

# THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

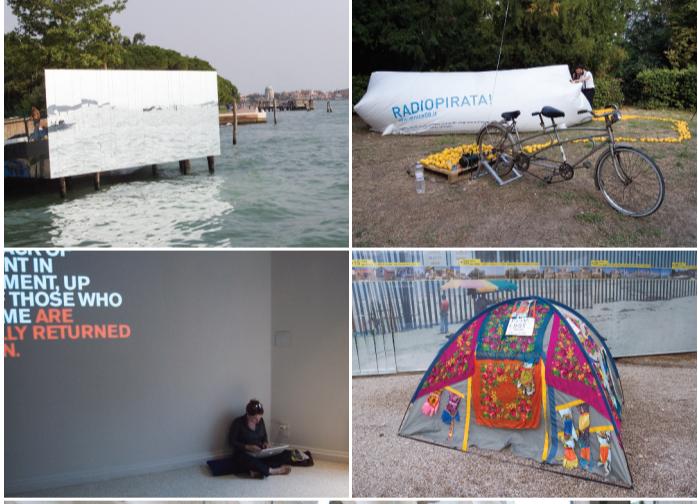
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REPORT FROM THE 11TH ARCHITECTURAL BIENNALE, WITH COMMISSIONER MENKING ON THE US PAVILION SEE PAGES 21-27



The Architect's Newspaper  
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SCALED-BACK SNØHETTA PAVILION TO OPEN IN 2012

## GATEWAY TO GROUND ZERO

On September 9, Governor David Paterson vowed that a memorial to the events of September 11, 2001 must open before other planned commercial development at the World Trade Center complex. This left architect Craig Dykers of Snøhetta with a delicate task: Create a focal point between *continued on page 8*

ARCHITECTURE DEAN TO DESIGN NEW STUDENT HOUSING AT YALE

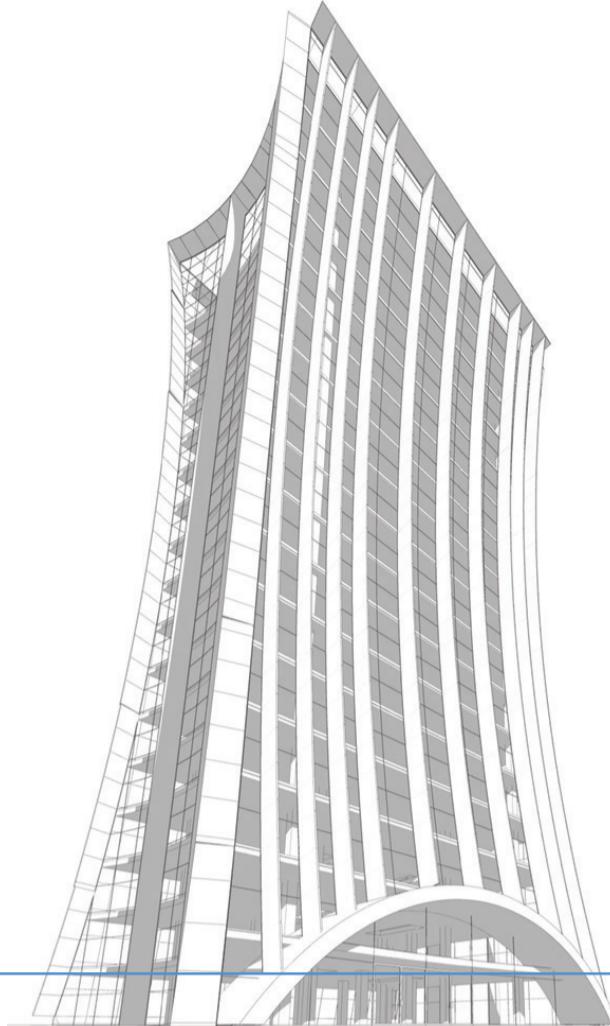
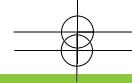
## STERN CHOICES

On September 4, in an announcement that surprised few, Robert A.M. Stern Architects was selected to design two new residential colleges at Yale, the first expansion of undergraduate housing by the university since Eero Saarinen completed Morse and Stiles colleges in 1962. Stern, the dean of the *continued on page 9*

BEYER BLINDER BELLE PARTNER NAMED TO LANDMARKS

## LPC GETS BLAND

In his 35 years at Beyer Blinder Belle, managing partner Frederick Bland has become one of the city's foremost preservation architects. He has worked on projects like Grand Central Terminal, Ellis Island, Rockefeller Center, and, most recently, the renovated Domino Sugar refinery. But he will *continued on page 5*



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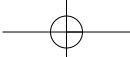
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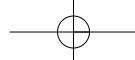
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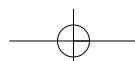


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VOLUME 06, ISSUE 16 OCTOBER 1, 2008. THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER (ISSN 1552-8081) IS PUBLISHED 20 TIMES A YEAR (SEMI-MONTHLY EXCEPT THE FOLLOWING: ONCE IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY AND NONE IN AUGUST) BY THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER, LLC, 21 MURRAY ST., 5TH FL., NEW YORK, NY 10007. PRESORT-STANDARD POSTAGE PAID IN NEW YORK, NY. POSTMASTER, SEND ADDRESS CHANGE TO: 21 MURRAY ST., 5TH FL., NEW YORK, NY 10007. FOR SUBSCRIBER SERVICE: CALL 212-966-0630. FAX 212-966-0633. \$3.95 A COPY, \$39.00 ONE YEAR, INTERNATIONAL \$160.00 ONE YEAR, INSTITUTIONAL \$149.00 ONE YEAR. ENTIRE CONTENTS COPYRIGHT 2008 BY THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

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## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

I just returned from my first Venice architecture biennale from where I wrote my first blog post. Now I have been asked to write a Letter from the Publisher. I am not going to start writing regularly for the newspaper—there's too much else to do to keep the business going—but the editors threw me a bone, and I felt like I had something to say about recent and future developments.

Over the past year, we've not only redesigned but added functionality to our website. I hope you have noticed the improved diary listings and the additional web-only stories that we post weekly. We are certainly gaining traction. We also stepped up our social networking capabilities and launched a blog: [www.blog.archpaper.com](http://www.blog.archpaper.com). It's about time, as the younger editors around here so often remind me. Until about two weeks ago, I never really paid blogs much mind, and then I became glued to Huffington Post and Mudflats.com following the antics of our current political circus.

Here at AN, we have had many conversations about how to blog; what's appropriate to blog; how long a blog post should be; and what does a blog want to say? The young editors obviously have one set of ideas and the older set are catching on fast. In any case, our blog will reflect our "newspaper family" and our interests as your eyes and ears in the world of architecture. I think that what we do on a daily basis has interest that goes beyond these four walls on Murray Street, whether it's a new product announcement, a press conference, a book, or a building. Of course, it's big news when one of our own, namely Bill Menking, is named the commissioner of the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (see this issue's feature) and our creative director, Martin Perrin, does all the graphics for the exhibition. But we also think you might be interested in what we overheard at a party last night, or how that starchitect reacted when we cornered him at a Show & Tell. Whatever it is, we will get it out there, and serve you what you have come to expect from AN, only juicier. Our blog content will be fun and lighter in spirit than the newspaper or the news on the website, but it will be just as to the point. Now that we have the tools we are going to take advantage of all the many different ways to reach the architecture community. As many of you have told us, AN is the only architecture news you read and that you rely on us to provide not just news, but events and information that matters. So we plan to deliver from whatever media makes most sense to you, be it paper, website, or blog. So, keep reading; we're coming to you 24/7. **DIANA DARLING**



CLARE HOLY/COURTESY BBB

**LPC GETS BLAND** continued from front page now work with the city's historic fabric on a grander scale as the newest member of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

"It certainly fits my skill sets and my interests," Bland told AN after his appointment was affirmed at a City Council committee hearing on September 4. Bland will replace Jan Pokorny, the former commission chair and preservationist pioneer who died in May. The council also reappointed commissioners Joan Gerner and Christopher Moore.

For a moment, it seemed as though Bland might be too qualified to join the commission. Diana Reyna, chair of the council's rules, privileges, and elections committee, pointed out the potential for conflicts of interest. But after a review of his signed agreement with the city, which the conflict of interest board approved, Reyna gave her assent. The agreement stipulates that Bland will recuse himself from any decisions involving his firm, as well as any that could involve a financial interest.

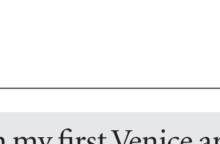
Bland joined Beyer Blinder Belle in 1972, and lives in Brooklyn Heights, which is the city's oldest historic district, as he is fond of pointing out. He joined the Brooklyn Heights Association and became its president in the 1990s. He has also helped guide the Evergreens Cemetery, and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, where he is the chair.

As the commission's newest member, Bland hopes to push for greater enforcement, especially with the city's inventory of historic properties growing. "There's a lot more ground to cover these days," he said. Another concern is so-called demolition by neglect, when a landmark's owner allows a property to deteriorate to the point where it must come down for safety reasons. Bland said the commission must work to force owners to maintain their historic buildings.

"He is an excellent choice in so many ways," Alex Herrera of the Landmarks Conservancy told the committee. "He is levelheaded, fair-minded, and widely respected in the preservation community. We believe he is one of the best-equipped individuals to serve on the Landmarks Preservation Commission."

**MATT CHABAN**

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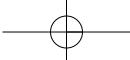
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EAVESDROP: ANNE GUINEY

## NON-SENSE & SENSIBILITY

We are feeling rather *serenissima* ourselves after a trip to beautiful and improbable Venice for the Biennale. This benevolent mood will no doubt be of short duration, and will not keep us from our appointed rounds, which include a moment to marvel at the wall text that folks put up next to their installations. Remember, if it's not really confusing, people won't think you're smart! Right, **Juergen Meyer H.**? We swear we hadn't had a drop of Campari when we came across the Berlin architect's very beautiful and very orange wallpaper based on data protection patterns in the first room of the Italian Pavilion. But perhaps we should have, because we're wondering how it "thickens the skin of discretion."

## WIGLEY'S WHACK-A-MOLE

Don't mess with the Mark, people: At an afternoon conference at the Biennale including the artist **Matthew Ritchie**, **Paola Antonelli**, and **Greg Lynn**, Columbia's **Mark Wigley** declared that "architecture isn't about people." An outraged Brit in the audience wasn't having it, however, and stood up and shouted, "Yes it is! Architecture is about people, and art is about metaphor—this is Rubbish!" Unfazed, Wigley responded, "If you would just self-loathe for a minute and let me finish..."

## ARCHITECTURE BEYOND BUILDINGS, DINNER BEYOND TABLES

We managed to smile our way into a fancy dinner on the roof of the Peggy Guggenheim villa held by **Thomas Krens** in honor of **Frank Gehry's** Golden Lion. Things were going smashingly until we were told to sit at table 16, only to realize that the numbers stopped at 15. Feeling Cinderella-ish, we sat ourselves down at the table indicated by a frazzled if reassuring Guggenheim staffer. A glamorous Gallic guest had different ideas, however, and told us that her seating card indicated that we were interlopers, and implied that this would simply not do. We considered offering her the lap of our handsome young neighbor, **Andrew Yang**, thought better of it, and were about to suggest that everything would surely be fine when she declared, "WE are FRIENDS of JEAN NOUVEL!" Indeed! Since WE are NOT, we decided not to push our luck and skiddaddled off to an empty-looking table before we got into any more trouble.

**WE SHOULD HAVE HAD A SPRITZ:** SEND GOSSIP AND CAMPARI BY THE CASE TO [EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM](mailto:EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM)

**FXFOWLE TO DEBUT NEW MASTERPLAN BY YEAR-END**

## Javits Redux

More than three years after signing up as second fiddle to Richard Rogers for the design of a new Javits Center on Manhattan's Far West Side, local firm FXFowle is now leading the masterplan for a dramatically smaller renovation in a thoroughly different neighborhood. Firm founder Bruce Fowle hopes to sell Javits board members on the scheme by November, and unveil drawings to the public soon thereafter, spokesman Brien McDaniel told AN.

The outlines of a downsized plan are beginning to come into focus. Last month, *The New York Times* reported, state officials announced bid solicitations for construction oversight on a \$1 billion package that would increase exhibit space by a mere 60,000 square feet, with a new hotel possibly located between 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> streets, in a northward expansion of the Javits site. The project would be completed by 2012.

Such a scheme, if realized, would be a remarkable retreat from visions of a new urban district. Long considered a lackluster facility, the convention hall has never drawn as much business as government backers hoped. In late 2005, the state proposed more than doubling the 700,000-square-foot center to 1.7 million square feet by 2010. Much of this expansion would run to the south, and Rogers proposed covering the space in a multicolored skin to replace Pei Cobb Freed's severe dark-glass exterior.

But Rogers' vision fell victim to clashing state-level priorities—including the MTA's push to sell or lease the land above its rail yard from 30<sup>th</sup> to 33<sup>rd</sup> streets—that left Javits without a plausible budget or political

sponsor. The rail yard land became Hudson Yards, a 26-acre site that the Related Companies plan to develop. Then governor Eliot Spitzer called off the center's expansion in a testy January 31 speech to construction executives. With a pressing need for more housing, he insisted, Javits' tenants and overseers would simply have to spruce up the existing site, and Rogers' ambitious new exterior was scrapped, though Bruce Fowle vowed to keep working on the center.

Meanwhile, decisions beyond Javits undermined hopes that the Far West Side would fit Rogers' vision of an energetic, pedestrian-friendly place. Plans to create a grand Moynihan Station founded, and by September, new governor David Paterson was insisting that any train station overhaul would have to focus first on expanding rail capacity. Rogers officially bowed out of the project in May, and this month the city begins public hearings on streetscapes for a new boulevard where Javits would have expanded.

That leaves FXFowle with a new planning challenge, beginning with a pervasive sense that the area around Javits is stuck. It sits at the edge of a still-underbuilt area with poor public transit options, and plans for Hudson Yards to the south will take years to realize. And the weakening economy will slow projects reliant on public money.

Under such circumstances, can a masterplan really make Javits more attractive and functional? Whatever the board sees in November, McDaniel suggested, would overtly try to link to Hudson Yards while placating a neighborhood that worries about overdevelopment and parking. "Given the budget, they're trying to make it as comprehensive as possible, and the community connection is important," McDaniel said. "Bruce is adamant that this has to revitalize the entire area."

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MATT FREID

Fashion designer Matt Levine of Steelo's fame has brought his gift for the arresting runway look to the world of interior design. "You never get a second chance to make a first impression," as Levine told AN. And when you walk into The Eldridge, you understand what he means. Owned and designed by Levine, this Lower East Side lounge puts on a sophisticated air, from its exclusive door policy to its detailing and décor. The space features an oak-plank ceiling and hand-stamped cement floors that mimic the appearance of wood, wildly styled with gold polish and real gold flakes. Fieldstone wraps the walls, finished with gold flakes. Intimate Chesterfield banquets are pushed to the edges of the 1,500-square-foot room, creating a rectilinear volume that feels surprisingly ample for such a modestly sized space. Complete with a tiger-wood bar, the lounge also features an entire mirrored wall lined with bottles of Armand de Brignac Gold Champagne. At the rear of the space, a large chandelier sits behind a partially mirrored panel, animating the room with reflected light. Tending to the smallest details, Levine has also designed laser-engraved menus and—of course—the gold-infused cocktail list. **DANIELLE RAGO**



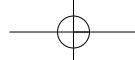

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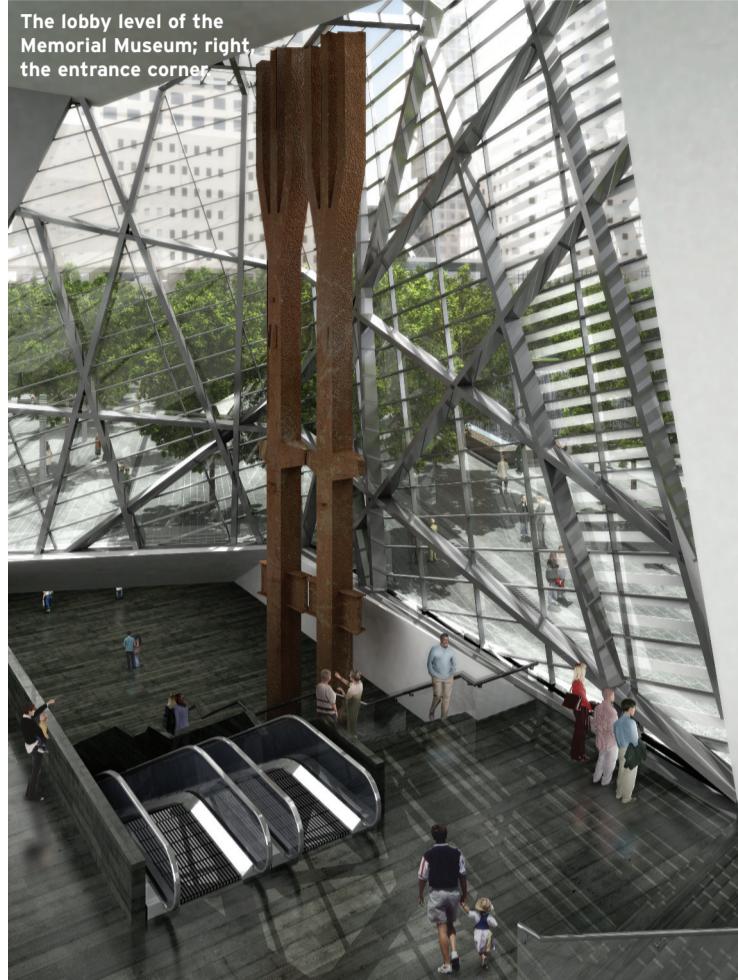
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**GATEWAY TO GROUND ZERO**

continued from front page three  
proposed towers and the memorial

itself that commemorates a tragedy while tying together an obstacle course of a site—all in a 47,500-

square-foot, three-story building.

Dykers presented a brave face at a press conference later that day to unveil the most recent designs for the site's museum pavilion. His \$80 million building, a glass-and-steel volume composed of tilted planes, is to open in 2012 as the only above-grade portion of the memorial museum. His remarks subtly referred to the jousting that made the pavilion so modest. "As important as any event in the past may be, people of the present and the future will connect with this place," Dykers said. "So the design tries to balance the initial Libeskind scheme and recent commercial planning."

The original plan for the site included a 220,000-square-foot cultural center fronting the sunken footprints of the World Trade Center towers. Former governor George Pataki rejected one of the site's designated tenants, the International Freedom Center, and the zone was subsequently reworked as part of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, honoring victims of all terrorist acts. It is that museum, which visitors will enter underground, to which Snøhetta's angled building opens through a stand of 50-foot-tall trees. The pavilion will also face the three proposed office towers, each with double-height retail at street level, designed by Norman Foster, Richard Rogers, and Fumihiko Maki. (The Freedom

Tower, to the north, is still scheduled to open in 2011.)

Searching for a connective language, Dykers and his team looked to the street-facing pediments of the lost World Trade Center. Since some had likened the famous Y-shaped columns of the center's lobby to "tree trunks," Snøhetta borrowed the metaphor to make a gesture with its roof. "We wanted the atrium to be a web structure, so that as much light as possible comes in," Dykers said at the presentation. The roof, a trapezoid with carats on top, features the vein-like pattern of a leaf. This gesture relates the building to Santiago Calatrava's PATH station, planned for Fulton Street on the east, and the trellises of Battery Park City on the west.

But as site leaseholder Larry Silverstein reiterated after Dykers' talk, other projects are on hold until the Port Authority "delivers infrastructure" to the entire, 16-acre site. That won't begin in earnest until the agency releases a report on September 30 that presents a feasible construction schedule. It is not clear that Silverstein can get financing or tenants for the other proposed towers.

Perhaps to preempt the Port Authority's report, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg called on September 10 for the city to take over site management. If that were to happen,



SQUARED DESIGN LAB

the Snøhetta project could get fast-tracked. Deputy Mayor Robert Lieber emphasized after Dykers' talk that the city's chief priority remains opening the memorial by September 11, 2011. Unlike the office towers, the memorial has a committed occupant, and can draw tourists while making good on a civic promise to victims' families. And while that logic places a heavy burden on a small building, Dykers welcomed the challenge.

"Being small in a place like this sets you apart," he told AN. "In New York, smaller spaces, like pocket parks in the Village or a small club, can be more memorable." Of course, other Ground Zero elements have been getting scaled back, notable among them Calatrava's transit hub for the Port Authority. In that spirit, Dykers' closing words to the press corps had a poignant ring. "Your memory of this place will be not a physical object," he said, "but an experience."

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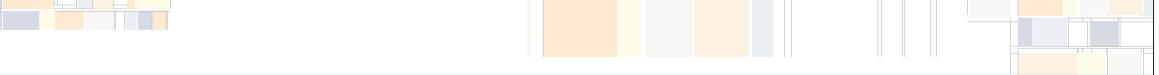
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**STERN CHOICES** continued from front page

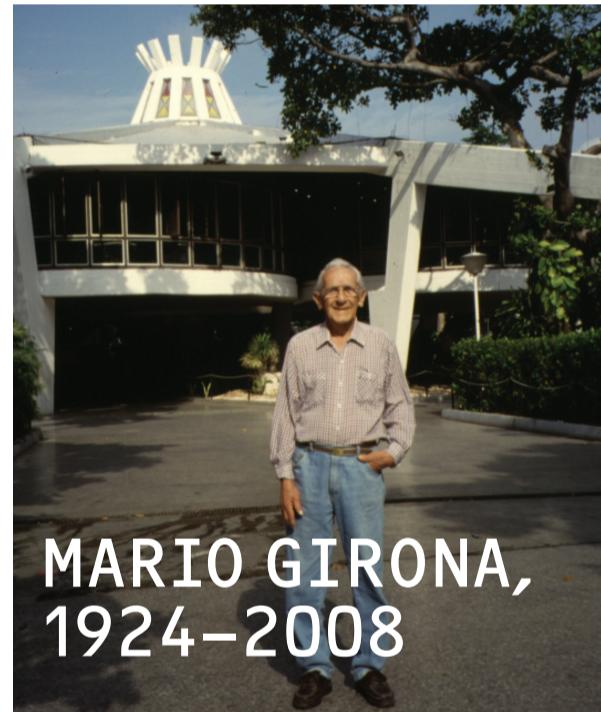
School of Architecture, was widely believed to be the leading candidate for the job. Yale President Richard Levin acknowledged Stern's deep involvement with the university as a factor that worked in his favor. "For the past decade, [Stern], along with former architecture deans Cesar Pelli and Tom Beeby, has advised me on every major building project we have undertaken," Levin said in a statement. "His understanding of Yale coupled with his appreciation of how good design can foster community will lead to a superior result."

Stern will have to contend with a difficult site. The Grove Street Cemetery will separate the new residences from rest of Yale College. With nearly 800 residents between them, Stern believes the new colleges will help re-center the University and connect Old Campus to Science Hill, the School of Management, and Saarinen's Ingalls Rink, among other sites. "It will be a lively place," Stern said. He also points out that the project

includes a new undergraduate theater and a social science library.

A debate about the selection has since raged in the *Yale Daily News*, primarily as it relates to architectural tradition versus innovation. As Stern is quick to point out to AN, "not a pencil has been lifted," so, he says, it is premature to speculate about the design. He does offer that the buildings will be "traditional residential colleges," by which he means they will include a sequence of interior courtyards and will include amenities such as small libraries and dining halls. He has also indicated that they will be primarily masonry buildings.

Yale is committed to reaching LEED Silver standards for all its new buildings, so even if they are neo-Georgian or Gothic, expect them to be highly insulated and efficient. "Traditional building techniques are inherently more sustainable," he said. "It takes more energy to heat and cool a glass and steel building than it does a masonry building." **ALAN G. BRAKE**



## MARIO GIRONA, 1924–2008

Cuban architect Mario Girona died in Havana at the age of 84 on August 28. An architect and university professor, Girona played a prominent role in shaping the built environment of socialist Cuba after 1959.

Born in 1924 in the city of Manzanillo, Girona grew up with an affinity for working with his hands. He went to a trade school as a teenager and became a skilled draftsman before pursuing architecture at the University of Havana. Girona gained early experience in the construction of private residences as an intern. Following graduation in 1954, he participated in numerous projects, notably the construction of the Hotel Capri in 1956.

After the revolution in 1959, as many of the established Cuban architects decided to leave the country, Girona chose to stay. Over the

subsequent decades, he became a consistent and pragmatic voice in both professional practice and education. His collaboration with Celia Sánchez Monduley, who then held the title of Secretary of the Council of State, resulted in various significant community and cultural centers. The Coppelia ice cream pavilion and park in Havana is his most recognizable project for Cubans and visitors alike. Completed in six months in 1966, it was the flagship of the Coppelia chain of ice cream parlors built around the island in the 1960s. Today, Girona's Coppelia is often obscured by a curtain of foliage; the long lines at the corner of 23rd Avenue and L Street, however, mark the spot.

A student of the Cuban modernists, Girona looked to established traditions appropriate for the island's

Girona in front of the Coppelia Ice Cream Parlor in Havana.

climate, preferring Wright to Le Corbusier. Awarded the National Prize of Architecture by the Union of Architects and Engineers of the Construction of Cuba in 1996, Girona's work is largely dedicated to facilities related to tourism and recreation. Some of his principal projects include the tourist center of Guamá, the 8,000 Lockers Park in Varadero, the Fishing Port in Havana, and the hotels Mar Azul, Pasacaballos, Ancón, Paradiso, and Punta Arenas. His collaboration with Sánchez, students, and the community of forestry laborers at Las Terrazas, in the province of Pinar Del Rio, resulted in one of the most important examples of community planning and prefabricated housing of the early 1960s. He also headed the renovation of Terminal 1 and design of Terminal 3 at Havana International Airport, and worked on the renovation and remodeling of the Museum of Fine Arts in Havana. As a professor, Girona encouraged collaboration with and among his students; he was also an advocate of the generation of the 1980s in their quest to reform the architectural profession and pedagogy.

His work represents one of the more successful architectural careers in Cuba following 1959 and is significant not just for the history of the recent past illustrated in his buildings but for the legacy of the early building campaign of the Cuban revolution.

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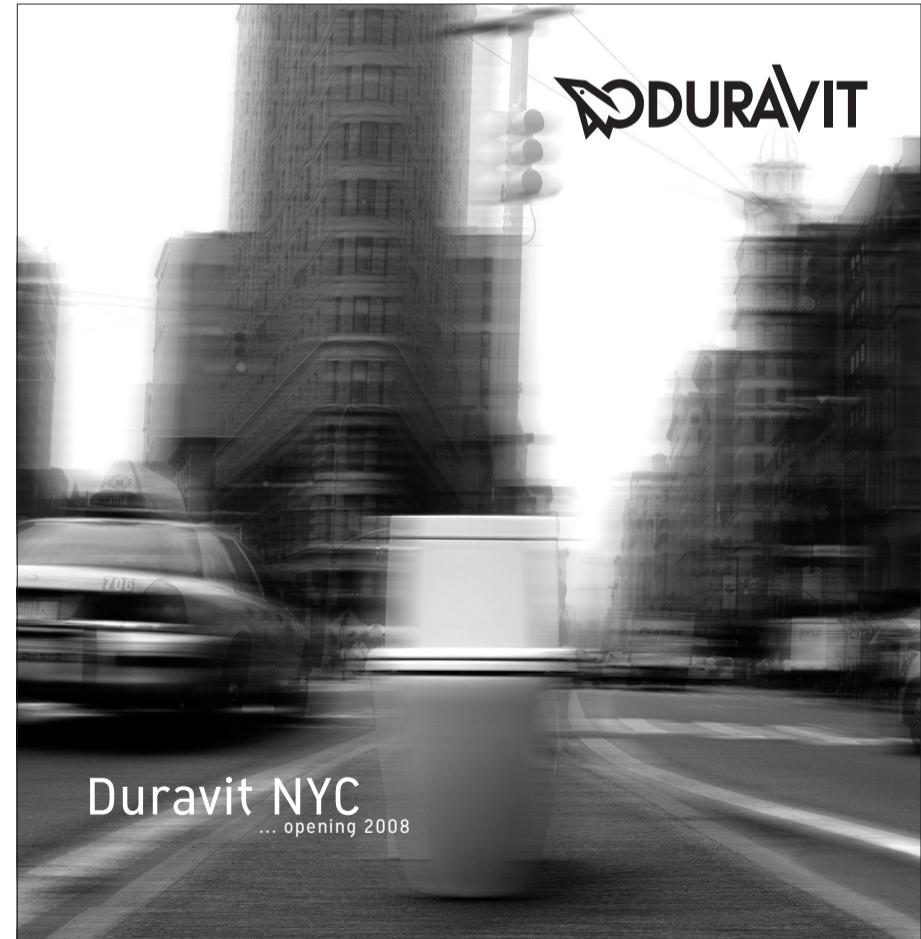


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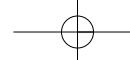
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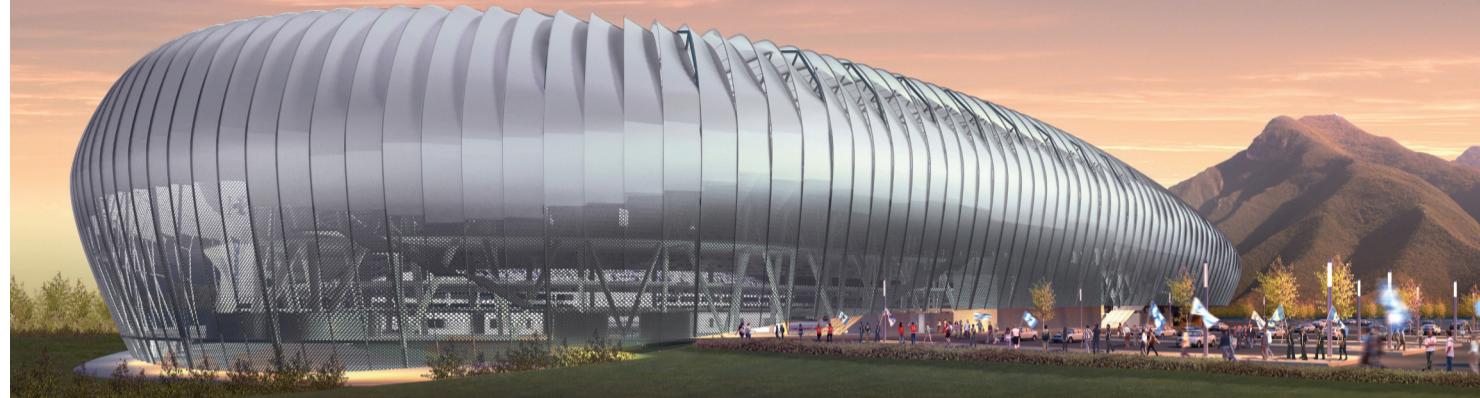
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 1, 2008

SPORTS-CENTRIC ATELIER LEAVES ITS PARENT FIRM

# HOK SPLIT



Left, Stadium for Monterey, Mexico; Camden Yards, Baltimore.



HOK SVE

Following their work in the early 1970s on Arrowhead Stadium, five architects realized they had hit upon a new niche: sport-specific stadium design. Before then, most teams awkwardly shared outdated baseball stadiums or ungainly hybrids. Realizing they would need help in executing such massive work, the designers looked across the state to Hellmuth, Obata, and Kassabaum, who would provide technical support to their architectural vision. In 1983, HOK Sport was born. On August 28, HOK SVE, now the undisputed leader in sports facility design, came full circle

with the announcement of a buyout from HOK Group.

"Sport" had always been an atelier of sorts within "Group," utilizing its resources but maintaining its own stable of designers. The two would occasionally collaborate on projects, but as HOK SVE grew into a 350-person global firm that dominates the stadium design market it began to outgrow its need for HOK Group, which has grown considerably itself in the intervening decades, becoming one of the largest firms in the country.

"It's a tortured analogy," Bob

White, HOK SVE's director of international marketing, said, "but it really is like the adolescent growing up into adulthood and moving out on its own."

Since 2000, HOK Sport has effectively been its own firm, when it became a limited liability partnership, relinquishing all but a few administrative and legal duties with the wider firm. There is also the issue of stock. Since HOK is employee-owned, HOK Sport cannot fully exercise control of its own stock, as it can when the buyout takes effect on December 12. (Some details of the deal are still being

worked out, but it passed a shareholder vote at both companies.) "This will give us more power to incentivize our employees' work," White said.

Under the tentative terms of the deal, neither firm will compete in the other's design area for two and a half years, during which time HOK Sport may also continue to use the HOK name. After that point, they may begin to work in certain ancillary fields, such as recreational facilities for colleges and hotels for sports complexes. After five years, "all bets are off," White said, though he acknowledged

there was little reason to compete. "As far as we can see into the future, we can't see ourselves relinquishing our expertise," he said.

Clark Davis, vice-chairman of HOK, agreed. "In the non-sports practice, we have lots of areas to focus on, from airports to healthcare to universities—all have been booming for us," he said. "We want to be able to focus on what we're good at."

For the time being, both sides stressed, it remains business as usual. Don Muret, the facilities reporter for the *Sports Business Journal* said the only possible problem could be when HOK SVE must relinquish a name that has become synonymous with stadium design.

"There could be some confusion," Muret said. "But as long as you know the architects are still there, I don't think there'd be a problem. Everyone knows who these guys are."

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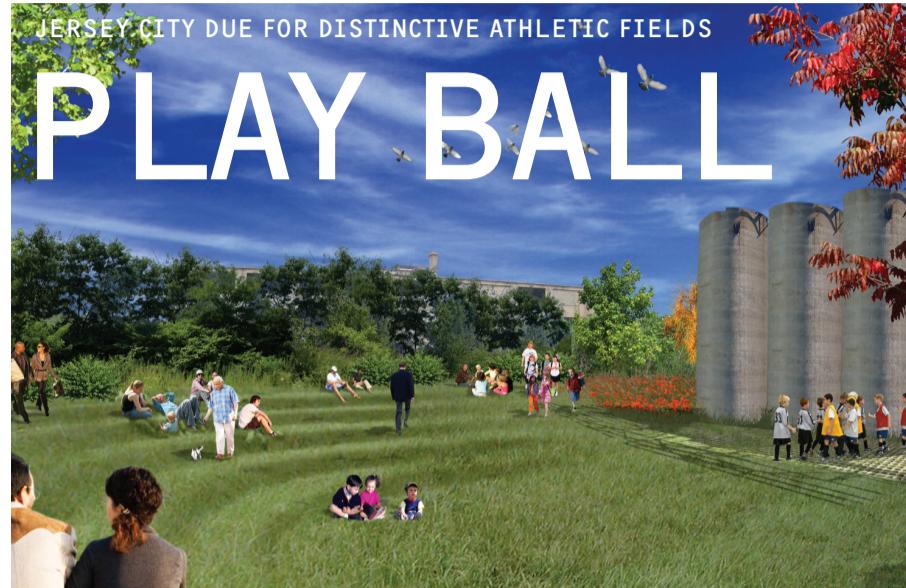
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JERSEY CITY DUE FOR DISTINCTIVE ATHLETIC FIELDS

# PLAY BALL

Jersey City's Ward F is home to Liberty State Park, the largest in recreational area in the city, but despite all that lush open space, the neighborhood is all but devoid of athletic fields. "It's a very scenic park," Ben Delisle, the director of development at the Jersey City Redevelopment Authority, said. "But it's not very active. There are some hiking trails, but that's about it."

When the city created the Morris Canal Redevelopment Plan a decade ago, one of the top priorities was the creation of such a park. The canal, long filled, still divided and disrupted the city because numerous old industrial sites lay vacant, many of them contaminated. One such plot was a 17-acre lot that once served as a rail yard. The city released an RFQ for Berry Lane Park in 2007, and a team consisting of Dresdner Robin, a local environmental and civil engineering firm, and Rogers Marvel Architects were selected. After a year of work, they are preparing to unveil their final proposal for what will become largest recreational park in the city.

"We wanted to give them something unique and not just slap down as many fields as possible," Mark Vizzini, the associate-in-charge for Dresdner Robinson, said. He said that it was this sort of progressive thinking that led his firm to partner with Rogers Marvel, after first working with the architects on the Canco Lofts. "Not to draw too heavily on the sport analogy," Vizzini said, "but when you play with better people, you play better yourself."

After first meeting with the

community last September to hear what locals wanted from the park—basically, lots of athletic facilities—and consulting with city officials, the designers returned in February to present three different plans: Community Rooms, Neighborhood Quilt, and Big Backyard. Though the final proposal draws on all three, it most closely resembles the latter, which concentrates circulation around the perimeter and places the ball fields and other facilities within.

One of the primary reasons for this approach is that the old rail yard had long riven the residential community it surrounds. The city especially wanted to increase access to a light rail station at the southwest corner of the lot that opened in 2000. The rail yard made access from the eastern neighborhood a long and even dangerous walk. "It was a barrier that had long split the community," Vizzini said.

This approach also offered the opportunity for a more creative arrangement to the fields within. Rogers Marvel placed a particular emphasis on highlighting the site's industrial past. In a nod to the canal, the park's

smaller facilities—basketball and tennis courts, playgrounds, picnic areas, and a skate park—run in a line along its original path, now called the "activity canal." And a stretch of concrete silos that once housed coal for the trains will serve as the backdrop to an amphitheater on one side and a spray park on the other.

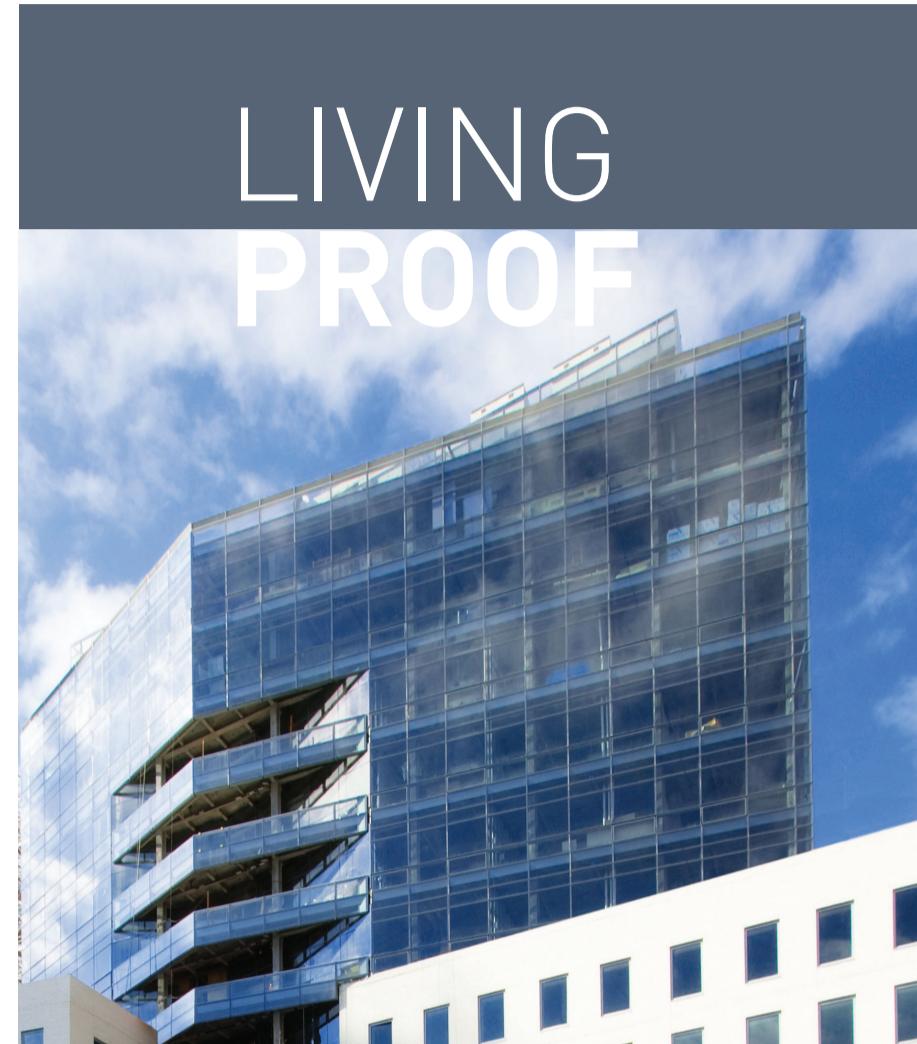
East of the canal and the spray park are the larger ball fields, with two baseball diamonds to the north and a regulation soccer field to the south. Between these rises the project's most distinctive feature, a concession stand with an arched roof that makes the building resemble a butterfly in flight. Pushing the symbolism to its extreme, the roof will be planted with flowers to attract the very same insects. "We thought how can we get a green roof and turn it into so much more?" Vizzini said.

The same could be said for the rest of the park. "We wanted something different," Delisle said. "And I think we've gotten that. When it's finished, it's really going to be a place where people really just step back and go, 'Wow.'"

MC



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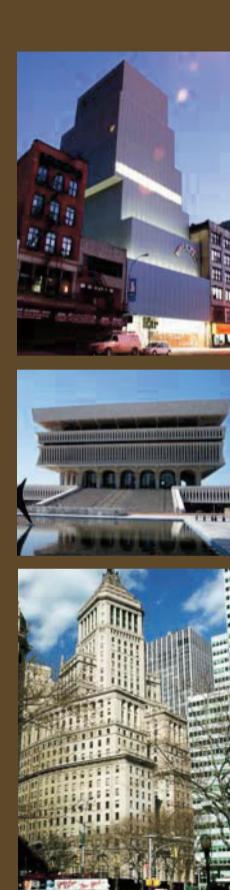


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From top to bottom: New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY; Empire State Plaza, Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY; Sports Museum of America, New York, NY.

## STUDIO VISIT > AUDREY MATLOCK

### 57 IRVING PLACE



Glancing at the bold, blue and clear-glass curtain wall of the Chelsea Modern, and a serene design for a steel-and-glass condominium at 57 Irving Place, you might not guess the same architect designed them both. But for Audrey Matlock, diverse styles reflect the districts in which these buildings sit. "The West Village is a more traditional neighborhood, but far West Chelsea is being redefined by architecture," she said during a recent visit to her Tribeca storefront studio. Built for the same developer, Robert Gladstone of Madison Equities, the two projects show Matlock's knack both for reinvention and for satisfied clients, many of whom return with multiple commissions.

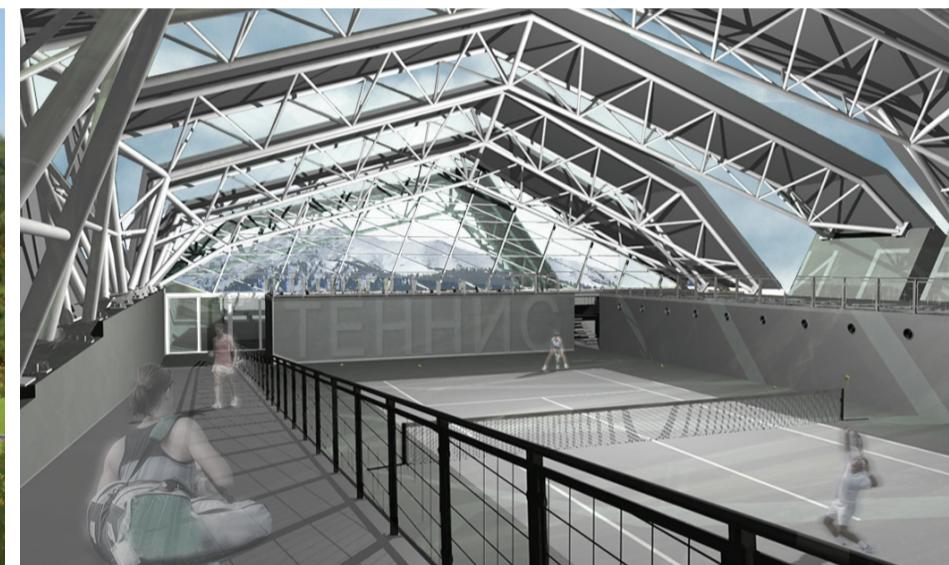
An alum of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Matlock established her practice in the mid-1990s. She struck out on her own without a client, quickly getting pre-qualified for city work. After renovating and upgrading the public library in Fresh Meadows, Queens, she collaborated with the Washington, D.C.-based office of Gensler to renovate and expand a corporate campus for Armstrong. Only within the last few years has she begun to find the kind of work you expect of small, downtown firms. "At first I couldn't get a loft renovation," she said, "because everyone thought I could build only skyscrapers."

As her high-end Manhattan residential projects continue, Matlock is aggressively pursuing work abroad, and in this, too, her firm has tremendous formal and programmatic range. "For me, there are no plateaus. You're always pushing upward, trying new things," she said. In Trinidad, she has designed a freestanding, waterside restaurant with generous indoor/outdoor spaces. Across the world in Kazakhstan, she is completing an enormous private residence for the developer of a new sports complex which she also designed. It is composed of zinc-clad bands that admit light through irregular, glazed clerestories, reflecting its own sense of place within the region's rugged landscape. **AGB**

BLOOM RESTAURANT



MEDEU SPORTS CENTER



CHELSEA MODERN



HOUSE IN THE TIAN SHAN MOUNTAINS

CHELSEA MODERN  
NEW YORK

Within view of Frank Gehry's IAC building and Jean Nouvel's still-rising 100 West 11th Avenue—and next door to a boldly graphic condominium building by Della Valle Bernheimer Architects—Matlock's Chelsea Modern sits among some of New York's most assertive architecture. With folded bands of cobalt-blue and clear glass, the facade is further animated by pop-out windows that extend with scissor hinges, a feature Matlock believes has never before been used in New York. The 85,000-square-foot, 47-unit building also includes a below-grade swimming pool, illuminated from above with glass set in the sidewalks.

57 IRVING PLACE  
NEW YORK

Alternating between transparency and translucency, and thus between public and private, the facade of 57 Irving Place features five-foot-wide by ten-foot-tall panes of glass, which pop out like those at Chelsea Modern. These, however, are so large that they are operated with automated controls. The translucent panels feature a silk-screened dot pattern, drawn from clouds, which create subtle variations in the glass panes. The nine-unit building is comprised primarily of duplexes, and an on-grade garage entrance is nearly invisible behind one of the clouded panels.

BLOOM RESTAURANT  
TRINIDAD

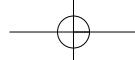
Glazed on the side facing the water, with a largely opaque land-facing side, this restaurant and bar stands on stilts, to keep the view on the land more open and to create dramatic vistas from within and atop the restaurant. The developer, a Trinidad-born New Yorker, aims to create a destination venue that appeals to locals and tourists. "He wants to build a place where he would want to hang out," Matlock says. The building is further enlivened by a reflecting pool visible, through a glass floor, from the bar area above. Triangular cut-outs, reminiscent of Toyo Ito's Serpentine Pavilion, puncture the building envelope.

HOUSE IN THE  
TIAN SHAN MOUNTAINS  
ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

This 30,000-square-foot manse is perched on a mountainside in an earthquake zone. Due to the instability of the soil on site, the project includes massive retaining walls built into the mountain. The architects treat these walls as terraces, creating numerous indoor/outdoor spaces, and tying the building to the landscape. The three-level house includes a large indoor pool and spa, as well as living quarters for a family of five and their staff. The indoor pool opens onto a lawn with large pivoting glass panels.

MEDEU SPORTS CENTER  
ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

Located in the Tian Shan foothills, the 20,000-square-foot project includes indoor and outdoor tennis courts, Turkish baths, a children's gymnasium, lawn game areas, and a barbecue pavilion. An independently supported super-truss holds each zinc-clad section of the roof, which will weather to further reflect the landscape. Though each layer is a different shape, it is built out of a standardized module, with clerestories framing views of the mountains and the valley.



JET BLUE'S NEW TERMINAL 5 PAYS QUIET HOMAGE TO SAARINEN'S TWA BUILDING, BUT CAN'T MATCH ITS GLAMOUR

# Clipped Wings



The interim logo for JetBlue's new Terminal 5 at John F. Kennedy Airport showed the abbreviation "T5" rising like a phoenix behind the iconic roofline of Eero Saarinen's 1962 TWA Terminal. The graphic expressed a literal truth: the new \$743 million, 26-gate terminal sits directly behind TWA, embracing it with a series of gently curved roadways and a facade of gray steel and glass. It also expressed the hopes of many preservationists that the spectacular reinforced-concrete TWA terminal would live again, making flying seem as glamorous as it had in the 1960s.

Those hopes have risen and fallen since the building closed in 2001. This spring, the Port Authority, which now owns the TWA terminal, agreed to spend \$19 million on asbestos abatement and other repairs so that JetBlue passengers would have

the option of checking in, via electronic kiosk, in Saarinen's building, then trundling up one of the tubes dramatized in the Leonardo DiCaprio movie *Catch Me If You Can* to catch a flight. A 2006 RFP for other uses—a themed restaurant, a museum of airline modernism—didn't attract any viable proposals, likely due to skittishness by developers about taking on the cost of the basic upgrades. The Port Authority says it is still committed to reopening the terminal once the abatement is completed at the end of 2008. A second RFP will probably be issued early in 2009, according to Port Authority public affairs officer Pasquale DiFulco. He says that the authority sees TWA as a multi-use building, not an empty shell, but how it could be used is still very much to be determined.

Meanwhile, JetBlue has moved on. Though the old

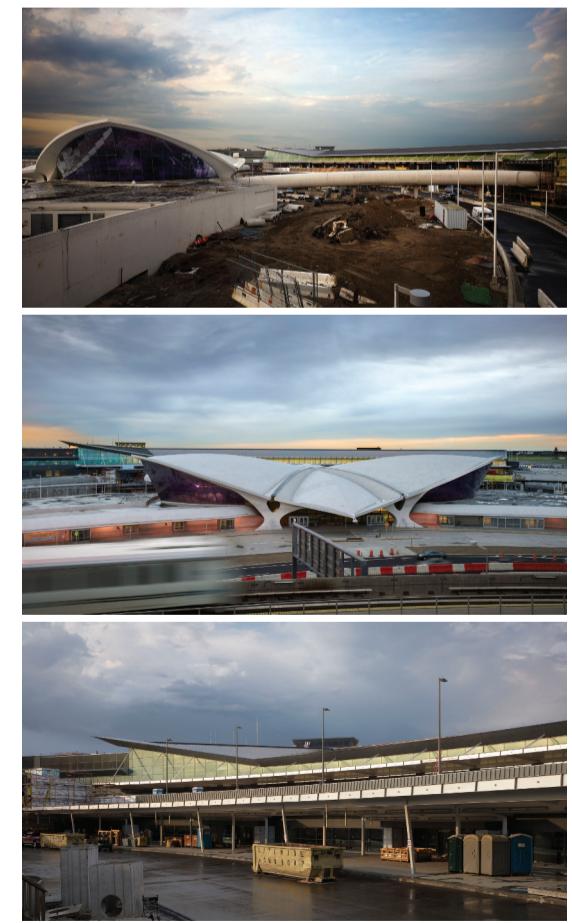
graphic is plastered on its soon-to-be vacated home at Terminal 6, the new T5 logo disappears behind the Saarinen building, replacing its graceful swoop with the pedestrian outline of the new building's ground plan inside T5. The logo suggests that the airline is trying to move past the Saarinen shack in its front yard and highlight its own accomplishment.

This might be possible if the new building were the kind of radical aesthetic break TWA was. But the structure, designed by Gensler, is explicitly deferential: low and dark, hugging the ground, and uninflated across its long facade but for the roof that tips-up on the left at an angle that, if you stand in just the right place, extends Saarinen's roof to the sky. If TWA were not in front, you might not give T5 a second glance. Looking at Kennedy overall, littered

with gray and glass and steel buildings, you wouldn't necessarily realize it was new.

This seems especially strange in light of the news from abroad, where Richard Rogers' Terminal 4 in Madrid and Norman Foster's Terminal 3 in Beijing are winning raves as true game-changers. While Gensler has spiffed up, daylighted, and streamlined the airport experience inside T5, nothing really feels different.

Most passengers will drive to the front door of T5, but 25 percent will reach it via AirTrain and enter through a curving, elevated hall, a white space with people movers that stands on stilts between T5 and T6. This leaves room for possible expansion, and also gives passengers the opportunity to look out over TWA and the rest of the airport, a ballet of moving ground-level parts. Oddly, though, the

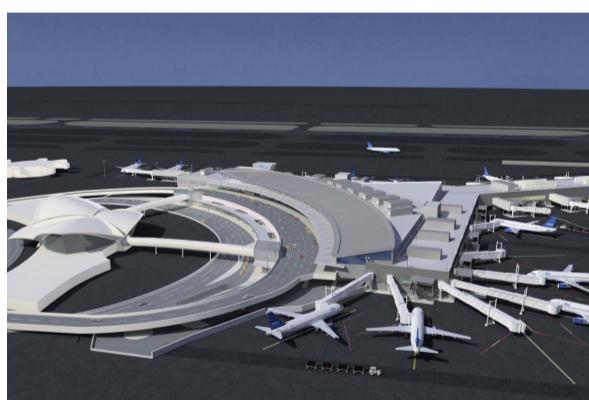




runway-side windows are up at the ceiling, so you can't see the planes. Gensler project principal Bill Hooper says this was to keep people moving—one can imagine kids, especially, stopping in their tracks to watch, but it also seems ungenerous.

The hall—white terrazzo floors, white-painted steel, white walls—also establishes the non-color scheme followed in the rest of the terminal. JetBlue blue is used sparingly—too sparingly—as an accent, making all the big spaces light and airy but fairly bland. And can those big white walls really be low-maintenance, as claimed?

The arrivals hall has more clerestories, and a pitched ceiling striped with metal trusses. Rows of check-in kiosks occupy the center of the floor, actual agents are against the wall, creating two lateral lines of passenger traffic toward the central security area. The terminal is designed to accommodate



20 million passengers a year, and up to 250 daily flights, which JetBlue says is equivalent to LaGuardia's total volume. The JetBlue system turns planes around in 30 minutes, rather than the average 75. The space is nice enough—the daylight relieves the onset of airport claustrophobia—but nothing special. There's no directionality in the ceiling, nothing interesting on the walls, no sense of drama. The best view of the TWA Terminal is from this level, back out the front glass, but who is going

to look at anything but the blue flight screens? Saarinen's oval flight tubes meet JetBlue awkwardly, in a pair of pedestrian boxes, tacked on to the front. What one will see at the end of the oval is a white wall. The landmarked right-hand tube couldn't be made accessible, Hooper says, and so the nostalgic traveller who wanted to use it would need to descend a flight of stairs, luggage in hand. (The left-hand tube of 1969 has an elevator.) They are not **continued on page 16**



The designers at **Payette** found a fitting inspiration for the connecting stair in a new research center at the **Albert Einstein College of Medicine** in the Bronx: the helical form of DNA. Installed by the master craftsmen of the ornamental metal industry with the same level of perfection inherent in the building blocks of life, the stair fosters creative exchanges between researchers, technicians, and students.

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 1, 2008



Main concourse; right, marketplace.

**CLIPPED WINGS** continued from page 15 integrated into the highly thought-out path (Hooper stressed the terminal's "intuitive circulation," minimum signage for maximum flow), but rather are appendices.

There's even less drama in the security area, which shifts the shade to gray, lowers the ceiling, and seems to say, "Let's just get through this."

Interest, instead, is reserved for the terminal "Marketplace," another area of life infiltrated by the brand-speak of the mall. RockwellGroup was hired to make something of the triangular space, which will funnel arriving passengers through the center and down to the baggage claim, departing passengers around the edges to an array of upscale dining and shopping options

reserved for the terminal "Marketplace," another area of life infiltrated by the brand-speak of the mall. RockwellGroup was hired to make something of the triangular space, which will funnel arriving passengers through the center and down to the baggage claim, departing passengers around the edges to an array of upscale dining and shopping options



(Muji! Lacoste! Tapas!). To center the space, Rockwell designed an overhead tension ring, an homage to Saarinen's staircases hung from a twist of cables. The outside of the ring is lined with screens that will show information and video art. On either side of the ring, down on the floor, there will be aisles of bleacher seating with movable cushions: places to watch the crowd but not get in the way. These were not yet installed on my tour, but will be an interesting experiment—architect David Rockwell cited William H. Whyte's research on people's behavior in urban parks as a model.

It is in the Marketplace that the sad limbo of TWA

begins to fade and some new ideas start to emerge. As one moves toward the gates, the terminal opens up. Floors and walls and ceilings are white again, but here that feels expansive rather than generic. Skylights above shower light down on the aisle, and the concourses are narrow enough that you can see out the windows on either side. Branded carpeting, with staccato stripes of blue and orange on JetBlue blue, is held to the edges, defining gate areas but not swamping the space in pattern.

At the very end of the main concourse is a big window through which you can watch planes criss-crossing on take-off and landing. This is the

view that would have helped in the AirTrain hall, and is the terminal's best moment.

As for one's return, the baggage handling system is supposed to be state-of-the-art, and luggage is delivered on big orange-topped carousels below. There's no way to disguise the underground nature of baggage claim, or to remove one's instinctive preparation for loss, so while the space seems pleasant enough—the bold blue Panelite on the back wall should be soothing—proof will be in the speedy return of one's bags.

As we toured the terminal, David Rockwell mentioned JetBlue's retro idea about the glamour of flight. Indeed, especially when it first appeared on the airline scene, the look of JetBlue seemed taken from the Saarinen era. But the terminal doesn't. Perhaps flying is just too serious a business now, but it feels like JetBlue has lost its sense of fun in its middle age. This terminal is clearly an attempt to further establish and bolster its reputation. But TWA is all too present a reminder of an architecture that once transported. **ALEXANDRA LANGE**

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## LPC APPROVES NEW PLANS FOR MCCARREN PARK POOL



## DIVING RIGHT IN

Hipsters, grab your swim trunks: On September 9, the Landmarks Preservation Commission unanimously approved Parks Department plans to restore the McCarren Park Pool to its Moses-era glory, along with adding new amenities called for by the community. After a three-year reign as North Brooklyn's premier concert venue, and three decades of disuse before that, the pool should finally be back to its original use by 2011.

The plan, designed by Rogers Marvel Architects, calls for a thorough restoration of the bathhouse, completed in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration, as well as reconfigured wading and diving pools, a "beach" platform that can accommodate an ice-skating rink, and new year-round recreational and community spaces within. "You have to respect the existing architecture and open space, and at the same time create a 21<sup>st</sup>-century facility," Jonathan Marvel told *AN* after the commission voted 7-0 in favor of the project.

At the sparsely attended hearing, however, some preservationists took issue with what they viewed as the plan's tawdry bells and whistles. "We are sorry to see the Parks Department adopt an agenda that fills so much of the formerly open space with concessions, administrative paraphernalia, and alien attractions," Christabel Gough, secretary of the Society for the Architecture of the City, told the commission. "It turns a sophisticated design of the 1930s into kitsch with a beach."

Marvel countered that, like all successful restorations, the needs of past and present had to be balanced, a sentiment the commission strongly affirmed. "For the resources the city is dedicating to this, we're going to need year-round use from this facility," commissioner Elizabeth Ryan said, responding to attacks on the skating rink.

Perhaps most controversially, the plan moves the swimmers' changing pavilions

outside of the bathhouse, adding low-slung volumes flanking the main entry. The architects wanted to place them closer to the water and free up interior space for new uses, while creating shaded space on the promenade. Preservationists argued that the pavilions distracted from the building's scale, but the commission disagreed. "I was worried they would block the view of the robust building behind them," Fred Bland, the newest commissioner, said. "But I find they do not cover up too much. The transparency and lacy feel of the design is modern, deferential, and appropriate." (Preservationists have also objected to a proposed rooftop restaurant, but a Parks Department official said that the design was not presented because it would come during a second phase, with a separate review, if it were pursued at all.)

Marvel said the architects had the good fortune of a nearly complete set of original drawings for the complex. This is how the decision was made to keep a separate spray park on the northern side of the pool, as drawings and photographs suggested had always been the case. The drawings also allowed for the careful restoration of windows and doors that have long been missing or boarded up. The designers even hope to peel back decades of graffiti to reveal the original bricks. "There is a kind of ruggedness to the McCarren complex, and we love that ruggedness, but we also want to make it as beautiful as possible," Marvel said.

As for concerts, Stephanie Thayer, the executive director of the local nonprofit Open Space Alliance, said she remains optimistic that events might continue in the pool during the off-season, as well as during the summer at one of the new parks along the waterfront. Thayer was also recently hired by the Parks Department, as its North Brooklyn administrator, which could help the new venue become a reality. **MC**

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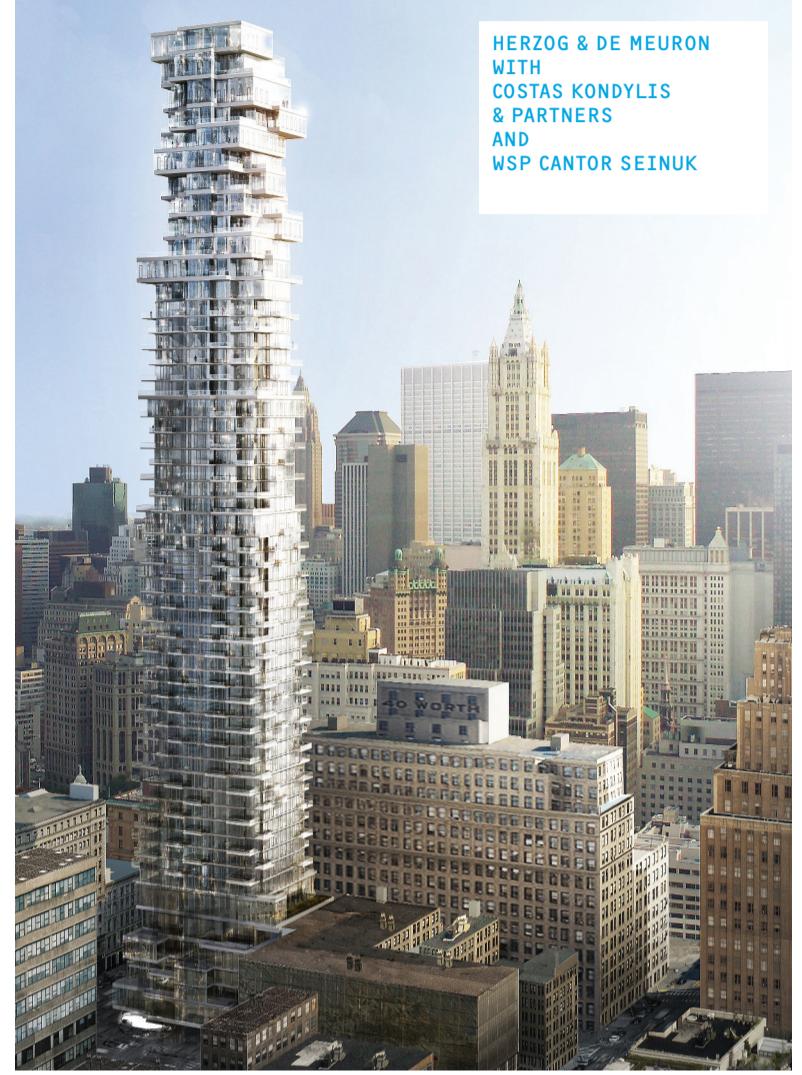
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Herzog & de Meuron (H&dM) has developed something of a specialty at taking our tired old building tropes and finding new ways to interpret them. Now the Swiss architecture firm has turned this talent to the skyscraper. At 56 Leonard Street, an 820-foot-tall luxury condominium development that has begun construction in Tribeca, H&dM has turned its back on many of the inherent efficiencies of the highrise—namely repetitive floor plans—in favor of a design-intensive approach. Each of the building's 57 floors is unique both in layout and profile. This was done in part to make each of the 145 apartments completely distinct, a selling point for the type of buyer capable of footing a bill that can range between \$3.5 and \$30 million. But it also created an envelope that entirely belies the standard extrusions we've grown accustomed to seeing ever since the Flatiron Building. The stacked floors create a seemingly random series

of setbacks and overhangs, effecting plays of light and shadow across the surface that lend a mottled texture and sense of movement to the exterior.

A glance at these shifting floor plates might cause a shudder to go down the spine, as it looks as if some serious structural maneuvers must have been devised to make it all hold together. But the structural system is actually quite standard: a poured-in-place reinforced concrete frame, consisting of shear walls in the core linked to perimeter columns by the floor slabs. The core slims halfway up the tower, going from six elevators to four, and there are two sections of structural outriggers on the mechanical floors, which increase the building's rigidity and allow the columns to be arranged in such a way that increases flexibility in the floor layouts. The increased rigidity also makes possible the building's startling cantilevers, which extend as much as 30 feet from the last vertical



support. Most of the tower's terraces (every unit has one) hang six feet off the slab edge, though the larger ones reach out as much as 10 to 12 feet.

But the most surprising story behind the structure lies in the lavish amount of energy spent on the design. The architects went through innumerable permutations of floor plate arrangements, bandying them back and forth with the structural engineer, Cantor Seinuk, to find an organization that met design goals while remaining within the realm of lateral stability. And while the shifting floor sizes didn't completely fill the zoning envelope, with a width-to-height ratio of 1:13, the slim tower is at its structural maximum. As the building got taller throughout the two-year design process, it became necessary to install a slosh damper system in the mechanical penthouse. This is basically a large pool of water, 30 feet by 30 feet by 12 feet deep, which acts as a counterbalance against building sway by sloshing in the opposite direction as the wind.

As innovative as this approach to the skyscraper may be, in other aspects H&dM referenced classic high-rise design. The building is composed around the base, column, crown arrangement found in such old standbys as the Empire State, Woolworth, and Chrysler buildings. The tower also tapers gently as it ascends, eroding at the corners while the edges remain square, from 8,000 square feet at the ground floor down to roughly 6,000 square feet at the penthouse level. There is a typical hierarchical structure of amenities

and residences: Above the lobby is a level of parking, topped by a lounge and spa, including a 75-foot pool. Four zones of residences comprise the column and crown sections, ranging in size from 1,030 square feet to 6,330 square feet: First there are four to five units per floor, then three, then two, and finally the crown is made up of eight full-floor residences.

The cladding system, however, swerves unexpectedly from the recent trend in highrise condos. Rather than go for look-at-me-world transparency with ultra-clear, low-iron glazing, the architects specified reflective glass for the window wall system. In part this choice was made to meet code insulation requirements, as the building is completely glass clad, but H&dM used it as a design boon by selecting a higher degree of reflectivity for the balcony doors than for the regular windows, creating sparks of light on the already shimmering surface and further animating the facade.

And then there's the Anish Kapoor sculpture. Wrapped around the building's corner columns at ground level, and protruding out onto Leonard and Church streets, the rounded, squished stainless steel form was modeled on a balloon suffering under compression forces from above. In spite of its appearance, it accepts no structural load itself, but it does function as an important cultural barometer: Even in dollar-per-square-foot squeezed Manhattan there's still a little room for a bit of art, even if it's not for its own sake.

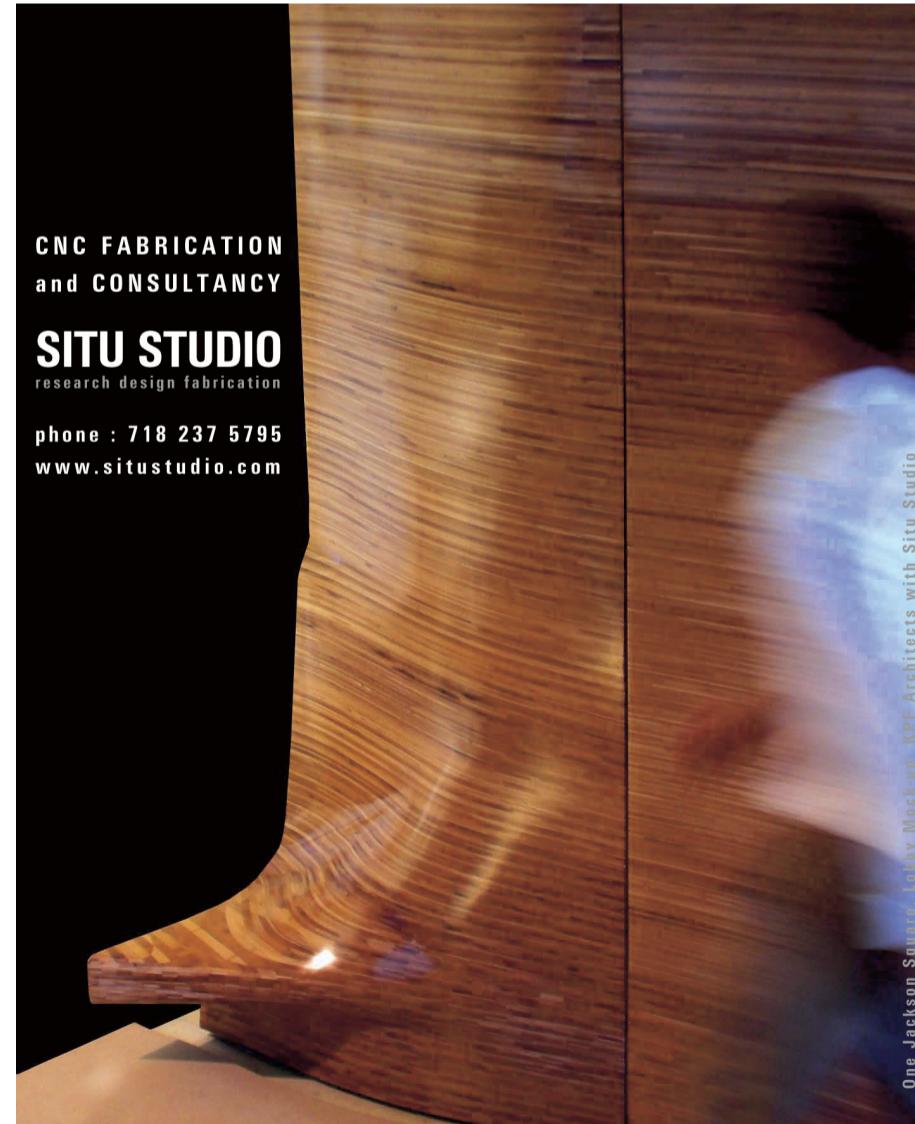
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## GREENING GRAND ARMY



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Longtime Brooklynites may recall when Grand Army Plaza featured the "Death-O-Meter," a sign in the broad circle displaying the latest body count for borough-wide traffic fatalities. For decades it stood as a call to caution—even if then, as now, the plaza itself was a better advertisement for the perils of New York's streets.

On September 12, the Design Trust for Public Space and Grand Army Plaza Coalition unveiled a sheaf of competition-winning schemes that could change all that. Launched last spring, *Reinventing Grand Army Plaza* drew 200 proposals from around the world, each a bid to cut the Gordian knot of five roads, two avenues, and one parkway that converge at the Plaza. Two French practices shared the \$5,000 grand prize in a first-place tie, with second- and third-place honors going to firms from Paris and Brooklyn, respectively. The top 30 proposals are featured in an exhibition just north of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch, on view through October 13.

Every entrant faced one aggravating problem: Grand Army Plaza was never intended to be a public space as we understand the phrase today. It was a monumental gateway, an exercise in Beaux Arts composition, but ill-suited to the present taste for Jane Jacobs-esque pedestrianism. And to tour the current exhibition is to cycle through the sadly limited repertoire of solutions.

Some entrants squeezed speeding automobiles through the very center, including first-prize winner *Please Wake Me Up!*, from

Guillaume Derrien and Gauthier le Romancer's winning entry *Please Wake Me Up!*

Paris-based team Guillaume Derrien and Gauthier le Romancer. Others pushed cars to the periphery, as in the proposal by third-place winner Garrison Architects of Brooklyn, which envisions an elevated pedestrian promenade circling the plaza, with public activities in the center.

Of the winning schemes, however, *Canopy*, from the Nantes, France-based firm acc&s2, is the most imaginative. Ramps and paths connect a startling array of surfaces and uses, including a nod to urban agriculture. "We've provided for a garden so that people can grow their own vegetables and sell them at the Greenmarket," principal Anne-Sophie Coué told AN.

While many entries were undeniably spirited, few matched the elegance of Michael Arad from Handel Architects. His *Green Army Plaza* expands the site's existing wooded berms into tunnels that cover the thoroughfares. If the concept wasn't selected by the 10-member jury—which included Alexandros Washburn, the city planning department's chief urban designer, as well as landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh and Ken Smith—it's likely because it would have been among the most costly to realize. We can only hope such worthy ideas shape the city's final product for the plaza, which remains a question of money, time, and political will.

IAN VOLNER

## THE TRAINS! THE TRAINS!

Over its halting two decades, Moynihan Station has swallowed up its fair share of politicians—it is even named after one of them. Governor David Paterson is the latest to stare deep into the maw, where he sees less the need for a dramatic new station than more utilitarian tracks, according to the *Observer*. The pink paper reports that behind the scenes, Paterson is eschewing his predecessor's plans for a major real estate swap in favor of a scaled back station that boasts reorganized tracks that can alleviate those already at capacity. Paterson would also put the Port Authority in charge of the project.

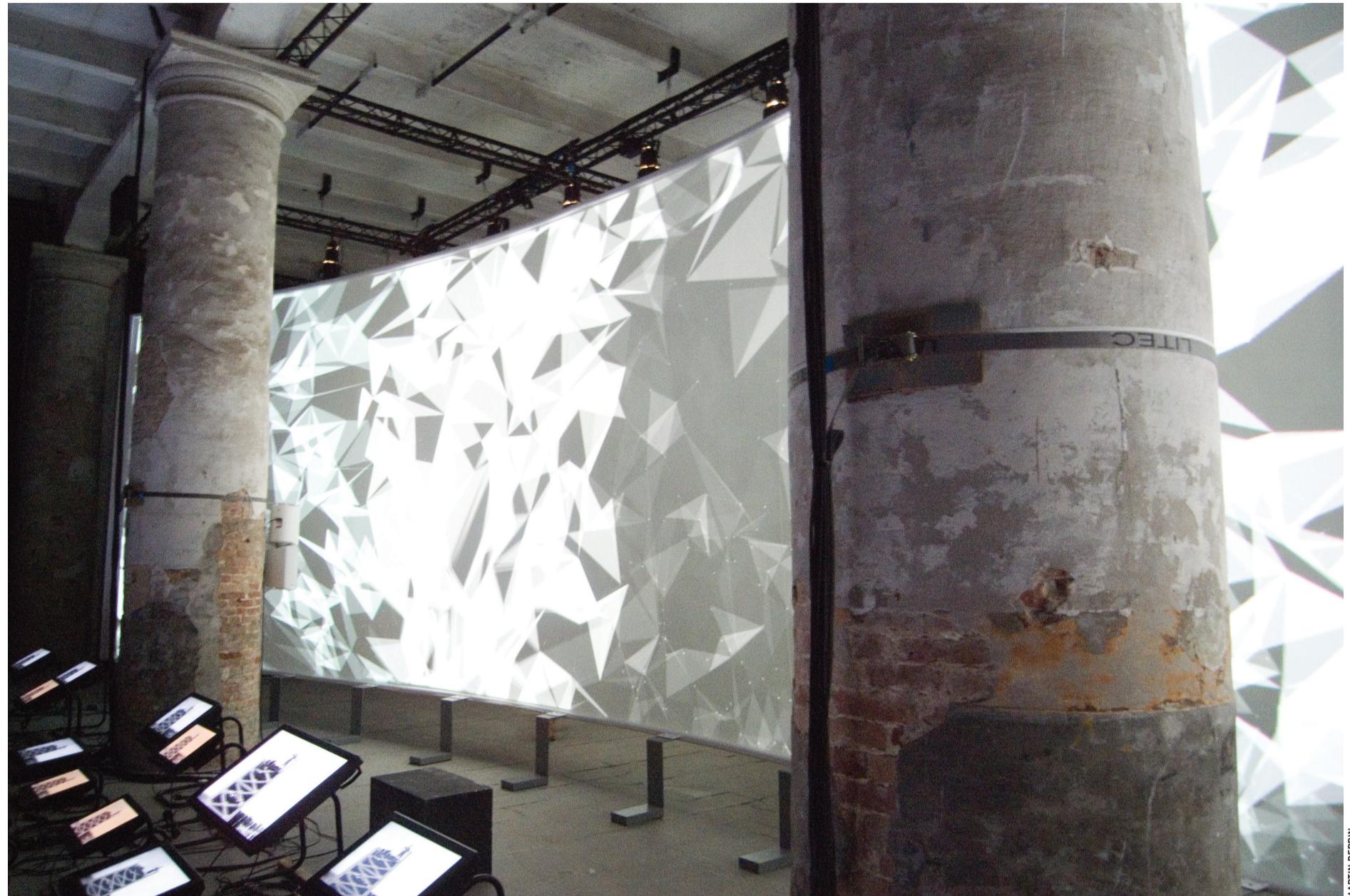
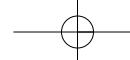
### TRUMP BUMPED UP

Hudson Square and Soho residents and preservationists continue to fight the Trump Soho, even as it reaches its inevitable completion. Or is it complete? On September 15, Community Board 2 released a letter taking the city to task for "rewarding" Trump with a 43<sup>rd</sup> floor, the permits for which were issued on September 10. Now, the board, the Soho Alliance, and the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation are trying to halt an application for a 44<sup>th</sup> floor.

### BATTER DOWN

As their seasons—and stadiums—wind down, the Yankees and Mets struck out with Assemblyman Richard Brodsky. In a report released on September 16, the Westchester pol declared that both teams misappropriated \$943 million in tax-exempt bonds because their projects do not comprise an economic benefit to the city, as well as draining \$850 million in city and state funds. Two days later, Representative Dennis Kucinich lashed out at the teams over the bonds, which if interpreted as wrongful, could jeopardize financing at Atlantic Yards.

AT DEADLINE



Rockwell Group with Jones/Kroloff

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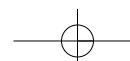
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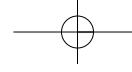
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Venice hosts seven biennales a year dedicated to the arts, and in September it was Architecture's turn. The main show was curated by Aaron Betsky (the first American director to get the job since architecture entered the biennale in 1975) and it spread out across the city and its gardens. Reporting from the Arsenale, the Venetian empire's formidable naval yard in its 12<sup>th</sup>-century heyday; the Giardini, home of more than 30 national pavilions, including the McKim Mead & White-designed US Pavilion, where editor-in-chief William Menking served as commissioner of the exhibit "Into the Open," and the Italian Pavilion, which was devoted to experimental architecture, AN took it all in.





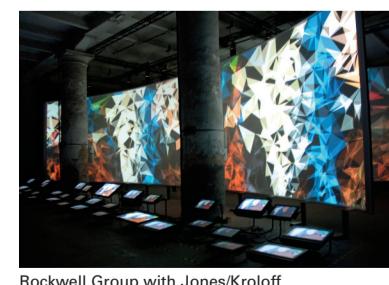
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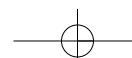


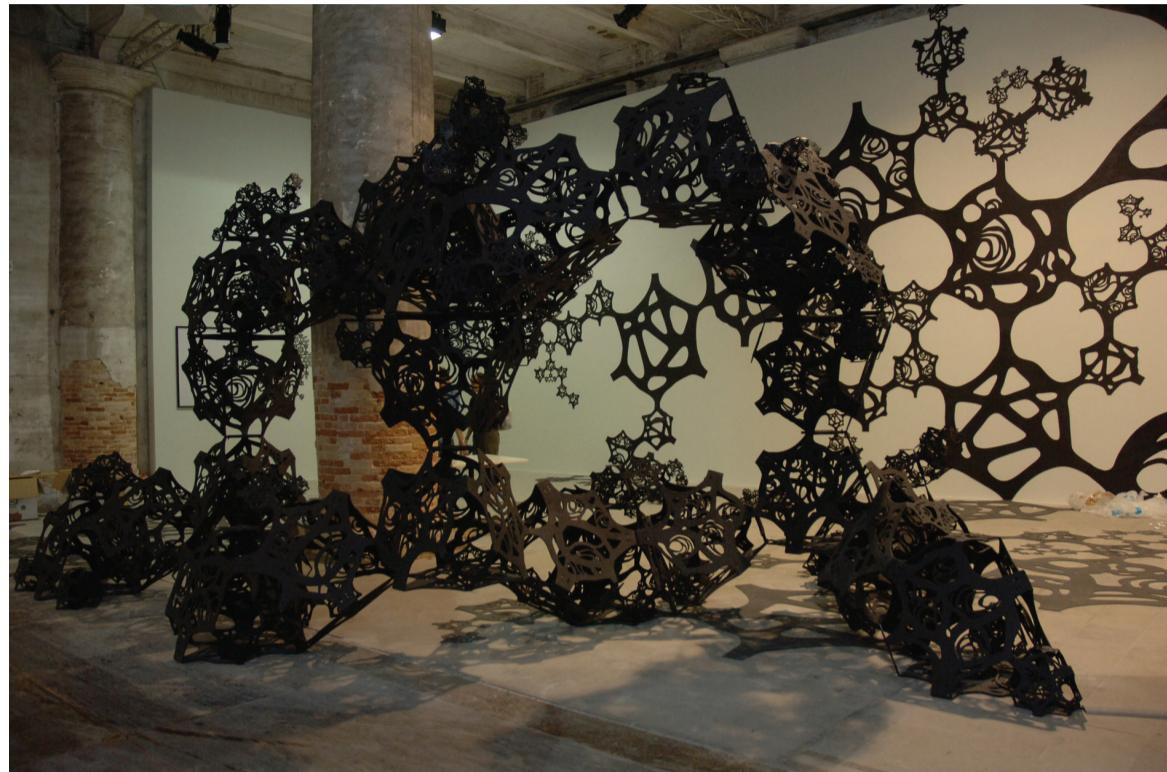
Rockwell Group with Jones/Kroloff



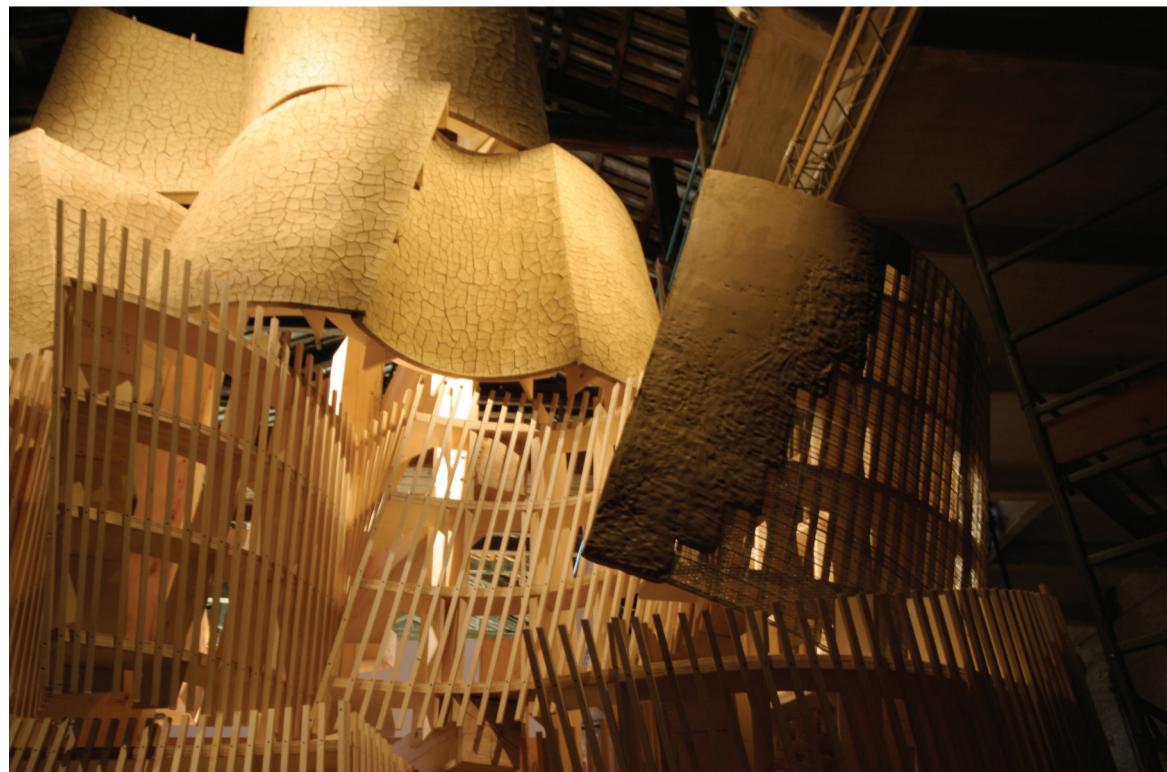
Greg Lynn Form

The theme was "Out There" but the experience was over the top as the leading lights of the profession plus a smattering of young up-and-comers from around the world produced a heroically-scaled display of performance architecture. By Julie V. Iovine





Matthew Ritchie &amp; Aranda/Lasch



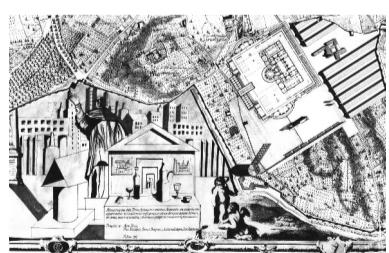
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To make sharp critical observers out of his audiences, German playwright Bertolt Brecht inserted blackout moments into scenes. The 11<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Biennale offered its own alienation effect in a dark-as-pitch room—a forecourt to the vast two-mile long Arsenale exhibition space—featuring an installation by Rockwell Group with Jones/Kroloff involving towering interactive screens where scenes from architecture's favorite movies (*Cleopatra*, *The Fountainhead*, *A Clockwork Orange*, etc.) as complex XY-axis projections leapt up in response to the crowd moving through. This Hall of Fragments set a seductive stage for the subsequent installations commissioned from 24 architecture practices by Biennale director Aaron Betsky. The brief was to show architecture "beyond building," that is "revelatory, utopian, and critical." Visitors marched past a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade of gargantuan works: elegantly embalmed prototyped extrusions by Asymptote; Coop Himmelb(l)au's Oz-like Feed Back Space first envisioned in 1969; and Zaha Hadid's brand-perfect acid green furniture/architecture. Most breathtaking in this sequence was Frank Gehry's Ungapatchket, a three-story timber model of a Moscow hotel that the architect is designing, slabbed over with clay in the spirit of Cai Guo Qiang's ephemeral Rent Collection Courtyard figurines shown in New York last winter, but originally exhibited in the Arsenale in 1999.

Even if you had not already been over to the Giardini, the other part of the Biennale dedicated to national pavilions and their individually curated exhibits, and seen the Estonian's big yellow "pipeline" providentially and ominously running down a gravel slope to the steps of the Russian pavilion, you might have questioned the relevance of the Arsenale's fabulously blousy installations. The European press has already come down hard, especially on the nudes brought in by French architect Philippe Rahm in an effort to demonstrate space-making through convection air currents instead of walls. The concept was certainly clever, and might have been enough for an art installation, but it cannot pass muster at an architecture fair if it doesn't actually work. Betsky tried to make an end-run around buildings that "just stand there" in favor of architecture that inspires and "transforms one's perception of one's world." And while there was plenty of food for thought about the latest way to turn data into structure, from artist Matthew Ritchie & Aranda/Lasch's scale-less, fractal-turned-structural-dooily to M-A-D's AirXY, which replicated the technology of Hall of Fragments with LED lights instead of movies, many of the installations looked as if they could too easily end up as catalog fodder for the amusement of galleristas.

The urban problems that preoccupied some architects—the lives of singletons for the Dutch collective Droog; the pile-up of unrecyclable and ghastly plastic toys for Greg Lynn—didn't seem global enough. Pros at performance architecture like Diller Scofidio + Renfro did not disappoint with a video installation that mashed up interviews with gondoliers in three different Venices—Italy, Las Vegas, and Macau—along with anyone's belief in authenticity of place. UN Studio, too, satisfied with a slitheringly stunning rendition of a villa fit for Zoolander that served as a screen for footage from an Alexander McQueen fashion show.

But as one continued down the vast Arsenale where in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, entire battleships could be built in a week, the impression that today powerful minds were bent to far less mighty tasks was hard to ignore. Ten months ago when Betsky set to work, presidents and vice presidents had not been nominated, Georgian borders had not been crossed, and hurricanes both natural and financial had not rocked our foundations. Now that they have, architects working in high concepts rather than hard realities seem somehow passé.

**ARSENAL INTERROTA**

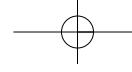
After the machined perfection of so many of the Arsenale's massive installations, the drawings of *Roma Interrota* provided the show's first real jolt. The recreation of a 1978 exhibition of the same name was

inspired by the 1748 Nolli Map of Rome. The drawings show the eternal city reimagined by 12 architects, including Aldo Rossi (pictured left), Paolo Portoghesi, Robert Venturi, Leon and Robert Krier, and Colin Rowe, who were themselves monumental practitioners in the 1970s. The reinstallation was an eye-opener for a new generation, including Casey Jones and Reed Kroloff, who collaborated with David Rockwell on the video installation *Hall of Fragments*. For them, the juxtaposition provided revealing contrast in the ways architects look at cities. "It has the stillness of a time capsule," said Kroloff, "and it's amazing to see how radically the tools of expression have changed."

The original *Roma Interrota* was organ-

ized by then-mayor of Rome Giulio Carlo Argan, and took as its premise the idea that since the publication of Giovanni Battista Nolli's famous New Plan for Rome, planning in the city had been stymied and destructive. Argan asked architects to start where the 230-year-old plan left off and dream of what the city could be. Revisiting the new reinstallation at the Arsenale, Argan wrote, "It is comprised not of proposals for urban planning, naturally, but of a series of gymnastic exercises for the imagination whose course runs parallel to that of memory... [Here] are hypotheses for the Rome which would have resulted had man continued to imagine it and not to plan it (badly.)"

**AG**



Belgium's curators David van Severen and Kersten Geers commemorated a missed centennial—the country first entered the Biennale in 1907—with *After the Party*, an installation whose main components are confetti and mostly empty rooms.

By taking the Biennale's theme "Out There—Architecture Beyond Building" as more guideline than directive, curators of more than 30 national exhibitions in the Giardini found expansive and fertile ground for their ideas. Expansive enough,

in fact, to encompass almost anything. Freed from the physical limitations of building, architecture could relate to everything.

The two most prevalent (and often intertwined) ideas curators explored were politics and the

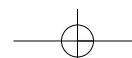
environment, but the work ranged from the poetic approach of Japan's Junya Ishigumi, who created a dreamland of flower-structures, to Russia, whose installation of a competitive architectural chess game could be read as a mirror

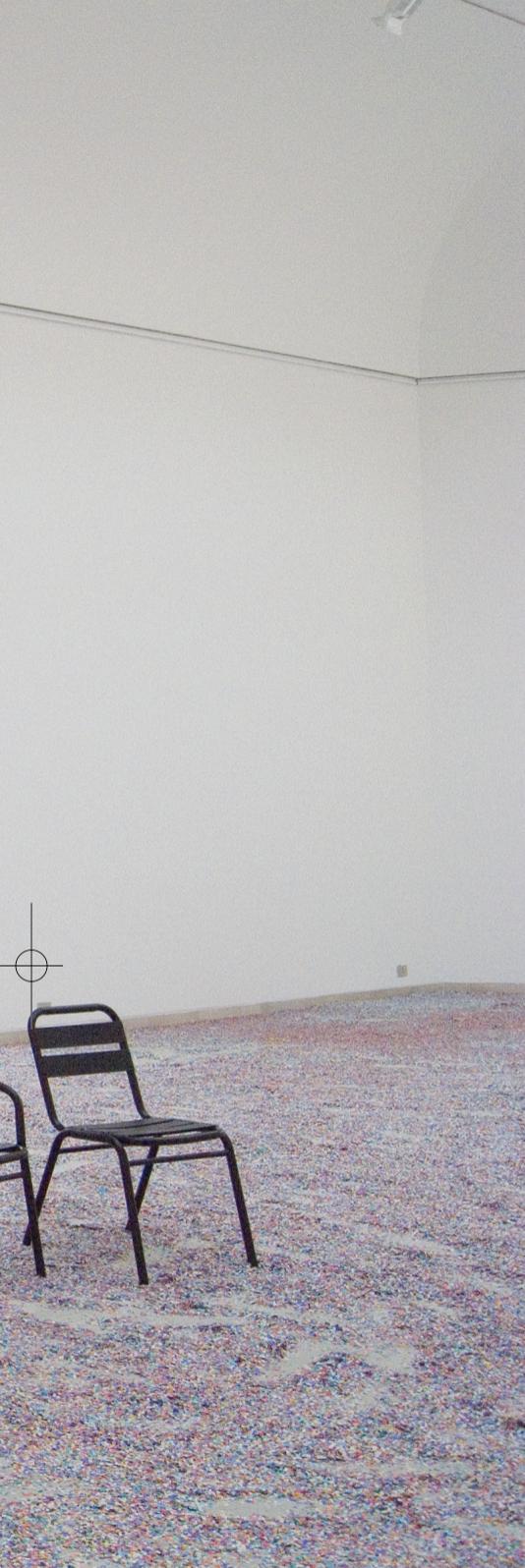
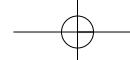
held up to contemporary politics.

Perhaps the most immediately satisfying project was not in a pavilion, but running between two. Estonia put a real-scale gas pipe on the ground between the German and Russian pavilions to represent a Gazprom proposal to build the Nord Stream pipeline connecting the two countries through the Baltic Sea. It was wonderfully concise in its ability to make a political argument physically manifest, and to raise questions about issues from regional power dynamics to environmental damage.

Poland's curators took the seldom-sexy idea of recycling and gave it some style by repurposing their pavilion as the Hotel Polonia, complete with beds. Inside, there were a series of photographic triptychs showing a building as it looks today and then one that Photoshop's it into the future. A 2004 basilica becomes a fantastic water park, since after a while the only people attending church would be tourists anyway, so why not? Likewise, a university library is rebranded as a mall, and cheekily, a Foster-designed building became

At the mouth of the Grand Canal, the city's largest public garden is dotted with 35 national pavilions and a series of outdoor installations. Inside, a few curators showed how architecture can indeed be pushed "beyond building," with results ranging from poetic to pragmatic. By Anne Guiney





By William Menking

When word first went out that the theme of this year's architecture biennale was "Out There: Beyond Building," I suspected that Aaron Betsky would take a more formalist approach and not include the kind of social activism that has recently engaged an increasing number of architects frustrated by a sense of impotence in the face of the country's crumbling infrastructure and frayed social fabric. I turned to Teddy Cruz whose housing proposals for Hudson, NY, we've covered in *AN*; and he started a conversation with Pratt Institute's Deborah Ganz. Soon the team also included Andy Sturm of the PARC Foundation and Aaron Levy of the Slought Foundation, two non-profits often involved with architects pursuing alternative practices. There seemed to be an opportunity to provide a counterpoint to the main exhibition with something that focused more on new approaches to engaging with communities and shaping local infrastructure.

Time was not on our side: We had only four months to conceive, develop, design, ship, and install everything down to the guestbook to Venice. Right at the start, Leanne Mella, with years of experience as a biennale coordinator and with the State Department, warned me,

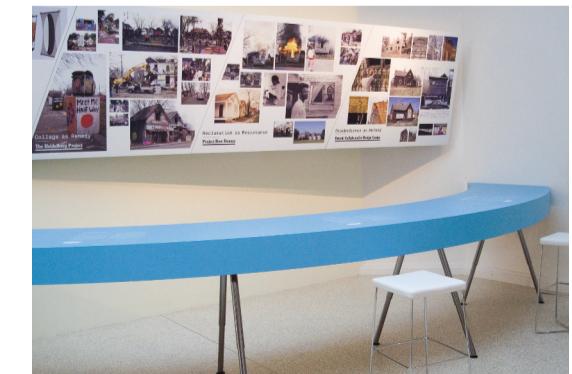
"I've done exhibits in Africa, and it can be a difficult place to mount an exhibition, but Venice is tougher!" and then she joined our team, an unbeatable vote of confidence.

Our goal was not modest: We were basically trying to develop and encourage an architecture culture that doesn't yet exist in the United States. And while we included efforts like The Heidelberg Project, where abandoned houses in Detroit have been encrusted by recycled refuse collected in the neighborhood, or Kyong Park's New Silk Road video montage, the impulse was to provoke new thinking about architecture, not to feature art projects.

While some of the work we decided to include (and that you may have read about in the last issue of *AN*) was very critical about aspects of American culture and the built environment, some of it was equally proactive about our problems, because they are in fact hard to believe. The reality is that in the last 25 years, this country hasn't really invested in our infrastructure, and so a lot of the projects in the pavilion looked at that rather than at buildings in order to make a connection between an architectural sensibility and a larger social infrastructure. Finally, I believe that architects are by and large urbanists who love cities and want to make them function better, and the projects we chose to include represented a range of ways to do just that.

a convincingly ominous jail. The mixture of solid ideas and a light touch led the jurors to award it the Golden Lion.

Germany, too, drew attention to the use and abuse of nature, though without the humor of its neighbor. To highlight the way we often squander our resources, the curators did some squandering of their own: The neoclassical German pavilion's portico was lit with 32 massive spotlights, which gave it an unfortunate eerie glow, and each visitor passing underneath felt their heat. **continued on page 26**





THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 1, 2008



Germany



## EXPERIMENTAL



Japan



UK



Poland



Switzerland

MARTIN FERRIN EXCEPT UK AND POLAND: ERIC HOLM



ZACHĘTA NATIONAL ART GALLERY

**GIARDINI** continued from page 25  
The physical sensation made an effective point, and while there was a notice inside that team members were reducing energy consumption to offset the 50,000 kilowatts of electricity the piece will ultimately consume, the choice seemed dubious. A second inadvertently funny moment was an indoor grove of apple trees under Gro-lights, fed by an IV-like sack of radioactively bright liquid that suggested nothing more than Soylent Green.

Japan's curator Junya Ishigumi took a very different stance on the issue of our relationship to nature, and imagined a world where architecture was not set in a landscape but inextricably a part of it. The seemingly blank white walls of the pavilion were covered with dozens of drawings of greenery-clad structures in different scenarios, and outside were a series of delicate glass greenhouses filled with flowers. Its dreamy beauty made it a favorite, but the ideas it raised were really no more far-fetched than much of the more ecologically-minded work in the Italian Pavilion.



Herzog &amp; de Meuron and Ai Wei Wei

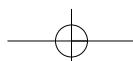
Inside the Italian Pavilion, 56 exhibits showed the range of experiment across the spectrum, from Lebbeus Woods' drawings to architecture's future as seen through the I Ching. With a tone set by the early, groundbreaking work of masters like Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, and Coop Himmelblau, the work suggests that the spirit of the new is alive and engaged. By Anne Guiney

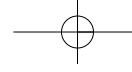


NL Architects



Madelon Vriesendorp





# ARCHITECTURE



MARTIN PERRIN

The Italian Pavilion in the Giardini promises an overview on the state of progressive practice in architecture, and while it certainly delivers, it does so in a way that is alternately provocative, satisfying, and dispiriting. Curator Aaron Betsky chose to devote the building that once housed the host country's installation (now relocated to the Arsenale) with the work of 55 experimental

firms, many of whom are younger, like MOS, NL Architects, and LOT-EK, and seven of the avant-garde's old school, most now prolific builders, including Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, and Morphosis. Most of the masters pulled work from their archives—Zaha Hadid's drawings were particularly spectacular, and a reminder of her extraordinary talent. A noteworthy exception was

Herzog & de Meuron, who teamed up with Ai Wei Wei, their collaborator on the Bird's Nest in Beijing, and made a simple but beautiful installation from the bamboo poles so prevalent on construction sites in China.

Almost all of the work on display is drawn from projects that were underway long before the Biennale, and Betsky has grouped like with

like. Teddy Cruz's cross-border work in Tijuana, Mexico and San Diego is catercorner to FAST's planning and community organizing project in the Arab-Israeli town of Ein Hawd, while Field Operations' large-scale and long-term efforts in landscape urbanism share a room with the Colombia-based Husos' engaging Proyecto Cali, which wonderfully manages to include

the restoration of a habitat for Monarch butterflies, an exhibitions building, and a soap opera called *Butterflies and Passions*.

One of the more striking things that emerges from the contrast Betsky sets up between the old-new and the new-new is the preoccupation with creating a more socially engaged practice over form-making, and the use of different means to tell a story. Along with Husos and its racy *telenovela*, AOC developed a Monopoly-based board game to help Venetians rethink their shrinking city, and J.P.A Jones Partners put together a Marvel-style comic book projecting 50 years into the future of Dubai. CUP's intentionally crude Xeroxed posters diagram a link between sneakers and poverty, while Urban Think Tank's colorful wall of posters from Caracas, Venezuela is as suggestive of a vibrant public realm as any in the show.

Yogi Berra, as usual, had it right: The future ain't what it used to be, and utopia as we know and love it is in fairly short supply in the pavilion. One of the more provocative pieces calls the very idea into question: *Abitare* editor Stefano Boeri and a student team took on at the eco-enthusiasm so prevalent in the pavilion and beyond and ask what it would really be like if nature once again was deeply integrated into our cities. Boeri's *Sustainable Dystopias* presents three scenarios—the city of energy devices, the city of vegetable surfaces, and the city of wild animals, each of which pushes the proposal to its logical conclusion and points out the pros and cons. As neat as it might sound, the piece argues, there's also a downside to having elk and moose wandering through protected greenbelts in a city. NL Architects also presents cut-n'-paste what-if scenarios in *Virtual Realities* that are a little uncomfortable, in spite of their humor. The ice caps are melting? Let's make one out of trash, since there's plenty of that! The two projects stand in marked contrast to the visually appealing yet thin suggestion represented by MA0/ Emmeazero's *Footprints*, whose vision for new types of public space seems more grounded in the possibilities of Photoshop than in a meaningful sense of how people use city streets and parks.



Zaha Hadid



Urban Think Tank



AOC



MA0/Emmeazero



Stefano Boeri



Husos

ANNE GUINEY AND ARCHITECTS

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 1, 2008

OCTOBER 2008

## OCTOBER

**WEDNESDAY 1**  
**LECTURE**  
**Steve Mumford**  
**Fine Arts Lecture**  
3:15 p.m.  
Parsons the New School for Design  
Kellen Auditorium  
66 5th Ave.  
[www.parsons.edu](http://www.parsons.edu)

**SYMPORIUM**  
**Solid States: Changing Time for Concrete**  
**Michael Bell, Angelo Bucci, et al.**  
Through October 3  
Columbia GSAPP  
Wood Auditorium  
Avery Hall  
[www.arch.columbia.edu/solidstates](http://www.arch.columbia.edu/solidstates)

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**  
**Between the Still and Moving Image**  
Whitney Museum of American Art  
945 Madison Ave.  
[www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)

**The Printed Picture**  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd St.  
[www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)

**THURSDAY 2**  
**LECTURES**  
**Karen Fairbanks**  
**Expanded Alliances**  
6:00 p.m.  
City College  
Shepard Hall  
160 Convent Ave.  
[www.ccny.cuny.edu](http://www.ccny.cuny.edu)

**Robert Campbell**  
**Why Architects Need Critics**  
6:30 p.m.  
Yale School of Architecture  
180 York St., New Haven  
[www.architecture.yale.edu](http://www.architecture.yale.edu)

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**  
**Architects Draw—Freeing the Hand**  
The Cooper Union  
Great Hall  
7 East 7th St.  
[www.cooper.edu](http://www.cooper.edu)

**The Harvest of Spring Blossoms**  
Chelsea Art Museum  
556 West 22nd St.  
[www.chelseaartmuseum.org](http://www.chelseaartmuseum.org)

**Tadashi Kawamata**  
**Tree Huts**  
Madison Square Park  
5th Ave. and 23rd St.  
[www.madisonsquarepark.org](http://www.madisonsquarepark.org)

**FILM**  
**Maison Tropicale**  
(Manthia Diawara, 2008), 58 min.  
7:00 p.m.  
Cantor Film Center  
36 East 8th St.  
[www.aiany.org](http://www.aiany.org)

**EVENT**  
**Rapture: Staging the Architecture of Frank Gehry**  
October 2 through 5  
Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College  
Annandale Rd., Annandale-on-Hudson  
[www.fishercenter.bard.edu](http://www.fishercenter.bard.edu)

## FRIDAY 3

**LECTURE**  
**Neil Denari**  
**The New Intimacy**  
5:00 p.m.  
Syracuse University School of Architecture  
103 Slocum Hall, Syracuse  
[soa.syr.edu](http://soa.syr.edu)

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**  
**Corin Hewitt: Seed Stage**  
Whitney Museum of American Art  
945 Madison Ave.  
[www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)

**Paris/New York: Design Fashion Culture 1925–1940**  
Museum of the City of New York  
1220 5th Ave.  
[www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org)

**Solos: Tulou/Affordable Housing for China**  
Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum  
2 East 91st St.  
[www.cooperhewitt.org](http://www.cooperhewitt.org)

**CONVENTION**  
**AIA New Jersey Design Conference**  
8:00 a.m.  
The Great Auditorium, Ocean Grove  
[www.aia-nj.org](http://www.aia-nj.org)

**TRADE SHOW**  
**2008 ASLA Annual Meeting & EXPO**  
Through October 7  
Pennsylvania Convention Center  
1101 Arch St., Philadelphia  
[www.asla.org/meetings/am2008](http://www.asla.org/meetings/am2008)

**SATURDAY 4**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**New Bamboo: Contemporary Japanese Masters**  
Japan Society  
333 East 47th St.  
[www.japansociety.org](http://www.japansociety.org)

**WITH THE KIDS**  
**The 2nd Annual L.E.S. Kids' Art Bike Parade**  
11:00 a.m.  
Tompkins Square Park  
500 East 9th St.  
[www.evccnyc.org](http://www.evccnyc.org)

**SUNDAY 5**  
**WITH THE KIDS**  
**Family Festival @ the Center**  
10:00 a.m.  
Center for Architecture  
536 LaGuardia Pl.  
[www.aiany.org](http://www.aiany.org)

**MONDAY 6**  
**LECTURE**  
**Adam Friedman, Vicki Weiner, John Shapiro, et al.**  
**Solutions for Preserving New York's Neighborhood Businesses**  
6:30 p.m.  
West Side Institutional Synagogue  
120 West 76th St.  
[www.mas.org](http://www.mas.org)

**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Frederick H. Evans: A Logical Perfection**  
Hans P. Kraus Jr. Fine Photographs  
962 Park Ave.  
[www.sunpictures.com](http://www.sunpictures.com)

## EVENT

**New York Deco**  
6:00 p.m.  
Center for Architecture  
536 LaGuardia Pl.  
[www.aiany.org](http://www.aiany.org)

**TUESDAY 7**  
**LECTURE**  
**John Lobell**  
**Architecture of Louis I. Kahn**  
6:30 p.m.  
The Municipal Art Society of New York  
457 Madison Ave.  
[www.mas.org](http://www.mas.org)

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**  
**John Milton's Paradise Lost**  
The Morgan Library and Museum  
225 Madison Ave.  
[www.themorgan.org](http://www.themorgan.org)

**The Seduction of Light: Ammi Phillips | Mark Rothko Compositions in Pink, Green, and Red**  
American Folk Art Museum  
45 West 53rd St.  
[www.folkartmuseum.org](http://www.folkartmuseum.org)

**Shigeyuki Kihara: Living Photographs**  
Metropolitan Museum of Art  
1000 5th Ave.  
[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

**WEDNESDAY 8**  
**LECTURE**  
**Kevin Murphy**  
**The Houses of Greenwich Village**  
6:30 p.m.  
Salmagundi Club  
47th 5th Ave.  
[www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org)

**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Live Forever: Elizabeth Peyton**  
New Museum  
235 Bowery  
[www.newmuseum.org](http://www.newmuseum.org)

**EVENT**  
**Cooper Square Hotel Walking Tour**  
6:00 p.m.  
Cooper Square Hotel  
33 Cooper Sq.  
[www.iesny.org](http://www.iesny.org)

**THURSDAY 9**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Sun K Kwak**  
**Times Composed**  
Ch'i Contemporary Fine Art  
293 Grand St., Brooklyn  
[www.chicontemporaryfineart.com](http://www.chicontemporaryfineart.com)

**FRIDAY 10**  
**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**  
**Beatriz Milhazes**  
James Cohan Gallery  
533 West 26th St.  
[www.jamescohan.com](http://www.jamescohan.com)

**Robert & Shana Parkeharrison**  
**Counterpoint**  
Jack Shainman Gallery  
513 West 20th St.  
[www.jackshainman.com](http://www.jackshainman.com)

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## SATURDAY 11

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**  
**Donald Moffett**  
**Project Space: Yuichi Higashionna**  
Marianne Boesky Gallery  
535 West 22nd St.  
[www.marianneboeskygallery.com](http://www.marianneboeskygallery.com)

**Jean Dubuffet**  
**Monumental Sculpture, From The Hourloupe Cycle**  
PaceWildenstein  
534 West 22nd St.  
[www.pacewildenstein.com](http://www.pacewildenstein.com)

**New York Architects and the Ordos 100**  
The Architectural League  
457 Madison Ave.  
[www.archleague.org](http://www.archleague.org)

**SUNDAY 12**  
**LECTURE**  
**Mitch Cope, Ingo Vetter, et al.**  
**(re)Generation: Three Artists, Three Cities**  
3:00 p.m.  
Noguchi Museum  
9-01 33rd Rd., Queens  
[www.noguchi.org](http://www.noguchi.org)

**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Oceans, Rivers, and Skies: Ansel Adams, Robert Adams, and Alfred Stieglitz**  
National Gallery of Art  
National Mall and 3rd St., Washington, D.C.  
[www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)

**WITH THE KIDS**  
**Indoor Places and Outdoor Spaces**  
10:20 a.m.  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd St.  
[www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)

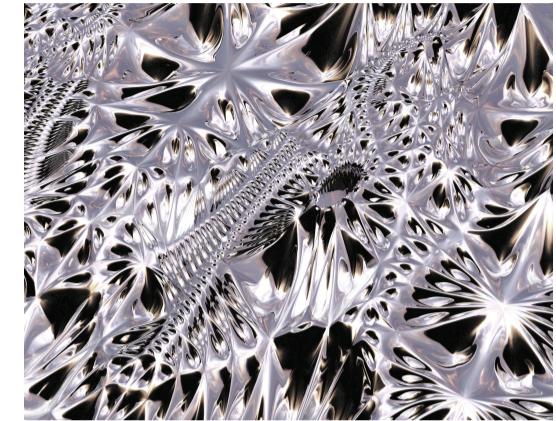
**TUESDAY 14**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**James Castle: A Retrospective**  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
26th St. and the Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.  
[www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)

**WEDNESDAY 15**  
**LECTURE**  
**Dr. Elizabeth Cromley, Monty Mitchell, et al.**  
**The Design and Renovation of Apartment Building Interiors**  
6:00 p.m.  
First Presbyterian Church, Parlor  
12 West 12th St.  
[www.gvshp.org](http://www.gvshp.org)

**SYMPOSIUM**  
**New Practices New York 2008: Winners' Symposium**  
6:00 p.m.  
Center for Architecture  
536 LaGuardia Pl.  
[www.aiany.org](http://www.aiany.org)

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**  
**Andrea Riccio: Renaissance Master of Bronze**  
The Frick Collection  
1 East 70th St.  
[www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

**Batiste Madalena: Hand-Painted Film Posters for the Eastman Theatre, 1924–1928**  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd St.  
[www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)



COURTESY RUY KLEIN

**MATTERS OF SENSATION**  
Artists Space  
38 Greene Street, 3rd Floor  
Through November 22

*Matters of Sensation* is a group exhibition of projects by 14 emerging architecture studios from across the United States. The list is impressive, from up-and-coming firms like Gage/Clemenceau Architects, Gnuform, Hirsuta, and Höweler+Yoon Architecture, to innovators such as Emergent, IwamotoScott Architecture, and MOS. While the rapid development of computer-aided architecture offers new approaches to textures, surfaces, and materials, it has also spawned a tiresome fixation on far-out forms. The architects here aim to go deeper by exploring materiality itself. The exhibited work, including *Klex* (2008, pictured) by Ruy Klein, examines the potential for ornamentation using digital fabrication by pushing the intricacy of design. By manipulating textures and surfaces, these works welcome beauty and ornament back to contemporary design.

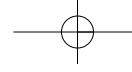


THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

**STREET ART, STREET LIFE: FROM THE 1950S TO NOW**  
Bronx Museum of the Arts  
1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx  
Through January 25

*Street Art, Street Life* examines artists and photographers who have used the street as subject matter, venue, and source of inspiration. The exhibition presents a diverse selection of work, encompassing aspects of documentary photography, performance, activism, and street culture. On display are works by Robert Frank, William Klein, Jacques de la Villeglé, Yoko Ono, Vito Acconci, Martha Rosler, Sophie Calle, and others. Garry Winogrand's *Untitled* (1962, pictured) portrays the city's streets as a locus of energy, a site of informal encounters and unexpected confrontations. New works by Xaviera Simmons and Fatimah Tuggar, commissioned for this exhibition, will also be on display, as well as a special commission from India entitled *Blank Noise Project: Moments of a Long Pause*, 2008. This two-channel video installation features recently shot footage of men and women in the streets of India voicing their opinions about and experiences with sexual harassment in public places. The exhibition identifies the street as a thread connecting today's leading artists and photographers to those of preceding generations. Accompanied by a comprehensive, 114-page catalogue that includes essays by guest curator Lydia Yee, Katherine A. Bussard, and Frazer Ward, the exhibition takes itself literally to the street, with a series of public events and programs that run the length of the show.

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FOR COMPETITION LISTINGS



## SITE SPECIFICS

**Iran do Espírito Santo**  
**Deposition**  
Sean Kelly Gallery  
528 W 29th Street  
Through October 18

Prior to its canonization as a bona fide art historical movement, Minimalism was widely dismissed as overly simple and utterly lacking in content; the term "minimal art," coined by the philosopher Richard Wollheim, was originally intended as criticism. The Brazilian artist Iran do Espírito Santo has often been associated with the Minimalists, and at first glance, his third solo exhibition at Sean Kelly Gallery appeared

to be itself nearly devoid of content: the only works presented in the main galleries were a subtle site-specific wall painting and two black rectangular objects. Yet as with the best Minimal art, sustained viewing of Espírito Santo's work opened up crucial questions about vision, perception, materiality, spectatorship, and architectural space.

The site-specific work, entitled *En Passant*, transformed three contigu-

ous walls into architectural representations of the grayscale; each wall was divided into narrow, parallel stripes that gradually ranged from white to black. According to the statement from the gallery, these grayscales alluded to a photographer's darkroom test strip. The work was lit from above by a skylight muted with scrims, ensuring that each viewer would have a different perceptual experience of the

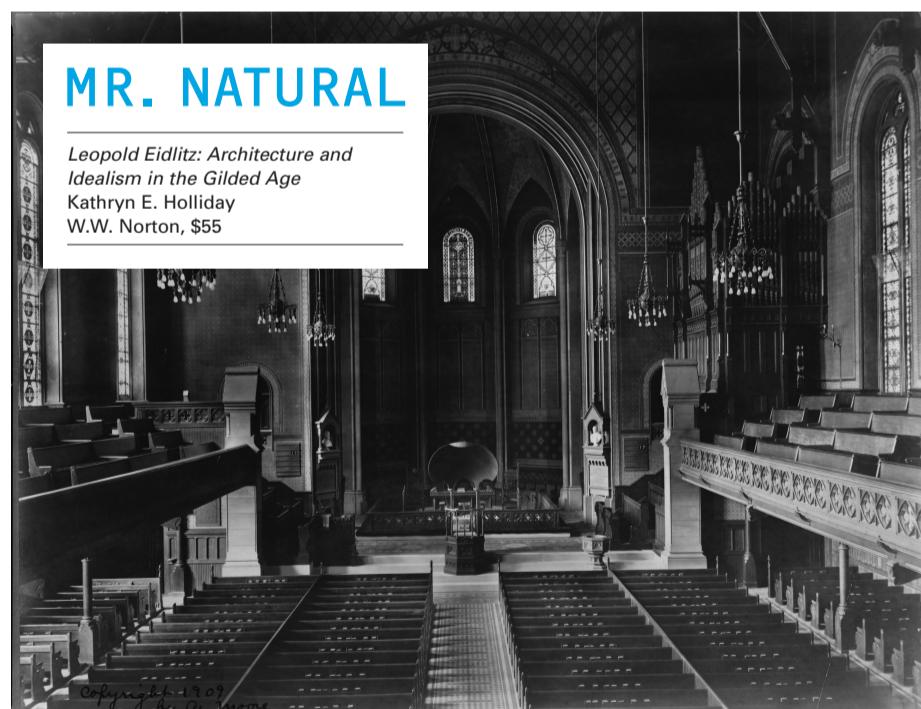
piece depending on the time of day and the weather.

The grayscale, with its relation to photography and the painter's range of colors, evokes the methods and practices of pictorial representation, which seeks to divide the chaotic field of visual phenomena into coherent, legible parts. In viewing *En Passant*, however, one noticed that the ideal order of the grayscale was subtly disrupted by the play of real light and shadow along the walls, so that the white end of the spectrum might appear oddly dulled, or the dark end eerily illuminated. Because one's experience of the piece depended on the interplay between the representational element of the grayscale and the contingent or real element of light and shadow in the exhibition space, the piece appeared to suggest that the concepts of perception and representation cannot easily be disentangled from one another.

In addition, by recasting the gallery walls as primarily perceptual phenomena, Espírito Santo subverted the logic of earlier site-specific art. Whereas Minimalist and Conceptual artists had rejected the illusionistic space of painting in order to call attention to the real architectural and social structure of the gallery, Espírito Santo reimagined architectural structure as itself inscribed between the real and the illusory. Yet, characteristically, the implications of this gesture were not fully elucidated in the work, but rather left open to the viewer's

speculation. The two other major works in the exhibition, both entitled *Deposition*, also negotiated the problem of real space versus representational space. Each of these nearly identical pieces consisted of a large sculptural representation in black granite of a matted and framed picture. The choice of a large scale and a heavy, monumental material for these works emphasized the status of the picture as a physical (or even architectural) object. At the same time, the exaggerated size of the *Deposition* pieces, along with their extreme simplicity of form, tended to establish the objects as caricatures, or icons of themselves, thus bringing them back to the realm of representation.

Ultimately, the strength of Espírito Santo's practice is not his treatment of any single aesthetic or philosophical issue, but rather his dexterity in weaving together multiple problems and projects that might otherwise seem unrelated, and thereby producing unexpected results. This approach of course runs the risk of lapsing into inconsistency, inconclusiveness, or incoherence, and there were indeed moments when the combined effect of the works in the exhibition seemed somewhat vague. Yet overall, the instability of Espírito Santo's practice appears inseparable from its promising tendency toward what the avant-garde once termed experiment. **MICHAEL PAULSON IS A WRITER AND CRITIC IN NEW YORK.**



## MR. NATURAL

*Leopold Eidlitz: Architecture and Idealism in the Gilded Age*  
Kathryn E. Holliday  
W.W. Norton, \$55



Imagine a restaurant in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century: A waiter says to an architect, "Pardon me, sir, but which spirit would you prefer to drink tonight, that of history or that of nature? Or might you prefer a cocktail blend of the two?"

In 19<sup>th</sup>-century America most architects preferred the latter, and a heady mix-

ture it was, as we discover in Kathryn E. Holliday's new monograph, *Leopold Eidlitz: Architecture and Idealism in the Gilded Age*. Eidlitz, like many designers of the era, was determined to blend formal principles borrowed from both history and nature in the hope of creating a new, specifically "American" style

of architecture. This quest was admittedly challenging, and remains only partially documented.

Most surveys of American architectural history assert that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century John Wellborn Root, Louis H. Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright were the first American architects to be

### Interior, St. George's Episcopal Church, 1848, New York

inspired by nature-based principles of form and function. Holliday counters that it was in fact Eidlitz who, beginning in the 1850s, "first paved the way toward the organic ideal." He was certainly the first American to document an interest in "organic" design with his book-length treatise, *The Nature and Function of Art, More Especially of Architecture*, published in 1881.

Appearances can be deceptive, however, for a superficial survey of Eidlitz's main architectural works shows not a radical interest in nature, but a more standard reliance upon historic eclecticism. Born in Prague in 1823 and educated as a businessman in Vienna—although Holliday suggests that he probably audited architectural courses at the Technische Hochschule—Eidlitz emigrated to New York City in 1843. After three years of work with architects Cyrus Lazelle Warner and Richard Upjohn, he initiated his independent practice with the

construction of St. George's Episcopal Church in New York, a Romanesque structure completed in 1848. While St. George's is extant, a discouraging number of Eidlitz's subsequent commissions have been demolished, including major works like Iranistan (1848, Bridgeport, CT), a fanciful Moorish home built for P.T. Barnum; the Brooklyn Academy of Music (1860–61, Brooklyn), an asymmetrical structure with mostly pointed-arched openings; and Temple Emanuel (1866–68, New York), a vibrant, polychromatic blend of Gothic and Moorish details. Still standing are quite a few Romanesque and Gothic churches in New York City and the neighboring region, as well as modified portions of his New York State Capitol design (1875–83, Albany), a controversial Gothic scheme eventually diluted into one that is mostly Romanesque.

Holliday concedes that Eidlitz's essays—while essential to understanding the organic ideal—are frankly challenging to read. For instance, while she presents *The Nature and Function of*

*Art* as "an original and fully rendered theory of architecture," she simultaneously reports that much of its content is "merely derivative" and that its prose is "extremely long, repetitive and dense." We must give Holliday tremendous credit for her careful study of this magnum opus and Eidlitz's earlier essays in *The Crayon*, for few scholars have waded through them.

Eidlitz's predominant message, Holliday tells us, was a call for an architectural "science of the beautiful," wherein "form, structure and ornament derive from a biological sense of fitness to purpose." With these principles in mind, one can indeed reinterpret many of his buildings. To take just one example, the irregular massing of his Brooklyn Academy of Music can be said to have "organically" expressed its interior division into various functional parts behind a remarkably austere facade. Its minimal ornament, however, did not signal a nascent rejection of historic styles, for Eidlitz also believed that any

*continued on page 30*

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 1, 2008



## FUTURE SYSTEMS

*Urban Machinery: Inside Modern European Cities*  
Edited by Mikael Hård and Thomas J. Misa  
MIT Press, \$45



The city of Garching was home to Germany's first nuclear research reactor, built in 1957 and known as the atomic egg (above). American reformers admired the Dresden rail station (below) as a farsighted work of infrastructure.

shows, modernist planners and architects of divergent backgrounds imposed enormous changes on cities, but each did so in a unique style, with their ideas adapted by local cultures.

Other essays explore political terrain, often linking infrastructure to unseen social consequences. In "Progressive Dreams: The German City in Britain and the United States," Mikael Hård and Marcus Stippak probe the history of municipal socialism by focusing on the dawn of public utilities. These large industrial concerns were established to provide basic services, but in the process they created a basic standard of living for all. Similarly, in the book's "Industry and Innovation" section, Dieter Schott demonstrates how literal power in the form of electricity led to political power, and thus to the independence of cities. Turning to that arena of public space—the street—Hans Buiter traces the transformation of streets from chaotic free-for-alls to orderly urban places. In his essay "Constructing Dutch Streets: A Melting Pot of European Technologies," he underlines the way that technologies from all around the continent contributed to the taming of the public domain.

Fending off entropy is an overarching theme of this volume. "Throughout the modern period," the editors write, "city officials have invested tremendous effort in keeping chaos at bay and making European cities livable." Europe has kept the edge in creating authentic urban places, the editors state: Barcelona or Budapest or Berlin could never be confused with Boston. But influence can be a two-way street. Writing about the making of the "car-friendly" city in Europe, Per Lundin shows how many European cities began to follow the American model of city planning, revolving all decisions around the use of cars.

In the 1920s, as the editors note, the poet Walt Whitman wrote staccato-sounding verses to echo the mechanical character of modern life. This is what they mean by urban machinery: technology shapes our lives whether we know it or not. As this book reminds us, we absorb urban systems so completely at our peril: We only notice them when they fail.

TARA KELLY IS A STUDENT IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AT PRATT INSTITUTE'S GRADUATE CENTER FOR PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

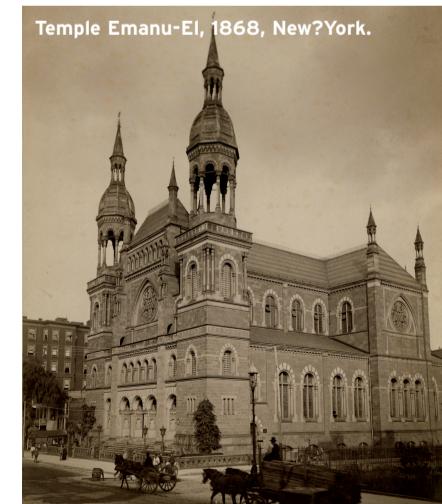
MR. NATURAL continued from page 29

building's "biological sense of fitness to purpose" entailed much more than meeting mundane functional requirements. In his opinion, one critical aspect of a building's function was the clear communication of its social significance via familiar architectural styles. Thus, at the New York State Capitol, the Senate staircase's sculptural program "spoke" to the public about new scientific developments in a Gothic language that they could understand. As Holliday explains, Eidlitz "was not seeking entirely new forms, but a way to make old forms meaningful again."

Eidlitz's efforts to reconcile nature and history are laudable, however, it is possible to question whether he alone paved the way toward the organic ideal in America, as Holliday claims. She does mention that a wide range of voices were calling for new sorts of nature-based principles of design in the period. In 1843, Horatio Greenough demanded, well before Eidlitz's first essays of 1858, that American architects "consult nature" and be aware that the "law of adaptation is the fundamental law of nature in all structure." In addition, alongside Eidlitz's essays in *The Crayon*, many other architects were eager to defer to nature's formal wisdom. As Henry van Brunt claimed in 1858, when "Nature yields some of her wild rudeness to man, and man stops wisely short of the full scope of his power, the result is a perfect stone architecture."

Given these general intellectual circumstances, perhaps Eidlitz's theories of organic design, as well as those of more famous 19<sup>th</sup>-century American architects, are best understood as the evolutionary product of a remarkably complex pool of ideas. The chain of formal mutations was a long and intricate one, as long as the evolution of any natural species. Yet, even if Eidlitz's work was not the Big Bang that catapulted American architecture forward any more or less than Root's, Sullivan's, or Wright's, Holliday's study of his life, buildings, and writings is fully warranted and an excellent scholarly record. Let us hope that other equally lucid and informative monographs on Eidlitz's contemporaries—Van Brunt and Wright, as well as figures like Jacob Wrey Mould and Detlef Lienau—will, in due time, add to our understanding of the organic ideal in American architecture.

LAURA BRUGGER TEACHES VISUAL STUDIES AT THE CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS



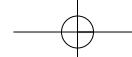
Temple Emanu-El, 1868, New York.

The United Nations' prediction that this year half of the world's population will be urban dwellers has fueled much commentary about megacities and sprawl. Adding new depth to the topic is *Urban Machinery: Inside Modern European Cities*, a volume of essays on the design, structure, and formation of modern urban environments in Europe. Through case studies that span the last 150 years, the book explores the role of technology in the economic and social growth of cities, looking at fields as varied as

urban energy systems, architecture, city planning, traffic engineering, and tourism. Its conclusions, while focused on Europe, offer cautionary tales for the world's aging urban cores.

The essays in *Urban Machinery* are divided into four sections, with a common "focus on the social forces, material structures, and cultural practices" that shaped European cities in their various built forms. The first section, "Modernism and Mastery," looks at planning at a large scale.

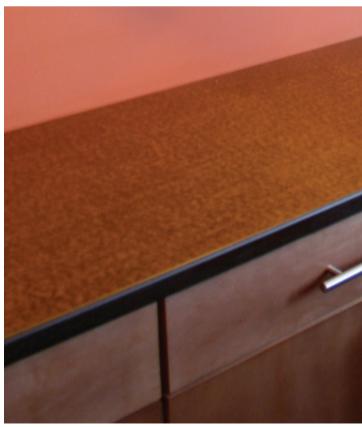
In his study of the Rhine river, for instance, Cornelius Disco explains how German, French, and Swiss cities along the polluted waterway managed the contentious objectives of trade, transportation, and water pollution, a tale that perhaps foreshadows the concept of the environment as a shared problem between nations. Elsewhere, co-editor Thomas J. Misa suggests that the uniformity of modernist principles did not necessarily beget identical cities throughout Europe. Instead, he



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## RESOURCES

**Studio Visit: Audrey Matlock (p.12):**

The interior fabricators—steel, glass, mill-work—for Chelsea Modern and 57 Irving are MOB A.S., Buyukdere Caddesi 173, Levent Pl. 13, levent 34330, Istanbul, Turkey, 90-212-3243-600. The curtain wall was fabricated Intercom Facciate Continue, Via Padre Nicolini, 35 - 35013 Cittadella, Italy, 39-049-9403-963, [www.intercomsrl.net](http://www.intercomsrl.net). **Clipped Wings (p. 14):** The structural engineer for JetBlue's new Terminal 5 is Ammann & Whitney, 2445 M St., NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-331-1029, [www.ammann-whitney.com](http://www.ammann-whitney.com). The corrugated steel roof was fabricated by Beaute Atlas, 600, 1st Ave., Parc Industriel, Sainte-Marie de Beauce, Québec, 418 387-4872, [www.beauteatlas.ca](http://www.beauteatlas.ca). The roof was installed by A. C. Associates, 124 Park Ave., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071, 201-939-6866. **Diving Right In (p. 17):** The pool consultants for the McCarron Play Center are

Counselman Hunsaker, 0733 Sunset Office Dr., 4th fl., St. Louis, MO 63127, 314-894-1245, [www.chh20.com](http://www.chh20.com). The preservation consultants are Jan Hird Pokorny Associates, 39 W. 37th St., fl. 12A, New York NY 10018, 212-759-6462, [www.jhpokorny.com](http://www.jhpokorny.com).

**In Detail (p. 18):** The structural engineers for 56 Leonard Street are WSP Cantor Seinuk, 228 E. 45th St., 3rd fl., New York, NY 10017, 212-687-9888, [www.cantorseinuk.com](http://www.cantorseinuk.com). Lighting for the project was designed by Schwinghamer Lighting, 335 W. 38th St., New York, NY 10018, 212-967-5944, [www.schwinghamerlighting.com](http://www.schwinghamerlighting.com).

**U.S. Pavilion (p. 25):** White stools were supplied by CITE, 131 Greene St., New York, NY 10012, 212-431-7272, [www.citenyc.com](http://www.citenyc.com). Lights and tables provided by Kartell, 39 Greene St., New York, NY 10013, 212-966-6665, [www.kartell.it](http://www.kartell.it).

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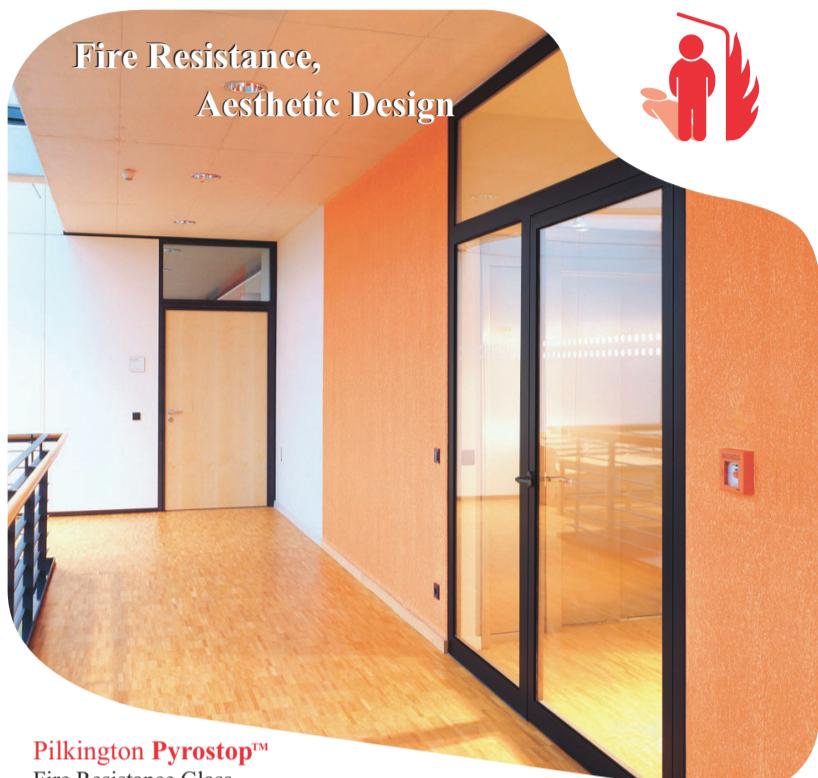
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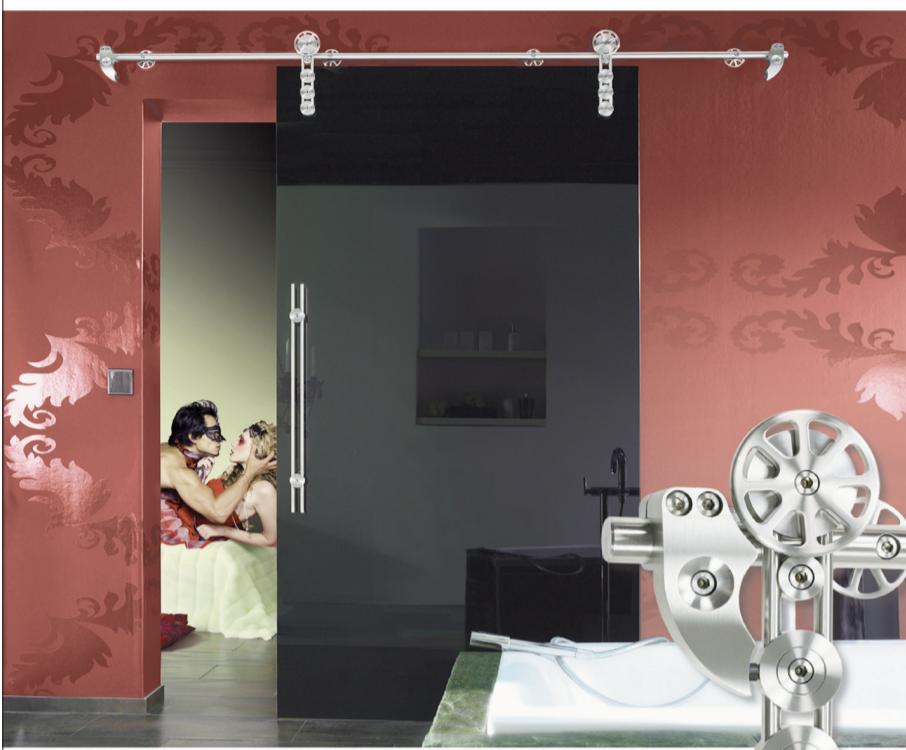
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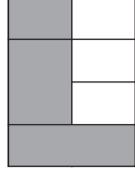
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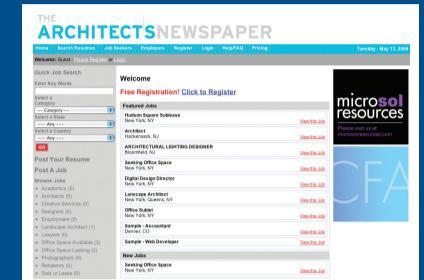
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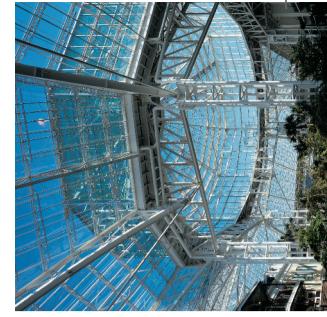
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