Since our co-workers no longer find it amusing when, on answering the phone, we yell out, “Hey Mr. ___ someone from Emperor’s Club V.I.P. on line 3 for you!” we’ve had to look elsewhere for entertainment. We were flipping through the Hollywood issue of Vanity Fair the other day and came across Ingrid Sischy’s piece on the Palazzo Chupi, Julian Schnabel’s ulcer-pink succumbed Venetianoid building in the West Village. Seeing as the remaining units range from $27 to $32 million, the spread is as close as we will ever get to checking out the details inside, so we took a look. It is charming, in its way, though it looks about as Venetian as Alec Guinness looked Saudi in Lawrence of Arabia. But great eyeliner! Anyway, tastes more refined than ours also took a look: Johnny Depp, Martha Stewart, and Madonna have all wandered through. The latter, however, liked the building more than the view: According to Sischy, Madonna looked out at Richard Meier’s Perry Street tower across the way and declared that compared to Chupi, it looked like a housing project. Meow!

Pleasingly, this was not the first time that the Guggenheim molded in his image and an indelible imprint on museums internationally. Krens pioneered the creation of international museum outposts with the high-profile Guggenheim Museum Bilbao that made Frank Gehry a mainstream celebrity. The Guggenheim now has some half-dozen outposts, depending on how you count them, and the practice has been copied by the State Hermitage Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and more recently, by the Louvre and the Centre Pompidou.

Krens leave the Guggenheim over to unlike objects, like motorcycles and clothes, both in shows funded by interested manufacturers like BMW and Armani; cars by Cai Guo-Qiang are now in the 5th Avenue atrium. He also took art and high-profile architecture to gambling casinos in Las Vegas (with another project planned for a casino in Singapore, initiated without telling his trustees) and transported art from underfunded Russian museums to western audiences that were eager to pay to see it.

Yet the man who sought “positions” in regions all over the world left some lapses in his wake—in Rio de Janeiro, where public outcry over construction costs stymied a Guggenheim by Jean Nouvel; in Taiwan, where a Guggenheim master plan with buildings by Gehry and Hadid never got past the models; in downtown Manhattan, where a Gehry mega-museum died after 9/11; and in Guadalajara, Mexico, where a Guggenheim skyscraper by Enrique Norten hasn’t been mentioned again since its trumpeted announcement almost three years ago. Sources close to the museum say that before Krens stepped down, the Guggenheim struggled to find a replacement for the museum’s director, Lisa Dennison, who left last summer for a job at Sotheby’s. Her job is still not filled. Now the Guggenheim may have to search for two executives, just as the Metropolitan Museum of Art is seeking to hire a replacement for outgoing director Philippe de Montebello.

Insiders say that the Guggenheim Board and any future director will refocus the museum away from expensive architectural globalization and toward its New York site and neglected collection. The rhetoric echoes an approach suggested by Peter Lewis, the insurance tycoon and former board chairman, who left the board in 2005 after Krens refused to abandon plans for more expansion. Lewis was the Guggenheim’s most important donor since the death of its founder. After leaving, he kept his promise to fund the conservation of the Frank Lloyd Wright pavilion’s exterior on 5th Avenue. To date, the combined Guggenheim board and director Philippe de Montebello. The pool features an adjustable floor that can move vertically through the park. “The sensuous shape of the building is evocative of the movement” of the swimmers and skaters who will soon inhabit the space, said Blake Middleton, partner at Handel Architects.

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AND THEN THERE WERE FOUR continued from front page that a fresh rezoning would likely add at least 15 months to the schedule.

“Everyone who has worked on this will tell you they would like to relook at that zoning,” said a source associated with another bidder, who asked for anonymity. “I thought Brookfield’s proposal was entirely feasible from an urban design point of view, and there were good, intelligent principles in it.”

Those principles may yet drive some of the site’s planning. It will take at least a decade to build out the project, and no developer will want to sink a lot of capital into it without knowing the prospects for Moynihan Station just to the east. So most observers (and some participants) expect players to lean on or borrow from each other in executing the project. That means Brookfield could get back in, as an investor in a single building or by virtue of its control over the site’s eastern gateway.

Brookfield recently secured $105 million in predevelopment financing for Manhattan West, a 5.4 million-square-foot mixed-use project featuring twin SOM skyscrapers. That project, on a deck from 9th Avenue to Dyer Avenue, will abut Hudson Yards, so Brookfield will still affect how construction crews, buses, and pedestrians eventually cross from Moynihan Station (or Penn Station, if it doesn’t change) into the Hudson Yards site.

The local community board and other well-organized civic groups in Chelsea and Hell’s Kitchen have advocated a plan integrating Moynihan and the Brookfield site into plans for Hudson Yards. Their advocacy has already led the MTA to release design proposals to the public. After the authority selects a bidder, support for the Brookfield idea may bring that model back into the picture.

“We’re all wondering whether there’s going to be room for change in urban design,” said someone who has participated in the bid process since last year. “The community itself is looking for it. The problem is, I don’t think anyone is going to take the time to build consensus.”

Governor Eliot Spitzer, at a February 28 speech, promised resolution of Moynihan Station’s unsure financing: MTA spokesman Jeremy Soffin said the agency will consider bids this month. As economic assumptions change, Brookfield’s choice to sit out the term-setting on Hudson Yards may prove wise later on if zoning problems make the project seem less financially; it does mean the company won’t get involved at a later point.

ALEC APPELBAUM

ABC Carpet & Home in Manhattan’s Flatiron District still touts its ornate chandeliers, carved Indian beds, and Oriental carpets—but sleeker styles are on the way. With much fanfare, British designer Tom Dixon recently opened a store-within-a-store, and the Minneapolis-based affordable good design company Blu Dot has also carved out a space, with other companies soon to follow. Dixon chose the location because “ABC had the space and ambition to support us, and we didn’t overlap with their current merchandise. Plus, they asked us,” he explained. Officially launched in late February, his matter-of-factly titled Shop on the second floor of 888 Broadway features many items that fit right in with the ABC showroom’s industrial-looking space. Dixon’s 2008 collection includes numerous products that are deliberately a bit raw-looking, with a handicraft aesthetic.

Fans of the designer will appreciate the opportunity to see some furnishings that can’t yet be found elsewhere in the United States, including stainless steel Punch Lights inspired by the cooling fins of a motorcycle engine and the Link Table, made of rough-hewn, geometrically patterned cast-aluminum. The store also carries brass Beat Lights created by Indian artisans using a traditional hammering technique. His more ethereal Twist Pendant lights feature fanlike folds of cotton in a spiraling shape. With product installations designed by Dixon himself, Shop has the designer’s largest collection of items anywhere in this country.

Open since December, the Blu Dot’s boutique features items such as Barbarella tables, which have perforations inspired by pizza boxes. Blu Dot—previously sold primarily on the web with an emphasis on flat-packing and prefab—wanted a New York presence, and ABC offered a high-profile and economical means to achieve that, according to a Blu Dot sales associate. Herman Miller and the Italian purveyor of high-end plastic furniture Kartell are also reportedly pondering their own stores-within-a-store at ABC.

LISA DELGADO
DIARY WORK

Two proposals for 5.8 acres along the shores of the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn—both pitched by the city’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)—look broadly similar. “Plan A” offers 26,000 square feet of housing, 22,000 square feet of retail, 9,013 square feet of community space, and 98,529 square-feet of open space. “Plan B” promises 774 units of housing, 36,800 square-feet of retail, 26,400 square-feet of community space, and 98,300 square feet of open space.

But when it comes to design, the development proposals competing for a toxic brownfield could not be more different. On February 25, HPD presented to Community Board 6 the plans by Monadnock Construction/the Related Companies and the Hudson Companies for a mixed-use, mixed-income project meant to embody the urbanized and green future of the notoriously polluted waterway.

Because the board had no influence over the department’s decision, the presentation was more a courtesy than anything else, and the competing parties were not even identified. Only after the designs, by Handel Architects and Rogers Marvel Architects respectively, spilled onto the blogosphere did the department acknowledge them, but even then, the differences between the two projects were not fully appreciated. As Jonathan Marvel put it, “What we’re looking at are two different schemes at different ends of the urban spectrum.” Rogers Marvel’s design, a collaboration with landscape architects West 8, offers a towers-in-the-park approach, aiming to create a stronger urban fabric with more open space and storefronts. Their nine buildings range from six to 12 stories, with those on 39th Street clad in brick that transitions to a mix of brick and glass on the water. “With that number of buildings, we actually hope to invite more designers into the project,” Bob Rogers said.

The Handel design consists of three larger buildings that Gary Handel said are more reflective of the consistent street wall heights of the surrounding neighborhoods. “The goal has really been to create a neighborhood that is not a neighborhood in and of itself but part of the neighborhood,” Handel said. He also said that the clustered buildings creates a more energy efficient design, sustainability being a marquee of both projects on the contaminated site.

Craig Hammerman, district manager for Community Board 6, said the differences, at least to the community, were moot. “I guess either one would be acceptable,” he said. “But to a whole lot of people, we shouldn’t even be having this discussion yet, given the condition of the site.” HPD is expected to choose a winning scheme in March. NC

A LINE IN THE WATER continued from front page

footprint, Solow has also committed to a $300 million school, which the city would build by 2012. The 8.7-acre plan by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Field Operations, and Richard Meier & Partners looks set to go forward, said Jasper Goldman, who testified for the Municipal Art Society, but unresolved problems remain. As Goldman explained, civic activists worry most about the clustered building footprint. Solow has also committed to 22,000 square feet of open space. He may relent on some issues, like “the impact on the skyline of four nearly identical towers, in order to secure funding for deck construction or concessions on opening 39th and 40th streets.” At a February 21 announcement laying out the waterfront coalition’s agenda, Garodnick told reporters that he and the developer were “in the midst of discussions about height, density, and open space.”

These issues should be resolved in negotiations before late March, when the Council will vote on Solow’s plan. Goldman forecasted that an easement will emerge as part of a deal. “What’s less clear is the idea that streets will be public, and that’s what Council negotiations are for,” he said. “We said the developer should consider a Riverside South model, where open space is mapped as parkland but maintenance is contracted to a private entity.”

To Goldman, a new waterfront park would cap Solow’s development by tethering it to its most famous neighbor. “A waterfront park would create a place to enjoy looking at the UN Secretariat,” he said. But Solow’s flexibility about keeping his development fully accessible may determine how soon that park comes into being.

In this age of heightened environmental concern much is said about the recyclability of building materials. But perhaps the archetypal form of sustainable design is the recycling of buildings—changing older, inefficient structures to allow new uses. Designing in steel makes this possible, as was the case at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, where Seldorf Architects relied on steel’s strength, light weight, and simplicity in cutting, welding, and joining to create a modern, new library within a 19th-century townhouse.

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Architect: Seldorf Architects
Photog: Leonard Smith
Along the periphery of the newly-opened Sheila C. Johnson Design Center at Parsons, which includes several galleries, an auditorium, archives, and new learning and meeting spaces, floor-to-ceiling glass with deep aluminum window sills serve as indoor and outdoor seating for students, while a flush ground floor and sidewalk obscure the separation from the streetscape. Inside, a glass diamond-grid roof blankets the new interior quad, where an earlier maintenance shop and alley had been scooped out during construction like seeds from a melon half, said architect Lyn Rice, connecting the ground floors of four pre-existing buildings and offering a sunlit view of the “back-of-house landscape: fire escapes, water towers, pipes, and all.” The original 1917 concrete formwork marks are maintained and the novelty of the new spaces accentuated—quite obviously in the florescent green of the “back-of-house landscape: fire escapes, water towers, pipes, and all.”

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As a tireless advocate for the possibility and necessity of the radical in architecture, Stephen Perrella seized a moment at the dawn of the digital avant-garde in the 1990s to argue for a typology of architectural production that he coined HyperSurface architecture. Born on Staten Island, Stephen Perrella first studied applied art and graphic design at Iowa State University, only to later return to his boyhood dream of becoming an architect and completing his architecture studies at the Pratt Institute School of Architecture in 1991. He later went on to informally study philosophy at the New School as a means to deepen his understanding of the relationship between culture and architecture, and to develop a theoretical voice.

During the years of his architectural studies at Pratt, he sensed the movement in debate surrounding critical architectural practice and theory, editing two volumes of the Pratt Journal of Architecture, publishing the work and ideas of theorists, artists, and architects, among them John Hejduk, Mark Wigley, and Peter Eisenman, who would later become central figures in the late-20th century architectural avant-garde.

It was through his work on these journals at Pratt that Bernard Tschumi, Dean of Columbia GSAPP, invited him to become editor of the GSAPP Office of Publications. Last week, Tschumi said, “He came along right when architectural practice was changing from hand-drawing to generating images by computer, and he was a front row witness and promoter of that incredible time.” It was during his tenure at Columbia that he became known as a fervent advocate of the possibilities of and necessity for the radical in architecture, while editing both the GSAPP faculty newsletter Newsline as well as the faculty’s journal Columbia Documents.

Columbia in the 1990s was the seminal school of emergent avant-garde thought and practice, and Perrella became a champion of those he deemed to embody the radical in architecture; years later, many of these became established as the elite thinkers of our generation.

Perrella was not satisfied with merely publishing and advocating the radical in architectural avant-garde. It was through his work on these journals at Pratt that Bernard Tschumi, Dean of Columbia GSAPP, invited him to become editor of the GSAPP Office of Publications. Last week, Tschumi said, “He came along right when architectur...
MILTON GLASER TO TRANSFORM CHELSEA THEATER INTO NEW BRANCH OF SVA

CURTAIN RAISER

Last month, the School of Visual Arts signed a 26-year lease for a theater in Chelsea whose new interior and exterior will be designed by SVA interim chairman Milton Glaser, renowned designer and creator of the I Heart NY logo. The 20,000-square-foot Chelsea West Cinemas at 333 West 23rd Street will be converted into lecture halls for SVA students and faculty. Glaser, speaking from his offices on West 32nd Street, said that the theater was bought in part as a way to reach residents of Chelsea where several other SVA facilities are housed. The school bought two buildings on West 21st Street in 2006 and this February entered into a 14-year lease for a 5-story building on West 16th Street. The spaces will help house the school’s programs in arts criticism, digital photography, and design criticism, all created within the last five years.

The theater, originally built in 1963 as a one-screen movie house, has undergone the inevitable multiplying renovations of the 1970s and ’80s. In its most recent incarnation, it housed two auditoria with 350 and 550 seats each, and was frequently used for red-carpet premieres. Laurence G. Somers will be the architect for the redesign of the Chelsea theater. SVA hopes to open the theater by fall 2008.

Glaser, renowned for his graphic designs, says that the new space will fulfill a wide range of functions: “Seminars, lectures, premiers, corporate use, any number of cultural activities,” he said. But right now the exact programming of the building remains unclear. He expects that one of the stages will be enlarged and that the building’s currently nondescript facade will be used as an exhibition space for site-specific art. He hopes the exterior design will promote community involvement.

Established in 1974, Milton Glaser Inc. takes on a gamut of design work, including advertising, printed materials, logos, store displays, and what the company calls “dimensional work,” which includes product design and architectural interiors. Glaser designed a number of restaurants, including the Trattoria dell’Arte and the Rainbow Room.

On projects like the theater, Glaser believes his relationship with the architect is critical: “The architect is generally the key personality involved, and if you’re a designer you have a similar background. You need to work out a personal relationship…. It’s a matter of becoming devoted to the task at hand and not to your own ego.”

One of the most omnipresent designers of his generation, Glaser has weighed in on the ethics of design with his book The Design of Dissent, co-written with Mirko Ilic. It examines graphics used to promote or protest war. This fall, his new book Drawing Is Thinking will be released by the Overlook Press.

The book addresses Glaser’s concern that many of today’s students think of drawing as vocational, a means for earning a living only. “Thinking and drawing are for everyone, even for those who don’t get close to the fields of architecture or design. You could say a drawing is a way of perceiving reality—it’s a fundamental tool to understand the world.”

ANGELA STARITA
The sticking point remains how much to rezone. DNA is still hoping for a more expansive program, such as one passed in the late 1990s for Vinegar Hill, Dumbo’s eastern neighbor. That rezoning took three small, separate landmarked plots and surrounded them with a larger contextual rezoning. As a result, any neighboring development would have to conform to the historic district. Graziano said that with Dumbo, the city seems to be taking the opposite approach, only rezoning half the historic district.

Graziano’s plan extends beyond the historic district, meeting up with three others: Fulton Ferry to the west, Brooklyn Heights to the southwest, and Vinegar Hill to the east. The remaining southern boundary is the highway. “This is a very contained area,” Graziano said. “It’s really got some definitive boundaries, and so whatever happens within these 25 square blocks affects each area very, very significantly.” As opposed to current development trends for those areas, Graziano proposes the shortest build- ings of the district.

Jennifer Torres, a Department of City Planning spokesperson, said the city had already rezoned other parts of the district, which is why it was looking at such a small area, or there were other projects in process on sites outside the district, which remains DNA’s main concern. When the Dock Street project was proposed three years ago, a groundswell of community and political opposition defeated the project, but it is due before the City Planning Commission in weeks, highlighting the ongoing tension in the neighborhood over development. Two modern luxury towers that already border the Manhattan Bridge, one at 23 stories and another at 33 stories, exemplify the type of development DNA fears.

Doreen Gallo, vice-president for the group, said she remains hopeful the city will adopt or at least incorporate DNA’s proposal into its own. “I think our plan is great, I think it will fly, and it’s based in reality,” she said. “Unfortunately, the city’s rezoning may not even include all of the district, so it is important that we can work together towards that goal.”

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Atlanta and its neighbors in the Southeast seem to have settled into a permanent state of drought, but New York has the opposite problem: every year, the levels in the harbor rise. The two phenomena are flip sides of the same coin—the inexorable and accelerating process of climate change, which presents a difficult set of problems for architects and urbanists. More and more firms are exploring ways to adapt to its effects and plan for the future. Jeff Byles explores why, when it comes to sustainability,

**blue is the new green.**

**water works**

One tenth of an inch may just be a splash. But sea level in New York creeps that much higher every year, and worsening climate impacts could make that splash several feet deep by the end of this century, meaning a soggier future for nearly one million of the region’s residents who live within three feet of the spring high-water mark. Factor in worsening storm surges, and today’s 100-year flood zone may well become a 10-year flood zone—wreaking $350 billion in damage to New York City under the severe scenarios the state’s Emergency Management Office is now studying.

“If you look where major development projects are going in New York, many are located right in harm’s way,” said Klaus Jacob, the outspoken Columbia University expert on sea-level rise, pointing to condos sprouting in Williamsburg or Columbia’s Manhattanville campus, sited at a vulnerable low point near the Hudson River. “That campus will start to look like Venice in a hundred years,” he warned.

London has its Thames Barrier. Dutch cities are fortified for the 10,000-year storm. But New York?

“Coastal cities around the world that intend to be around for the next hundred years have done incredible work,” said Michael Fishman, founder of the consulting practice Urban Answers. “In North America, we have very little to show.”

That is starting to change as architects, ecologists, and engineers grapple with a hybrid of structure and landscape that is well-suited to the world’s rusting wharves. Some call it aquatecture—a new, blue alternative that is catching up with the green building movement as the next wave of sustainable urban design. “It’s not a building, not a pier, not a boat,” said Fishman, who teaches a waterfront studio at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation.
At Bass River Park in West Dennis, Massachusetts, Stoss’ carpet of hillocks (right) fuels the free play of complex ecologies. Rising lake levels nourish a new marsh (top) at Milwaukee’s Erie Street Plaza, by the Boston-based Stoss. Breaching New Orleans’ levees would blunt the harm from Mississippi River floods, as in this high-density housing concept from Praxis3.
For areas atop a newly graded edge at Brooklyn Bridge Park (left), Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates positioned significant plantings to skirt the 100-year-flood zone (below).

A subsurface wetland forms the heart of WRT’s design for Queens Plaza (above, left); runoff from the Queensboro Bridge feeds a lushly planted rain garden (above, right).
runnels with weep holes to collect water from paths and open spaces. A rain garden at the base of the Queensboro Bridge captures bridge runoff during storms, directing it to lush plantings. Below grade, a lozenge-shaped subsurface wetland detains water once it has filtered through street-level plantings. But working with water requires updated design chops. WRT and collaborators Marpillero Pollak Architects, who won a 2008 AIA New York chapter design award for the project, note that architects need to embrace a more unruly aesthetic. “A couple of years ago this project would have looked incomprehensible to a lot of architects,” Ruddick said. “There’s a kind of terror of things that don’t look organized and orderly.” If a Category 4 cyclone hits the East River, Brooklyn Bridge Park will be exhibit A of that messiness. But it should still be around. In Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates’ design for the new public space, the sharp-edged bulkhead is banished in favor of a more natural riparian edge among adaptively reused piers. Careful thought is being given to storm threats, said principal Matthew Urbanski. “We’ve gone to great pains to shape the land in such a way that the significant tree plantings are above the 100-year flood level, so we don’t get salt-water inundation,” he explained. Beyond a calm-water basin that shelters small islands of natural habitat, a stabilized riprap edge protects against wave energy. Upland hills are planted with meadow grasses and canopy trees, while farther inland, freshwater swales capture stormwater from adjacent asphalt before it reaches the river.

“There’s a general consensus that we have to start working within the natural systems and reinforcing them,” said David Hamilton, principal of Praxis3, which won a recent round of The History Channel’s City of the Future competition with a proposal to liberate Atlanta’s natural streams from 1,900 miles of buried pipes and catchments. Contending with severe drought in the Southeast, Hamilton’s Atlanta-based team, in collaboration with EDAW, BNIM Architects, and environmental engineering firm Metcalf & Eddy, proposed a series of “waterscapes” to restore the natural watershed and spawned piedmont forest instead of sprawl. Existing drainage systems would be converted into aquifers to store ever-scarcer precipitation. The team aims to develop the idea as a model for drought-prone cities, where bureaucrats are perking up their ears. “When you start running out of water, politicians start paying attention in a hurry,” Hamilton said.

New Orleans officials might want to consult his firm’s entry for a post-Katrina design competition that rethinks that city’s levee system. Collaborating with architect Lee Kean, Praxis3 proposed breaching floodwalls to create softer berms that ease over a block-size parcel in the Bywater neighborhood. Elevated green space weaves this natural terrain back into the city; a reflecting pool and cistern collect water on site. “The Mississippi River could actually go through its flood stages without doing any damage,” Hamilton said.

If there’s a bright side to climate change, it may be the opportunity to drag bolder designs out of the closet. “Some of these visionary projects are really legacies of the 1960s and ‘70s,” said architect Lindy Roy, who is studying the impacts of climate change in Africa with her students at Columbia’s GSAPP this semester. “We need to look at things with that kind of breadth. Otherwise, we make the sexy forms, and then all of the environmental stuff gets handed over to sustainability experts and engineers.” In other words, thinking the unthinkable can be an adventure. “Our goal is to make people excited instead of terrified,” said Adam Yaninsky, principal at Architecture Research Office (ARO), who is working with Nordenson’s Latrobe Prize team. ARO’s provocative entry for New York’s City of the Future episode did just that, making a virtue out of Gotham’s waterlogged fate. Envisioning low-lying neighborhoods deep-sixed under some 36 inches of water due to melting polar ice caps, ARO designed an optimistic new city for the year 2106, built of thin, pier-like buildings rising above Manhattan’s flooded downtown streets. Kayakers paddled languidly among ruined storefronts, as verdant promenades bridged the waters overhead.

Take that, Rotterdam. When the big one hits, we may not be high and dry. But at least we’ll be floating in style.

JEFF BYLES IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.
MARCH

WEDNESDAY 19
LECTURES
David Governor
Pamplin’s Venuses and Portraits
6:00 p.m.
Frick Collection
1 East 70th St.
www.frick.org

Bill Browning, Bob Fox, Laura Kerr, et al.
Integrating Sustainability in Design, Planning, and Project Funding
6:30 p.m.
Harvard Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy St., Cambridge
www.gsd.harvard.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
St. Lukes Projects 87
Geometry of Motion
1920s/1970s Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

THURSDAY 20
LECTURES
New York/China Dialogues
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
538 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

Herman Hertzberg
Social Space
6:00 p.m.
City College
Shepard Hall
Convent Ave. and 138th St.
www.ccny.cuny.edu

Paul Stoller
Climate Inspired and Climate Responsive Architecture and Computational Tools
6:30 p.m.
New York City College of Technology
Voorhees Building
186 Jay Street, Brooklyn
www.citytech.cuny.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Barney Whibley
Little Deaths, All the Same
31 Grand
6:00 p.m.
City College
Shepard Hall
Convent Ave. and 138th St.
www.ccny.cuny.edu

FIRST FRIDAY EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Utagawa: Masters of the Japanese Print, 1770–1900
Brooklyn Museum of Art
200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn
www.brooklynmuseum.org

McDermott & McGuire:
Because of Him
Chaim & Rea
547 West 26th St.
www.chaimandrea.com

MONDAY 24
LECTURES
Yoshitomo Nara
Future Local
6:30 p.m.
Yale School of Architecture
McNair Lecture Hall
111 Chapel St., New Haven
www.architecture.yale.edu

Chi Lord, Curtis Schreier, Felicity Scott, Mark Wasiuta
Art Farm: Radical Hardware
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium
113 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

TUESDAY 25
LECTURES
Michael Ian Kaye
Rock/On: A Casual Talk about Desire, Drive, and Design
6:30 p.m.
Fashion Institute of Technology
Kathy Murphy Auditorium
227 West 27th St.
www.ifi.edu

Frederick M. Dolan
Overcoming the Tradition: Schmitt, Arendt, Foucault
7:00 p.m.
New York University
Deutsches Haus
42 Washington Mews
www.nyu.edu/deutscheshaus

Jeffrey D. Sachs, Charlie Rose
Economics for a Crowded World
6:00 p.m.
Stirrings Festival of Technology
CUNY Graduate Center
6:00 p.m.
New York City College of Technology
Voorhees Building
103 Havemeyer St., Brooklyn
www.gsapp.cuny.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Guy Ben Nir, Siri Segal, Ruti Sella
Only Connect
7:00 p.m.
Chelsia Art Museum
586 West 22nd St.
www.chelsiaartmuseum.com

Therese M. O’Conor
James Tichnor: Wondering: design, systems, and delights
6:30 p.m.
New York City College of Technology
Voorhees Building
103 Havemeyer St., Brooklyn
www.citytech.cuny.edu

SATURDAY 29
LECTURE
Beverly Lovey
Warrior For Freedom
2:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Museum of Art
200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn
www.brooklynmuseum.org

SUNDAY 30
LECTURE
Caroline Schenman, Lynna Tucker, Emma Bee-Bernstein, et al.
Beyond the Waves: Feminist Artists Talk Across the Generations
3:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Museum of Art
200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn
www.brooklynmuseum.org

MONDAY 31
LECTURE
Thomas Heatherwick
Belief & Doubt
6:00 p.m.
Yale School of Architecture
McNair Lecture Hall
111 Chapel St., New Haven
www.architecture.yale.edu

APRIL

TUESDAY 1
LECTURES
Uli Margolis
Living Systems
1:00 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Bluel Center
103 Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

Vladimir Djurovic
6:30 p.m.
Harvard Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy St., Cambridge
www.gsd.harvard.edu

Overdrive
Postmasters Gallery
459 West 19th Street
Through March 29
With its screaming reds, oranges, and yellows arrayed in taut linear forms, Diora turns the industrialemoji art into a surreal pop room. Red bands radiate from a central point, appearing like a cross between a spider and an electrical device, according to the artist; high above, a security camera stares down from a perch in a Cooper-created red case. Other works in this solo show demonstrate the artist’s flair for taking drawing-like geometries and translating them into three dimensions. The wall-mounted piece Afterglow combines two-dimensional drawing with protrusions of colored paper, creating an elaborate scene suggestive of a convoluted mind hidden within an orderly exterior.

Laura Kerr, et al.
Bill Browning, Bob Fox, Laura Kerr, et al.
Integrating Sustainability in Design, Planning, and Project Funding
6:00 p.m.
Harvard Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy St., Cambridge
www.gsd.harvard.edu

FOR COMPETITION LISTINGS
VISIT WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM/DIARY FOR THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER’S FULL LISTING
Architectural commentators have become overwhelmingly preoccupied with the possible meanings of contemporary built forms, linking them to the so-called Bilbao effect, or to the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, or, simply, to the architect’s ego. In Support and Resist: Structural Engineering and Design Innovation, Nina Rappaport takes a different—and much welcomed—approach. She eyes canonical and well-known recent buildings and examines their structural makeup, introducing readers to the engineer’s role newly emerging in the design process. Many of the examples will be familiar to most readers. The CCTV in Beijing, the ICA in Boston, and the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart, for instance, are all widely published buildings. And their respective architects—Rem Koolhaas, Diller Scufio + Renfro, and UNStudio—have achieved a degree of celebrity that crowds all others out of the spotlight. Rappaport, however, opens the curtain on the other leading role: the structural engineer. She unveils the structural framework, and not just the artistry, of the buildings themselves, and in so doing, exposes the central contributions of engineers—by nature, more collaborators than celebrity figures—who make these buildings possible.

Rappaport, an architectural writer and the editor of publications at the Yale School of Architecture, argues that in the modern era there have been three stages when the engineer’s role has been particularly salient. The first was at the turn of the last century, when avant-garde architects such as Le Corbusier and Erich Mendelsohn became fascinated with engineering as they were laying out the principles of modern design. The second episode, she explains, occurred in the 1950s when new typologies such as the skyscraper were executed on larger scales. And the third critical moment of contributions by engineers? Right now.

With celebrity architects becoming increasingly engaged in making landmark forms, with new materials available to designers, and with new urban conditions, the nature of the profession has changed again. Contemporary engineering responds, establishing its “focus on the structural optimization of form, with a commitment to the architect’s design aspirations and program in performative rather than prescriptive engineering.”

She divides the book into 14 chapters, each representing a firm practicing today. Among these are Arup, Buro Happold, Guy Nordenson, Werner Sobek, Atelier One, and Bollinger + Grohmann. With each, she presents background (mostly biographical information on the founding principals), along with a few case studies from the firm’s portfolio. She mixes both lighter, personality-driven anecdotes with more rigorous presentation of case studies from each firm’s portfolio. This approach brings a spirit of contributions by engineers?
Shenzen has faced even greater setbacks. Urbanus for the Dafen neighborhood of quality of the project as a whole, in terms of development has reached a standstill. The readers.

In treating such sophisticated and specialized subject matter—often considered impenetrable by those without an engineering background—Rappaport’s discussion is both thought-ful and accessible. Her presentation is supported by a rich array of imagery. Unpublished construction shots complement photography of finished projects. She also includes drawings, diagrams, and sketches, revealing the process of design engineering.

The book’s organization reins in the effectiveness of Rappaport’s argument. In dividing the material by firm, she ends up providing a biographical cross-section of current practices rather than generating an overarching narrative to address new achievements in engineering. As a result, it becomes a monograph 14 times over and does not quite capture the larger story of progress it wants to describe. Treated as a survey of contemporary practice, however, it is an important work, illuminating to most readers.

One of the book’s greatest strengths is in conveying that design and engineering are not separate pursuits. The relationship between engineers and architects has been a perpetual curiosity to both practitioners and observers, with disciplinary boundaries at times hard to distinguish. A spate of recent publications underscores this interest. Building by Bill Addis (Phaidon, 2007) surveys the 3,000-year history of engineering. And Andrew Saint, an English architectural scholar, takes on the issue directly in Architect and Engineer: A Study in Sibling Rivalry (Yale University Press, 2008).

Rappaport manages to cut through the so-called sibling rivalry. She tells the story of engineering as an inherently collaborative enterprise and one that engages design at its most intrinsic levels of disciplinary knowledge.

In 1954, a truck en route from Spring Green, Wisconsin, pulled into the traffic turnaround at Fifth Avenue and 58th Street in Manhattan. A few Taliesin apprentices jumped out, unloaded a collection of Wright-designed plywood furniture, and took hammer and nail to the 2nd floor corner suite at the Plaza Hotel, soon to be known as Taliesin East. Frank Lloyd Wright had arrived in what he deemed the nation’s “ultimate proving ground,” a city he famously loved to hate. From 1954 to 1959, Wright lived at the Plaza while overseeing the construction of the Guggenheim Museum, entertaining celebrities, writers, and socialites, and conducting an unprecedented self-promotion campaign from his “elegant perch.” Frank Lloyd Wright in New York, by Jane King Hession and Debra Pickrel, is an entertaining and at times hilarious compilation of photographs, anecdotes, and brief thematic essays on the Taliesin East period.

Wright moved primarily to oversee the construction of the Guggenheim, but it was also a calculated decision to establish the third and final phase in his career. If the original Taliesin was about the advancement of organic architecture, and Taliesin West was about the possibilities of suburban development, the foundation of Taliesin East was not only about leaving “a lasting architectural mark on the glittering metropolis,” but a concerted effort to advance his Broadacre City philosophy from the nation’s media center.

Wright, who thought the Plaza “was built by the Astors, Astorists, Astorites, the Vanderbilts, Plasterbils, and Whoeveributs, who wanted a place to dress up and parade and see themselves in great mirrors,” felt the hotel was “the best part of New York.” The authors find it remarkable that the futurist had such...
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NEW SPIRIT OF CHINA continued from page 17

affection for the historicist design of the Plaza, but, after all, his life was full of provocative contradictions, which has always been a recipe for success (or at least publicity) in New York.

Wright loved to hold court with the press and clients in the Oak Room. As a former apprentice recalled, Wright delighted in “knowing how to be a nineteenth-century gentleman among people who still appreciated that sort of thing.” He preferred Irish whiskey neat, but the waiter almost always served it in an ice-filled glass. In response, as Brendan Gill recounted, “Wright would pick up a spoon...lift the cubes out one by one, and proceed to flip them across the green-carpeted floor, to the astonishment and pleasure of the other patrons.”

While a substantial portion of the book is devoted to the construction saga of the Guggenheim, Hession and Pickrel include excellent and concise descriptions of his other New York-related work. This includes his unrealized 1929 proposal for towers around St. Mark’s on 10th Street, an auto showroom amidst the newly built “poetry-crushers” on Park Avenue (Wright’s payment: fine imported vehicles), the Hoffman House in Rye, the Cass House on Staten Island, and his unrealized design for the Belmont Park racetrack.

In New York, Wright’s working relationship with Elizabeth Gordon, editor of House Beautiful, flourished and for a while, his organic designs seemed poised to become the nation’s dominant style. She encouraged him to tap into the “Populuxe” phenomenon and the consumer explosion of the 1950s, and Wright designed and marketed furniture, dinnerware, rugs, and other furnishings to the masses. The book captures the spirit of this marketing effort with a collection of images and copy from the magazine.

An entire chapter, called “Master of the Medium,” is devoted to how this genius of self-promotion thrived in endless television appearances, radio interviews, and press conferences. As Hilary Ballon notes, Wright was an early master of the sound bite and seemed to be tailor-made for television. He appeared on NBC’s Conversations with Elder Wise Men, told the Today show that grass and flowers would bloom in the streets of New York in 25 years, and even appeared as the mystery guest on What’s My Line? The most famous and captivating of his television appearances was The Mike Wallace Interview, which aired in two segments in 1957 on ABC, complete with harshly lit close-ups and plenty of grilling from Wallace. But the crux of the Taliesin East story is the arduous, 16-year process of designing the Guggenheim, Wright’s only major project in New York; one he promised would make the Metropolitan Museum “look like a Protestant barn.” It was complicated by numerous redesigns, code infringements, disputes with the museum directors, curators, and artists, and hostile criticism from the press and public.

When push came to shove, Wright had the ultimate expeditor, Robert Moses (a.k.a. “Cousin Bob” who was, in fact, a distant relative), on his side. After four years of negotiations, Moses reportedly ordered the building commission to “Damn it, get a permit for Frank. I don’t care how many laws you have to break.”

Even after the official drawings were approved and released, Wright still faced a standoff with the Guggenheim’s director, James Johnson Sweeney, over the design of the exhibition spaces—which included a protest from 21 artists including Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, and Robert Motherwell—and that grew so tense that Wright threatened to leave the project: “You all, curator included, know too little of the nature of the mother art: architecture,” he declared.

The controversial building opened to famously mixed reviews. One of the book’s many entertaining sidebars is a list of provocative descriptions of the Guggenheim from the press and public (“bobsled course,” “Hamburger Heaven on earth,” “big white ice cream freezer,” etc.).

In 1957, while touring the unfinished Guggenheim Museum with Aline Saarinen, Wright expounded on its natural energy: “You put a capital ‘G’ on God. All my life I’ve been putting a capital ‘N’ on nature. I know in my heart that it is all the body of God we’re ever going to see.” He left New York on January 27, 1959 and passed away in April—several months before the official opening.

KEEAN HUGHES IS A GRADUATE STUDENT IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AT PRATT INSTITUTE.

FRED BERNSTEIN WRITES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, METROPOLITAN HOME, AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

Densheng Noble Town, Beijing.
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www.blacklounge.com
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Blum
Axo Light
www.axolight.it
Spring is in bloom at Axo Light. Blum, the latest collection of blown-glass and metal suspended ceiling lamps by designer Marcello Furlan, is reminiscent of the form of a carnation. Dense, populated glass vases seem to blossom out of a chrome-plated sphere at the center; each vase contains a single lightbulb, which helps to propagate light in all directions. Available in crystal (pictured) or chrome-plated glass, the lamp comes in 31-bulb, 19-bulb, and single-bulb versions. A matching vase is perfect for containing the sorts of pretty, petaled plants that inspired Blum’s form.


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**www.archpaper.com**

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On January 31, at a memorial service for Herbert Muschamp, the late architecture critic for The New York Times, Lisa Dennison, now a chairman at Sotheby’s, revealed that she had been working with Muschamp on a series of exhibition proposals for New York’s Guggenheim Museum where she was then director. Her are three excerpts he wrote up on classical themes that Dennison shared with AN, showing Muschamp at his visionary best.

Via Piranesi

The ramp is a street—the Via
Piranesi—that coils through space,
time, and the history of ideas. The
side galleries are side streets, or the interiors of imaginary Roman
palaces along this street. The ground floor is a plaza, adorned with plantings and sculpture and ringed by cafe tables. In the
evenings, an orchestra plays.

The street begins at the top of
the ramp, with the excavations of
Herculaneum and Pompeii, breaks
off at the base, with recent build-
ings like the Seattle Public Library,
and generally adheres to a chrono-
logical order. Piranesi’s engravings
dominate the window displays. They are supplemented by the work of artists like Goya and Fuseli, who also probed the dark side of the 18th-century Enlightenment, and by designs for neo-classical build-
ings like the United States Capitol that were directly influenced by
Piranesi’s ideas.

The street also passes by
windows through which we get
glimpses of fields other than art and architecture, including archaeology, photography, stage design; cine-
matic; psychoanalysis; explo-
ration and tourism; and computer animation. The overarching theme of the show is the relationship between the individual mind and the modern city as a stage for col-
lective imagination. The Via Piranesi marks a symbolic threshold
between the inner and outer worlds. This ambiguity reflects the changing status of the architect that Piranesi
himself represented.

Where Palladio exerted the ideal of reasoned order into architectural
practice, an ideal that would materialize centuries later in the
New Objectivity of Mies van der Rohe and other modern architects, Piranesi stands for the articulation of emotional content. One of the
objectives of the show will be to trace the evolution of subjectivity
in architecture from Piranesi’s time to our own.

“Via” here should be taken to mean “through” as well as “street.” In Piranesi’s own time, collectors of his engravings discovered
Rome “through” Piranesi. This show should use Piranesi as a lens for focusing a broader set of cultural issues and relationships: How did conceptual art affect our perception of “paper architecture” like Piranesi’s? How have modern media like movies, television, and digital communications affected the relationship between interior and exterior space? What are the
origins of the “division of labor” that assigned to art the expression of subjective points of view and to architecture the task of manifesting
the ideal of objectivity?

The show can’t, in other words, be just a happy success story about
the struggle of the creative spirit against the forces of artistic
convention and social oppression. It must also reveal the potential for
architecture’s complicity with those forces—even when architecture
is at its most artistically creative. It should be faithful to Piranesi’s
enduring capacity to disturb.

Hey, Venus!

If there (sob!) can’t be a Via Piranesi, then it seems to me the best alter-
native is to present something tightly focused on the Wright build-
ing, an exhibition that offers a fresh interpretation of the design.

A good case can be made for interpreting the Guggenheim as, in effect, a 20th-century Temple of
Venus. This may seem whimsical at first, but in fact the evidence exists to back it up: in Wright’s biography; in his predilection for, and other
uses of, the spiral form; in his deliber-
ate archaism; in his religiosity about architecture; and, above all, in the inherent formal, spatial, and structural properties of the design itself, and in the connotations
Wright saw in them.

I would not propose that this is the sole “legitimate” interpretation of the building; simply that this
view has come into clearer focus 50 years after the building’s com-
pletion than was possible when the building was new. And do you
know what was the Number One pop song in early 1959? Why,
Frankie Avalon’s “Venus.” I’m stuck
on this image of people walking up Fifth Avenue and seeing that great Paleolithic fertility fetish thrusting her chest out in the street and thinking: “Hey, Venus!”

Antinous A GoGo

For all kinds of contemporary reasons, there has to be a show on Antinous. Antinous has to do
with the emergence of a modern cosmopolitan ideal. The emperor
HADRIAN closed the borders of the empire and dedicated himself to
the cultivation of Mediterranean culture. Antinous is the muse figure
and later god who helped inspire him in this ambitious project.

The simplest meaning Antinous held for
HADRIAN is probably the truest and the most modern. Hadrian was in
many ways an “outsider.” It can’t be easy for any emperor to find someone he can just be himself with.

I really don’t think this is just about Hadrian making a fetish
object out of his boyfriend, but about his wanting to create a place
in the ancient pantheon for the human bond as a condition of peace and a sense of feeling at home in
one’s skin.

NEW PRACTICES NEW YORK 2008

New Practices New York 2008 is the second curated portfolio competition and exhibition in a new biennial tradition sponsored by the New Practices Committee of the AIA New York Chapter. It serves as a platform to recognize and promote new innovative and emerging architecture firms within New York City that have undertaken unique and commendable strategies—both in the projects they undertake and the practices they have established. Distinguishing this award from others given to new practices is the attention focused on how the winning teams plan to better facilitate the type of projects that they undertake.

JURY

Amie Andreas, AIA
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Eisenman Architects
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The Architect’s Newspaper
Charles Renfro, AIA
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Winners receive:

Award announcement at Jurors Symposium on June 4, 2008
An exhibition at the Center for Architecture opening September 5 to December 2008
A symposium to discuss their practice on October 15, 2008
Lecture series and showcase at Hotel Showroom
One free membership in the AIA for 2009

Opportunities for additional exposure:

Features article and portfolio in September issue of Architectural Record and Guggenheim Show

Register online at www.aiany.org/newpractices.

New practices go on exhibit for 6 months at the AIA New York Chapter Center and Guggenheim Museum

SCHEDULE

2 April
Information Session for Entrants, 6pm
16 May
Registrations Due
30 May
Submissions Due, 3pm
6 June
Juror Symposium, 6pm
5 September
Exhibition Opening, 7:30pm
15 October
Winners’ Symposium, 6pm

Cover story

Herbert Muschamp

The Architect’s Newspaper
MARCH 19, 2008

THE LAST WORD>

VALE

ATQUE

AVE

On January 31, at a memorial service for Herbert Muschamp, the late architecture critic for The New York Times, Lisa Dennison, now a chairman at Sotheby’s, revealed that she had been working with Muschamp on a series of exhibition proposals for New York’s Guggenheim Museum where she was then director. Here are three excerpts he wrote up on classical themes that Dennison shared with AN, showing Muschamp at his visionary best.
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