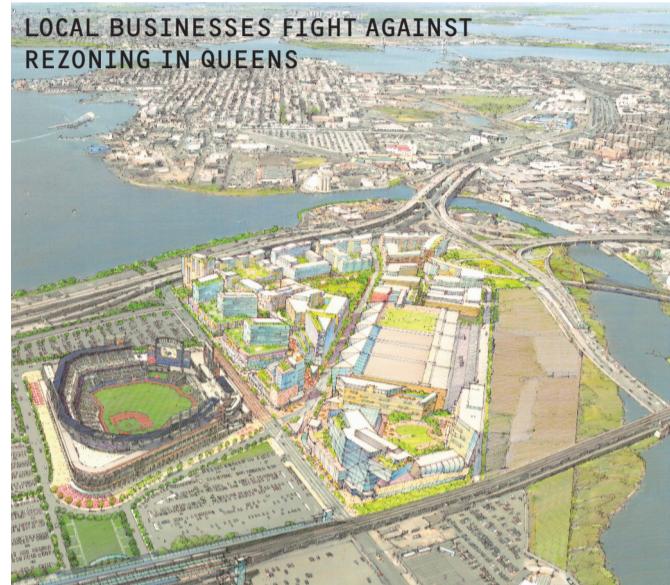


THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

08 05.07.2008

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NEW WILLETS POINT? NO WAY!

When a pothole forms in Willets Point, business owners there don't call 311; they call an asphalt supply company. "We have to fix it ourselves," said Jerry Antonacci, owner of Crown Container Company. "Going back 30, 40 years, the city just hasn't provided services for us."

The 61-acre site houses about 250 businesses, most of them auto body shops. Streets are rough, the soil is polluted (the

The city hopes to turn Willets Point from a motor-oil soaked industrial area into a green neighborhood with hotels and a convention center.

land used to be an ash dump), but for Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, it is a promising site for development. On April 21, the city certified a rezoning proposal for the area, which is the first step toward realizing a LEED-rated development **continued on page 8**



A WING AND A PRAYER

Since its unveiling in 2004, supporters of Santiago Calatrava's soaring-dove-inspired design for the World Trade Center transportation hub have seen it as a potent symbol of the city's rebirth. Ballooning budgets may turn the project into an albatross for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, however, which has mounted a yearlong effort to contain costs at the extraordinarily complex station and may yet deflate its final form.

Design changes come at a delicate time for the agency, as Governor David A. Paterson prepares to appoint an executive director following the April 24 resignation of Anthony Shorris. Some speculate his move could

leave Calatrava in the lurch as the project struggles to meet a scheduled 2013 opening.

With its PATH platforms, mezzanine, concourses, and wing-like roof spans, the station has been nipped and tucked since at least 2007, when cost estimates put the project up to \$1.2 billion over budget. Moreover, a recent risk report for the Federal Transit Administration—which is contributing a \$1.9 billion grant to the hub—found less than a five percent chance that the \$2.221 billion budget would be met.

According to the report, budget risks include rising expenses for underpinning the Number 1 subway line, shifting cost allocations for **continued on page 11**

MOMA NEIGHBORS SPEAK OUT AGAINST HINES' TOWER AT LPC



NO NOUVEL IN MY BACKYARD

The Architect's Newspaper
21 Murray St., 5th Floor
New York, NY 10007

It has been suggested that Jean Nouvel's design for a 74-story tower abutting the Museum of Modern Art helped the French architect win the Pritzker Prize a month ago. Whether there is truth to this or not, the building certainly earned the French architect little admiration or appreciation from dozens of the building's future neighbors. Instead, they ridiculed the project for more than two hours during a hearing at the Landmarks Preservation Commission on April 8.

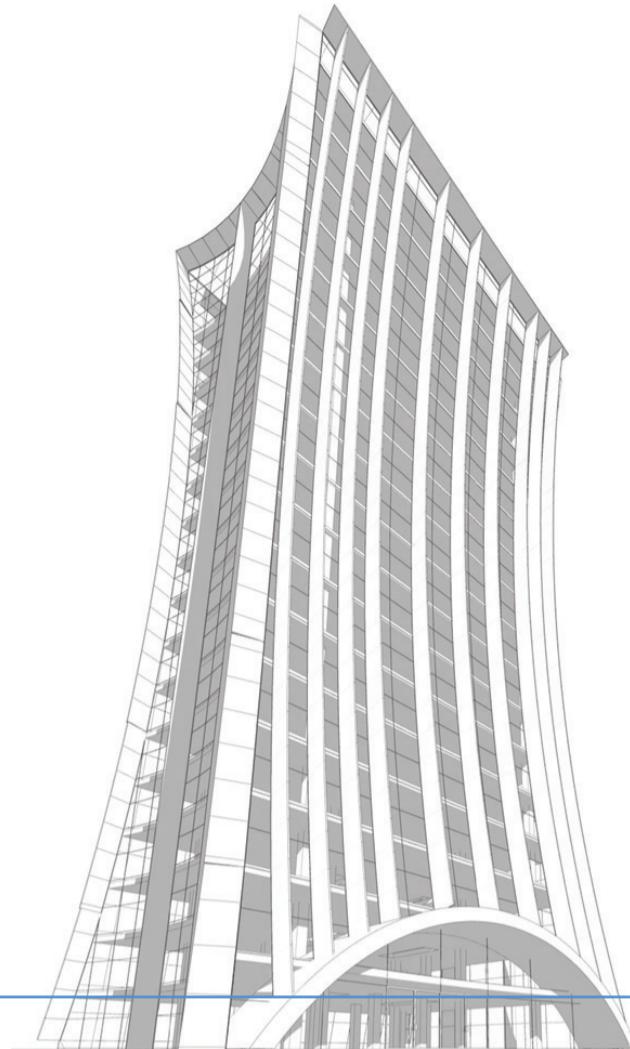
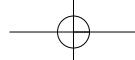
Though Nouvel and Hines, developer of the newly christened *Tour de Verre*, made the most detailed presentation of their condo/hotel/MoMA gallery yet, the designs were not actually under review. Instead, the commission was asked to determine **continued on page 5**

UN STUDIO DOES THE WAVE.

SEE PAGE 12



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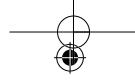
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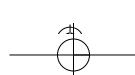
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LETTERS**HANDSOME BUT NOT MY TYPE**

Julie V. Iovine's "Jean Nouvel has Arrived" (AN 07_04_16.2008) assumes that the 75-story tower Jean Nouvel designed for the location next to MoMA will be built. It is as tall as the Chrysler building—if not taller—on a site next to MoMA in a Special Midtown Preservation Subdistrict. A lot has to happen in order to transfer the air rights from the University Club and St. Thomas Church before the tower can become a reality, and this transfer has been voted down twice by Community Board 5. The building is terrific, but belongs in a neighborhood like the one where Nouvel's West 19th Street condo will be built. Nouvel has designed a building that is inappropriate for the site and the neighborhood. I expected something unique, but not completely inappropriate.

RITASUE SIEGEL
NEW YORK

MISSING THE POINT

Joshua Barnett's Letter to the Editor ("Unaffordably New York, AN

DEARTH OF AMERICANS

From the Milan Furniture Fair in April to the hubbub spawned by the ICFF in May, spring is saturated with design but not, it seems, with American designers. Italian *Vogue* devoted over 150 pages in its April issue to a pageant of 76 posturing portraits of designers and architects (including two covers: one of Rem Koolhaas in a variety of Prada get-ups; and one with Marc Newson in DiorHomme). In all, five Americans were included: Daniel Libeskind, Frank Gehry, Karim Rashid, Craig Robins, and Richard Meier. Of course, these are all men (ahem!) of impressive talents and stature, but they hardly represent the promising pulse of the future of design.

The magazine was passed around in Milan with some consternation: so many pages, so little new ground covered. Of course, the *Saloni* has never been an obvious place to find American talent. They have never caught fire the way the British did ten years ago, or the Dutch, French, Scandinavian, and Japanese at other times, all to be vacuumed up by high-end Italian furniture manufacturers who prize excitement, innovation, and ideas over those stolid American values: price-point and availability. American designers are not so much out of their league as out of context in a world where design is often a fashion statement dressed up as technological derring-do. But perhaps being overlooked is not such a bad thing. Italian *Vogue* may have found it difficult to scare up name-brand American designers for their fashion spreads, but Paola Antonelli found some 138 Americans to include in her *Design and the Elastic Mind* show at the Museum of Modern Art, where the power of design is treated as something far more fluid—encompassing biomechatronics and computational and information design—than a fashion twist.

We seem to be in a schizophrenic design moment. British designer and Muji consultant Sam Hecht has talked about a division between "novelty acts" and "fundamental instigators of design." That rift is exacerbated by media and design institutions whenever they focus on novelty over purpose.

Take the Sketch furniture, designed by the Scandinavian group Front, using rapid prototyping and 3D files to draw furniture with a laser beam that hardens into liquid plastic chairs. The undeniably zingy video of the furniture's fabrication is currently on show at three major design exhibitions: at *Elastic Mind*, where it's celebrated for marrying motion-capture video technology to digitized 3D computer modeling for rapid manufacturing; at the Cooper-Hewitt's *Rococo* show, where it joins the timeline of our fascination with excessive curves; and at the London Design Museum, where it ranks among the top 100 progressive international designs. Meanwhile, back in Milan, we have Dutch designer Tord Boontje's over-the-top Fig Leaf wardrobe with shaggy doors fleeced in 616 hand-painted enamel leaves (taking up to six hours each to be painted and numbered), suspended from hand-wrought bronze tree branches against an interior of "bespoke dyed and woven silk." It is nearly impossible to visualize, and it will continue to be so since *The New York Times* locked it down for exclusive publication in some future issue of luxury-laden *T* magazine.

The super-tech Sketch chair and the ultra-handmade Fig wardrobe would seem to be at opposite ends of the current design spectrum. But in fact they are both novelty acts. If American designers haven't grabbed this kind of attention, maybe that's a hopeful sign that they are somewhere hard at work on design—not as a product, but a verb. **JULIE V. IOVINE**

07_04_16.2008) is well-meaning but misguided. Looking at the mega-tall and mega-costly downtown residential tower by Robert A.M. Stern and to be built by Lawrence Silverstein, Barnett seems to suggest that the money ought to be spent instead on providing affordable housing or repairing bridges. If the 80-story tower were being proposed for funding and construction by the city, the question might be appropriate, but last time I looked, Larry Silverstein was a private developer.

Sadly, too many well-meaning people in our city fail to see the difference between public need and private investment. Keeping the city's bridges in good repair is the responsibility of the city. Providing appropriate impetus to induce private builders to construct affordable housing is the responsibility of the city.

Catering to the needs and desires of those who wish to spend their dollars on 80-story condo units is what Bob Stern and Larry Silverstein do very well. Let's not confuse who provides which, with what, and to whom!

ANDREW ALPERN
PETER KIMMELMAN ASSET MANAGEMENT
NEW YORK

THANK YOU, STEVE

I had the pleasure of working with Stephen Perella ("Stephen Perella, 1958–2008," AN 05_03_19.2008) on his first built radical work: The St. Clare's Preschool/Early Childhood Development Center on Staten Island. It was a thrill working with him, and is a testament to his talent and vision that a 30-member Parish Council approved the design unanimously. Stephen and I worked together on the AIA Staten Island Design Awards Program for five years, and he influenced a small group of architects here on Staten Island. Stephen challenged us to think hard about meaning in architecture, and I, as well as others that were close to him, are better architects today because of it. He is missed.

DAVID L. BUSINELLI
SALVADEO ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS
STATEN ISLAND

NO NOUVEL IN MY BACKYARD continued from front page the worthiness of a transfer of air rights from two landmarks down the block: St. Patrick's Church (275,000 square feet) and the University Club (136,000 square feet). It is up to the Commission, as per the Zoning Resolution, to determine whether the transfer and its resulting development "contribute to a preservation purpose" and "relate harmoniously to the subject landmark."

The Hines team took a nuanced approach in their arguments for the transfer, suggesting it would move the development rights almost a block away from the two landmarks in question. This move would protect them from closer and therefore disharmonious developments, they explained. "The strategy here is to move the bulk into that higher density zone" along Sixth Avenue, said Michael Sillerman, Hines' counsel. The idea is that at that remove, it would just be another Midtown skyscraper. "You'll see a new building amidst a series of towers," said Ward Dennis, the project's preservation consultant. "Really, this is about an urban experience, not building side-by-side."

Nouvel argued that the design itself, while not stylistically analogous to the landmarks, would still have little effect on them. "The impact is less strong because the building is very narrow," he said. "I wish to enrich this neighborhood, to open the sky, and also to create a kind of signal you can read in the skyline of the city and you can say, 'The MoMA is here.'"

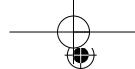
Furthermore, to deny Nouvel would, as the architect put it, deny the city a wholly new building type, a departure from its boxes and cylinders. Then, following a series of renderings reinforcing the building's slim profile, Nouvel concluded, "You understand we really can't see a lot of the building. This vertical line, this élan is very important to convey this sense of lightness."

Despite Nouvel's poetic performance and the near-breathless reviews in the architectural press that preceded it, almost every speaker lashed out against it, bringing a litany of complaints. The most persistent, and perhaps obvious, concerned the building's size—at 11,150 feet, it is taller than the Chrysler building—and scale.

The necessity and validity of the air-rights transfer also came into question. "These landmarks are already well taken care of," said Veronica Conan, president of the West 54th–55th Streets Block Association. Her group, which represents a block of anomalous residential buildings in the heart of Midtown (whose entire membership seemed to turn out for the hearing) contests the preservation schemes put forward by the well-funded parties involved in the plan.

The project was not without a few supporters, including David Childs—he called himself "a friend and admirer" of Nouvel—as well as MoMA heavies Glenn Lowry and Barry Bergdoll. Perhaps Nouvel's greatest promotion, however, came from a young, pony-tailed Pratt architecture student. The only speaker without notes, he delivered a blistering defense of the project, arguing that it will become an instant landmark.

Because the hearing ran past 7 p.m., a number of the commissioners had left, and, lacking a quorum, the project could not be discussed or cross-examined as usually happens at the end of a hearing. Commission chair Robert Tierney said it was a "terrific presentation" but would go no further. A commission spokesperson, **continued on page 9**



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For the design press, the second thing in April means but one thing: hotel rooms in gray and rainy Milan; and long, jetlagged subway rides to the Rho fairgrounds to tramp through dozens of pavilions, each the size of the Javits, in search of the latest and hottest in \$150,000 kitchens and high-end plastic chairs. Yes, dear readers, we went to the annual *I Saloni del Mobile*—tough work, we know! There was design on display everywhere in the Lombard city, from public buses with pictures of great-looking Flos lamps to the cover of Italian *Men's Vogue*, with Rem Koolhaas in a red double-collar shirt on the cover. We knew he was never a stickler for the old form-follows-function notion, but two collars?

For the foot-weary journalist, the days do not end when the fairgrounds close and we jostle past 340,000 other attendees to get back on the subway. (N.B.—thin Italian designers have very sharp elbows, so beware.) The real action at *I Saloni* happens after hours, at the parties. *Andiamo!* There's prosecco to toss back, focaccia to nibble, and gossip to trade! Many of these parties are in the Zona Tortona, which used to be where young designers showed one-offs, hoping to interest a manufacturer, but these days, huge companies like Swarkoski and Corian play host. There is still lots to see, though, perhaps too much: MAP principal Laurent Gutierrez joked to us that "in the art world, people need to understand a work before they like it, but in design, they just need to like it." This wise observation may help explain the scores of barely functional chairs, over-the-top shower heads, and similar objects destined either for the pages of glossy magazines, the dustbin of history, or both. But how to explain the work of the Czech design studio Koncern from Prague? It showed a line of broken glass carafes and goblets called "Domestic Violence" with publicity shots depicting a mad Czech designer attacking a young woman with a meat cleaver at her neck. Sex sells, sure, but uxoricide?

We were feeling very special and insider-ish when we got handed a VIP card by a fellow from Established & Sons (the London company run by Alasdair Willis that produces the work of designers like Amanda Levete and Jasper Morrison) inviting us to skip the queue at their party at La Pelota. We were delighted by the idea of putting aside our strongly held democratic principles for a moment—the *pollo* can wait!—and cutting the line for some prosecco. Unfortunately, every journalist in Milan seemed to have the same card. Hopeful partiers would flash their VIP credential, only to be told to stand in line with all the other cardholders. We put a good face on things, rediscovered our principles, and waited with the crowd.

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RE-REZONING 125TH STREET continued from front page future rezonings citywide. She presented her amendments before the council's zoning subcommittee, which then voted 10-1 in favor of the revised rezoning.

Building on complaints from Community Board 10 and other concerned citizens, Dickens negotiated with the Bloomberg administration for an increase in affordable housing, a reduction in proposed building heights, a relocation fund for impacted businesses, a strengthening of the arts bonus program, and nearly \$6 million in improvements to Marcus Garvey Park.

"Much has been said about the impacts of this plan and its focus on Harlem's past, present, and future," Dickens said. "It is my opinion that all of the components I have worked so hard to secure to protect my community will honor Harlem's past, claim Harlem's present, and provide for Harlem's bright, expansive future."

Dickens was applauded by a number of colleagues on the subcommittee for what they called one of the most progressive rezonings any of them could remember. "This is a major accomplishment that sets a template and a blueprint for all those communities of diversity that exist in our city," said Bronx councilmember Larry Seabrook, who also envisions the new rezoning leading to "a second Harlem Renaissance."

The plan, announced last October, met with widespread opposition from the community. Already reeling from gentrification, locals fear the rezoning will only exacerbate the problem. The City Planning Commission, which certified the plan last month, maintained that with height restrictions and enticements for cultural development, it would preserve the community's character while providing for its future.

The community then turned to Dickens, but she remained silent throughout the land-use review process until two weeks ago, when she declared, "There will be no rezoning plan signed into law if I do not get the protection for my community."

Dickens said her first priority was affordable housing. Of the roughly 3,900 units the rezoning will create, 46 percent will be income-targeted, with 900 guaranteed at 60 percent of the area-median-income and 200 units at 40 percent. And 50 percent of all affordable units will be two bedrooms or larger, to provide for family housing. This is the largest haul of any rezoning.

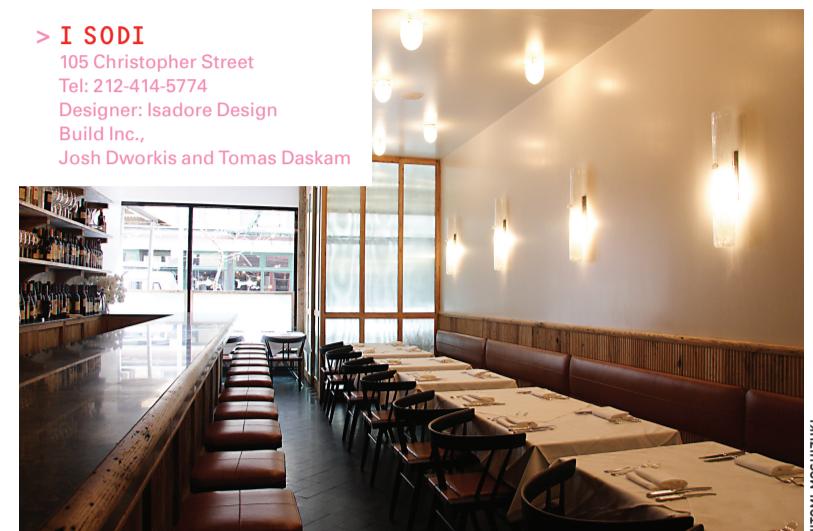
The revisions also create a \$750,000 forgivable loan program to assist in the relocation of the 71 businesses that the Department of City Planning expects could be displaced by the rezoning; these would be moved to within ten blocks of 125th Street. There is also a \$1 million fund to help with the potential relocation of other businesses on the street.

The pioneering arts bonus, which restricts development rights at the core of the zone unless an arts or cultural organization is given space, will now be overseen by an advisory board to ensure the organizations are representative of Harlem's indigenous artistic community. The terms of the arts leases have also been increased from five years to 15, with the option for two additional five-year terms.

On April 23, the full Land-Use Committee voted 22-2 in favor of the amendments, and the commission certified the changes a week later. A full council vote is expected soon after. "All the things we wanted to happen have come to fruition," CB 10 chair and rezoning critic Franc Perry told AN. "We were told this day would never come, but here we are." **MATT CHABAN**

OPEN> RESTAURANT

> **I SODI**
105 Christopher Street
Tel: 212-414-5774
Designer: Isadore Design
Build Inc.,
Josh Dworkis and Tomas Daskam



HITOMI MOCHIZUKI

First time restaurateurs Rita Sodi and Josh Dworkis joined forces in the conception of I Sodi, their downtown Italian restaurant. Combining Sodi's Florentine background with Dworkis' New York sensibility, the restaurant is a blend of two design ideals. From layout to furnishings and fixtures, designers Dworkis and Daskam created a comfortable, relaxed environment where patrons can casually socialize. Conceptually based on Adolf Loos' Kärntner Bar in Vienna, the restaurant sensationalizes the designers' concern for materials. The combination of unadorned forms with raw materials like stone, leather, and dark wood presents a modern look while staying true to traditional Tuscan style. According to Dworkis, the bar, made of marble and salvaged chestnut wood from a South Carolina barn, is based on a neighborhood cheese-and-meat shop that Sodi frequents when in Florence. The duo's attention to details continues in the leather-upholstered seating, inspired by Hermès leatherwork from the Deco period, and in the space's hand-blown glass sconces, vases, and specialty glasses, designed with Williamsburg artist Michiko Sakano. Dworkis and Daskam delicately contrast light walls with dark furniture and flooring to produce a light but rustic ambiance where contemporary meets traditional. **DANIELLE RAGO**

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MAY 7, 2008

NEW WILLETS? NO WAY!

continued from front page
plan that includes a convention center, hotel, parks, 5,500 units of housing, and 500,000 square feet of office space. This initiated the public review phase that could last for seven months. The same day, 29 members of the council came out against the plan in political opposition.

But while the mayor calls the area blighted, locals call it neglected. Last month, the Willets Point Industry and Realty Association (WPIRA), a group of the ten biggest businesses and landowners there, sued the city, demanding they fix the area's broken infrastructure and compensate property holders for the hit to their land values.

The city wants to move now—and has not ruled out the use of eminent domain—but landowners are convinced they'd get much better deals on their turf if only the properties were more attractive. "Put in the infrastructure, and development will take care of itself," said Councilman Tony Avella, who, with hundreds of others, protested the development near Shea Stadium on the Mets opening day.

But City Hall wants a hand in the plans. Announcing the development last May, Mayor Bloomberg explained that the

city's goal is to turn the zone into "the city's first truly green community, with buildings that use the latest energy-efficient technology and parks and open spaces that give New Yorkers new places to play." The NYCEDC also promises 5,000 new permanent jobs, and relocation assistance to businesses already there. But that's little comfort to locals.

"These are pie-in-the-sky ideas," said Avella. Relocating the businesses is impossible, he says, because "it's the only zoning of its kind in Queens." Antonacci said relocation means he shuts down for good. "I run a rubbish hauling station," he said, "and to relocate me, you have to promise you'll pull some strings to get me the permits I need because they don't issue these kinds of permits anymore."

"The city's intent on developing this area, and eminent domain continues to be a very serious threat," said Michael Gerard, a lawyer for the WPIRA. For Antonacci, the city's just not playing nice. "It's their way or no way," he said, referring to eminent domain's intimidation factor. "They've got that gun and they put it on the table. How are you going to negotiate with that?"

WILL BOSTWICK



make-up, character, or charm."

Still, residents are worried that this signals the end of Stuy Town as they know it. The tenant shake-up combined with lingering—though officially unconfirmed—fears of new developments on Stuy Town's beloved green space have kicked a long-standing effort to landmark the neighborhood into high gear.

"It's worth preserving, certainly now that the community is changing," said Susan Steinberg, vice president of the Tenants Association. Simeon Bankoff, executive director of the Historic Districts Council, said that making Stuy Town an official landmark wouldn't just protect the physical site—a towers-in-the-park postcard from the days of mid-century modernism—but also highlight the philosophies behind the plan.

"Met Life stepped up to the plate," he said. "Here was a corporation honoring the needs of regular people. In 20 years, when it's impossible to live anywhere in the city, Stuy Town will be a reminder that hey, it was possible, and maybe it can be again."

Steinberg doesn't hesitate to admit, laughingly, that Stuy Town's towers aren't beauty pageant material, but, she said, it's what's inside that counts.

"Every now and then we get a letter like, 'That place is ugly! Who are you kidding?'" Steinberg explained. "But they don't understand that there's so much more to it than that. While not an architectural stunner, it certainly has a lot of history."

WB

When Tishman-Speyer dropped \$5.4 billion on Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village in 2006, it was the largest sum ever paid for a single residential property. Now some residents worry that to make good on the investment, the company will some day make use of its 72 acres of open space.

Though big—110 buildings, 11,200 apartments—Stuy Town isn't exactly a cash cow. It was built by Met Life in the 1940s as affordable housing for veterans, and three-quarters of the apartments are still rent-stabilized. Tishman-Speyer is evicting illegal sub-leasers from rent-stabilized apartments and raising rents on market-rate units, sometimes by as much as 25 or 30 percent. This prompted an angry letter

in late March from city councilmember and resident Daniel Garodnick, who argued that the new owner's tactics are dangerously imprecise, as some legal, long-term residents are finding non-renewal notices in their mailboxes. "Unfortunately," Garodnick said, "many legitimate, long-term tenants are getting swept up in this. They're scared, angry, and frustrated."

Tishman-Speyer promised no major changes when it bought Stuyvesant Town. In a statement issued after the sale, CEO Jerry I. Speyer said, "The thousands of tenants in rent-stabilized apartments are completely protected by the existing system. No one should be concerned about a sudden or dramatic shift in this neighborhood's

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CONGESTION PRICING WILL BE BACK

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver may have squelched the plan to bring congestion pricing to Manhattan, but according to three members of the state commission that developed it, road-pricing isn't dead. At the April 18 assembly of the Regional Plan Association, Marc Shaw, the former deputy mayor who headed the mayor's Traffic Mitigation Commission, told a workshop session that the idea of getting mass-transit money from traffic would not die but would instead get a redesign. "It's going to morph into something like pure tolling of the East River bridges," said Shaw. "That would coordinate toll policies of the MTA, the city, and the Port Authority and do the time-of-day pricing everybody wants."

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg has affirmed his intent to upgrade citywide bus service even without congestion pricing in place, and Governor David A. Paterson recruited former Metropolitan Transportation Authority chief Richard Ravitch to work with the debt-saddled agency to find savings. All agree that the MTA desperately needs a new and self-replenishing cash source. "I talked to Ravitch a few minutes ago, and this is going to be on his agenda," Shaw said.

Anthony Shorris, the aggressive Port Authority chief who introduced time-sensitive polling at the Hudson River crossings (and recently resigned), likewise offered a formula for making road-pricing work. "Part of our success has to do with the structure of the Port Authority," he said. "We are insulated politically from the need for yearly appropriations. And institutional form matters for big endeavors that have long-term payoff and short-term pain."

ALEC APPELBAUM

NO NOUVEL IN MY BACKYARD continued from page 5 Lisi de Bourbon, said it was unlikely the project would be publicly discussed until it came back for a vote on the transfer within the next few months. This leaves the opinions of the oft-enigmatic commission a big question mark.

Afterward, Nouvel said he was not surprised by the reaction. "I'm always a little bit sad of that," he told AN. "Ninety-nine percent of the presentations are negative because they want nothing. Every project for them is a disagreement." Asked what he would do if the commission sided with the community, Nouvel began to speak before a Hines representative tried to cut him off. "No, no, I can answer this," the architect protested, waving the man away. "I can always change a project if I have a good reason. It could even get better." MC

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Nouvel's
Tour de Verre.



COURTESY HINES

The MTA's series of five-year capital plans, which the state authorizes, would furnish a modified strain of the politically-immune revenue Shorris invoked. But since MTA finances depend on fares, they will always face some static from lawmakers. Accordingly, fellow panelist and commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan, who heads the city's Department of Transportation, echoed: "I really don't think we should be eulogizing congestion pricing." Sadik-Khan treated the city's congestion as an urban design problem: Make the city pleasant enough for people on bikes and on foot, she suggested, and you will remove cars at the margin.

"There's no more room for cars, so we have to look at ways of using the real estate available to us for other means," she told AN. "I liken it to a network." The department has designed a bright bike lane along Manhattan's 9th Avenue and greened plazas in the Meatpacking District and Dumbo. A bike shelter designed by Grimshaw has arrived in each borough. Over the summer, Sadik-Khan told AN, the department will create new bike lanes on wide-enough roads and sharpen plans for more ferry service.

The discussion downplayed the kinds of bus improvements that congestion pricing would have funded. One such improvement, underway along Fordham Road in the Bronx, lets riders pay at a kiosk and enter through either door, and lets a bus trip traffic lights to make them stay green. "The Fordham Road route includes high-visibility dedicated bus lanes painted a bright terracotta color, fewer stops, and other improvements that result in up to a 20 percent time savings," the city announced in a March 25 release.

The city hopes to buff up bus lanes on 34th Street and on 5th and Madison avenues: It says it cannot promise upgrades in other areas without road-pricing. So Shorris' call for "long-term benefit" rang out after the panel, with the city-owned bridges the most alluring target for fearless politicians. But Shorris was a lame duck, having announced his resignation under reported pressure from Paterson three days earlier.

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CATHY CARVER

With two branches in Korea and a flagship presence in Beijing totaling 19,000 feet over three venues, Arario is one of the leading contemporary galleries in Asia. A new, 7,000-square-foot branch in Chelsea, designed by Adjaye Associates, shows the level of the gallery's ambitions in New York. With American eyes increasingly looking East, Arario's focus on contemporary art from China, Korea, and India will not hurt its prospects. "Right now we're seen as an emerging gallery in New York, but eventually we'd like to compete with Gagosian or Mary Boone," said Elysia Koo, a spokeswoman for Arario. Located in a handsome brick building that had previously been used for storage, the second-floor space has black oak floors and, usually, stark white walls (though the gallery routinely adds walls and for the last show painted the entire space black). Adjaye opened up the space with slim, tapered steel columns, and lit it with discreet white track lighting and fluorescent tubes slipped into slits in the ceiling. A monumental pivoting wall leads to the offices, conference rooms, and a large art storage facility. Mary Boone, watch your back. **ALAN G. BRAKE**

NY AND BOSTON INITIATIVES ADDRESS GLOBAL PROBLEMS

CITIZEN GREEN

Just before the first anniversary of the wide-ranging PLANYC sustainability initiative, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the MTA announced a few more pieces of their green agenda. On April 8, the mayor's office announced an RFP for solar installations on 11 city-owned sites in the five boroughs. In a separate move, on April 14 the MTA announced plans to increase use of renewable energy, support transit-oriented development, and develop green building standards.

The MTA's goals, if somewhat more speculative, are more sweeping than the Mayor's proposal, with the target of generating six megawatts of solar power at sites around the region, as well as additional renewable energy from wind and hydroelectric power from the East River. (As a point of reference, the Indian Point nuclear power plant on Long Island generates 2,000 megawatts per annum.) The solar power will be developed through an RFP in partnership with the New York Power Authority and the Long Island Power Authority, and will be the largest solar power project in the state. Following the recommendations of the 17-member sustainability commission,

which included architect Robert Fox of Cook + Fox and the Regional Plan Association's Robert Yaro, it also announced plans for green roofs on the Metro-North Harmon Yard Support Shop, the Far Rockaway Bus Depot, and the B&T Queens Midtown Tunnel building annex. "Thanks largely to our robust transportation network, the energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions of New Yorkers are a quarter of the national average," Governor David Paterson said in a statement. "By capitalizing on the MTA's network, we can further improve our energy efficiency and carbon footprints."

The mayor's plan calls for the city to generate two megawatts of power on city-owned buildings, which would more than double current solar capacity. The plan calls for private solar developers to own, install, and maintain the arrays, which will be located on sites including five schools, a community college, as well as facilities for the departments of sanitation, environmental protection, and transportation. "We looked for large, flat roofs without shadows," said Ariella Maron, deputy director of long-term planning and sustainability. "Schools were particularly important because of potential educational benefits."

Boston Mayor Thomas Menino announced a similar plan on April 9 to create a map of possible solar sites around the city. With \$550,000 in grants, including \$150,000 from the federal Department of Energy, the Boston Solar City initiative also seeks to lure private solar development onto municipal buildings through RFPs, and bring down costs through bulk procurement. **AGB**

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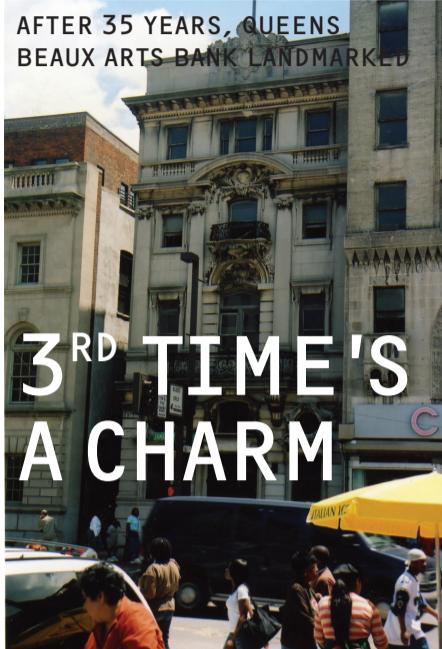
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overturned the commission a year later.

The commission and preservationists redoubled their efforts in 1991. Stark had died three years earlier, and his daughter Rita controlled much of the estate, including other historic gems like the defunct *Long Island Press* plant (since demolished in favor of a Home Depot). Rita Stark proved as intractable as Fred—both claimed landmarks designation would hamstring future tenants. In 1992, the newly empowered City Council denied designation.

Three years ago, Stark sold the property to Conway. Uncertain of what to do with the decaying structure, the new owners were approached by the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, which suggested landmarking. "They told them there was money to be had if the building was landmarked," Jeff Gottlieb, president of the Central Queens Historical Association, said. "From tax breaks to grants, it could be much cheaper and more distinctive than a new building."

The preservation effort also gained important political support from local council member Leroy Comrie, who serves on the council's landmarks subcommittee and is often cautious when it comes to preservation. "If we can't afford to maintain these structures and it costs us an economic opportunity, it's no good for anyone," he told AN.

Commission staff spent months working with Conway and Comrie, eventually convincing both of the benefits of landmarking. Conway almost pulled out at the last minute, but Comrie threatened to designate the building regardless, and the company acquiesced.

"Conway's got a lot of guts to go into a retail site without glass," said Ken Olson, president of Poko Partners, which is developing the bank building with Conway. "Then again, you've got all these crummy buildings and then this unbelievable building."

Tierney said he was just happy that the struggle was over. "It's a small building, but it's also a very big building in terms of how the landmarks commission operates," he said. "It shows we can persevere and understand the issues, and can work with people. It's just a matter of talking it through." MC

Conway, the local discount department store chain, is known for its thoroughly marked-down dry goods in nondescript, fluorescent-lit buildings. But when the newest store opens next year in a sumptuous, four-story Beaux Arts building in Jamaica, Queens, it will achieve something the Landmarks Preservation Commission has struggled with for over three decades: the salvation of the old Jamaica Savings Bank.

Following months of landmarks vetting, the City Council voted unanimously to designate the 1898 bank building on April 16. The structure had not been so fortunate in earlier landmarking attempts; Commission chair Robert Tierney went so far as to compare the whole affair to *Groundhog Day*—the same situation experienced again and again.

In 1974, a decade after the bank moved across the street, the commission voted to landmark the site, calling it the finest example of Beaux Arts architecture in the borough. The building's owner, Fred Stark, and the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, tended to disagree. Through their urging, the Board of Estimate

handle on the costs was absolutely critical," he said. "But the changes that are being contemplated in Lower Manhattan are simply to bring this thing within shooting distance of the original budget."

That decision may hinge on Shorris' successor. A likely candidate for the post is Christopher Ward, the agency's former chief of planning and external affairs—and a respected transportation figure.

"If it's Chris Ward, they're changing one high-quality person for another high-quality person," said Robert Paaswell, director of the University Transportation Research Center at the City College of New York. A new leader may also reflect chairman Anthony Coscia's vision of a resurgent role for the Port Authority, such as overseeing work on Penn Station.

And regardless of perceived missteps at the World Trade Center hub, the Port Authority remains the region's unparalleled public builder, said Kent Barwick, president of the Municipal Art Society.

"The basic infrastructure of the city can't really be built and managed by the private sector," he said. "We have the feeling that a stronger hand and a better-coordinated hand at Moynihan Station and the West Side would be very good." JEFF BYLES

A WING AND A PRAYER continued from front page infrastructure, and scope creep at the project, which is designed by the Downtown Design Partnership, a joint venture of STV and DMJM Harris, in association with Calatrava.

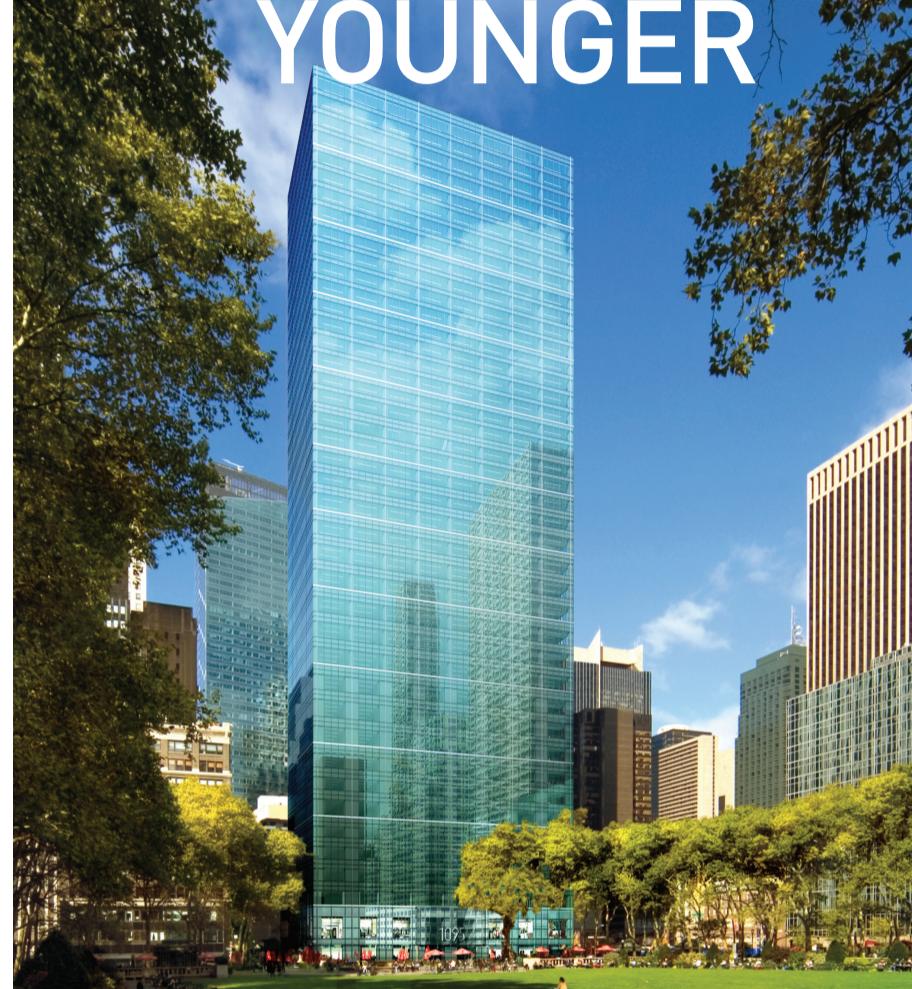
Port Authority officials said scale-downs will spare Calatrava's signature, above-ground structure. Still, changes could dramatically reshape mezzanine areas, platforms, and other features as the agency wrestles to bring the design in on budget.

Federal officials acknowledge the project's complexity. "We know that we're not going to keep the budget to \$2.2 billion," said James Simpson, the FTA administrator, who called that figure a "back-of-the-envelope number" drawn up after September 11, 2001. With a final tab at perhaps \$3 billion, he said, the FTA's watchdog role will continue. But, he added, "Any overruns would be paid for by the Port Authority."

Some have suggested that a new agency leader could slash the hub's federal funding, diverting cash to other projects such as the languishing effort to rebuild Pennsylvania Station.

Such a drastic move seems far-fetched, said Thomas Wright, executive director of the Regional Plan Association. "Getting a

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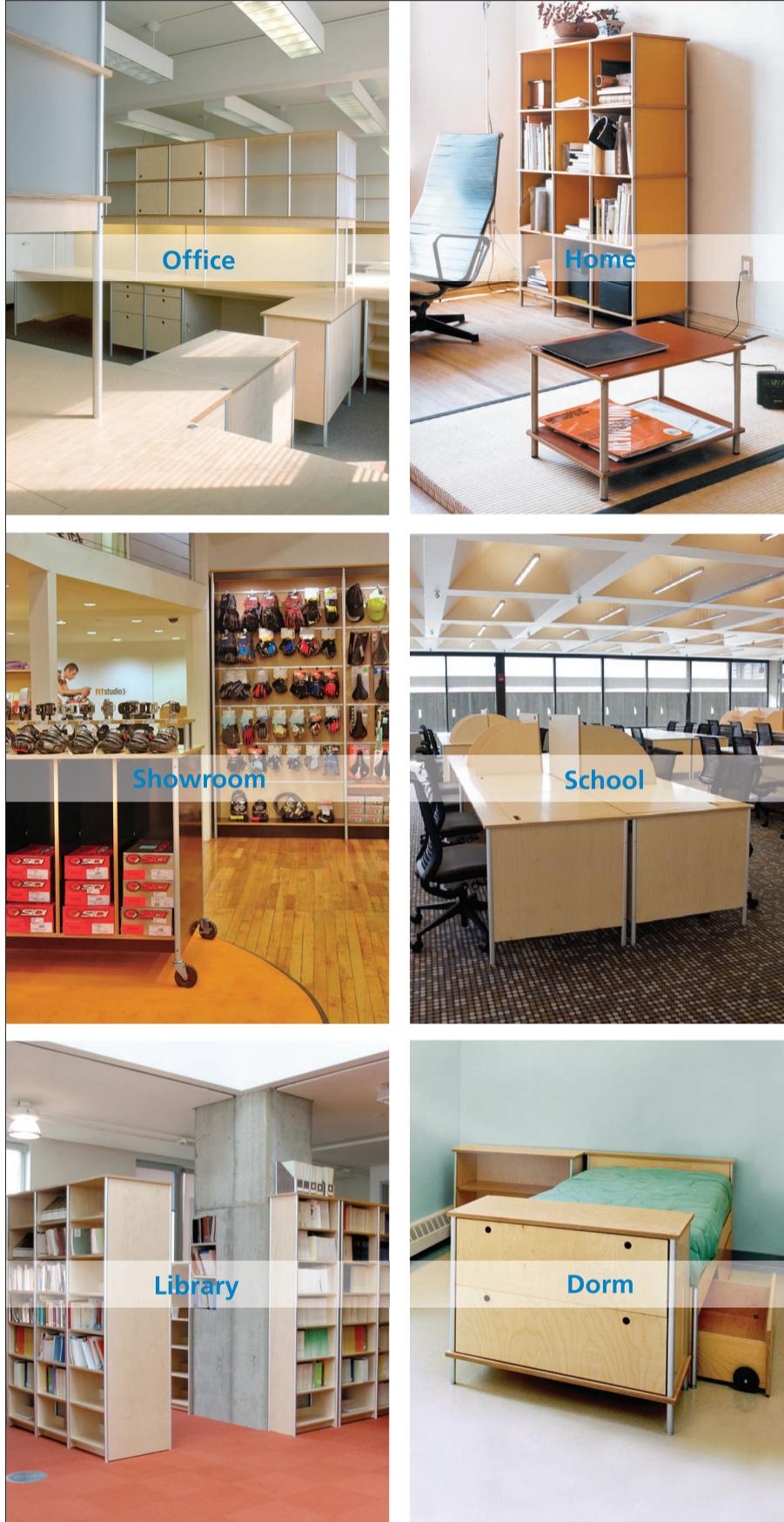
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UNSTUDIO BUILDS IN TRIBECA

RIBBONS IN THE SKY

Though famous for the winding and unwinding Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart and the iconic Erasmus Bridge in Rotterdam, until now Dutch firm UNStudio, led by Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, had not had an opportunity to build in New York City. On May 7, they unveiled the design for a 20-story residential tower in Manhattan, Five Franklin Place.

Situated amid the cobblestone streets of Tribeca, Five Franklin Place has 55 apartments and three living types—lofts, city residences, and penthouses. As in so many other high-end condominiums, the developer Sleepy Hudson will lure future residents with amenities like a well-designed gym, a private spa, an elegant lobby, and lip-smacking 360-degree views over Manhattan. As far as slick and sexy renderings in sales brochures can give a reliable idea of future spaces, these will be beautiful: operable walls in the bathrooms, floating mezzanines, internal glass-cab elevators for the penthouses, as well as walls connecting libraries, kitchens, bedrooms, and bathrooms that make one's thoughts drift to Bond Girls and secret service devices.

But it is the facade that will grant Five Franklin Place a special place among the architectural ranks of the city. Whereas most new apartment buildings either hide behind ostentatious gift-wrap or are wallpapered with generic patterns of glass and concrete, UNStudio promises a combination of contextualism and a subtle displacement of typical expectations. Inspired by the strong but often overlooked decorative horizontal elements found in the historic cast-iron buildings of Tribeca, the architects are wrapping corners, balconies, and terraces in swirling, reflective black metal bands of varying widths. Whereas a horizontal line in a facade typically indicates a new floor, Van Berkel and Bos lightheartedly play with the sense of scale that the passerby uses to read the city on a day-to-day basis. Their hori-

zontal ribbons placed at varying distances give no indication of floors, and will leave us questioning the height of Five Franklin Place. Once completed, these bands could give the building the strange and pulsating energy of an accordion at standstill—anytime, one could expect the building to stretch itself up to greater heights or come down to the level of surrounding buildings. By redefining Tribeca's notion of decorative horizontality, UNStudio's Five Franklin Place might effectively straddle the historicizing and the blingification most new condominiums appear to struggle with these days.

DIRK VAN DEN HEUVEL

UN Studio's Five Franklin Place.



COURTESY ARCHPARTNERS 2008

UNVEILED

TOREN

This 38-floor mixed-income tower promises to up the architectural ante in Downtown Brooklyn. Designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Roger Duffy with Peter Fajak, the rectilinear tower will look as if it is being eaten away at the edges through the use of ultra-clear low-iron glass at the corners and dark gray glass in the center. "We wanted to make the form less discernible through visual erosion," Duffy said. A custom curtain-wall will allow panels of varying depth, creating a uniquely textured facade.

Located on Myrtle Avenue near Flatbush, the context surrounding Toren is clearly in

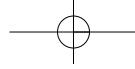
transition, and surrounding developments and streetscape improvements should push the area upmarket. The project will include sweeping views of Manhattan and Brooklyn on the upper floors. "From the beginning, we worked with the Economic Development Corporation to make sure this building is a significant addition to Brooklyn," said Fajak. "It's a major gateway to the borough." Seeking LEED Silver certification, Toren will include 40 below-market units and 240 market-rate units, including duplexes and penthouses on the upper eight floors.

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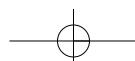


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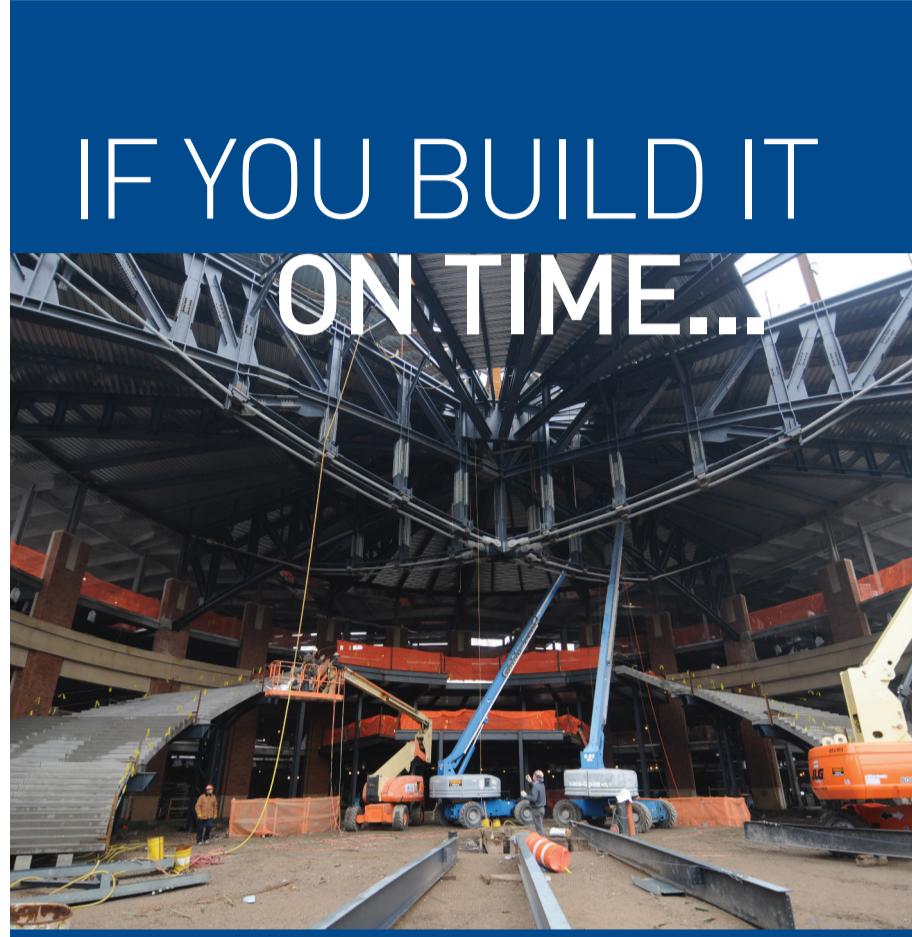
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COURTESY RAPSON ARCHITECTS

RALPH RAPSON, 1914–2008

One of the world's oldest practicing architects at the time of his death at 93 and the last surviving contributor to the first phase of the Case Study House program, Ralph Rapson distinguished himself as an educator and author of numerous notable modern buildings in the Midwest and abroad.

I first met Ralph Rapson around 1986 while at work on the exhibition *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses* for its 1989 presentation at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (MOCA). Rapson's unbuilt Greenbelt House project, one of the earliest Case Study residential designs for the program spearheaded in 1945 by *Arts & Architecture* editor John Entenza, had captivated me and my collaborator Craig Hodgetts, designer of the *Blueprints* exhibition. It was Craig's idea to present full-scale mockups of several houses in the exhibition; we selected Rapson's as the embodiment of the early, experimental aspirations of the program. Along with two other, later Case Studies, we installed this unbuilt work in the cavernous spaces of MOCA's Temporary Contemporary (now named the Geffen Contemporary).

At the time of our meeting, Rapson was in his seventies and the *Greenbelt House* project was a distant memory. Yet he graciously and generously assisted us with all manner of recollections, as well as numerous unpublished sketches and preliminary studies for the project that shed more light on the radical nature of his thinking about the "postwar house"—a subject of profound importance to many architects of his generation. The *Greenbelt House* was realized for the first time in the MOCA exhibition, complete with midcentury modern furnishings and objects including a Jeep in the carport and a mocked-up planted greenbelt bisecting the two wings of the house's open plan.

Rapson's contributions to the field of architecture and education are chronicled in the 1999 monograph *Ralph Rapson: Sixty Years of Modern Design*, published on the occasion of an exhibition held at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota. A graduate of Cranbrook Academy of Art, Rapson worked

in the office of Eero Saarinen from 1940–41 before moving to Chicago in 1942 to form his own practice. There he directed the Architecture Department at Chicago's New Bauhaus (later called the Institute of Design) until 1946. From 1946–54 he was associate professor in the School of Architecture at MIT.

A hallmark of Rapson's work was the use of innovative materials and a sculptural treatment of space and volumes. Besides his Case Study design, other early experimental projects included the 1938 *Fabric House* and the 1939–40 *Cave House* (both co-designed with David Runnels). In the early 1950s, taking a leave of absence from his post at MIT, he was employed by the US Department of Foreign Buildings as architect for American embassy buildings in Stockholm and Copenhagen, as well as US housing in Boulogne, Neuilly, and Le Havre in France. In 1954 Rapson relocated to Minneapolis to become dean of the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, where he remained until 1984 while running his own practice, Ralph Rapson and Associates. His son Toby Rapson and grandson Lane Rapson later joined him in the practice.

Rapson's Pillsbury House in Wayzata, Minnesota and the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, both built in 1963, were among his most notable designs. (The Guthrie was subsequently demolished to make way for a new building by architect Jean Nouvel; the Pillsbury House was also later demolished.) In the 1970s he realized several university buildings, including the Performing Arts Center of the University of California at Santa Cruz (1971, with Heinrich Bull) and the spatially complex Humanities/Fine Arts Center at the University of Minnesota at Morris (1973), as well as several other buildings for the Minnesota campuses. His corpus of work also includes housing complexes, churches, and a wide array of other building types.

A former student of Rapson's, Richard Koschalek, now president of Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, credits Rapson as a primary influence who introduced his students to the "thought leaders" of the time—people such as Siegfried Giedion, Buckminster Fuller, and Charles and Ray Eames, who came at Rapson's invitation to the University of Minnesota. "Ralph Rapson was a true humanist," said Koschalek. "He had a deep-seated concern with human welfare and truly believed that modernism could elevate people's lives. He believed that architecture was truly a noble profession." Koschalek also points to Rapson's sense of humor and superb drawing skills as among his outstanding characteristics.

Rapson was elected a fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1964, and was awarded the Topaz Medallion for Excellence in Architectural Education in 1987. His 1945 design for a modern rocking chair, called the Rapson Rapid Rocker and marketed by Knoll Associates, later became a classic of midcentury modern design and was recently reissued. His *Greenbelt House* for the Case Study program also subsequently formed the basis for a line of prefabricated modern houses called the "Rapson Greenbelt."

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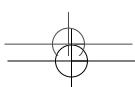
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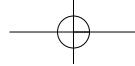
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Don't go to Leroy Street if you're looking for Leroy Street Studio. The firm's office is on Hester Street now, above the non-profit Hester Street Collaborative, a community design organization that is "a direct outgrowth of Leroy Street Studio," according to founding principal Marc Turkel. Aside from an obvious predilection for street names, the retention of the moniker and the change of location reflects the growth of the firm and its evolving practice, which ranges from high-end residential to commercial, public, and community work.

For Turkel and co-founder Morgan Hare (Shawn Watts recently became the firm's third principal), the evolution reflects an interest in construction, detailing, and community work that has interested them since they began their architectural education. The two

met as graduate students working on the Yale Building Project in New Haven, and Hare had previously worked as a contractor. "We always shared an interest in how buildings are put together," said Turkel. After graduation, Turkel worked for London-based Hopkins Architects, a firm known for their beautiful detailing, where he developed relationships with people who would later become clients (the firm has several projects underway or recently completed in England).

Turkel and Hare founded Leroy Street Studio in 1995 and relocated and started the Hester Street Collaborative in 2001 (now run by executive director Anne Frederick) with the idea of promoting community-based, participatory design. "We realized that on a lot of community projects, there wasn't the budget for the extra layer of quality and dignity that design can

provide," Hare said. Hester Street Collaborative is now supported by grants as well as fundraising from its board of directors, on which Hare and Turkel sit. Employees from Leroy Street Studio often lend a hand on their community projects.

For Leroy Street Studio, having the non-profit downstairs has the added benefit of helping to diversify their portfolio beyond the typical high-end residential, restaurant, and office clients. It also helps to reinforce what they see as the collaborative nature of their practice. Several projects, such as the Residential Gym, reflect creative solutions born out of brainstorming sessions with clients. "You're catching us at an interesting time. We're getting more involved in construction management and community design-build projects," said Turkel. "It's the way we want to work in the future." **AGB**

VICTORIAN ESTATE



RESIDENTIAL GYM



HOUSE ON FURTHER LANE

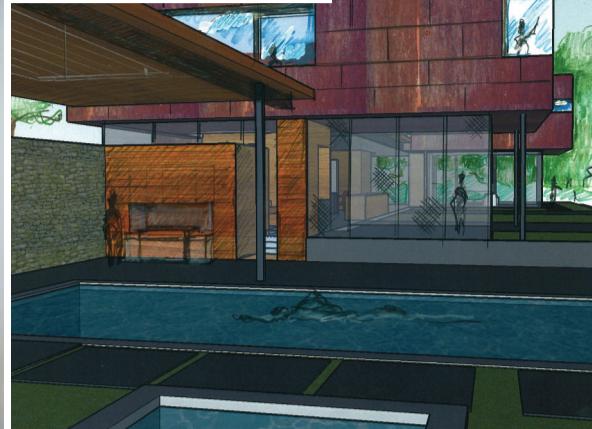


ALL IMAGES COURTESY LEROY STREET STUDIO

TRADING OFFICE



HOUSE ON STEARNS POINT ROAD



ALL IMAGES COURTESY LEROY STREET STUDIO

RESIDENTIAL GYM
SCARSDALE, NY

Walking the site with the client, the architects came upon the idea of converting this mid-century house on the property into a home gym. "The clients wanted to demolish the house, but we convinced them that we could reuse it in a new way," Turkel said. "And now it's their favorite part of the property." The architects removed the floor between the first floor and the lower level to create a half basketball court with a sprung gym floor, reinforcing the walls with steel beams. The gym also includes billiard, lounge, and kitchen areas.

TRADING OFFICE
NEW YORK

Located in Lever House, this 7,500-square-foot hedge fund trading office features a dynamic scalloped ceiling of painted MDF fins. "Anything rectilinear would have competed with the historic architecture," Hare said. "We wanted this to look like a recent intervention." The architects designed the ceiling to break up the monotony of the open office floor-plate. The fins hang from a conventional acoustic ceiling frame. Mechanicals are exposed above the fins and the composite steel and concrete slab was sprayed with black acoustic foam. The architects also organized the offices around the fund's art collection.

VICTORIAN ESTATE
BERKSHIRE, ENGLAND

Like the residential gym, this project involved marrying old and new and figuring out new lives for obsolete buildings. The architects converted a hodgepodge of Victorian outbuildings, including a barn, into other uses, such as an indoor pool and a children's playroom. "It's sort of like, architects as programmers," said Hare. "We were trying to create a dialogue between old and new, to show that the story continues." The architects loved the unintentional beauty of the patched masonry walls, which they preserved on the exterior, while on the inside they created a spa-like pool with perfectly unblemished surfaces.

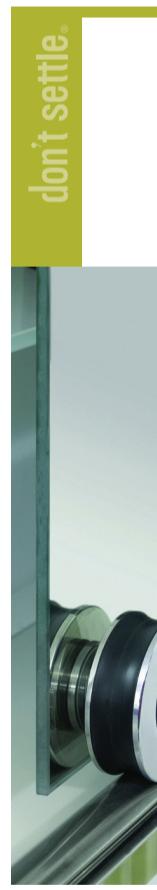
HOUSE ON FURTHER LANE
EAST HAMPTON, NY

On this twelve-acre site, the architects wanted to preserve as much land as possible, while differentiating the flat ground and creating a sense of place. By inserting a series of Westchester granite walls into the landscape, the architects created a number of semi-bounded courtyards. "The clients wanted as little maintenance as possible," Turkel said. Two structures—simple, rectilinear volumes clad in stone and Ipê wood rain screens—accommodate a large family house and a daughter's smaller house. North-facing facades are mostly glazed to provide generous views out to an agricultural preserve.

HOUSE ON STEARNS POINT ROAD
EAST HAMPTON, NY

Two copper boxes with stone retaining walls linked by a bridge, this house sits on a steeply sloping site. "Arriving at the top of the hill, you don't experience the house all at once," said Hare. Private areas, three bedrooms, and an office area are above with a distant water view, and public areas including the living and family rooms and kitchen are below. The property also includes a pool and guesthouse.

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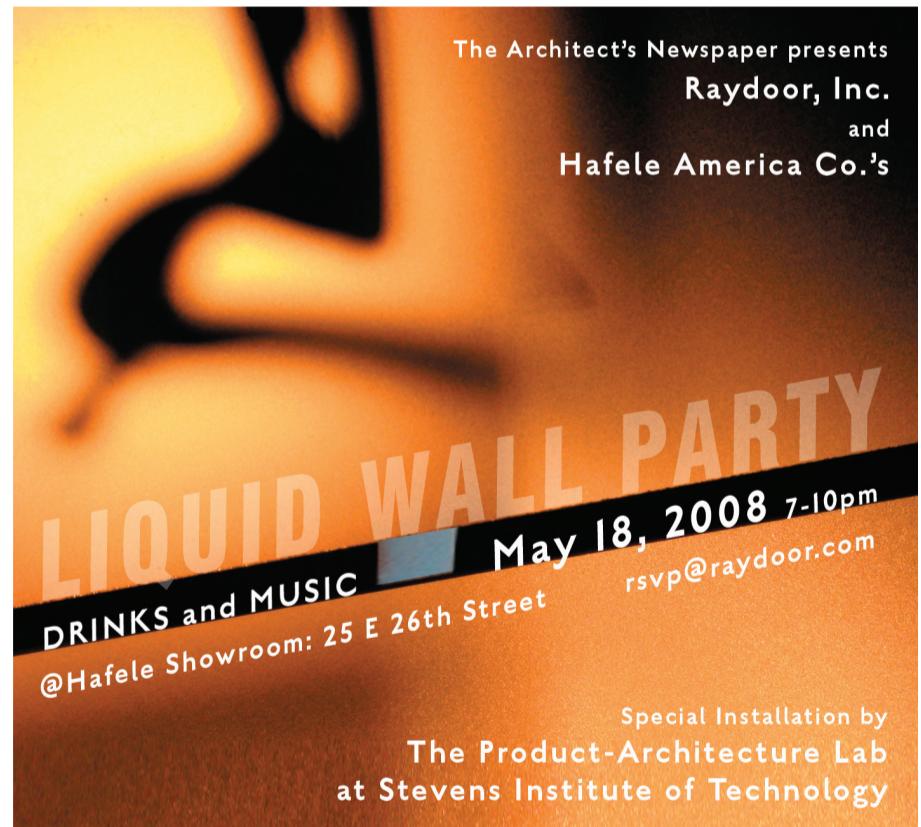
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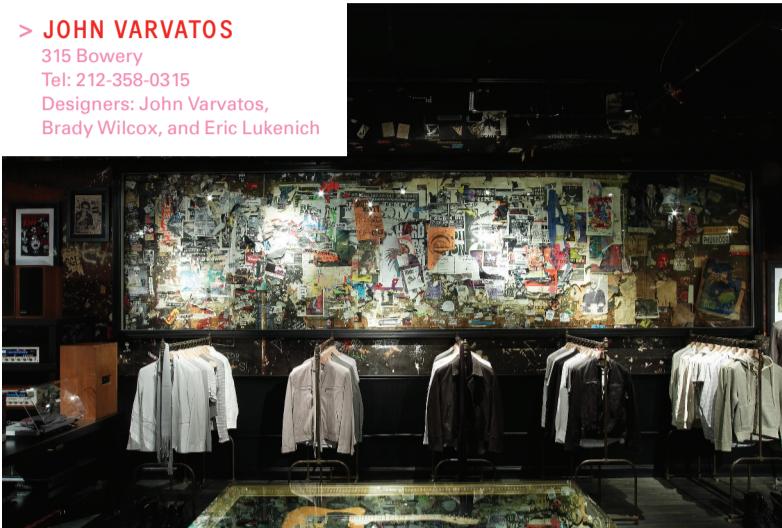


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COURTESY JOHN VARVATOS

John Varvatos, the rock-and-roll fashion designer, opened a boutique in the old CBGB storefront on the Bowery last month. Amid complaints that it co-opted a punk institution, and counter-arguments that it's better than a Starbucks, Varvatos told AN that he was only trying to "keep the heart of the space alive," not so easy when it is held together by little more than decades of urine, band stickers, and graffiti. Little else was left, as it had been packed up for a planned, now canned, CBGB Las Vegas. "We started by replacing the floor, which was caving in," said architect Brady Wilcox, who also helped design Varvatos' first stores almost a decade ago. Sections of sticker-and-graffiti-riddled walls were preserved behind glass, while those that were "cleaned" reveal cracked, peeling, and smoke-damaged paint that actually possesses an astonishing patina of blacks, reds, and whites, over which hang posters and musical instruments from Varvatos' ample collection. Varvatos said he wanted the store to be "clubby in feel, like the original space," which meant limited lighting—spots for the cloths—though a massive fixture composed of 29 small, identical black Lucite chandeliers hangs dramatically in the center of the space. Just about everything else, from the furniture to the racks to the cash wrap—an old Bowery speakeasy bar—has been salvaged and restored with anarchic flourish. And naturally, the space would not be complete without a fully equipped stage. **MC**

MORE PUBLIC PROJECTS EXEMPT

UPDATE
TO WICKS
LAW

After 40 years, the mandate that requires public construction projects to issue multiple contracts known as Wicks Law has finally been changed to reflect today's budgetary realities. In 1921, the law was established to require that public projects award separate contracts for plumbing, electrical, heating/ventilation/air conditioning, and general contracting. Projects exceeding \$50,000, an amount established in the 1960s, had to comply. New legislation adjusts this amount for inflation, setting the amount at \$3 million for New York City projects, \$1.5 million for downstate suburbs, and \$500,000 upstate.

Unlike in the private sector, where a general contractor coordinates the work, the state requires separate contracts to promote fair competition among bidders—a claim that has been called into question by architects for its inefficiency. Separate contracts require project managers to prepare four sets of drawings and specifications, process four contracts, and coordinate the work of the four contractors. There is greater potential for delays whenever the

work of one contractor is off-schedule and delays the work of another contractor. While the law was originally intended to prevent subcontractors from billing fraud, critics have argued that the law drives up construction costs and thus taxes. Many would like to see a complete repeal of the law. Meanwhile, contractors argue that the law is needed and that the revisions will drive up costs and prevent non-unionized contractors from competing for public projects, hurting their business.

In 2006, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said of the proposal, "These important and long overdue changes will make city construction faster, cheaper, and more efficient." He added, "We will continue to support a full repeal of Wicks Law, but I applaud state leaders for making major progress." According to Governor David Paterson's office, the new budget mandates will exempt more than 70 percent of public works projects from Wicks Law. Last June, Governor Eliot Spitzer announced support for reform, but it was not until April 10 that the legislature passed the 2008–2009 executive state budget, making the change official.

Also under the reform, contracting entities will be able to avoid Wicks Law through use of project labor agreements. A press release stated that "subcontractor protections will also be strengthened to ensure that employees on public works projects are treated fairly, and that the original intent of the bill—to protect subcontractors from bidding fraud—remains intact."

SARAH F. COX

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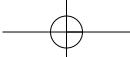
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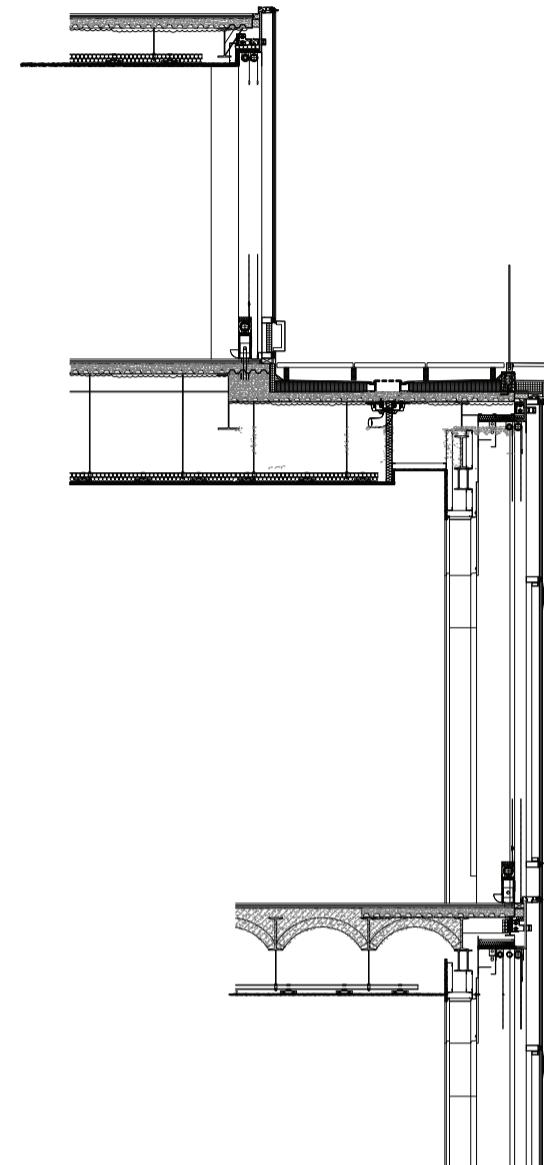


First constructed in the 1870s as the home of Tiffany & Co., 15 Union Square West has seen its share of changes. Designed by architect John Kellum, who also lent his pen to the Tweed Courthouse on Chambers Street, the corner property originally featured a cast-iron facade encrusted with cornices, pillared architraves, and rustication—just the type of edifice you'd expect to house the jewels and ornamental wares on sale

within. But by 1925, long after Tiffany had moved uptown following the trend in fashionable neighborhoods, after an underwear and clothing company had moved in and Union Square had become a hotbed of trade union activity, the Amalgamated Bank bought the building and made it its headquarters. More concerned with giving the working classes a fair shake than with maintaining an architectural gem, Amalgamated allowed

time to have its way with Kellum's Corinthian capitals and lintels. In 1952, when a hunk of iron molded like an acanthus leaf detached from the building and killed a salesman from Brooklyn, the bank decided to make its home safe for passersby. Rather than refurbish the ornate facade, it hired architect Eugene Schoen to strip away the building's decaying ornament and encase the entire volume in plain white brick. In recent years, Union

Square has swung back from its proletarian period. The well-heeled now walk its streets, and in 2006 Amalgamated put Number 15 up for sale. Brack Capital Real Estate scooped up the property and decided to develop luxury condos on the site, commissioning Perkins Eastman (PE) signature designer Eran Chen to transform the somewhat drab structure into a big-ticket apartment building. (Half-way through the project, Chen



COURTESY OFFICE FOR DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

departed PE to form his own firm, Office for Design and Architecture. PE stayed on as Associate Architect.)

After doing research, Chen discovered the history of the address and had the idea of incorporating the original facade—if any of it remained intact—into the new design. After stripping off the white brick, the team found cast-iron arches that had supported the molded work and framed the window penetrations—themselves simple monolithic elements with only a little fluting around the edges. This

left the challenge of incorporating these Gilded Age elements into an overall modern package that included a seven-story addition to the top of the existing five-story structure. Chen concocted a scheme of floating boxes for the addition, which would shift in alignment to form a series of setbacks and overhangs, creating convenient places for terraces, unique layouts for the apartments, and deal in an interesting way with

the zoning regulations. He then enveloped the entire volume in a glass and zinc curtain wall (the zinc was later replaced with anodized aluminum due to fabrication limitations).

The transparent glass envelope, broken by bands of blackened metal, would create a contemporary aesthetic for the entire elevation, while allowing the cast-iron arches to be seen from outside and function as sculptural elements within the apartments.

Actualizing Chen's vision presented myriad challenges for facade consultant Dewhurst Macfarlane and Partners and curtain wall contractor J&R Glassworks. Chief among these was achieving the architect's desire for unbroken glass surfaces while spanning floor-to-ceiling heights of up to 21 feet. Because the building is over 50 percent glass, the panels had to have soft-coat low-e treatments to meet the insulation demanded by code. Unfortunately, no U.S. manufacturer makes soft-coated insulated panels at



After adding seven floors to the 1870s structure (facing page, left), designers engineered a curtain wall that reveals cast-iron arches through floor-to-ceiling, argon-filled glass units (facing page, right). Setbacks create terraces with unimpeded views of Union Square, while gray-tinted, low-iron lites allow for maximum transparency (above).

the 17-by-6-foot dimensions that the design demanded, and the team had to source overseas, taking their business to the Austrian firm Eckelt, a subsidiary of Saint Gobain.

The final glass units are one inch thick, composed of one heat-strengthened lite (to prevent thermal cracking on the soft-coated side) and

one tempered lite (for safety) with the gap filled with argon gas, increasing insulation value. The glass is also treated with a slight gray tint to form an aesthetic connection with the black cast iron, and both lites are low-iron for maximum transparency, so that when you're hanging out in your \$8 million dollar apartment, you'll be able

to see Union Square clearly, and Union Square will be able to see you, or at least the cast-iron arches, clearly.

Of course, these large, sophisticated panels are enormously heavy and require serious support, a fact that Chen further challenged by requesting that the wall have no exterior mullions. It was no big deal to structurally silicone the addition's glass to back supports, but the longer spans on the floors below presented a problem. This was compounded by the fact that every two floors, the plane of the wall shifts in or out by eight inches—a transition banded by anodized aluminum spandrels—leaving as little as six inches to work with between the wall and the cast iron. In answer, the team developed a steel-reinforced aluminum stick system, a two-by-five-inch box shape that made for an overall wall depth of six inches.

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AT DEADLINE

BUILDINGS COLLAPSE, DOB FOLLOWS

Despite her efforts at reform, Department of Buildings Commissioner Patricia Lancaster could not outrun the real-estate boom that has riven the city. Following an uptick in construction accidents and deaths this year, Lancaster, an architect, resigned on April 22, days after she admitted to a City Council committee that the East Side condo building, where a crane collapsed in March and killed seven ("Tower Crane Topple," AN 06_04.22.2008), was in violation of zoning regulations and should not have been permitted by the department. Lancaster had overseen a number of reforms to a cash-strapped and corrupt department, including a massive overhaul of the building code, but she was also under pressure from a development-friendly administration.

DANGEROUS CRANES

One of Lancaster's final undertakings before she resigned was a citywide inspection of all tower cranes, the results of which were released on April 17. Of 29 cranes in the city, eight were found to be in violation—including those at the Trump Soho and Goldman Sachs headquarters in Battery Park City—and were immediately shut down, though seven have since resumed operation. And the first act of Robert LiMandri, Lancaster's temporary replacement, was a \$4 million specialized inspection program, which would hire 20 engineers to examine cranes, concrete, and excavation projects considered high-risk.

IT GETS WORSE

The AIA's Architecture Billings Index—the profession's rough measure of monthly architectural output—hit the lowest level in its 13-year history in March, according to numbers released on April 23. The index continued a slide that began in January ("Preparing for the R-Word," AN 07_04.16.2008), which bodes ill for the architectural economy and the construction sector as a whole, because the design phase is generally first in the building process. Inquiries for new design projects also hit a record low.

ROGERS MARVEL GOES PUBLIC

The city chose a scheme by the Hudson Companies, and designed by Rogers Marvel Architects with West 8 and Starr Whitehouse, for the notoriously toxic Public Place site on the Gowanus Canal ("Dirty Work," AN 05_03.19.2008). It is the latest project from the architects who have also had recent wins at the Battery Maritime Building, McCarran Park Pool, and Governors Island. The losing team was led by the Related Companies, which has had a rough run, by contrast, losing out at Hudson Yards, Pier 40, and Moynihan Station.

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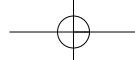
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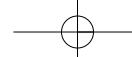
AT THE 47TH INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR IN MILAN LAST MONTH, THE MOOD MAY HAVE RICOCHETED FROM FEARS ABOUT THE ECONOMIC ROAD AHEAD TO EARNEST CONCENTRATION ON SUSTAINABILITY AND GAGA EXCITEMENT ABOUT ALL THAT'S ARTY AND LUXURIOUS, BUT AT LEAST A FEW DESIGNERS TRIED TO STICK WITH SOLID LINES AND GOOD DESIGN.

BY JEFF BYLES, JULIE IOVINE, WILLIAM MENKING, AND DANIELLE RAGO

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER



COURTESY BASF

FEATURE
24

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MAY 7, 2008

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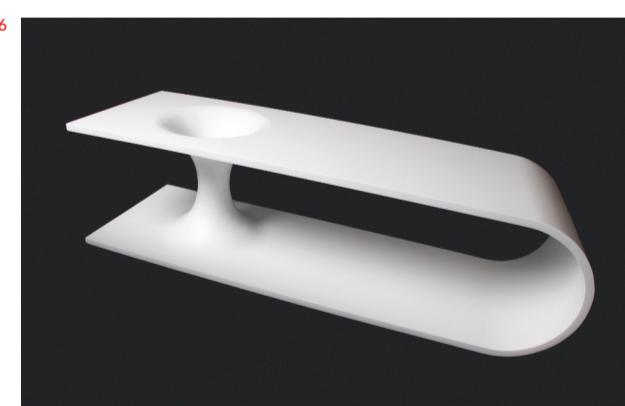
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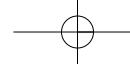


6



7





11 SURFACE TABLE


1 MYTO
KONSTANTIN GRICIC /
PLANK

Technology and design coalesce in Konstantin Grcic's Myto cantilever chair produced by Plank. Using a new plastic from BASF, Grcic was able to conceive the chair as one monoblock with a supporting frame structure and perforated seat and back that convey the feeling of flexibility typical of cantilever chairs. Stackable, the chair comes in eight colors: black, white-gray, traffic red, pure orange, gray, yellow green, aubergine, and light blue. Grcic's passion for technology and materials is showcased here along with his interest in detail and high performance.

2 HELLEU
FRANÇOIS RUSSO /
POLTRONA FRAU

Fellini would feel at home in this makeover of the classic director's chair, which reinvents old-school wood and canvas with modern flair. The fixed steel frame is clad in glacier-white Corian, while armrests and cross brace are of reflective chromed metal. In place of canvas, a saddle-leather seat and backrest are sturdily secured with a clever system of stitch-like connectors. Dedicated to the late Jacques Helleu, Chanel's artistic director for more than four decades, this chair melds simplicity and luxury, as evident in its finely worked

3 SPOON TABLE
ANTONIO CITTERIO /
KARTELL

Cramped New York apartments need not stint on style with the arrival of this studio-sized folding table. With a white, melamine laminate honeycomb top that is just over half-an-inch thick, this lightweight piece can be easily demounted via its foldable knee mechanism. High-tech materials continue in the molded, bi-component legs, which are made of modified polypropylene aluminum in sharp colors (like fetching day-glo orange). Named in the spirit of Citterio's Spoon Chair—which brought a snazzy glamour to office cubicles—this table does likewise for space-starved urbanites. And at more than six feet in length, it'll seat six with room to spare.

4 GHISA
RICCARDO BLUMER AND
MATTEO BORGHI / ALIAS

Designed as an urban furnishing for public plazas, gardens, or backyards, this modular seating system is built to sprawl. It can snake around trees, roll in waves across lawns, or lock step in bench-like ranks. The basic module consists of a closed-frame, ergonomic chair, with 11 tapering ribs that shape its seat and back. With mirror-image modules and

leather—available in Conero red, dove gray, blue, coffee, and olive. constructed of lamellar wrought iron, these heavy-duty chairs are built to last, with durable, exterior-grade finishes. And if you're alone in a crowd, they also do just fine as a single seat.

5 FRAME CHAIR
WOUTER SCHEUBIN /
ESTABLISHED & SONS

Only four years old, Established & Sons has already made a name for itself and for its unerring knack in identifying new British and now also European talent. The Frame Chair, designed by Dutch designer Wouter Scheubin, owes a bit of its angularity to Rietveld but is also cleverly engineered. Belonging to his "Walking Furniture" series that explores the mechanics of motion, the chair is made of beech laths assembled to support an oak-veneered plywood seat and backrest.

6 WORMHOLE
WYSSEM NOCHI

Inspired by space-time travel, Lebanese designer Wysssem Nohi crafted this table with a funnel-shaped column whose form is borrowed from astrophysics. The designer's flair for spatial flows stems from his career as an architect and urban designer who studied at the AA in London and Parsons in New York. With a sleek Corian skin, the Wormhole holds its own in Nohi's quirky line of limited editions and one-offs.

7 DOUBLE BOTTLE TABLE
BARBER & OSGERBY /
CAPPELLINI

Long, sleek, and ultra-modern, Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby's Double Bottle Table produced by Cappellini successfully combines innovative design with familiar forms. Part of a line of single bottle tables that have won international design acclaim, this latest version multiplies a singular element, the bottle, extending the size of the table to eight feet long and three feet wide. Rectangular in shape, the table connects to the two bottle bases with a simple yet resistant conical joint. A central element of furniture for any dining area, Double Bottle is available in white Calacatta marble or black Marquinia marble.

8 MR. IMPOSSIBLE
PHILIPPE STARCK /
KARTELL

Bad-boy designer Philippe Starck may have inspired this chair's moniker, but the official story goes like this: Tasked with creating a chair that would dazzlingly float in mid-air, Starck and his crack team at Kartell turned to advanced plastics technology to realize the impossible polycarbonate dream. This marvel of organic good looks is created by indestructibly welding two oval shapes together—the transparent frame and the seat—with a state-of-the-art laser process

that sets off beguiling visual effects. The seat is available in both opaque or translucent versions, while the circular, transparent legs complete the sensation of a pearlescent shell in suspension.

9 NINE-O CHAIR
ETTORE SOTTSASS / EMECO

The Italian designer Ettore Sottsass, who died on December 31 at age 90, was the first to recognize the generic beauty of Emeco's aluminum 1006 Navy chair, taking it out of its place as standard issue for submarines and government offices and putting it in homes and stores

in the 1980s. A few years ago upon telling Emeco that this was the one chair he wished he had designed himself, Sottsass was invited to remake it his way. And so he did, giving the iconic metal shape a more forgiving polyurethane seat in five bright colors, including red and orange,

that are as life-affirming as the designer himself. He also created a swivel armchair version.

10 KANU
KONSTANTIN GRICIC /
CASSINA

Gently curved and seemingly smooth, Konstantin Grcic's wooden armchair, Kanu, exemplifies perfect form. German industrial designer Grcic teamed with Italian manufacturer Cassina to create this basin-shaped,

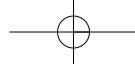
plywood seat that is deceptively simple. Two molds—one for the frame, the other for the seat—were required to accommodate the different curvatures required for the back and seat support.

Minimal in its design and available in white, black, and brown, the chair seems two-dimensional but relies on an interplay of conical volumes. Together, Grcic and Cassina create an impeccable icon of good design through careful crafting and state-of-the-art industrial technology.

11 SURFACE TABLE
TERENCE WOODGATE &
JOHN BARNARD /
ESTABLISHED & SONS

With radius corners that pour into rounded legs, this nearly 10-foot-long carbon fiber dining table is as slim and uniform as it can be at only .08 inches thick at the edge. From British producer Established & Sons, the Surface Table was designed by Terence Woodgate, an industrial designer, and John Barnard, a racing car engineer who has worked for Ferrari and McLaren.

(Barnard's Ferrari 641 is in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection.) According to Woodgate, the idea behind the design was "in taking the form of a normal table, one with legs at each corner, as far as we possibly could. It became a search for perfection."



RETURN OF THE SNUFF BOX

HIGH CRAFT AND CONTEMPORARY DESIGN MERGE IN A COLLECTION OF ONE-OF-A-KIND OBJECTS FROM A NEW COMPANY DEDICATED TO INTRODUCING HISTORIC METHODS AND MATERIALS TO A NEW GENERATION OF ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS.



Barber & Osgerby's *Cidade* candle holder.

We may be on the verge of a new Arts and Crafts movement, but it is clearly one stripped of both fervor for social reform and prejudice against machinery. This time around, the passion seems to be about the revival of arcane techniques and rarefied materials in the service of architects and designers making high-priced *objets d'art*. This is nowhere more evident than at a new company called Meta, created to marry hip designers to pedigreed artisans wielding age-old technologies. Opening in New York on May 12 (following a launch in Milan last month), Meta is a subsidiary of Mallett, an antiques dealer with shops in London and New York. The company commissioned five designers, among them Asymptote, Tord Boontje, Matali Crasset, and Barber Osgerby, to create 11 made-to-order pieces.

For a glass-topped coffee table called Ivo_03, Asymptote used faceted Imperial Tula blue steel (with its historical roots both in 18th-century weaponry and bibelots crafted for Catherine the Great to use as bribes) as a base to which the architects added a topographically-complex surface of slumped glass. Another Asymptote piece, Mnemos_03 (opposite page) is the largest of three boxes made of silver gilt—the smaller Mnemos_01 is



On June 26, 100% Design Shanghai will open, six weeks before the Olympic games begin. As the first international fair in the country dedicated to contemporary design, it is a landmark event, organized by Reed Exhibitions, the company behind similar design fairs in London and Tokyo. New York design writer Aric Chen and artist-designer Tobias Wong, the exhibition's creative directors, sat down recently with AN to describe their plans for the show and their impressions of the contemporary design scene in China.

CHINA BOUND

STEPHEN ROSE

The Architect's Newspaper: You were last heard from running a tattoo parlor at Design/Miami. Is participating in an international design fair going to be a big stretch?

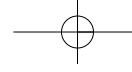
Aric Chen: Well, because this is the first international contemporary design fair that we know of in China, it seemed that it couldn't be just any fair. There

had to be some kind of underlying premise not only because it's the first one, but more significantly, because contemporary design in China really doesn't exist as we know it here and in Europe. In fact, I think that's why the organizers wanted to involve us, and especially Tobias, because he's known not so much as a conventional designer of products but as a provocateur. And I think they realized that the fair had to be a little bit more of a statement than just a showcase of interesting designs.

What do you mean by no contemporary design when "made in China" is printed on so many products in our stores?

Tobias Wong: When I first arrived, what I thought of as original, indigenous Chinese design just wasn't there. What I did see, from interiors to products, were really western-influenced goods.

AC: In January 2007, I was in China working on a story for *Fast Company* magazine about creativity in graphic design, architecture, product design, and so on. I spent two weeks traversing the country, and I found only two really creative product designers. I assumed that I just hadn't looked hard enough. Recently, I saw the Victoria & Albert Museum catalogue for a show covering design in China, and they have the same two

Asymptote's silver gilt *Mnemos .03* jewelry box.

made of solid gold—with nested interior boxes carved from fine-grained satinwood. The box shape is as esoteric as its 18th-century antecedents would have been, based as it is on dozens of 3D printed models built up from layers of acrylnitrile butadiene styrene deposits.

London-based designers Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby have attempted to revolutionize the candelabra (facing page) by making a silver platter—more like a minimalist sheet of sheen—supporting seven candleholders sculpted into *Jetson*-like starbursts. These hand-wrought shapes are made of spun and cast 958 Britannia silver, an exceptionally pure grade of the metal introduced in 1697; the platter is of 925 Sterling and rests on a hidden base of polished pearwood.

Other pieces in the collection include Tord Boontje's hand-veneered Coco Bolo cabinet and Matali Crasset's Cubist cheval mirror with hand-stitched goatskin backing. The manufacture of bonbonnières, curio cabinets, and, yes, solid gold snuff boxes would hardly seem essential in today's world, but anything that reconnects architects and designers to a knowledge and appreciation of how things are made is progress worth celebrating, and not only by fetishists.

JULIE V. IOVINE IS EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF AN.

PAOLO PANDULLO

as their featured product designers. So that seemed to confirm that there really isn't much. There's no real infrastructure to speak of, although, oddly enough, there are hundreds of design schools—some quite good, like the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing—literally turning out thousands of graduates each year. Still, I can't seem to figure out what they're doing after graduation.

TW: We did find some signs of a changing scene, and they'll be seen at the fair. Lyndon Neri and Rossana Hu own a store in Shanghai called Design Republic that's very cool. It's like the Moss of Shanghai.

AC: But they also design themselves, and

one of the great pieces they have is this double-walled glass vessel. It's a smart, updated take on the Chinese teacup, and one of the favorite pieces we found that does something new with a traditional concept. I see them as part of a wave of overseas Chinese who are making a big difference in China. Rossana is from Chicago and Lyndon studied at Harvard, and they both worked for Michael Graves in Shanghai.

And what are your plans for the exhibition? I understand the hall will be filled with about 100 exhibitors, with some familiar names from Italy and the United States like Cassina and Formica. How will it all hang

together?

AC: You have to remember how vastly different China was even five years ago. When we first started, we kept talking about the obvious clichés that are in use there—the dragons, the phoenixes—meaning that that would be the last thing you would ever do. But the more we started talking about it, the more we wanted to use something that was local and familiar. So we're doing this big installation of raw bamboo scaffolding, a platform, if you will, for the years to come.

TW: Yeah, bamboo scaffolding is a very prevalent thing that you see absolutely everywhere in China now, and it's become

a widely appropriated sort of symbol about the country's breakneck development.

AC: And so we thought we would invert this idea of the bamboo scaffolding so it's not about structures rising but rather like a void to be filled. The venue is this fantastic Soviet-built complex—it's very grand and quite ornamental—from around the 1950s, and inside the entry hall will be empty but for the floor-to-ceiling scaffolding. It becomes a kind of trope for the emerging nature of contemporary Chinese design.

WOKmedia from London and Shanghai will be creating an installation with these large glass pieces—like lenses or eyeballs—

fabricated locally and scattered in the scaffolding as it continues outside. We're also commissioning some large sculptures for a café. We want it to be a fun and inspiring collaboration with other artists and designers.

AC: In the past, fairs—say, the 1925 Paris Exhibition or the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago—played a huge role in the development of design. We can't compare this to that, but it would be nice if 100% Design Shanghai went down as an influential moment in the development of contemporary Chinese design.

TW: This can't be a conventional trade show. It's more a call to arms, as in, "Where are you, Chinese designers?"

The double-walled *Boli* glass from Design Republic in Shanghai.



COURTESY DESIGN REPUBLIC

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MAY 7, 2008



Teresita and Samuel Cochran's *GROW*, a network of photovoltaic and wind-generating panels in the shape of climbing ivy, was developed at the Pratt Design Incubator.

that while tenants have many advantages in renting there, most of the facilities are available to all New York designers. Studios run from 135 to 1,082 square feet for \$260 to \$1,600 per month. Fourteen of the group's 19 studios are rented.

The design center's spacious reception area is furnished with Eames steel-and-plywood cabinets and red Herman Miller sofas, but the industrial feel is very much present in three gargantuan elevators on one end of the floor. (Legend has it that in Degnon's day, a train car could be rolled into the elevator, lifted to the appropriate floor, filled, lowered, and then hooked up to a train for quick delivery around the country.) On either side of the floor are meeting rooms furnished with tables, chairs, multimedia projectors, and a floor-to-ceiling whiteboard wall. That down-low quality is welcomed by current tenants like Manuel Saez, previously design director for the furniture company Human Scale. When Saez, who won the 2007 iDA Product Designer of the Year award, decided to start his own firm, he chose to rent an office in Long Island City after learning the price and all the amenities for tenants. Plus, he said, the view was a selling point: His tall windows look like a picture postcard of midtown Manhattan. Before moving his studio in January, Saez had to present his business plan to the NY Designs board, who assessed its viability.

Pratt Institute founded a similar organization in 2002, the Pratt Design Incubator. It was a natural fit for the school, with dozens of design students and faculty members on campus. Steven S. Matt was admitted into the program in October 2007 when Pratt's president, Thomas Shute, learned that Matt had been traveling the country in search of initiatives meant to encourage sustainability. His business, One Earth, will let users log on to a website that tells them where to find environmentally-friendly groups in their area. Want to recycle print cartridges? Look under "Reduce Toxicity" and the name of a local recycling center appears. "We're eliminating excuses!" he said. "No one can say, 'I don't know.'"

Matt and his incubator col-

leagues meet every two weeks to talk about their challenges and share knowledge and contacts. There he's met brother-and-sister team Teresita and Samuel Cochran, the founders of SMIT (Sustainably Minded Interactive Technology). Their first project, *GROW*, is featured in the recent *Design and the Elastic Mind* show at the Museum of Modern Art. It consists of flexible solar panels in the shape of ivy leaves made of film photovoltaics. The flapping panels can generate wind and solar energy and, the firm hopes, be integrated into architectural design.

One of Pratt's first incubator tenants, SMIT used their Brooklyn campus office to develop a prototype while learning the basics of running a creative business. Kelly Talcott, an intellectual property lawyer and mentor in the Pratt program, has helped the Cochrans protect their ideas.

"I think the incubator provides a start-up business with a level of guidance and nurturing that is difficult to reproduce out in the wild," Talcott said. "You get to take advantage of resources that you would otherwise not have."

While places like Pratt and NY Designs have affiliations with established schools, 3rd Ward in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn was started by two artists, Jason Goodman and Jeremy Lovitt who, after attending the Museum School in Boston, were disconcerted by the obstacles to making art in New York. They decided to come up with a solution of their own, what marketing director Nikki Bagli calls "a one-stop shop for artists." Renting out the bottom floor of an industrial building—20,000 square feet of space—the two founded 3rd Ward in May 2006 in an attempt to create affordable studio space that would give artists freedom to think big, as Bagli put it.

Todd McCollister, a member for almost two years, finds that all the artists he knows at 3rd Ward have tended to make work on a larger scale than most people who are bound to studios in their apartments. McCollister himself joined 3rd Ward when he was asked to build cabinets for the Daedalus Foundation. Though he took the job to support his work as a sculptor, he soon received other furniture orders and has never been without work since. "I don't know where else I could've started the business with so little risk and capital," he said.

ANGELA STARITA IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

FOR YOUNG DESIGNERS TRYING TO LAUNCH A PRACTICE, LEARNING THE BUSINESS SIDE OF THINGS CAN BE TOUGH. AROUND THE CITY, SEVERAL DESIGN INCUBATORS ARE THERE TO HELP: PROVIDING ACCESS TO EVERYTHING FROM PROTOTYPING MACHINES AND VIDEO EDITING ROOMS TO MARKETING ADVICE, THESE GROUP HOMES ARE HELPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS.

On Thomson Avenue in Long Island City, a white stone-facade building announces its affiliation with a massive billboard: IDCNY. The International Design Center building was one of the factories erected by Michael Degnon, a contractor known for building the first subway tunnel and the Cape Cod Canal. Following the model of the Bush Terminal Market in Brooklyn, Degnon decided to provide companies with manufacturing facilities that gave full access to transportation: Rail lines went right up to the buildings for easy loading and distribution.

While Degnon's venture went under by the end of World War I, on a smaller scale, his ideas live on in a design incubator in the IDCNY building called NY Designs. One of several around the city, NY Designs was set up to give creative entrepreneurs support for their businesses, and provides relatively low-cost space, equipment, courses, workshops, and business advice. Their goals may be different—some trying to encourage local employment, others promoting sustainable design—but all result in helping new businesses stay in New York. Unlike Degnon's model, though, where large-scale manufacturing was the focus, design incubators are directed toward firms of fewer than a dozen employees. The result is a sort of hive of designers, manufacturers, and advertising firms that can cull ideas from each other. While some require a formal entry application to increase the chances of a business succeeding, others are less structured and more geared toward providing artists with needed space and tools.

A project of the CUNY Economic Development Corporation and LaGuardia Community College, which also uses the building for classrooms and offices, NY Designs intends "to help emerging designers grow their business and create design jobs and resources for the design community," said Jane Tabachnick, director of the program. She pointed out

THE GROWTH INDUSTRY

MAY 2008

MAY**WEDNESDAY 7**
LECTURES

Christopher Gray
The Most Beautiful Block in the World
 11:00 a.m.
 Metropolitan Museum of Art
 1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

Daniel Okrent, Hilary Ballon, Alex Garvin, et al.
Rockefeller Center @ 75 Tribute to a Miraculous Mega-Project
 6:30 p.m.
 Donnell Library Auditorium
 20 West 53rd St.
www.skyscraper.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
Superheroes: Fashion and Fantasy
 Metropolitan Museum of Art
 1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

THURSDAY 8
LECTURES

Shigeru Ban, Karen Van Lengen, et al.
Shigeru Ban: Paper Houses and the Architecture of Disaster Relief
 12:00 p.m.
 National Building Museum
 401 F St. NW,
 Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

Michael Webb
Two Journeys
 6:30 p.m.
 New York City College of Technology
 Voorhees Hall
 186 Jay Street, Brooklyn
www.citytech.cuny.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Barkley Hendricks
 The Project
 37 West 57th St.
www.elproyecto.com

Geometry as Image
 Robert Miller Gallery
 524 West 26th St.
www.robertmillergallery.com

Jackie Gendall
Shuli Hallak
 Moti Hasson Gallery
 535 West 25th St.
www.motihasson.com

Saint Clair Cemin
 Sikkema Jenkins & Co.
 530 West 22nd St.
www.sikkemajenkinsco.com

FRIDAY 9
EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Andy Messerschmidt
Crackpot Crystallomancy
 Plane Space
 102 Charles St.
www.plane-space.com

Richard Diebenkorn
Ocean Park Monotypes and Drawings
 Greenberg Van Doren Gallery
 730 5th Ave.
www.gvdgallery.com

Robert Therrien
 Gagosian Gallery
 555 West 24th St.
www.gagosian.com

Zhang Huan
Blessings
 PaceWildenstein
 534 West 25th St.
www.pacewildenstein.com

EVENT
Bklyn Designs 2008
 10:00 a.m.
 Dumbo Arts Center,
 30 Washington St., Brooklyn
 Smack Mellon,
 92 Plymouth St., Brooklyn
 St. Ann's Warehouse,
 38 Water St., Brooklyn
 Tobacco Warehouse,
 Empire-Fulton Ferry
 State Park,
 26 New Dock St., Brooklyn
www.bklyndesigns.com

SATURDAY 10
EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Jeff Smith
Bone and Beyond
Mary Heilmann
To Be Someone
 Wexner Center
 1871 North High St.,
 Columbus, OH
www.wexarts.org

EVENT
LIC Bike Parade
 11:30 a.m.
 Socrates Sculpture Park
 32-01 Vernon Blvd.,
 Long Island City
www.socratessculpturepark.org

WITH THE KIDS

What's the Story?
Narratives in Art
 10:30 a.m.
 Museum of Modern Art
 11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

SUNDAY 11
EXHIBITION OPENING

Neil Folberg
Celestial Nights: Visions of an Ancient Land
 Yeshiva University Museum
 15 West 16th St.
www.yu.edu/museum

MONDAY 12

FILM
Head-On
 (Fatih Akin, 2004), 121 min.
 6:30 p.m.
 Goethe-Institut New York
 1014 5th Ave.
www.movingimage.us

TUESDAY 13

LECTURES
Robert Torchia
Cunningham in a Florida Context
 6:00 p.m.

American Folk Art Museum
 Branch Location
 2 Lincoln Sq.
www.folkartmuseum.org

Witold Rybczynski
The Vertical Dimension of the City

6:30 p.m.
 National Building Museum
 401 F St. NW,
 Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

LIST YOUR EVENT AT DIARY@ARCHPAPER.COM

Charles Bagli, Kent Barwick,
Richard Ravitch, et al.
Moynihan Station: What Needs to Happen Next?
 6:30 p.m.
 The Municipal Art Society of New York
 457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

What's Happening
Art in General
 79 Walker St., 6th Fl.
www.artingeneral.org

FILM

Sangre de mi Sangre
 (Christopher Zalla, 2007),
 110 min.

7:00 p.m.
 Wexner Center
 1871 North High St.,
 Columbus, OH
www.wexarts.org

WEDNESDAY 14

LECTURES
Harris M. Steinberg
Philadelphia's Central Delaware Riverfront Vision Plan
 12:30 p.m.
 National Building Museum
 401 F St. NW,
 Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

Exploding Chinese Art: The Economy of Art/The Art of Economy

6:30 p.m.
 Asia Society
 725 Park Ave.
www.asiasociety.org

THURSDAY 15

LECTURES
Martin Venezky, Sam Potts, et al.
Opposites Attract

6:30 p.m.
 ADC Gallery
 106 West 29th St.
www.adcglobal.org

David Rockwell
Inspiration, Imagination and Innovation

7:00 p.m.
 Federal Hall
 National Memorial
 26 Wall St.
www.downtownny.com

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Aaron Siskind
The Egan Gallery Years 1947–1954
 Robert Mann Gallery
 210 11th Ave., 10th Fl.
www.robertmann.com

Kate Costello

WallSpace
 619 West 27th St.
www.wallspacegallery.com

Swab 08-Barcelona

Plane Space
 102 Charles St.
www.plane-space.com

FRIDAY 16

SYMPOSIUM
Moving People Who Move the World
William Paolillo, Elliot G. Sander, et al.

7:15 a.m.
 McGraw Hill Auditorium
 1221 Avenue of the Americas
www.navigatingopportunities.com

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Arbus/Avedon/Model:

Selections from the Bank of America LaSalle Collection

Heavy Light:

Recent Photography and Video from Japan

Bill Wood's Business

International Center of Photography

1133 6th Ave.

www.icp.org

Power in the City

apexart

291 Church St.

www.apexart.org

MONDAY 19

LECTURE

Mary Luévanos

Staying Ahead of the Curve:

Recent and Upcoming Legislative Changes in Energy-Efficient Building

12:30 p.m.
 National Building Museum
 401 F St. NW,
 Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

TUESDAY 20

LECTURE

John Maxtone-Graham

Rescuing Normandie's Jean Dupas Panels

11:00 a.m.
 Metropolitan Museum of Art
 1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Medieval and Renaissance Treasures from the Victoria and Albert Museum Tiepolo Drawings from the Robert Lehman Collection

Metropolitan Museum of Art
 1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

Three Gutenberg Bibles

The Morgan Library and Museum

225 Madison Ave.

www.themorgan.org

WEDNESDAY 21

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Bernd and Hilla Becher Landscape/Typology

Dada at MoMA

Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53rd St.

www.moma.org

THURSDAY 22

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Kahn & Selesnick Eisbergfreistadt

Yancey Richardson Gallery

535 West 22nd St.

www.yanceyrichardson.com

Philippe Gronon

Yossi Milo Gallery

525 West 25th St.

www.yossimilo.com

FRIDAY 23

LECTURE

John Maeda

AIGA/NY Fresh Dialogue 24

6:30 p.m.
 The Times Center Stage

The New York Times Building

242 West 41st St.

www.aigany.org



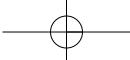
TUCA REINES

HUGO FRANÇA:
THE STORY OF THE TREE
 R Gallery
 82 Franklin Street
 Through June 14

Breathing new life into fallen or burned trees, designer-craftsman Hugo França turns the forest's natural processes into utilitarian sculptures. *The Story of the Tree* documents França's work in the Brazilian rainforest and in the fields of south Bahia, Brazil. It is there, in the middle of the forest, where ideas for each of his pieces are conceived. Because of the monumental size of the trees, preliminary design and shaping occurs on site before each piece is transported to França's studio in São Paulo. Using the material as his guide, França allows the tree to inform his decisions about where to carve and how to shape the piece. The exhibition includes both furniture and objects made of the raw Brazilian hardwoods known as pequi, gameleira, oiticica, juerana, and tatajuba, all of which express the organic forms of the trees themselves. Made out of gameleira wood, *Mararé Coffee Table* (2007, above) reveals the cylindrical design of the trunk from which it was carved. By preserving each tree's original features, França's design principle of minimal intervention creates completely unique pieces.



COURTESY RICHARD MEIER & PARTNERS



In the classic Ant Farm project *Electronic Oasis* (1969), parachutes became kinetic sculptures.

Archizoom, for instance, had its *No-Stop City*, and Superstudio its *Continuous Monument*, both falling precisely within this exhibition's time frame. Linked conceptually if not ideologically to projects such as these was Ant Farm's *Truckstop Network*.

They conceived this 1971 project in the manner of early 1970s avant-gardist space—that of a vast network. But unlike its globally homogeneous Italian contemporaries, its existence was fundamentally rooted in location, with its system of interstate highways, truckstops, and roadside attractions—and the car culture these enabled and promoted—capturing something distinctly American. Launching their project forward, well beyond its time, Ant Farm clairvoyantly conceived media as intrinsically embedded within this architecture. They drove through this space, after all, in their so-called Media Van, a Chevrolet that they outfitted not only with design flourishes appropriate to 1971 but also with equipment to record and broadcast their movements-about. When Sony released its Portapak, the first portable video recorder, in 1967, Ant Farm quickly incorporated this new technology into their practice. In this way, they made a clearing for firms such as Diller + Scofidio to later experiment with media as a patently architectural element.

The exhibition, which was divided

into six thematic sections, devoted one of these to *Truckstop Network*, showing images, plans, maps, and notes. The curators also included six monitors, along with one projector, showing some of the footage from these voyages. Other categories included the *Electronic Oasis*, *Real@city*, *The House of the Century*, *Bio-tech Future*, and *Linear Media*. Each of these showed an architecture of supreme resistance, linked to broad networks. Throughout it, a remarkably rich trove of archival materials recounted a prodigiously creative and productive process.

The exhibition formed part of GSAPP's Living Archives program, which aims not only to treat content in an investigative manner but also takes the act of curating itself as a pedagogical endeavor, understanding archives as a fluid system devoted as much to the future as they are to the past. Scott and Wasiuta used curatorial interventions sparingly, giving full voice to the material itself. One of the program's central tenets is to enrich the body of work in the research process, and, in that pursuit, the team restored several early videotapes that could be seen in the exhibition. Scott has also recently completed a book, *Ant Farm*, to be published by Actar this month. Full of archival materials, the book, like the exhibition, is visually stunning, but it also provides a solid theoretical and historical framework for Ant Farm's body of work.

JOHN GENDALL IS A WRITER AND CRITIC IN NEW YORK, AND A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

Ant Farm is perhaps best known in popular memory for *Cadillac Ranch* (1974) and *Media Burn* (1975)—works that involved partly submerging up-ended Cadillacs in the Texan desert and driving a car through a pyramid of flaming television sets. The casual observer can certainly be forgiven, then, for failing to immediately discern that these were architects at work on architecture.

Ant Farm: Radical Hardware at Columbia's Arthur Ross Gallery, is an admirable work of scholarship and provided a fascinating account of the germinating process of a seminal but often poorly understood

architectural presence. The exhibition set its focus between 1969 and 1971, Ant Farm's earliest years together, well before the group executed the now famous *Cadillac Ranch* and *Media Burn*. Co-curated by Felicity D. Scott and Mark Wasiuta, associate adjunct professor at Columbia and its director of exhibitions, the show revealed the deeply architectural nature of their work.

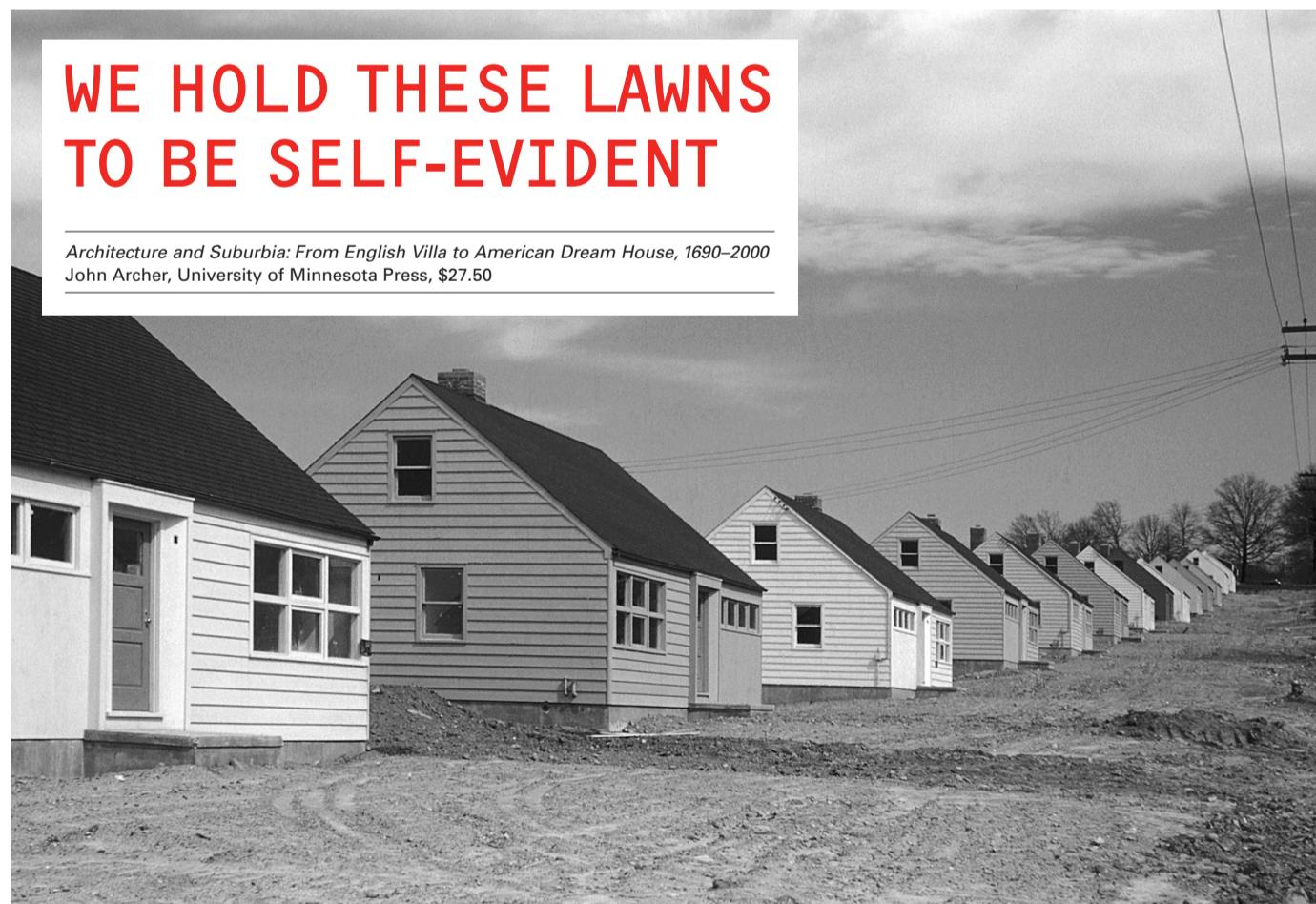
Ant Farm's three founding members trained as architects: Doug Michels at Yale, Chip Lord at Tulane, and Curtis Schreier, who became involved in 1969, at RISD. Even the most cursory walk through the gallery plainly revealed the pres-

ence of an architect's hand, with sophisticated drawings, diagrams, and methods of representation, all executed with élan. One of the curators' greatest achievements was to demonstrate that Ant Farm's projects were not simply inherently architectural, but that they were telling harbingers of the discipline's future directions.

This was a moment, after all, when the ideological objectives of modernism were under question, when the dawn of postmodernism was nearing. It was a time when, in places like Italy, architectural firms were working out ideas for a continuous, universalizing space.

WE HOLD THESE LAWNS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT

Architecture and Suburbia: From English Villa to American Dream House, 1690–2000
John Archer, University of Minnesota Press, \$27.50

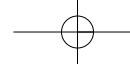


In middle-class America, the assumption that possessions (particularly houses) express core values is so pervasive that it's essentially invisible, but it's a proposition with history. John Archer has filled in important pieces of that history, advancing the associated debate by connecting the built form that came to dominate the national landscape with the forms of individualist philosophy that descend from John Locke.

The paperback release of this 2005 study could be a watershed event for the understanding of America's sprawlscape, at least in scholarly circles, though it deserves attention well beyond academia. Mining the high and low culture of three centuries, Archer assembles ample evidence supporting his thesis: The semi-pastoral single-family detached residence, despite being reviled by generations of tastemakers, planners, and environmentalists, has become the dominant Anglo-American building form because it embodies a deeply entrenched ideology, that of articulating identity by defining private space.

Archer, chair of cultural studies and comparative literature at the University of Minnesota, has the rare gift of making theoretical material accessible, occasionally simplifying it but never dumbing it down. The customary references to the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin are here, along with Locke and Alexis de Tocqueville, but the **continued on page 32**

COURTESY OF MINNESOTA PRESS



SHAKE, RATTLE, AND ROLL

Shaker Design: Out of This World
Bard Graduate Center
18 West 86th Street
Through June 15



Settee, unidentified maker, 1830.
Right: Music Staff Liner,
Isaac Newton Youngs, 1830.

Design junkies sated by the ICFF's up-to-the-moment wares should catch the subway uptown to the Bard Graduate Center, where *Shaker Design: Out of This World* offers a welcome dose of timelessness. This small exhibition, organized by Bard and Vermont's

Shelburne Museum, does an admirable job of placing the famed utopian community's furniture, art, graphics, and consumer products in their historical context. It also includes many stunning objects to admire. Divided into five sections—the Shaker

World, the Spiritual World, the Fancy World, the Commercial World, and the Contemporary World—the exhibition examines the social and cultural forces that prompted Shaker response, resistance, or, as in the case of their consumer products, generated profits. The first section focuses primarily on the furniture that community members designed for themselves, with often remarkable results. The monumental Double Trustees' Desk (1850, attributed to Watervliet, New York) kept the family's records in order while conveying solemnity with its vast size; rootedness with its legless design; and the sect's philosophy of sexual equality with its mirrored compartments. The slender Side Chair with Tilters (1850, New Lebanon, New York), an iconic peg-board ready chair with tiny, pivoting metal feet on the rear legs for leaning back, shows how these designers adapted common objects to fit everyday habits. The community's more spiritual side is evoked in a selection of "gift drawings," delicate images, mostly by women, which were executed with furious intensity and religious devotion. This section also touches on the role that repetitive, ecstatic dancing played in the culture. And the Commercial World demonstrates the sect's savvy in marketing a variety of products, including textiles, furniture, famous round boxes, seeds, and other products, which made many of the communities highly prosperous by rural, nineteenth-century standards.

The orgiastic patterns of the 1820s and 1830s "Fancy" craze, a mainstream movement that rejected the austerity of neoclassicism, provide a useful counterpoint to the simplicity of the Believers' objects. Though



COURTESY BARD GRADUATE CENTER

many of these objects have whimsical, energetic decoration, their proportions and lines fall decidedly on the folk end of the spectrum, whereas the Shaker objects have the elegance of fine art. The section on the contemporary world also makes the Believers look smart: Even design luminaries as skilled as Hans Wegner, Antonio Citterio, and Joep van Lieshout for Moooi seem clunky compared to these nineteenth-century artisans.

Architecture gets short shift in the show. An informative if pedestrian video discusses Shaker building but focuses on the ascetic-looking settlement in Canterbury, New Hampshire, while omitting the almost Jeffersonian grandeur of the architecture and landscape at Pleasant Hill settlement in Kentucky. A fine catalogue from Yale University Press corrects this deficiency somewhat, but the show would have been strengthened by a fuller examination of the way in which the regimented, efficient, hygienic, and graceful existence of the Shakers extended from the point of a needle to their meticulously tuck-pointed buildings.

ALAN G. BRAKE IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.

GAME THEORY

The World of Madelon Vriesendorp
Aedes Am Pfefferberg
Christinenstraße 18-19, Berlin
Closed April 17

The World of Madelon Vriesendorp
Edited by Shumon Basar and Stephan Trüby
AA Publications, \$52

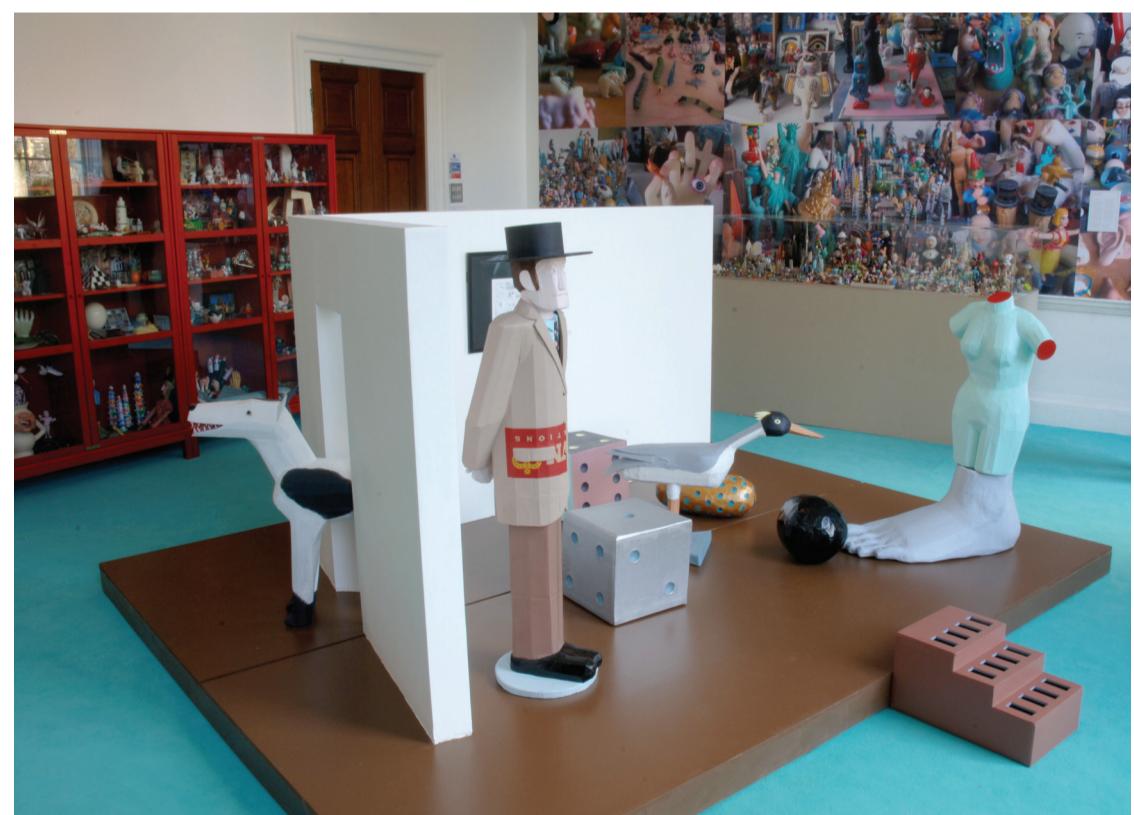
You really don't want to theorize about Madelon Vriesendorp's fabulous body of work—paintings, clothes, collaborations, and curated collections of strange, mass-produced objects—and for good reason. When she and the writer Douglas Coupland visited one another's collection-packed dens, they ended up trading stories about the monumental project of dusting all that stuff. What you do, Vriesendorp told me when I visited her apartment in London's Belsize Park—the same one she and Rem Koolhaas moved into while finishing *Delirious New York*—is blow on the collections, then vacuum the dusty air.

Vriesendorp's apartment was a pure, curious pleasure. So was her

first-ever solo show at London's Architectural Association (the book serves as the catalogue for the exhibit, which traveled to the Aedes gallery in Berlin and is expected to come to the United States shortly). Both venues were filled with her marvelous, strange, and obsessive paintings; a curated collection of awkward, funny, and surreal interpretations of places, buildings, and objects; and the strange beauty she finds in bad taste.

The show includes original paintings for *Delirious New York*—the luminous vision of the Welfare Palace Hotel was one star of the show—among a trove of other works. There's the beautiful, elusively arranged postcard collection; a large-scale version of Vriesendorp's *Mind Game*, a sort of psychoanalyze-yourself parlor game she hopes to put into production; and the animated-movie version of the *Delirious* paintings. Each one could have carried a serious show by itself.

The Surrealists aimed to put the visible at the service of the invisible. That is certainly what Vriesendorp does. You'd never call her work abstract—on the contrary, it's highly physical—yet the world on display here is weird and unreal, very much like dreams. It's a way of looking at architecture that is so direct and unusual that it says more about how we imagine space than whole bookshelves full of literary theory.



CHARLIE KOOLHAAS/COURTESY ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION

The London exhibit was the first major public outing of an extraordinarily rich and generous life's work, which until now has been for friends only. In some ways, that reflects Vriesendorp's strength as a collaborator on projects such as *Delirious* with her husband Koolhaas, and with the Zenghelis' on the AA project *Exodus, or the*

Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture, the latter a fantasy-critique that cut a walled city through London.

In the images she made for *Delirious New York*, Vriesendorp was at her eccentric best. And as you work through her career, you discover Koolhaas here and there. Her collection stalks cultural mis-translations of famous objects, like

With its movable pieces, *The Mind Game* is Vriesendorp's version of a self-analysis kit.

things made clumsily at one level but exquisitely at another. And the buildings that do this—like Koolhaas' CCTV in Beijing—crop up around Vriesendorp's fantasy skyscrapers salvaged out of snow domes or

continued on page 32

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MAY 7, 2008

WE HOLD THESE LAWNS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT

continued from page 30

all-too-familiar pomo bafflegab is not.

Reframing "the political self" as an autonomous being detached from any form of community, Archer finds, coincided with redefining land as private property, not a collective resource or feudal fiefdom. He draws sturdy lines connecting the British Parliament's 18th-century Acts of Enclosure with the partitioning of territory, physical and psychological, into individual units short on social cohesion ("suburbanizing the self"). He is not the first to tell this story, but he tells it in rich detail, unearthing eye-opening quotations from every era. Americans may be surprised at the opposition that arose almost as soon as English nobles and bourgeois aspirants began imitating Italianate *rus in urbe* settlements on the outskirts of town; a dialectic between artificial pastoralism and urbanites' skeptical responses was established long before Malvina Reynolds assailed the little boxes of Daly City.

As if to reward American readers with a light dessert after nearly 200 eat-your-vegetables pages on their British predecessors' growing fondness for rustic retreats, Archer steers the US chapters through earnest self-improvement tracts toward pop-culture camp. Between postwar ad copy that now reads as self-parody and hip-hop lyrics whose social critique is rarely subtler than drive-by Uzi spray, suburban standardization appears a national obsession. We can apparently neither imagine alternatives to it nor give up griping about it.

Suburbanization of space and of consciousness was neither natural nor inevitable, wise. The virtue of evenhandedness morphs

Archer shows, though it obviously became popular. It required sustained promotion by a long series of interested parties, from 19th-century design theorist Andrew Jackson Downing and domestic reformer Catharine Beecher to the Federal Housing Administration and the electric-appliance industry. Archer is stronger on cultural currents than on specific mechanisms that rendered suburban forms practically the only available option in much of the country (Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier* remains essential there). Those who view suburbia as the aggregate result of consumers' free decisions must still face the question, raised by Andres Duany and others, of whether those consumers had meaningful choices among distinct options. Archer's work raises a related issue: how the term "consumer" (rather than "citizen") came to frame individual identity.

Not all of the historicizing is up to code. Among English poets who praised rustic calm over London's pace, he cites Ambrose Philips (1674–1749) without supplying an evaluative context: Philips was dreadful. His treacly, singsong trochees, scorned by memorable contemporaries including Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, earned him the nickname that became his sole influence on the language when fellow versifier Henry Carey, parodying Philips' lickspittle praise for an aristocrat's children, dubbed him "Namby-Pamby."

One shouldn't make too much of Philips here, but the reference is a small-scale instance of a recurrent blind spot: a refusal to pass or affirm judgments, aesthetic or otherwise. The virtue of evenhandedness morphs

into a perverse reluctance even to notice one objection impossible to dismiss as class condescension. The environmental effects of post-World War II suburbanization receive only lip service: a handful of mentions, but no extended treatment comparable to that given ad campaigns, cinematic caricatures, or Bakhtinian cultural hybridity in home décor. These are welcome, but perhaps not the most pressing concerns on a warming planet that guzzles oil at \$100-plus a barrel. When the index to a history of suburbia omits the terms *environment(alism)*, *sustainability*, and *urban renewal* entirely, and gives only cursory references to ecology, redlining, and the all-important *automobile*, the problem may not be limited to the indexing.

"America is a markedly privatist culture, and it is inordinately invested in commodities," Archer concludes. "In too many respects suburbia indulges those tendencies, with particularly unfortunate ecological consequences." Yet he plays it too safe here, retreating to accept the suburban point of reference as-is and burying stronger critiques within momentary concessions. (Considering his eloquence elsewhere, calling them namby-pamby would be too harsh.) Still, he has done vital work linking spatial and behavioral decisions to underlying beliefs and their mechanisms of cultural transmission. Suburbia, the solution that inevitably became a problem, is too large for a single theory to explain. A comparably thorough account of its planetary effects would be an ideal follow-up project for such a capable scholar.

BILL MILLARD WRITES ABOUT ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM AND IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

GAME THEORY continued from page 31

lighthouses of the East Coast in her paintings and models. She has collaborated with others, too: Her daughter Charlie photographed the studio for this show and book, while writer Charles Jencks has also been a creative partner. But Vriesendorp's own drawings are a more subtly comic, perhaps more truthful analyses of the world around us.

This is real art, deserving of a much bigger venue and longer show. The simple pleasures of form could be heard in cryptic exclamations of visitors to the London gallery: "I love the Buddha on the phone!" Or, "The Soviet stencils are beautiful!" There's a trademark melding of form and humour, strangeness and recognition.

And yes, that does extend to the brazen, animated version of the sexual congress of skyscrapers, shown in the movie version of the *Delirious* cover-girl painting *Flagrant Délit*, where the Statue of Liberty bursts from her role as bedside lamp and goes off on a kind of apocalyptic fantasy journey.

This work represents the opposite of the current mania for intellectualizing everything we don't understand. It's like fortune telling, a recognition of menace and desire in the realm of buildings. And it reflects the simple pleasure kids take in collecting a load of great stuff. Which is also what architects do.

KESTER RATTENBURY, A LONDON-BASED WRITER AND CRITIC, CONTRIBUTES REGULARLY TO BUILDING DESIGN AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

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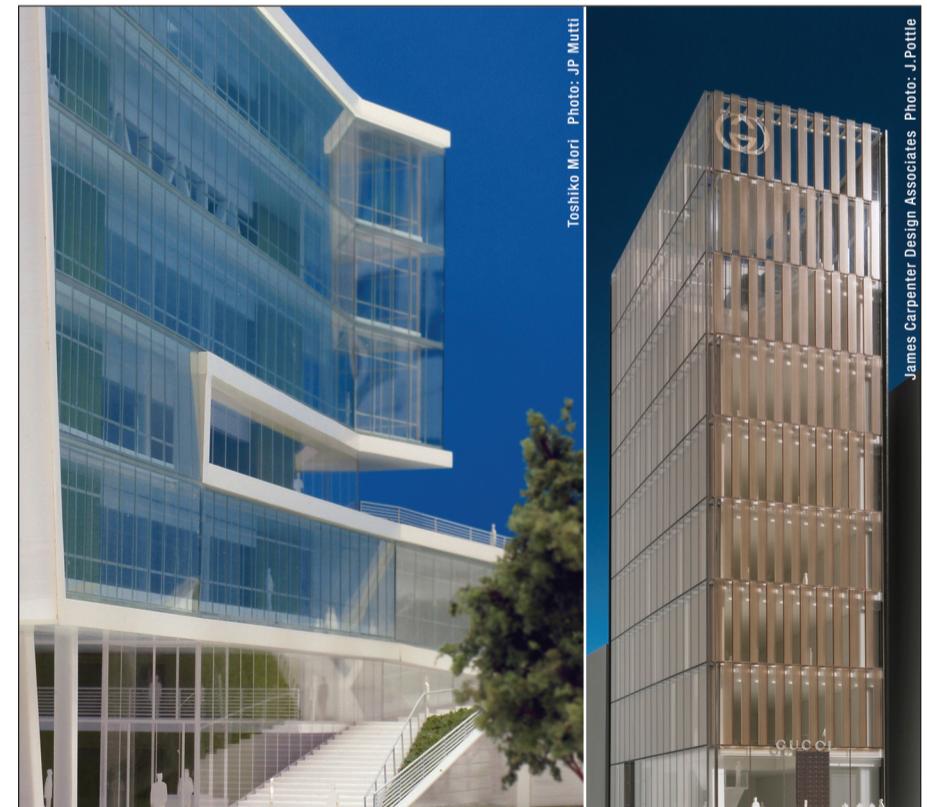
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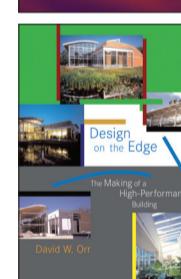
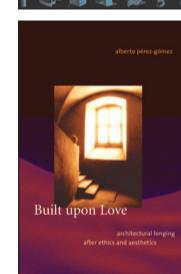
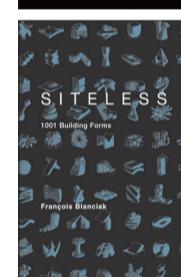
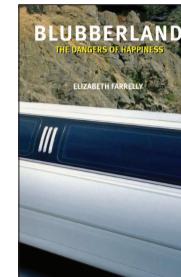
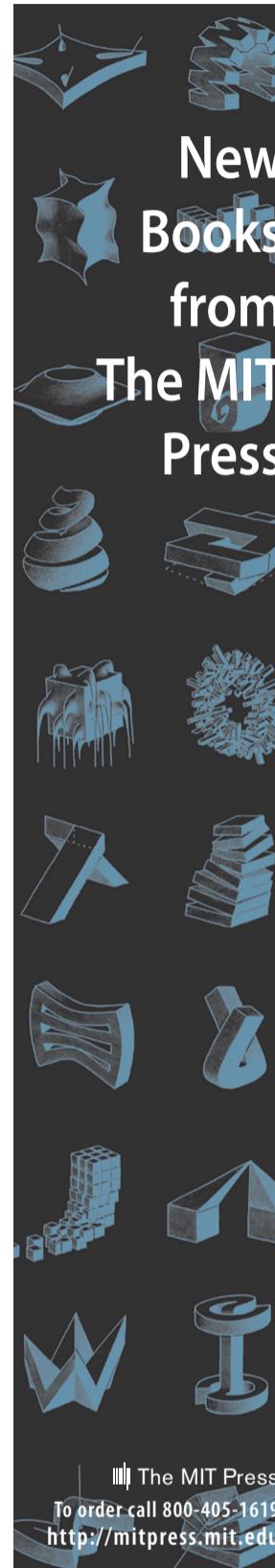
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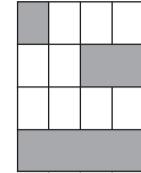
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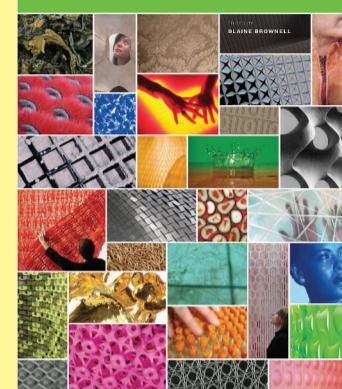
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their projects should not therefore be penalized.

Precisely for this reason, the initiative of the AIA New York Chapter to invite me as a juror, extraneous to any professional relationships in New York, appeared an excellent choice. This was further reinforced, as I later noted, in the selection of the other eight jurors (three for each section in Architecture, Interiors, and Projects): either foreigners or professionals in allied fields.

What is more, I must admit my appreciation that the juries were composed of only three members: something that never happens with Italian juries, which tend to be elephantine, ensuring that it is impossible to understand who is actually responsible for the choices made. On the other hand, I did find it strange to judge projects without knowing the names of the designers. If this praxis makes sense in competitions for the awarding of a project (though I should say, at least in Italy, it is

very rare that anonymity remains intact because, as is well known, there is nothing more public than a good secret), it makes very little sense when dealing with works that have already been built or designed. It is of no use—to cite one example—to avoid writing the name of the author of the IAC Headquarters in New York, something known to almost everyone, especially those in the field. The same can be said for the vast number of projects with a recognizable style or those that have been widely published in architectural magazines or on office websites.

With regard to the projects I had the pleasure of examining, I must say that the level of quality particularly impressed me. Let me explain: While I fully expected to find points of excellence, I had never imagined that the average was so high. In Italy we live in a state of schizophrenia: On the one hand, we have a smattering of projects of surprisingly elevated quality and, on the other, in my opinion, a vast number that are far from satisfactory.

This is due to a notable separation between the results of research and the expectations of builders. (It must be said, however, that things are improving and at present, above all in the large cities of northern Italy, there is greater demand for quality construction.)

In particular, I was impressed by the fact that the vast majority of the projects, in one way or another, dealt with the relevant themes being proposed in recent cultural debate:

in particular, issues related to the environment. Most of the projects that we selected offered interesting responses to issues of context, the need for natural spaces, and sustainability. A significant number of projects pursued these objectives through a mixture of innovative and traditional technologies, both high-tech and low-tech. Undoubtedly, with respect to the results of pure research (for example, in the classrooms of Columbia, Pratt, or Cooper Union, to mention only a few of the avant-garde American universities), the work presented

demonstrated both a level of caution and a greater degree of realism.

To be honest, there was also a lack of the fearless experimentation and taste for excess that a militant critic like myself actually prefers to see. I was particularly drawn to one project because, more than focusing on an outstanding object, it sought to create an open work that allowed space for the unprogrammed interventions of the natural world. I later discovered it was designed in collaboration with the Dutch group West 8 and, following the conclusion of the symposium, I learned that a few young Italian architects had also been involved in the project. I ask myself if this is not a sign—in my opinion, a positive one—of a fresh attitude that mixes, in new and original ways, the formal ideas of different cultures. And perhaps it is a sign that there is a growing desire to move beyond critical regionalism, and beyond the international style exported by large corporations and many of the protagonists of the star system.

A JUROR LOOKS BACK

From a front row seat, architecture critic and historian Luigi Prestinenza Puglisi compares the divergent approaches to competitions in the United States and in his native Italy, and finds reason to be optimistic.

When I received the letter in Italy inviting me to participate in the jury for the AIA New York Chapter Annual Design Awards program, I was in the midst of running a furious debate on competitions and architectural awards. The reason: Italy organizes a limited number of competitions, less than

one tenth of those held by Spain or France; furthermore, they are suspected of being piloted by juries organized *ad hoc* to favor one or another of the participants. Feeding the debate at this specific time was the news that a competition for a building was awarded to a designer with close personal and professional ties to one of the jurors. The latter, accused in an article, publicly responded that in the circle of architects, everyone knows everyone; thus it is inevitable that among the various participants one finds friends, and

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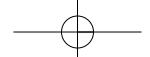
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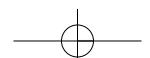
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