

THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

07_04.15.2009

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SIX VISIONS DISPLAYED FOR NATIONAL AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUM ON THE MALL

CAPITOL MOVE



Moody•Nolan/Antoine Predock Architects scheme.

COURTESY MOODY•NOLAN/ANTOINE PREDOCK ARCHITECT

At times bold, at times safe, the six finalist designs for the National Museum for African-American History and Culture went on public display March 27 at the Smithsonian Castle in Washington, D.C. The museum, which will sit in the shadow of the Washington Monument and is due to open in 2015, will be the final institution located on the National Mall.

The designs were submitted as “vision statements” by a heady mix of both avant-garde and establishment firms, including Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Moody•Nolan and Antoine Predock; Moshe Safdie and

Associates; Foster and Partners; Devroux + Purnell and Pei Cobb Freed; and Freelon Adjaye Bond. The teams have all held preliminary meetings with the 11-member selection committee and will make official presentations in the week before the final decision, scheduled for April 10.

“They all demonstrated a commitment to the challenge of building on the Mall and to the commitment that the subject needs to be framed as everyone’s story, not just an African-American’s story,” said Dr. Lonnie Bunch, the NMAAHC’s director.

The building, which **continued on page 18**



THREE CONTENDERS VIE TO REVAMP PIER 57

Pier Pressure

Long a dilapidated hulk on the Hudson River waterfront, Pier 57 has seen its share of grand designs get launched with fanfare, debated, then scrapped. Now the Hudson River Park Trust is set to select a finalist from the latest trio of contenders to reshape the historic, T-shaped structure at West 15th Street, once a municipal bus depot and lately all but derelict amid hopes to reinvent it as a waterfront destination.

The three developer-led teams—Related Companies, the Durst Organization with C & K Properties, and YoungWoo & Associates—have taken markedly differing approaches to the Trust’s request for proposals, released last summer, to turn the 1952 pier into a revenue-generating piece of Hudson River Park while providing plentiful public space. The teams must also tread carefully upon the pier itself, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and known for its innovative engineering that uses three concrete caissons to support the structure instead of piles.

Related’s team proposes a \$353 million development designed by Elkus Manfredi Architects and **continued on page 13**

MAKE IT NEW, AGAIN!

SPECIAL ADAPTIVE REUSE ISSUE: COTTON BARN, SILOS, DORMS; CHIPPERFIELD IN BERLIN & TSCHUMI IN ATHENS PAGES 31-37

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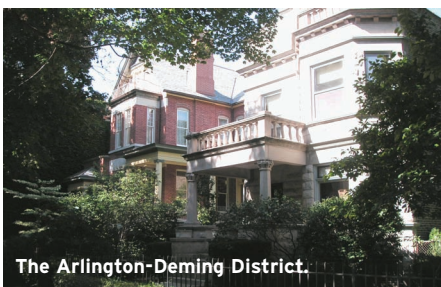
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VIÑOLY AND EYP DESIGN NEW KENNEDY PROJECTS IN BOSTON

KENNEDY CENTRAL

While much attention has focused on the fate of the future George W. Bush Library in Dallas, few may have noticed that another presidential clan, the Kennedys, are expanding their architectural presence in Boston with two new projects.

As part of a \$495 million earmark going to the National **continued on page 5**



The Arlington-Deming District.

COURTESY CCL

CHICAGO COURT'S DECISION SENDS SHOCKWAVES AROUND NATION

A Landmark Ruling?

Preservation alarms are ringing at the specter of Chicago’s architectural patrimony—Louis Sullivan, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright—being pummeled by the wrecking ball in the wake of a court challenge that has raised constitutional questions about the city’s 41-year-old landmarks ordinance.

On March 11, attorneys for the city asked the Illinois Supreme Court to review a lower court’s ruling that blindsided preservation advocates by deeming the Chicago ordinance so rife with “vague, ambiguous, and overly broad” language that it may violate due process and equal protection rights. Meanwhile, preservation **continued on page 10**

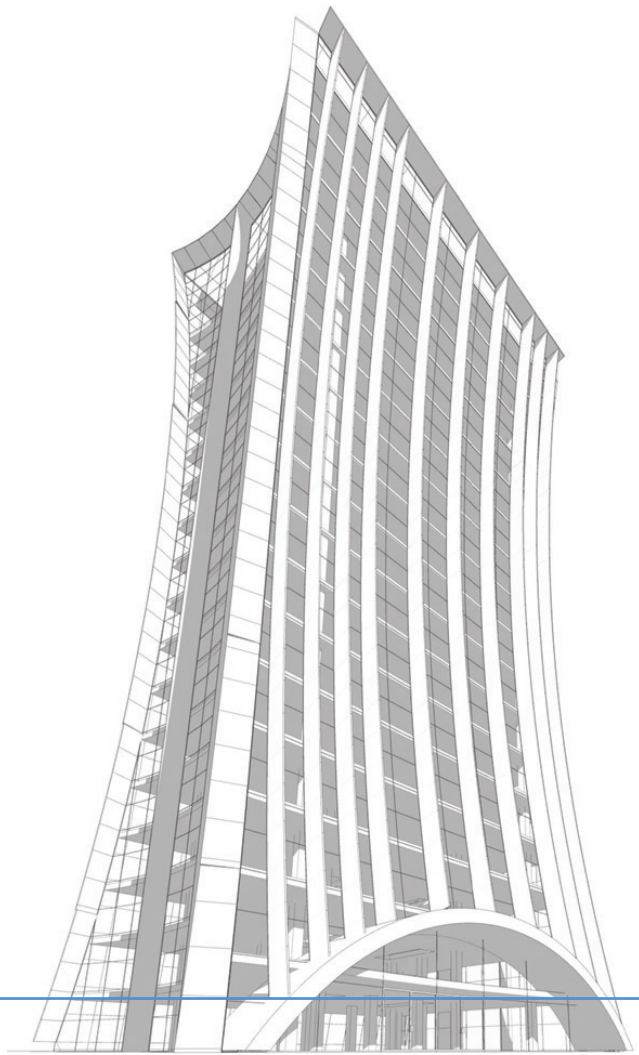


THE BLOOM'S ON THE HIGH LINE
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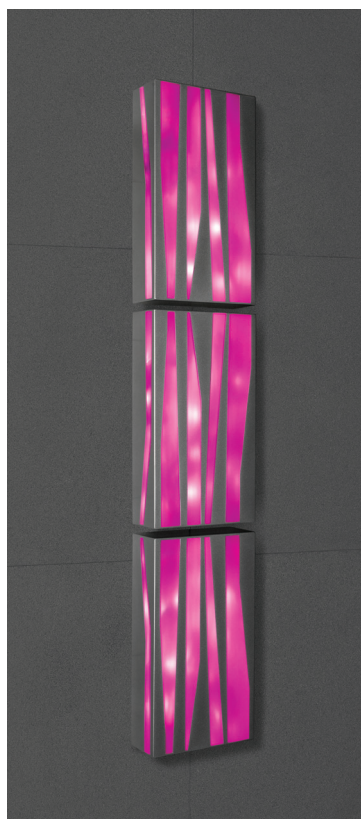
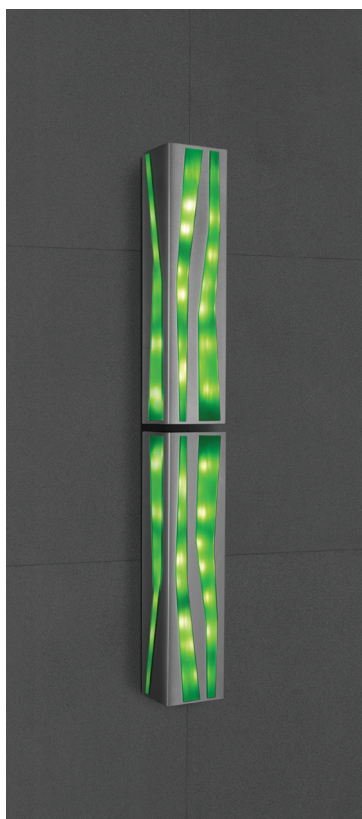
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SPECIAL PROJECTS

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WRITER AT LARGE

Alec Appelbaum

ASSISTANT MARKETING MANAGER

Pamela Piork

SALES ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

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INTERIORS DIRECTOR

Jeff Greif

EDITORIAL INTERNS

Mariana Rodríguez Orte

Dustin Seplow

CONTRIBUTORS

MARISA BARTOLUCCI / DAN BIBB / SARAH F. COX / DAVID D'ARCY / MURRAY FRASER / RICHARD INGERSOLL / PETER LANG / LIANE LEFAIVRE / LUIGI PRESTINENZA PUGLISI / KESTER RATTENBURY / CLAY RISEN / D. GRAHAME SHANE / ALEX ULAM / GWEN WRIGHT / PETER ZELLNER

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SPUR ON THE HIGH LINE!

In a city ruled by expedience-at-all-costs urbanism, nothing seemed so improbable as the survival of the High Line. Written off for decades as an economic albatross and blight-inducing eyesore, this 22-block-long relic of New York's industrial past has been transformed by Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro into a poster child for the social and environmental pluses of preservation. While the park's success as a public space will be parsed in the coming months, the project indisputably marks a quantum leap forward for how New York thinks about the past.

So it may come as a shock to learn that a major stretch of the High Line remains in land-use limbo. The section to open in June runs between Gansevoort and 20th streets, and work is underway on the park's continuation north to 30th Street. When New York City took control of those sections in 2005, however, it stopped short at the remaining loop around the West Side rail yards—where the Related Companies is planning the massive mixed-use development known as Hudson Yards. As public review for that project moves ahead this spring, the High Line is poised to become one more pawn in the rail yards' complex zoning negotiations. And that is no way to treat an incomparable urban artifact.

The advocacy group Friends of the High Line, which was instrumental in the city's acquisition of the line's southern section—and who will have an ongoing official role in maintaining and operating it while reporting to the Parks Department—has urged public officials to step in at Hudson Yards. The rail line's owner, CSX, donated the southern portion to the city, and seems willing to strike a similar deal at the rail yards. Meanwhile, Community Board 4, the Manhattan borough president's office, and elected officials have all rallied for the High Line's preservation.

Related executives say that they too want to save the High Line (the company's point man on the project, Vishaan Chakrabarti, is, after all, a former Friends of the High Line board member), but to date, there have been no guarantees that the line will be retained. Of particular concern is a section that runs east to 10th Avenue, known as the 10th Avenue Spur, that once carried mail-laden freight cars to the Morgan postal building across the street.

Making matters worse is the site's two-track zoning process. The 26-acre Hudson Yards development is split into two separate planning parcels, and both include the High Line. The yards east of 11th Avenue were rezoned in 2005, but without provision for the rail line's preservation. (On April 2, the city council approved zoning tweaks for that portion of the site, again ignoring the rail line.)

The yards west of 11th Avenue are a different story. This section of the site is due to commence a lengthy rezoning process later this year. Whatever the developer's intentions, it makes no sense to undertake a full-dress public review of the yards while omitting one of their greatest public benefits. Now is the time to declare the High Line an integral part of this process, and acquire the remaining railway from CSX.

Thanks in part to dogged Chelsea residents and ardent railroad enthusiasts, New York has come a long way from the last century's tabula-rasa tactics. Far from hindering good design, this ungainly, rusting hulk has spawned some of the most exuberant architecture in the city. As its champions have long understood, the High Line tells a powerful urban story. It speaks, like few other landmarks, to the stubborn persistence of the past.

JEFF BYLES

KENNEDY CENTRAL continued from front page

Archives in the omnibus bill signed by President Obama on March 11, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, designed in 1979 by I.M. Pei, is receiving \$22 million for an addition (along with smaller amounts for the Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson libraries). The addition, however, will not be designed by Pei but by Boston-based Einhorn, Yaffee, Prescott (EYP), the architects of several National Archive projects as well as the 2004 renovation of Harvard's Widener Library. According to EYP principal David Fixler, the addition has been in development for at least six years as funding has been shored up, and is due to break ground this year after an equally complicated design process.

The library is a sequence of monumental forms overlooking Boston Harbor, and had already been altered by a Pei-designed addition in 1991. "We analyzed the Pei: It's all primary geometries, like origami," Fixler said. "So we took another fold and looked at it two ways." The choice was between continuing the line of Pei's Smith Center addition, or folding back toward the harbor and away from the building's approach. "We decided to be deferential," Fixler said, which meant extending the existing plinth to follow the contour of the shoreline. The 28,000-square-foot, two-story, pre-cast concrete addition will contain temporary exhibition space and much-needed storage for a vast artifact, audiovisual, and textual collection, along with offices and classrooms. "Pei is aware of the plan but did not seek any revisions," Fixler added. "The Kennedy Foundation did make changes. But the final plans got the [exhibition designer and husband of Caroline Kennedy, Edwin] Schlossberg blessing."

The expansion joins another Kennedy project underway on an adjacent four-acre site belonging to the University of Massachusetts. To be designed by Rafael Viñoly Architects, the \$100 million Edward M. Kennedy Institute will be dedicated to educational causes and include a replica of the U.S. Senate Chamber (perhaps aping the customary Oval Office replicas at presidential libraries) as well as galleries showcasing famous confrontations in the history of the Senate, spaces for mock Senate debates by students, and even a training program for actual junior Senators. The nonprofit institute would be financed, according to a report in *The Boston Globe*, by a group of pharmaceutical, biotech, hospital, and insurance companies that have already raised \$20 million.

Selected from a shortlist said to include Steven Holl and Pelli Clarke Pelli, Viñoly will be working with Sasaki Associates, and exhibition design will be handled by none other than Schlossberg, according to Josslin Lesser + Associates, the project manager. The building is expected to cost about \$50 million, and ground breaking is due later this year. **JULIE V. IOVINE**

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LETTERS

EMPIRE IMBROGLIO

As you know from my comments about the recently auctioned Empire State Building model ("Empire Fake?," *AN* 05_03.18.2009), I believe that the model shown was not the original, but one built for a *New York Times* article illustrating my suggestion that the building's height could be increased by about 33 floors. After giving the matter more thought, I now believe that the so-called owners of the building's archive may not have had any title to it.

The original work was done by Shreve Lamb & Harmon. In the early 1970s, that firm was merged with my firm Petroff and Jones, forming the new firm of Shreve Lamb & Harmon PC. Both merging firms ceased to exist. The four partners of the new firm prepared and signed an agree-

ment that the archives of both firms would, in essence, be held in "trust" and at a later point be donated to a permanent collection. This agreement was placed in a file of legal documents establishing the PC firm.

Some years later, I resigned from the firm, and sadly the other three partners died. Prior to my leaving, Bill Plyer and Don Grossman had been made associates, and evidently inherited the PC and presided over that firm's closing some time later. What happened to the agreement, whether lost or destroyed, I do not know.

Given these circumstances, I do not believe the PC firm owned the archives of the Empire State Building, or of any other works done by both original firms prior to the merger. I continue in the practice of the profession, and am certainly not an

attorney. But I do believe there is at least a matter of ethics, which seem to be of less importance as the years have passed. I wish to make clear that I have no financial or any other interest in the matter, other than those included in this letter.

ROBERT WAGENSEIL JONES
ROBERT WAGENSEIL JONES & ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS
WESTBROOK, CT

CORRECTION

An editorial about urban planning in the Bronx ("Learning from the Bronx," *AN* 06_04.01.2009) referred incorrectly to Van Cortlandt Park. It is the borough's second-largest park, after Pelham Bay Park. It is not the Bronx's largest open space.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009

EAVESDROP: SARA HART

MICHAEL V. MITCHELL: TERREFEUD

A drama is developing that promises to be an architectural *All About Eve*, with the role of Margo Channing being played by **Michael Sorkin** and that of Eve Harrington played by **Mitchell Joachim**. (The role of Addison DeWitt has not yet been cast, but a couple of you will be asked to audition.) Sorkin, principal of the eponymous architecture practice in New York, is circulating a statement accusing former employee and mentee Joachim of stealing **Terreform**, a not-for-profit urban-design and research organization, which Sorkin says he founded, incorporated, and named all by himself. Joachim, who was at one time Terreform's executive director, insists the two men founded it together, and has posted a "Michael Sorkin Disclaimer" on his website and blog. Speaking of Web sites, URLs, and déjà vu, most of Terreform's content and its logo exist simultaneously on Sorkin's site (terreform.info) and at Joachim's site for Terreform ONE (terreform.org). Go look. You can't make this stuff up.

It's also gotten personal, as evidenced by the dueling diagnoses: Sorkin says Joachim suffers from "Oedipal rage," while Joachim counters by insisting that Sorkin has "Founder's Syndrome." At press time, no lawsuits had been filed, but clearly it's going to take more than King Solomon-esque bluff-calling to determine sole ownership of Terreform. Eavesdrop intends to get to the bottom of it, take sides, and pick a winner. As Margo Channing said, "Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night!"

RENSE WATCH

The Delaney Report ("the advertising industry's version of the Drudge Report"—*Advertising Age*) reports rumors that Condé Nast chairman **Si Newhouse** is looking for a replacement for *Architectural Digest's* **Paige Rense**. If true, this will shock those who were resigned to her monarchical status as Editrix-For-Life (EFL) and thrill those whom she has shunned, dissed, and damned with faint praise. Newhouse certainly has plenty of contenders among those he has added to the unemployment rolls. **Dominique Browning** of shuttered *House & Garden*, perhaps? **Deborah Needleman** of knocked-off *Domino*? We hear the ever-clever *H&G* defector **Mayer Rus** is ready to pounce. We're not holding our breath, though. We'll believe it when EFL is hauled out the door, though we hope not on a gurney!

BLIND ITEM!

What New York architect is being sued for unwanted sexual advances by both male and female staffers?

SEND STOCK TIPS, FROSTED TIPS, OR PG TIPS TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

GRIMSHAW-DESIGNED AMPHITHEATER TO BE CONEY ISLAND GATEWAY



COURTESY GRIMSHAW

It's been rough sailing out at Coney Island of late, with the destruction of Astroland last winter and simmering tensions over the city's rezoning plan. But now, Coney's ship, or rather its amphitheater, has come in.

Borough President Marty Markowitz, who announced the project two years ago in his state-of-the-borough address, will provide funding for the \$47 million Grimshaw-designed project, which replaces a small 1980s bandshell across Surf Avenue from the aquarium. The new structure boasts a 60,000-square-foot roof in the shape of a hyperbolic paraboloid—picture a massive Pringles potato chip—made of steel and translucent fiberglass, with hundreds of strobing stage lights.

Mark Husser, the partner-in-charge, sees the theater, which is officially called the Coney Center, as the latest in a long line of Coney icons stretching from the Parachute Jump to the Cyclone. "What is the context of Coney Island? It's that there is no context,"

Husser said. "Everything is unique, everything is a spectacle, but in that uniqueness, Coney's icons find unity."

While not as big as outdoor theater rivals like Jones Beach—8,000 seats versus 18,000—the amenities, such as new green rooms and an improved sound and lighting system, will hopefully attract marquee names. During the off-season, the 5,000 seats under the canopy will be removed and replaced by an ice rink, and the public will have access to the 3,000-seat lawn for recreational activities whenever shows are not underway. Grimshaw will also be revamping the park's playground with landscape architects Mathews Nielsen, as well as the handball courts across the street.

"A lot of people take the subway to Coney Island," said project manager Paulo de Faria. "But even more drive, and they come in on Ocean Parkway. That's why this will truly be the new gateway to Coney Island."

MATT CHABAN

COMPLEXITY AND CONTRADICTION CONTINUE AT GROUND ZERO

World Trade Tango

The World Trade Center site is not ready for occupancy, but neither is it at a standstill. A week after the Port Authority announced the first commercial lease for one of four Ground Zero towers, the site is showing more life—and stirring up new controversy.

On March 26, the Port announced the lease of nearly 191,000 square feet at what is to be New York's tallest skyscraper to a real estate concern called China Vantone. But what was "the Freedom Tower" is now One World Trade Center, matching the tactic developer Larry Silverstein has used for his towers, including the occupied Seven World Trade Center. Speculation swirled that the Port might take over the development or marketing of Silverstein Properties' proposed three towers.

A confidant of Silverstein's said such speculation was "preposterous," and called on the Port to erase doubt as to when it would build out the site's infrastructure. This person spoke on condition of anonymity, reflecting the degree to which the Port and Silverstein apparently need each other. The agency and the City of New York have pledged to serve as backstop tenants in the 975-foot, 64-story Tower Four, designed by Maki & Associates. The two public tenants would take about two-thirds of the

office space in the tower.

That commitment looms as Silverstein seeks financing or tenants to build all three promised skyscrapers. A Silverstein spokesperson would not comment on record, but one downtown business leader told *AN* that it would "make sense" for Silverstein to complete Tower 4 while credit markets thaw, then seek new lenders for the other buildings, which Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners and Foster + Partners are designing to taller specs. The Port, which must deliver infrastructure and security to the site, would have to work collegially with Silverstein for this scenario to speed construction.

And there is trouble brewing elsewhere on the site. On March 18, *The New York Observer* declared kaput a deal under which the Port would pay the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church around \$60 million to move its new building out of the way of a security checkpoint for truck deliveries.

Pending a resolution of that dispute, plans to create a humbler version of Santiago Calatrava's proposed transportation hub are poised to speed memorial construction. On March 26, the Port announced a \$338 million contract to DCM erectors to build the hub to street level. "Because part of the Transportation Hub's roof serves as part of the Memorial Plaza's floor, this solution cut an estimated two years off the complete delivery of the Memorial Plaza," the Port said.

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COURTESY ADIDAS

In keeping with the environmentally friendly motto for adidas' new SLVR brand—"reduce complexity"—the global sport retailer has used a light touch for its first SLVR store, located in an existing Soho space. Designed by Sid Lee with adidas' retail concept team, the 2,700-square-foot interior uses four main materials with a clean, modern aesthetic: recyclable wood, plywood, glass, and metal frames. The space serves as a blank canvas for adidas' collection of men's and women's apparel, footwear, and accessories, while incorporating organic elements such as locally sourced wood in the form of paneled flooring, along with custom wooden chairs that are draped with felt to highlight seasonal colors and patterns from the collection. These textures are accented by polished glass and steel found in the display cases and overhead tubular lighting. In keeping with the line's eco-conscious production process (the "Zero Waste" t-shirt is cut from a single piece of fabric), the designers demolished no walls to create the new store, instead reusing the existing structure. As the first stand-alone SLVR location to date—outposts are to follow in Paris, Miami, Bangkok, and Los Angeles—the space admirably embodies SLVR's quest for a smaller carbon footprint. **DANIELLE RAGO**



ISTOCK

VIRGINIA TO PROMOTE
CONNECTIVITY, CURB DEAD ENDS
CUL-DE-SACKED!

The Commonwealth of Virginia has introduced new requirements for secondary roads, with the goal of promoting connectivity and reducing stormwater runoff. The new rules effectively ban cul-de-sacs by calling for streets in new subdivisions to be designed as through streets, connecting both within new developments and to adjacent subdivisions. The rules, which also call for significantly narrower streets, represent a watershed moment in what is emerging in planning circles as a connectivity crusade.

"There is a growing concern about cul-de-sacs nationwide," said William Lucy, a professor of urban and environmental planning at the University of Virginia. "But Virginia is the first state to take such an action. It will greatly reduce, if not eliminate, cul-de-sacs."

Virginia is unique in that it owns and maintains all roads in the state, giving state officials greater control than municipalities in setting road-related land-use policy. Governor Tim Kaine pushed for the new regulations, which were drafted and implemented by the Virginia Department of Transportation, on the grounds

that greater connectivity on secondary roads would reduce stress on primary roads, as well as make them easier to navigate for emergency vehicles.

The Virginia Home Builders Association, which represents many suburban builders, opposed the new rules, arguing that they will be difficult, if not impossible, to implement. "We support connectivity, and in an academic world, the idea works," said Michael Tolson, spokesman for the Home Builders Association. "But in the real world, there is a thing called politics." Tolson believes that connecting subdivisions, which are often developed by different builders, will be impractical, and run counter to the desires of many buyers. "These regulations were not designed for suburban America," he said.

Lucy argued that the new rules will reshape Virginia's suburban landscape for the better, even if there is more work to be done. "Single-use zoning and a lack of connectivity are the two biggest proponents of sprawl," he said. "This will improve access, but it does nothing to change single-use zoning."

For its part, the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) lauds the decision. "I can't understand why the home builders are against it. It's the culture wars. They are operating on the transportation ideology of the Heritage Foundation," said John Norquist, CNU president. "There is a change going on around the country. People want an alternative." Norquist believes it will be a model for other states, and possibly for changes in federal policy.

Meanwhile, the Virginia Home Builders Association has vowed to continue to challenge the new rules. "We only have one-term governors in Virginia," Tolson said. "We'll push to have it revisited." **ALAN G. BRAKE**

EERO DYNAMIC



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TRADING UP



Creating the appearance of effortless takes precision. In the built environment, this means inspired design and craftsmanship. In the business environment, it means streamlining operations to rise above the rest. That's why Bank of America challenged **Gensler** to design a staircase uniting its new trading floors at **One Bryant Park**. Fabricated by A-Val Architectural Metal Corporation and erected by Empire City Iron Works, its illuminated steel and glass construction is more than ornament. It represents the free flow of ideas. It represents mobility and agility. It represents how to get to the top.

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Architect:
Gensler
Photo:
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FIRST NEW GUIDELINES FOR PARKS IN HALF A CENTURY

Grass is Greener



Top: An ecological restoration plan for the Fountain Avenue Landfill in Brooklyn; Below: Urban parks will be analyzed and reshaped to respond to local realities.

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation is getting ready for a revolution in the way it designs, builds, and maintains its parks. Under new regulations contained in a document still in draft stages and entitled *Park Design for the 21st Century: High Performance Landscape Guidelines*, the city's parks will not only become more environmentally sustainable, they will also look literally greener.

At first glance, the proposed changes may seem prosaic. They include encouraging the use of tree trenches containing multiple trees and understories of plants in certain areas, for instance, instead of the standard tree pits that predominate throughout the city. And in many parks, New York City will be phasing out traditional park benches, which used slats made of tropical rainforest wood, and instead experiment with new bench designs and other types of materials such as recycled plastics and Black Locust, a renewable hardwood.

Yet the new guidelines—the first in 50 years—are part of an ambitious overhaul of New York's overall ecology. Developed by the Design Trust for Public Space in conjunction with the Parks Department, the guidelines are expected to play a significant role in reducing climate change in the region. "Parks have traditionally served cities for social reasons—health and exercise," said Deborah Marton, executive director of the Design Trust for Public Space. "But the point is to make parks into something that they haven't been before—infrastructure to improve the overall quality of our lives—so they can be used to cut down on sewer overflow; they can be used to recharge groundwater; and they can be

used to improve air quality."

Although individual Parks Department designers have been keeping up with some of the new sustainable practices that have now become commonplace in the landscape architecture profession, the department as a whole needs to make a paradigm shift in the way that it does business, said Marton. "There are parks that still use drinkable water for irrigation, and that just makes no sense," she said. "And instead of filtering stormwater runoff through plants, most parks still take runoff from parking lots and dump it in the sewer system."

The new ecological approach will have major implications for park aesthetics. According to Charles McKinney, chief of design at Parks, "Twenty-first century landscape design is really about respecting what is there as much as possible—the root zone around the tree, the existing water course and drainage patterns—as opposed to making a new thing of beauty that does not necessarily relate to that place."

Parks designed under the new guidelines will most probably look messier than the urban parks that New Yorkers are used to, noted Marton, adding that under the proposed changes there will be more foliage and new landscape forms such as "rain gardens," or meadows that turn into marshy areas to trap stormwater.

Although park designers will be required to think more holistically about design, there should be plenty of room for creativity: "Landscapes are only as good as they are comprehensible. So it is going to be up to the landscape architect to use the strategies in this book to make them readable to users," Marton said. **ALEX ULAM**

WITH NO SETTLEMENT IN SIGHT, MTA UNLEASHES ITS DOOMSDAY PLAN

STRAPPED HANGERS

New Yorkers looking for a legislative express to rescue the foundering Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) got the bureaucratic equivalent of a garbage train on March 25, when the MTA made good on threats of a budget and capital plan marked by daunting service reductions and fare hikes.

In a series of 12–1 votes, the agency's board approved the so-called "doomsday plan" that would slash service on train and bus lines and raise the monthly unlimited MetroCard to \$103 from its current \$81. These and other desperate measures result from an impasse in Albany, where legislators were still toiling to reach an agreement that would bolster the MTA's budget.

To that end, the most powerful person in state government, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, kept pushing for a compromise among the state's lawmaking bodies in the last hours before the vote. Silver has worked to emerge as the straphanger's hero since February, when the assembly seemed set to pass a plan adding tolls to East River bridges, along with a payroll tax, to keep MTA capital projects alive. But the state senate under fledgling majority leader Malcolm Smith let the plan stall, with no deal brokered before the MTA deadline.

"We're trying very hard to reach a negotiated settlement," Dan Weiller, a spokesperson for Silver, told *AN* a day before the vote. And while both the speaker and Smith were concerned about the vote, he added that "the MTA has said there's some wiggle room."

In voting to turn a contingency budget into an operating plan, the MTA has strongly signaled time's up. The plan will axe two subway lines—the Z, serving much of north-east Brooklyn from Bushwick to the Queens border, and the W to Astoria. Throughout the boroughs, 35 bus lines would also disappear. As New York's transit-riding population keeps growing and job centers disperse from midtown Manhattan, the cutbacks could harm productivity and hamper access to jobs.

Yet Senate Democrats, new to the majority this year, did not organize to support either an earlier plan spearheaded by former MTA chief Richard Ravitch or Silver's compromise proposal, which lowered bridge tolls from their recommended level to around the cost of a subway ride. Said one transit advocate, insisting on anonymity due to ongoing discussions with the legislature: "Smith, who's trying to say it's all about MTA accountability, really can't get the votes."

Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for the advocacy group Straphangers Campaign, argued that Silver could bring lawmakers around to his way of thinking even after the MTA's vote. How? "The same way he can direct any major expenditure," Russianoff told *AN*. "Power of the purse. He says to them, 'You want your annual appropriations?'"

At this stage, Silver's political gamesmanship is the last recourse for New Yorkers who will otherwise dig deeper into their pockets for \$2.50 on a single ride beginning May 31. **AA**



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Paying homage to the Battery as the first home of the New York Aquarium in 1896, WXY Architecture's SeaGlass Carousel brings exotic sea life back to Lower Manhattan. Located at the southern end of Battery Park, SeaGlass is part of an ongoing

park restoration that also features kiosks, benches, and a fountain designed by WXY for the adjacent Battery Bosque. The pavilion was inspired by the spiraling geometries of the nautilus shell, and is attuned to how the sun and air move through the site, according to WXY principal Claire Weisz. "We wanted to develop a piece of architec-

ture that really fits contextually into the park setting, and wasn't a building, but rather a sculptural fragment," she told *AN*. Composed of glass and steel, the structure features SmartGlass panels, which change from transparent to cobalt blue during the ride, simulating a descent to the ocean's floor. Visitors climb aboard 30 iridescent sea creatures created by George Tsylin—production designer for Disney's *Little Mermaid* on Broadway—including fanciful angelfish, lionfish, clown triggerfish, and butterfly fish. With oscillating turntables that mimic swim patterns, ocean projections, and lighting by noted designer Don Holder, the ride offers a high-tech, multimedia trip to the depths. **DR**

Architect: WXY Architecture
Client: The Battery Conservancy
Location: Battery Park
Completion: Summer 2010

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A LANDMARK RULING? *continued from front page* agencies around the nation have scrambled to file briefs in support of Chicago's landmarks law, which if invalidated would not only threaten more than 9,000 protected properties in the city, but embolden challenges to ordinances around the country—including those in New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Seattle—that mirror the law in Chicago.

"If the precedent is set in Illinois," said Jonathan Fine, executive director of Preservation Chicago, "it could open the floodgates for the loss of preservation ordinances throughout the country."

The case originates not in the nuances of pediments and porches but in what the plaintiffs contend is the flagrant abuse of the landmark process to make an end-run around zoning rules. The complaint was first brought by residents of two landmark districts: the Arlington-Deming District in the affluent Lincoln Park area, a collection of 1890s mansions and Second Empire-style houses; and the East Village District, comprised of working-class streetscapes dating to the late 1800s. Both neighborhoods had been subject to out-of-context new development, and in both cases, local aldermen had moved to downzone the areas to preserve neighborhood character.

In their complaint, Albert Hanna, a long-time Lincoln Park resident and land-use critic, and Carol Mrowka, a real estate agent, argued that these landmark districts were created only after downzoning attempts were separately thwarted. (The Arlington-Deming rezone was scotched following a successful court challenge by Hanna.)

"Landmarking was a complete afterthought," said Thomas Ramsdell, an attorney for the plaintiffs. "What happened here is that when two zoning measures failed, two different aldermen, using the exact same criteria, simply said: Let's landmark the area." The result, Ramsdell argued, were districts cobbled together from a hodgepodge of buildings that had no coherence as landmark districts. A trial court didn't buy

those arguments, however, and dismissed the case in 2006.

But on January 30, an appellate court sided with the plaintiffs, finding that the seven criteria used to evaluate Chicago landmarks are unconstitutionally vague. In its decision, a three-judge panel said the criteria—which use wording such as "significant" or "unique" to describe potential landmarks—could apply to virtually any property in the city. Moreover, the court rejected the city's argument that landmarks commission members were experts well-versed in such terms, and further found that qualifications for commission members were untenably vague. With that, the case was remanded to the trial court for further proceedings.

For the time being, at least, the city's landmarks law remains in full effect. Whether or not the state's supreme court weighs in—a decision is expected by June—a final ruling may not come for at least a year. And given the considerable case law on the matter, some experts see the Illinois ruling as an "oddball decision" that is likely to be reversed.

"What we're looking at here is an intermediate court decision in a state court. It doesn't carry a lot of persuasive authority around the country," said Julia H. Miller, special counsel for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Indeed, a federal district court, ruling on a similar challenge to Chicago's landmarks law in 1994, declared it consistent with the state and federal constitutions.

Regrettably, the ultimate outcome is likely to have little impact on what the plaintiffs maintained was their true target: Chicago's dysfunctional political culture. "There is no comprehensive plan in Chicago," Ramsdell said. "We have 50 fiefdoms—we leave land use up to the individual aldermen of the 50 wards. It looks like we're out to undo historic preservation," he continued. "That's not the case. We want the city to have a strong landmarks ordinance that can't be abused this way." **JEFF BYLES**

**UNVEILED****THE HIGH LINE BUILDING**

Architect Morris Adjmi's 100,000-square-foot, steel-and-glass tower is the latest to rise in the fast-changing Meatpacking District. Located at 450 West 14th Street and

built atop an existing, five-story art deco building that formerly served as a meat-packing facility, Adjmi's office-and-retail structure is named The High Line Building, since it is one of just a few buildings to sit astride the elevated railway. Fittingly enough for its art-focused neighborhood, the tower is conceptually inspired by artist Rachel Whiteread's *Untitled Monument* (2001), in which a transparent resin cast of a plinth is mirrored on top of the plinth itself. "It carries some of the articulation of the base throughout the height of the building," Adjmi told AN, "specifically referencing the aperture where the High Line enters the building on the top of the cube." As a modern reiteration of the past, the building's brawny steel framing echoes the old rail line below, while energy-efficient glazing, ventilation, and water systems have it on track to receive a LEED Gold rating. **DR**

Architect: Morris Adjmi Architects
Client: CB Developers
Location: 450 West 14th Street
Completion: December 2009

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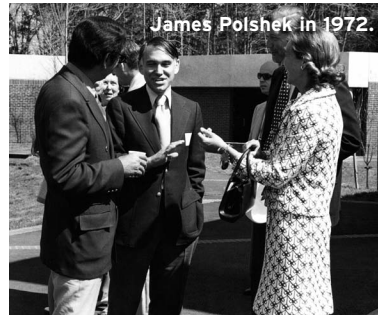
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RECESSION TALES: JAMES POLSHEK



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WHATEVER IT TAKES

In the third of our conversations with architects about past recessions, AN talks to James Polshek, senior design counsel and a founder in 1963 of Polshek Partnership Architects, who will be presented with the Augustus Graham Medal by the Brooklyn Museum on April 23.

Which downturn has been hardest on you so far?

1972—that was the big traumatic one. My memory of the later ones is not as vivid as when there was no gasoline or oil in the '70s.

Before that, things were going great. I went to Japan in 1962 when I was 32 for almost two years. It was a busy time of unlimited possibilities, and I was doing these big \$100 million laboratory projects.

When I came back in '64, I was back to doing little remodeling jobs and consulting for the New York State Mental Hygiene fund that was very progressive then, hiring young architects to consult on bigger projects.

I was sharing an office at 295 Madison with Richard Kaplan, Michael Zimmer, and Alfredo Toscanini, son of the conductor. We each had a corner office in the tower at the top. We had an agreement that whoever got the busiest first would take over the whole space. And I got it. We grew to about 45 people.

Then in 1970, I was working on a student center at Wesleyan University when there was a sudden, gigantic drop in the market and they cancelled it. That was the beginning of rumblings from the Middle East. Then in 1972, we had a fire. I had these two apartments on 9th Street side by side: one my family lived in and the other was a kind of branch office because we had grown so large. For me, the fire was really symbolic, like Thor had thrown his lightning bolt.

Did it really feel that desperate?

Well, we were down to about five people, from 45. I recall talking to my wife at the time, saying I thought it was time to call [Ulrich] Franzen (I had worked for him years before) and tell him that maybe it was time for me to go back to work. She said, don't be silly, something will happen, but I was really considering closing the office. I didn't engage in a job hunt, but I did look at ads. There wasn't much around, anyway. I just didn't want to fail.

At the same time, though, we were

doing some interesting planning studies for Westinghouse. And we did the Brotherhood Synagogue on Gramercy Park. That turned out to be important as it proved my commitment to preservation.

Did you go into preservation as part of a survival strategy?

You can say strategy, but preservation, like planning and feasibility studies, was also a philosophical predilection. It had to do with my own eclectic set of interests and my getting easily bored. I really believe in preservation, particularly when it's in conjunction with the addition of something new.

When I was at school at Yale, historic buildings were not even looked at, but I thought preservation was a moral obligation. I didn't share the agenda of that generation of architects who came out of school after World War II, Harvard in particular, who were kind of mini master-builders. I think that in architecture, at its most ideal, the architect is somewhat anonymous. That encouraged me to find ways to create new architecture that was not always visible, not *de novo*: underground, historic preservation, interiors, healthcare, and laboratories.

When did you start teaching?
Was it to support your practice?

I became dean of Columbia in 1973, but I didn't seek it out. Max Bond recommended me and I had every reason to agree because things were really bad. And it stayed depressing all the way until about 1976.

Some architects weather downturns by looking abroad for work.

That's another strategy, but not one we entertained. In the '70s, many big firms were running to the Middle East for work. They were making presentations to the Shah of Iran. I was too young to get offers of that kind, but I was absolutely disinclined anyway. And I think there was an unspoken consensus in my office because everyone had little children. They didn't want to go off to Saudi Arabia or China. And we still don't.

Was there something else you did go after?

Feasibility studies—they don't often result in buildings, but they can. They're sometimes intellectually provocative and they force you to collaborate with engineers. We worked on a plutonium processing plant until everyone realized how dangerous it was. And on a prototype to develop a new type of industrial plant—it was the most eclectic bunch of stuff you can imagine, but it all helped in our recovery. Studies go on, whether there's a recession or not.

I was one of Philip Johnson's adoptees and went to those soirees where architects criticize one another. It was a parallel universe, when Eisenman and those guys were dividing up the world into whites and grays. I said, I'm not white or gray. I'm pink, and I'm not going to be part of this, and I wasn't. It is, however, important to establish a reputation within the profession for quality of work and integrity. But it's even more important to survive.

Top: Related's Pier 57 plan includes a three-acre park by Field Operations; Below: Durst wants to have a children's museum and a "fantasy-like" roof garden.



COURTESY RESPECTIVE FIRMS

PIER PRESSURE continued from front page featuring a movie theater, restaurants, retail, and a marina. The pier's roof would become a three-acre public park by Field Operations, creating a visual connection to that firm's other celebrated West Side park, the soon-to-open High Line across the street. The concrete caissons that form the pier's foundation would house a fully automated parking system for up to 520 cars at a time. "This would be one of the city's first adaptive-reuse parking garages," said Related project manager Anthony Fioravanti.

The Durst team opts to create a wide-open public space at street level that will accommodate a changing mix of activities. "The public space is really what our whole design element has been about from day one," said Stan Eckstut, principal in the team's Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects, which was assisted by Project for Public Spaces. Main attractions of the \$330 million plan include the Children's Museum, which would be built into the caissons and every level of the pier, and a public "fantasy-like roof garden," with nautical-themed fabric structures housing various restaurants and activities. "We shied away from doing another green lawn [on the roof]," said Eckstut. "We think there's enough of that in Hudson River Park already."

Lastly, there is YoungWoo's \$191 million plan, created with design firm LOT-EK, which would fill the pier shed with their trademark shipping containers, fitted with glass and rented out as studio and gallery spaces for artisans. An educational center concerned with maritime and Hudson River history

would be set within the caissons. Unlike the other two teams, YoungWoo would retain the pier's wide service ramp, extending it up through the roof and turning it into open-air seating for a rooftop park that would host the Tribeca Film Festival in the summer. The ramp and other public walkways through the marketplace would be protected from the elements but not climatized—much like European porticos, said LOT-EK principal Ada Tolla. "The intention was to think of it as an urban pedestrian space," she said. "Very much a continuation of the Meatpacking District."

A winning team could be announced as early as next month, according to Connie Fishman, president of the Hudson River Park Trust. "We have a real estate consultant looking at suggested revenue numbers and construction cost numbers to make sure they sound realistic," she said. "We are also working on traffic studies, because one of the thornier issues is how the traffic circulates in and around the development."

Though the final decision is the Trust's, a community advisory board has been involved from the beginning, keeping the developers focused on community priorities such as respect for the pier's unique floating structure. At a February public hearing, it was clear that the teams have very different attitudes toward the past: The Related and Durst teams touted their adaptive reuse of the caissons, while the YoungWoo team defended their own, more hands-off, approach. "We looked at [the caissons] kind of like archaeological spaces," Tolla said. "That really is the history of the pier."

JULIA GALEF

Architectural experience, think Trespa

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One of the six piers designed by
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IN DOWN DEVELOPMENT MARKET, MAINTENANCE FUNDS TURN SCARCE

BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARKED

When plans for Brooklyn Bridge Park were unveiled in January 2006, they were heralded as a grand experiment in park development. In order to cover the \$16 million in annual maintenance for the 1.3-mile waterfront park, which stretches from Dumbo to Cobble Hill, a handful of residential and retail sites would be included in the project. Instead of paying taxes, those properties would make payments to a special fund dedicated solely to park maintenance.

But with the collapse of the economy, interest in the development sites has faltered, raising questions about where long-term funding might come from should the planned apartments, hotels, and stores not be built on schedule, or at all.

"We don't anticipate that happening," said Regina Myer, president of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation, the state agency overseeing park development. "Obviously, the economy is in a place none of us anticipated, but we think it will turn around, and we will see renewed interest in the development sites."

Of the six marine piers at the heart of the new Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates–designed park, two are underway. And when those piers are completed by year's end, \$5 million will have been socked away for maintenance,

thanks to funds already drawn from One Brooklyn Bridge Park, a massive warehouse being converted into condominiums and retail at the foot of Atlantic Avenue.

But what happens when those funds run out? Myer declined to entertain such a thought, but it has already led State Senator Daniel Squadron, one of many critics of privately developed parcels, to instead propose siphoning off tax dollars from re-appraised properties, of which there are expected to be many when Dumbo is rezoned later this year. Both the city and state, which jointly run the park project, have dismissed that idea.

Meanwhile, with the state's budget collapsing and worries mounting about its capital commitments to the \$350 million project—of which only \$230 has so far been allotted—Mayor Michael Bloomberg proposed a swap on March 12: The state would cede its share of control of both the park and Governors Island, in exchange for taking over the city's share of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. That move would free up \$300 million of city money for both park projects. Negotiations continue over the matter.

Development critics hope this will also be an opportunity to reevaluate the maintenance funding streams. "We're hoping the mayor will see the error of his and the state's ways," said Judith Francis, president of the Brooklyn Bridge Defense Fund. But even here, opponents may be out of luck. "We're not looking at any other revenue streams regardless of whether it's under mayoral or joint control," a Bloomberg spokesman said. **MC**

ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS AMONG THE SLOWEST-PAID PROFESSIONS

THE CHECK IS (NOT) IN THE MAIL

While professional sectors in all areas of the economy are reeling, architects and engineers appear to be suffering the most, at least in terms of accounts receivable. According to data gathered by financial analysts Sageworks, architects and engineers are paid more slowly than attorneys, accountants, advertisers, and every other category of professional services they monitor. And what's worse, the delays are getting longer in the current recession.

The average time for accounts receivable payments across professional, scientific,

and technical services, the category within which architectural and engineering services fall, was 37.4 days. Architects and engineers fared far worse than that average, with an average delay of 50.79 days, far surpassing accountants (26.41 days), lawyers (23.14 days), and information technology and computing services (37.82 days).

Delays were up across the board over the last three years, but again, payment delays for architects and engineers were longer, an increase of 6.46 days from 2007 to 2008, compared to

an increase of 4.29 for all professional sectors. "I don't think it comes from a lack of respect for the profession," said Kermit Baker, chief economist for the AIA. "But architects don't have a lot of leverage."

The delays help to compound the difficulties now facing architecture firms. Baker regularly hears of 90- to 120-day waits. "Delays like this have become an industry standard," he said. "Architects need pretty hefty credit lines, and delays like these increase their risk exposure."

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From the top: Two sufficient, but soulless, ballparks, Citi Field, formerly known as Shea Stadium, and Yankee Stadium.

extend to the best features of Shea, a worn but swingin' piece of space-age modernism with a perfect-circle plan crowned by a signature continuous strip of floodlights sleek as the headlamps of, say, a '64 Lincoln Continental.

Both teams spent about a billion dollars, and it shows. Practically speaking, both new parks will be perfectly commodious places to watch or play a game. Unlike those in the originally multi-sport Shea, all of Citi Field's tastefully dark green seats actually point toward home plate. This and all other complex technicalities of sight-lines and crowds, have been competently organized in both stadia by HOK Sport (itself recently rebranded as Populous). But perhaps the near monopoly of this firm on this important building typology, and the odd disengagement of architectural discourse from it, has reached a crisis. While Olympic sports venues are often all too deliberately undertaken as demonstrations of cutting-edge design, professional sports buildings in the United States are generally reduced to a mish-mash of folkloric pastiche and hyper-engineered structural steel. Surely a firm like Diller Scofidio + Renfro, which recently inaugurated a radically respectful makeover of Lincoln Center, could have done the same for its exact contemporary, Shea? (Boston's Fenway Park has admirably sustained a lowbrow version of this approach, with up-to-date additions intricately woven into historic fabric.) Or conversely: Could Peter Eisenman, who recently produced a zippy and zeitgeisty stadium for Arizona's NFL Cardinals, have brought some of that same bravado to the Bronx?

Both the Yankees and the Mets have failed either to enhance their existing homes and the times they evoke, or to replace them with buildings that vigorously incarnate the city's present. Or perhaps they do the latter all too well: Future generations who seek to capture our own time in the vessel of these buildings will find our own wan and facile notation of the past. Feh. Legendary baseball commissioner Bart Giamatti famously observed that baseball, a sport of cosmic near-misses and low averages; a sport that abandons you in gathering winter when you need it most, "is designed to break your heart." By that sad standard, New York's insipid new ballparks are a great success.

THOMAS DE MONCHAUX

Very big buildings can be time machines, evoking the aesthetics and aspirations of the moment they were made. Yet those created for collective ritual or routine—cathedrals and capitols, prisons and schools—can do the opposite: conjure a constant present, immune from history. Baseball stadiums, thanks to the reliable recurrence but unfathomable result of each season, each game, each inning, each pitch, somehow manage to do both. They serve the paradoxical human need to both observe and suspend the passage of time. This is a purpose of all religions, especially baseball. This is the purpose of a ballpark.

Until this month, New York City was blessed with two very different and deeply complementary incarnations of this sort of building: Yankee Stadium in the Bronx and Shea Stadium in Queens, homes of the Yankees and the Mets. The particular moments that these ballparks incarnated were a representation of, perhaps, the city's most cherished mythologies of itself. The

original Yankee Stadium, minted in 1923, was the Gotham of Babe Ruth and King Kong, of art deco pinnacles, Zeppelins, Speakeasies, and Jacob Gatz. The 1973 renovation and expansion of the stadium, though commonly reviled for blunting the charms of the original, has come to embody another beloved New York: the terrific, horrific, tough-as-nails city of Scorsese and Serpico, Son of Sam and Mr. October—the city wherein Howard Cosell, noting a fire in a neighboring building while calling Game Two of the 1977 World Series, could observe, "Ladies and gentlemen, the Bronx is burning." Perfectly bracketed between these moments was 1964's Shea Stadium: the sparkling Jet-Age *Mad Men* city of Seagram and Lever, Cheever and Yates, steel and glass.

No more. By a coincidence of financing and politicking, both stadiums have been demolished, with adjacent replacements opening this year. Both offer ersatz reproductions of various precursors. The new Yankee

Stadium ostensibly undoes the damage of 1973. Its Indiana limestone facing is a crude die-cut reproduction of the original 1923 exterior. But that first facade was a beautifully balanced composition in which the spare classical gestures were relieved by the human-scaled texture of the masonry and subtle surface modeling at the resolution of a single brick's depth. It had the sturdy, municipal appeal of a WPA swimming pool. But in the new building, the vast slabs of stone veneer; the clumsy addition of a brooding cornice to the entry bay; and the general affect of bombastic stripped classicism: all strongly combine to evoke some kind of vast interwar ministry—and maybe the kind of rally that doesn't happen with two outs in the ninth. The new building features a bowl-shaped interior profile in which multiple seating tiers are further from the field in plan but closer in cross-section than before. Thus we lose the singular virtue of the 1973 version: the sweeping, shockingly steep upper deck. This monu-

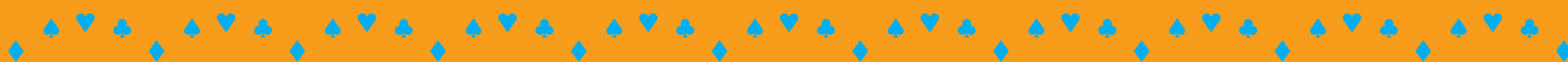
mental structure created a sublime combination of vertiginous intimacy with the field and a collective claustrophobia of crowds that was worthy of a Roman Coliseum. Red Sox Fans will rejoice in its absence.

At Shea (now called Citi Field in honor of its corporate sponsor), the story is different but no better. The arcaded facade is a thin pastiche of Ebbets Field in Brooklyn, the home of the beloved Dodgers before they departed in 1958 for Los Angeles. That appropriation monumentalizes an awkward confluence: although Dodger owner Walter O'Malley traditionally gets the infamy for banishing the team, his decade-long effort to build a new ballpark at the logical confluence of a dozen subway lines in downtown Brooklyn was sabotaged by that familiar monster, Buildings Commissioner Robert Moses, who wanted a new stadium in deepest Flushing, where he'd had his World's Fair successes. Which is where the Mets reside. Sadly, though, the tendency to pastiche and evocation does not

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009



CAPITOL MOVE continued from front page comes with an expected budget of \$500 million and will cover between 300,000 and 350,000 square feet, will have several elements, regardless of the winning design: significant outdoor public spaces and natural components, including water features and trees; areas committed to different elements of African-American history and culture, including the Civil Rights movement and "1968 and Beyond"; and thematic references to slave ships—a charge some firms took literally by inserting full-size models of slave ships inside their designs.

Commonalities aside, the proposals can be superficially grouped into two categories: those that aim toward replicating the Mall's built context and those that push against it. The first category includes the projects by Safdie, Devroux + Purnell and Pei Cobb

Freed, and Freelon Adjaye Bond, a joint venture by the Freelon Group, David Adjaye, and Davis Brody Bond Aedas.

All three groups employ generous amounts of right angles, plinths, and stone, echoing the material and lines of Mall stalwarts like the American History Museum, which sits directly opposite the site at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue.

At the same time, each has a signature element that cuts against tradition: Safdie's building, designed with Sulton Campbell Britt & Associates, is roughly a triangle (echoing I.M. Pei's National Gallery East Wing, at the other end of the Mall), shot through with a floor-to-ceiling glass atrium that would provide a striking view of the Washington Monument. Devroux + Purnell and Pei Cobb Freed's design is a granite and limestone box that almost, but not quite, encloses wavy



wood-and-glass walls on two sides. Freelon Adjaye Bond and SmithGroup's proposal, a staid plinth topped by three basket-like tiers, is meant to echo both a classical column and a common motif in Yoruban art.

The Foster, Predock, and Diller Scofidio + Renfro teams take the opposite approach. Foster's design, with URS, is a sensuous, snail-shell spiral that rises from a collection of gardens to a final, dramatic picture window facing the Washington Monument. Moody•Nolan and Predock's design is a shard-like array of forms topped by a massive crystal skylight, meant to evoke the area's origins as marshy wetlands. Diller Scofidio + Renfro, with KlingStubbins, present perhaps a too demanding design, a table-like glass form encasing a limestone facade.

Setting aside the strength of their designs, each team brings significant advantages.



Clockwise from left: Diller Scofidio + Renfro with KlingStubbins; Foster + Partners/URS Group; Devroux + Purnell Architects with Pei Cobb Freed & Partners; Moshe Safdie and Associates with Sulton Campbell Britt & Associates; Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroup.

Diller Scofidio + Renfro are riding a wave of good press for their edgy but successful redesign of Lincoln Center. Freelon Adjaye Bond bring together three marquee names among black architects—Phil Freelon, David Adjaye, and the late Max Bond.

Devroux + Purnell is likewise a well-known black-run firm, and, with Pei Cobb Freed, has the added advantage of having built multiple big-ticket projects in Washington, a place famous for its architectural red tape. And Safdie, Predock, and Foster are steady old hands who can nevertheless turn out surprisingly new designs. **CLAY RISEN**

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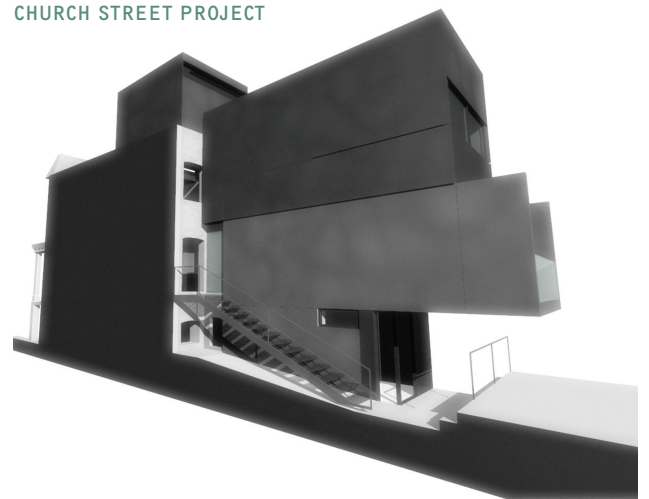

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009

THE LACEY



CHURCH STREET PROJECT



ALC SILVER SPRING



THE DROST



In the past decade, Division1 has sprung some aggressively abstract architecture upon a sometimes unwilling Washington, D.C., and that makes it all the more quixotic to find its offices installed inside a turreted Victorian-schoolhouse-turned-art-studios on one of the quaintest blocks in Georgetown. Ali R. Honarkar, who founded the firm in 1994 with his partner, Mustafa Ali Nouri, enjoys the irony. “We still live under English rule in D.C. when it comes to housing,” observed Honarkar, 40, who would seem youthful even without the mass of shoulder-length hair. “I love traditional architecture. I just don’t want to recreate it.”

A series of minimalist, colorfully soigné restaurant designs around the D.C. area have become bread and butter for Honarkar and Nouri, and helped to build a cult following among people who like neo-modernism along with their custom cocktails. But on the city’s rowhouse blocks, where Division1’s residential projects are growing steadily more daring and conspicuous, their radical alternatives to the standard polite Washington envelope have sometimes put them at odds with review boards, permit offices, preservationists, and neighbors, who—let’s just come right out with it—can be rather square.

“It’s not even about design,” Honarkar said of his occasionally strained community relations. “That’s one of the first things we had to learn. It’s always about politics.”

Fortunately, Honarkar and Nouri can hold their own because they’re basically locals themselves (they both graduated from the University of Maryland’s architecture school in the early ’90s). Significantly, they largely controlled their early projects by acting as their own developers. Though several of their newer projects are for clients just outside of town, they have focused their development work mainly on what was then an overlooked section of the old Shaw neighborhood near the now-frantic U Street corridor, where they bought their first parcels of land in the mid-1990s.

In a city laid and overlaid with historic districts, “We went and found our own little area where we can do modern,” Honarkar said. In the late 1990s, they designed and built a row of condos called Logan Heights on 10th Street, N.W., and then sold all but the one owned by Honarkar. Logan Heights’ spare, offset cubes and cantilevers diverge sharply from the neighborhood’s modest brick formality. Next, around the corner, their W Street Residence brought a bolt of de Stijl audacity to another unsuspecting old-world block.

Nearby, they have just finished a 26-unit condominium, The Lacey, this time with a simpatico New York lawyer, Imar Hutchins, as the developer. Nobody in Culver City would blink an eye at The Lacey’s clean glass curtain wall, staggered facade openings, and projecting steel-mesh catwalks, but in this part of D.C., it looks suspiciously without precedent. **BRADFORD MCKEE**

PING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Charlie Chiang, a frequent restaurateur client, wanted a new take on Chinese dining. Ping divests itself of ethnographic touches for a more globalist sense of cool. “We didn’t want rice paper and chopsticks,” Honarkar explained. And whereas most Chinese restaurants have just a service bar, Ping’s bar, clad in red-stained cedar, stretches more than 40 feet long and defines the restaurant’s linear, minimalist design, complemented by long communal tables and more-private dining areas set behind a screen of raw steel louvers. A slatted cedar ceiling draws in the forms of a lighted polycarbonate interior wall outside at the restaurant’s entrance.

ALC SILVER
SPRING
SILVER SPRING,
MARYLAND

Just outside the D.C. line, this headquarters project is mixed with street-level retail for a burgeoning language-translation company and will surge upward from an existing storefront shell. The design cleverly manipulates county permitting rules for renovation versus new construction by keeping much of the original facade intact, positioning the building so that its new two-story structure is largely suspended off the ground by steel supports. “Montgomery County didn’t know what the hell it was,” said Honarkar. “They told us, ‘there’s no definition for what you’ve done,’ so they had to approve it.” With an exterior clad in ipe and porcelain panels, the building has a green roof on its stair tower, an observation deck, and a trellised rooftop terrace.

CHURCH STREET
PROJECT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

A set of stacked and eccentrically stepped new volumes, clad in Viroc, elongate this typical Washington row house near Dupont Circle, opening dramatic, column-free spaces on the interior without changes to the facade. The clients are a married couple: The wife is Swiss and, according to Honarkar, imports a more comprehensive sense of green architecture than a typical Washingtonian might. Thus the house will have radiant floors, geothermal heating and cooling, and flat solar panels mounted on the roof. Inside, the few design flourishes include a polycarbonate interior wall to line a stair.

THE LACEY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

A longtime D.C. landmark, the Florida Avenue Grill has been joined by a new landmark, The Lacey, a 26-unit condominium named after Lacey Wilson, Sr., a shoe-shiner who opened the Florida Avenue Grill in 1944 on this site at the edge of Washington’s old city. (The developer, Imar Hutchins, bought the Grill in 2005.) The open-corridor building is clad in glass curtain wall and Viroc, a smooth, cement-bonded particleboard. Unlike so many D.C. condominiums, there is no butt end, said Honarkar. “Every elevation is designed.”

THE DROST
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Joining the cluster of Division1’s projects in the Shaw neighborhood, the four-unit Drost condominium fills in the end of a row of old houses along an alley with a high contrast in mood. The Drost’s trim, interlocking facades combine raw masonry and blond wood around large window openings. Each unit takes in a lot of natural light and the upper floors merge fluidly with outdoor terraces. “We don’t want to do typical luxury condos,” Honarkar said. “We want a true urban building.”

PING



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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009



AS AMERICA TAKES A FRESH LOOK AT ITS TRANSIT POLICIES, AN IDEAS COMPETITION TACKLED THAT PARADIGMATIC CITY OF TRAFFIC: LOS ANGELES. THE FLOOD OF SMART SOLUTIONS—BOTH PRACTICAL AND OUTLANDISH—OFFERED A RARE MIX OF INSIGHT, ETHICS, AND HOPE.

On March 21, *The Architect's Newspaper* and the Los Angeles-based Southern California Institute for Future Initiatives, a program of SCI-Arc, announced the winners of their open ideas competition, *A New Infrastructure: Innovative Transit Solutions for Los Angeles*.

Inspired by LA County Measure R—a half-cent sales tax hike passed last November that promised up to \$40 billion in transit funding for the city—the competition offered architects, engineers, and planners a chance to rethink LA's transit infrastructure from both the neighborhood scale and far-reaching, system-wide perspectives. The contest attracted 75 proposals from around the world, providing a refreshing look at a set of problems all too often met by sighs of weary futility among transit professionals.

Most of the winning schemes took a big-picture approach to reintegrating this famously far-flung city. The professional winner, *Más Transit*, by Joshua Stein, Aaron Whelton, and Jaclyn Thomforde with Jacob Brostoff, proposed a system in which high-speed regional and local rail would be seamlessly linked via a raised infrastructure above the city. The student winner, Ryan Lovett, tackled transit issues in concert with rezoning to incorporate work, production, and living into the same dense districts, a simple development strategy that solves multiple environmental problems at the same time.

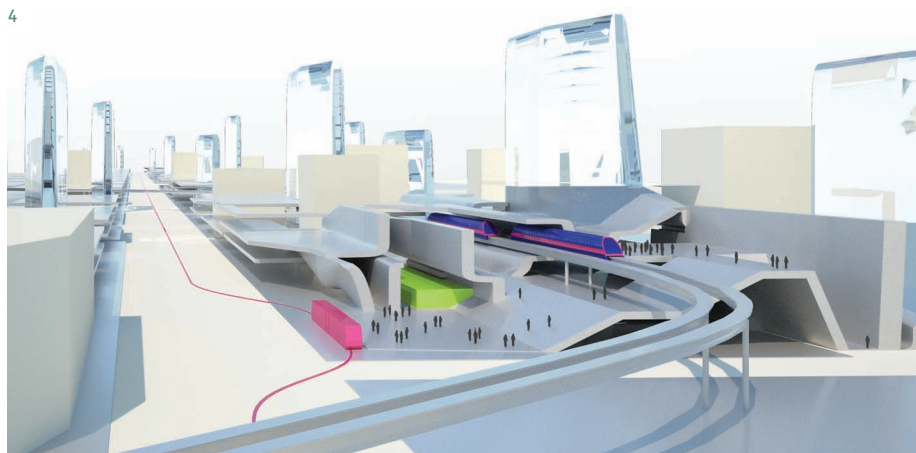
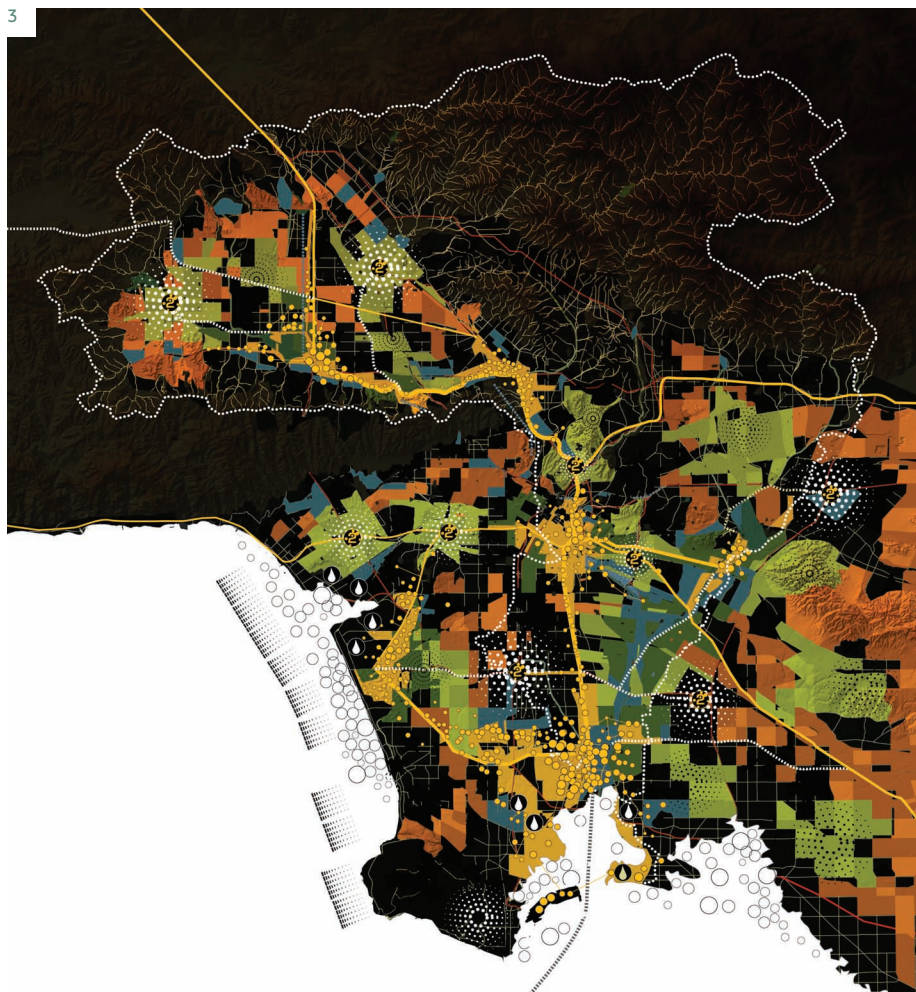
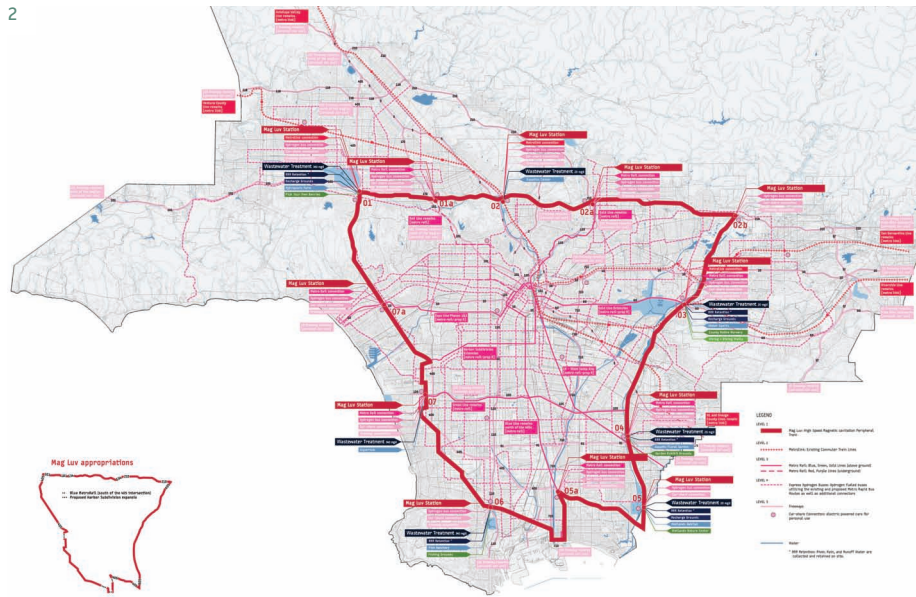
Many of the best ideas to emerge from the competition were repeated across the spectrum. The second-place student winners, Alan Lu and Yan-ping Wang, proposed a modular mobile transit vehicle, which, like one proposed by Lovett, could travel both on and off a track. Meanwhile, the third-place professional winner Osborn's *Mag Luv* proposal, like *Más Transit*, integrated high-speed rail with local mass transit systems, not to mention with zip cars and other individually-oriented transit technologies, converging on 12 centers of transportation and activity.

Several of the top prize winners—like Ben Abelman, Vivian Ngo, and Julia Siedle's *Freeways Are For Trains*—proposed using LA's existing freeway system as a base from which to build new transit and dense urban development. Others, like Fletcher Studio's *Infrastructural Armature*, looked at merging transit with other existing infrastructure in the city, like water and sewer networks, from which "infrastructural tentacles" could grow. Roe Goodman's honorable-mention-winning student proposal suggested transit stations which could double as neighborhood centers, offering markets, bike storage, and other amenities. NBBJ's *Green Tech City* scheme, which won a professional honorable mention, proposed linking new stations within a greenbelt, accompanied by zoning in the area to encourage the burgeoning green-tech sector in the city.

Among the organizers' special selections was Odile Decq's eye-popping *Fast, Fluid & Free*, which proposes an electric-car transport system modeled on free bike-sharing systems developed in Europe, along with mixed-use linkages spanning the freeways with parks, commerce, and car and bike stations. Wes Jones' *The Answer Is Not Mass(ive) Transit* took a contrarian approach, suggesting that instead of resource-intensive infrastructure, planners consider small-scale solutions like the Elov, a pod-like electric vehicle that fits into less space than a smart car and reduces the volume of traffic

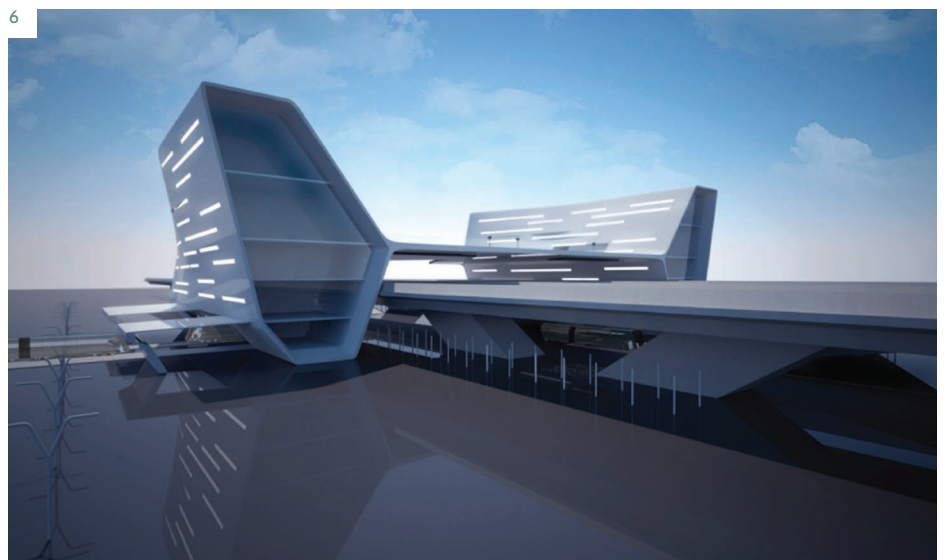
BEYOND GRIDLOCK

COURTESY RESPECTIVE DESIGNERS



1 Odile Decq/ODBC, *Fast, Fluid & Free*
 2 Osborn, *Mag Luv*
 3 Fletcher Studio, *Infrastructural Armature*
 4 Joshua Stein/Radical Craft, Aaron Whelton/AAW Studio, and Jaclyn Thomforde with Jacob Brostoff, *Más Transit*

5 Ryan Lovett, *Glocalizing Los Angeles*
 6 Alan Lu and Yan-ping Wang, *Modular Diffusion*
 7 Ben Abelman, Vivian Ngo, and Julia Siedle, *Freeways Are For Trains*



by serving the same number of occupants in only one quarter of the space. (A complete list of winners is available at www.archpaper.com/newinfrastructure.)

Outside of new ideas, the competition encouraged conversations among transit players, designers, and community leaders, who don't speak together enough when transit decisions are made. The jury, which met a few days before the winners were announced, included architects Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss, and Neil Denari; but also Aspet Davidian, director of project engineering facilities for the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Cecilia V. Estolano, chief executive officer of CRA/LA; Gail Goldberg, director of planning for the City of Los Angeles; Roland Genik, urban planner and transit designer; and Geoff Wardle, the director of advanced mobility research at

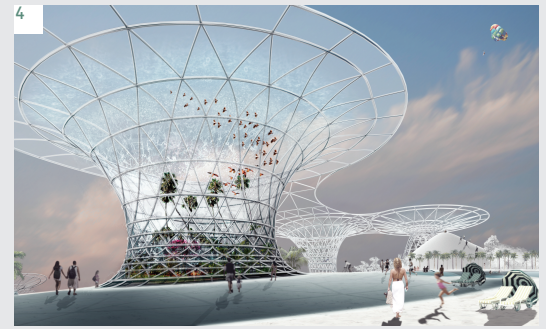
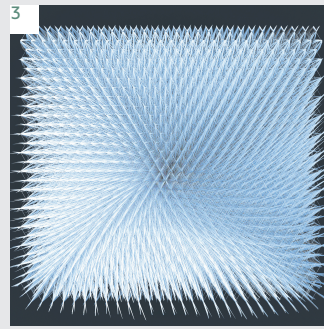
Art Center College of Design.

Most agreed that the discussion about transit in the city needed to be expanded to better tap into the design and urban planning fields. But they also argued that the whole issue needed to be rethought from a coordinated, regional perspective. Mayne pushed for a change in how we see the city at large, while Denari pressed for proactive—not reactive—planning, and Goldberg pushed for more long-term thinking. Moss pointed out that Measure R only detailed rail and road improvements, but not how such improvements would affect the city. He deplored a city balkanized by local politics, without an overall vision. "We're known in LA for experimental architecture," he said. "But when it comes to urban planning, we're about as meek a place as there is."

SAM LUBELL

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009

HONORS > 2009 YOUNG ARCHITECTS FORUM



Each year the Architectural League of New York presents new work and ideas in architecture, urbanism, and related disciplines through the Young Architects Forum competition. Open to designers ten years or fewer out of graduate or undergraduate school in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, this year's competition focused on the theme "Foresight," work that in some fundamental way envisioned the future.

From over one hundred entries, six firms were selected as winners of the 2009 Young Architects Forum: **Aziza Chamonix**, Bureau E.A.S.T., Toronto; **Ivan Juarez** and **Patricia Meneses**, ex.studio, Mexico City and Barcelona; **Frida Escobedo Lopez**, Mexico City; **Cristina Goberna**, **Urtzi Grau**, **Cornelia Herlz**, and **Cristian Zanon**, Fake Industries, Brooklyn; **Phu Hoang**, Phu Hoang Office, New York City; and **Sung**

Goo Yang, Ether Ship, Boston.

According to League program director Anne Rieselbach, "All of the winning entries were relevant to the current economic climate, and responded to the reality of place." Jurors included Mark Gage, Ana Miljacki, Julio Salcedo, Paola Antonelli, Teddy Cruz, Nader Tehrani, and Calvin Tsao.

The Young Architects Forum exhibition will be open from May 14 to July 17 at the

- 1 Aziza Chamonix, Bureau E.A.S.T.
- 2 Ivan Juarez and Patricia Meneses, ex.studio
- 3 Sung Goo Yang, Ether Ship
- 4 Phu Hoang, Phu Hoang Office
- 5 Frida Escobedo Lopez
- 6 Cristina Goberna, Urtzi Grau, Cornelia Herlz, and Cristian Zanon, Fake Industries

Urban Center at 457 Madison Avenue. For more information, please visit www.archleague.org. **DR**

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009

PHILLY FEUDS OVER VSBA-DESIGNED CONDO TOWER

DIL-WORTHLESS?

A three-story, neo-colonial revival house in Philadelphia is at the center of a preservation conundrum that has pitted city agencies against one another and sparked an angry debate over the city's historic fabric. Further complicating the matter, it also involves a former mayor, Richardson Dilworth, and Philadelphia's most famous architects, Venturi Scott Brown Associates (VSBA).

The story begins in the 1950s when Dilworth, in a highly public move to bolster the then-rough Society Hill neighborhood, built the house as his personal residence. Though not designated as an individual landmark, the house is a contributing structure to the neighborhood historic district, and was designed by the noted architect Edwin Brumbaugh. Now developer Turchi Properties has stepped in, and wants to remove much of the structure to build a 16-story, VSBA-designed luxury condominium tower behind the facade.

The Philadelphia Historical

Commission had approved the plan under the previous mayor's administration, but the Licenses and Inspections Review Board, under Mayor Michael Nutter, overturned the approval. Irked by that move, the city law department then filed an appeal with the Court of Common Pleas, arguing that the Review Board overstepped its authority when it nixed the condo plan. According to a spokesperson for Turchi, action on the appeal is expected within 90 days.

The VSBA scheme calls for the rear portion of the house to be knocked down, more than half of the overall structure, according to the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. Turchi has argued that the removal is an alteration rather than a demolition, which would not be allowed under the city's preservation regulations.

The street facade and roofline of the house would be maintained to serve as the entrance and first-floor sitting room, along with an office on the second floor. The third floor would be empty. "It effectively

turns an important house into a stage set," said John Gallery, executive director of the Alliance.

Dan McCoubrey, a principal at VSBA, disputes the house's architectural significance but sees value in its symbolism of the city's revitalization. He thinks the scheme would elevate the spirit of the house rather than diminish it. "Our project brings back its significance. It makes the house an icon," he said.

For Gallery, the decision has implications far beyond the fate of the house itself. "It redefines the term 'alteration,' and sets a dangerous precedent," he said, predicting that even if the developer wins the appeal, neighbors and civic groups will take the fight to the next level: the Commonwealth Court. **AGB**



COURTESY VSBA

AT DEADLINE

GEHRY LIKES IKE

On March 31, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission announced the somewhat unexpected selection of Frank Gehry—a Canadian, no less—to design a new memorial in Washington for President Dwight Eisenhower. The commission would not release renderings for the project, which will rise on the Mall near the National Air and Space Museum and is expected to cost between \$90 million and \$120 million. The Santa Monica-based Gehry beat out finalists Rogers Marvel Architects, Berkeley-based Peter Walker and Partners Landscape Architecture, and Krueck & Sexton Architects of Chicago.

MUSEUMS A GO-GO

Despite these recessionary times, a trio of major museums have announced that they are moving forward with expansion plans. SFMOMA said on April 3 that Gensler would lead a planning effort in preparation for an expansion that would double the size of the museum's iconic Mario Botta building to approximately 100,000 square feet. In London, the Tate Modern gave the green light on April 1 to Herzog & de Meuron's addition to the firm's earlier museum building. While that project was noted for its quietly sophisticated reuse of the Bankside Power Station in 2000, the addition will be a \$310 million brick pyramid that explodes from the existing Bankside building. And the same day across town, the directors of the British Museum announced that Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners would be moving ahead with a \$200 million extension, to be housed in five linked pavilions that are to serve exhibition, conservation, logistical, and storage facilities.

EMPIRE SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

Speaking of monuments, one of New York's most celebrated, the Empire State Building, is going green. On April 6, Wien & Malkin, the building's owner, announced that the tower would undergo a retrofit aimed at reducing its energy usage by 38 percent by the time renovations are completed in 2013. Three of the most major changes will entail replacing the double-hung windows, insulating behind radiators, and rebuilding the chiller system. At a cost of \$20 million—part of a \$50 million renovation of the building aimed at attracting higher-end tenants—the project is expected to save \$4.4 million per year, paying for itself in short order.

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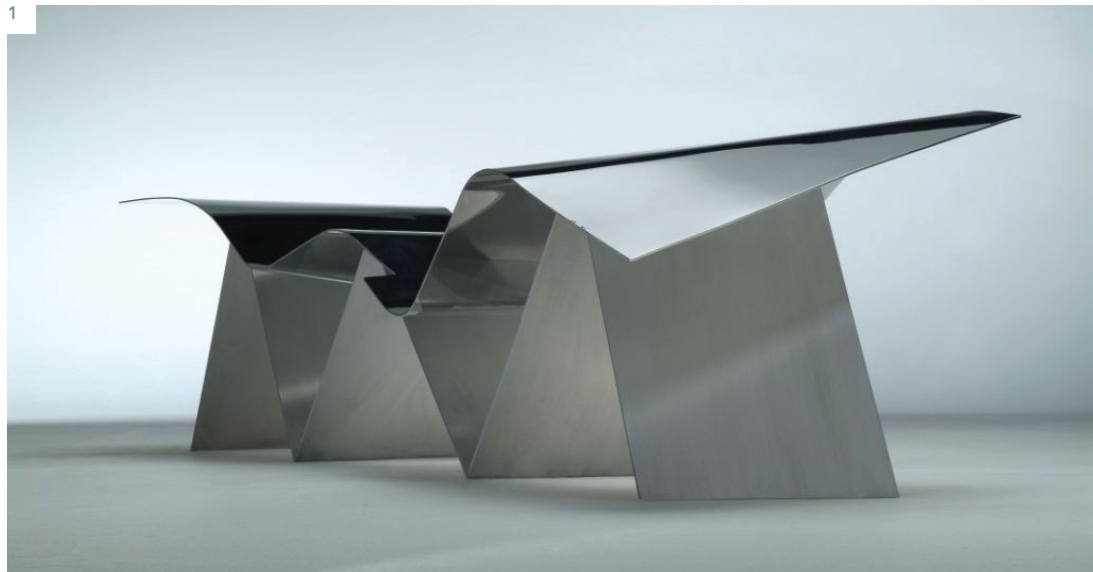
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009

2



1



3



4



5



SHOW OF HANDS

FROM FRANK GEHRY'S HAND-POLISHED ALUMINUM BENCH TO ZAHA HADID'S SINUOUS TAP, ARCHITECTS ARE DESIGNING FURNISHINGS THAT CELEBRATE CRAFTSMANSHIP AS MUCH AS TECHNOLOGY. BY DANIELLE RAGO

1 TUYOMYO
FRANK GEHRY
EMECO

The Pennsylvania-based manufacturer of aluminum chairs Emeco has once again joined forces with architect Frank Gehry in the development of Tuyomyo, a large-scale bench, to be debuted during the Salone del Mobile in Milan. Using 80-percent-recycled aluminum components, CNC, and aircraft manufacturing technology, as well as craftsmanship, the bench is composed of a nine-foot, hand-polished "wing" of offset trapezoids supported by a brushed "truss." The sculpted, one-of-a-kind prototype will be auctioned in May and proceeds of the sale will benefit the Hereditary Disease Foundation. www.emeco.net

2 FOSTER 510
NORMAN FOSTER
WALTER KNOLL

Recently launched at the Cologne International Furnishing Show, Foster + Partners' Foster 510 sofa for the German manufacturer Walter Knoll is a minimalist take on the classic English club. Intricately detailed with stitched piping and drawn-in leather, the sofa subtly references its tailored past yet gestures forward with seamless orthogonal lines. The seat is discreetly supported by steel frame legs, and consists of hundreds of pocket springs that provide maximum comfort. Foster 510 is available in black and white leather, with or without a backrest, and chrome-plated or coated black legs. www.walterknoll.de

3 SKIN
JEAN NOUVEL
MOLTENI & C

A departure in scale from his Musée du Quai Branly, French architect Jean Nouvel reinterprets the unique architecture of the museum in his latest collaboration with Italian manufacturer Molteni & C. A sculpted seating system, SKiN synthesizes innovative technology with modern design to create a suspended seat in which the decorative material becomes the very structure of the object. An outer frame composed of tubular pretensioned aluminum with foam rubber inserts acts as the base for the structure and is covered in hide, leather, or double-face felt with geometric incisions. The seating system is available as a sofa, an armchair, and an ottoman, and is currently on view at Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum's *Fashioning Felt* exhibit. www.molteni.it

4 KITCHEN AND BATHROOM
TRIFLOW TAPS
ZAHA HADID
TRIFLOW CONCEPTS

In designing the "tap of the future," brassware designer Triflow Concepts looked to London-based architect Zaha Hadid to combine the capabilities of brassware technology with modern design and good engineering. Inspired by the movement of water and the continuous flow of liquid, Hadid captures the performative quality of water in the Kitchen and Bathroom Triflow taps. Fluid in form and ergonomic in shape, the tap blends handle and body into a continuous form composed of curvilinear geometries. www.triflowconcepts.com

5 TONALE
DAVID CHIPPERFIELD
ALESSI

Inspired by Oriental ceramics and by Italian painter Giorgio Morandi's study of color, British architect David Chipperfield designed the Tonale table service as a collection of typologically ambiguous objects that are pure in form and function. Using a variety of materials including metal, glass, and wood, the pieces maintain a sculptural elegance while serving as durable and practical objects. Available in a range of muted colors, from pale yellow to deep red earth and dark green, the set consists of various-sized plates, bowls, and cups, as well as a carafe, beaker, and tray. www.ales.si.com

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The past decade has been all about invention: new materials, new technologies, new architectures. Preservation has meanwhile grown more sophisticated, and while adaptive reuse has been around for years, several new projects expand its power as a middle way, where the past informs the present. *AN* looks at case studies from across the Americas, and in Athens, Berlin, and New York.

PAST IS PROLOGUE

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009



SHARON RISEDORPH PHOTOGRAPHY



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GENE REDMOND



JEANINE TURNER

01 ADAPTIVE REUSE

1 ST. KITTS BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION ST. KITTS, WEST INDIES SANDER ARCHITECTS

Adaptive reuse doesn't get much more drastic than Los Angeles-based Sander Architects' transformation of a derelict, 18th-century cotton barn into a scientific research facility. Situated on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean, the existing building was little more than a ruin when work got started in 2004. Hurricanes had blown the roof off, termites had eaten through the timber framing, and jungle foliage had enshrouded the structure. But what remained of the two- to three-foot-thick stone walls, quarried from the island's volcanic base, was as sturdy as ever and possessed enough charm to convince the facility's manager, Gene Redmond, that it was worth preserving. "It's a beautiful old structure," said Redmond. "The first architect I talked to advised bulldozing it. I said, 'No, thank you.'"

While the walls were in good shape, the design called for raising them four feet to maximize usable space on the upper floor of the 10,000-square-foot facility. Two feet of this height was added with stone cannibalized from other structures of the same vintage on the island. The remaining two feet was made up by a clerestory

window along the base of the pitched roof, which lets ample daylight into the interior. Gaps in the envelope were filled with new concrete block walls, which were then plastered over, or glass brick, which offers the benefit of letting light in while remaining impervious to hurricanes. The roof—itsself capable of withstanding 500-mile-per-hour winds—is made up of insulated corrugated iron panels on custom-designed, light-gauge steel framing. The framing was prefabricated in sections in Richmond, California, and shipped to the island, where local labor bolted them in place. The architects also designed a curve in the hip of the roof to avoid the typical pointy ridge, where wind can get in and tear things apart.

The architects completely reframed the building's three floors with poured-in-place concrete, with the exception of one existing stone column that is off kilter by a foot from its base to its top. "Whoever built this must have drunk too much grog," said principal Whitney Sander, "but it still functions. It's load bearing. The foundation wanted to get rid of it, but I fought for it. This crazy element is part of the soul of the building."

2 SILO POINT BALTIMORE, MARYLAND PARAMETER

When it was completed in 1923, the grain elevator in Baltimore's Locust Point neighborhood was the largest and fastest in the world, every year conveying 3.8 million bushels of grain from railcars to transatlantic cargo ships. By 2003, however, the facility had become a dilapidated nuisance to owner Archer Daniels Midland. But developer Patrick Turner and architect Chris Pfaeffle of Baltimore firm Parameter saw potential in the structure. "Looking at it I thought, tall, long, thin—residential would be interesting," said Pfaeffle. It was also a 300-foot-tall building on the water in an area zoned for low-rise residential and industrial uses. "The developer and myself, we love old buildings," continued Pfaeffle. "We really wanted to keep it because it was a great building, but it would have been impossible to build anything new that tall in this neighborhood."

Repurposing the one-time grain plant for residential use while maintaining its industrial aesthetic required both surgical and wholesale interventions. Most of the 23-story tower, with its traditional loft-style layouts and 14-by-14-foot windows, was a

cinch, but the top six stories—where the grain scales once lived—were enclosed in a corrugated iron box framed with steel dunnage designed to support cranes, not the load of floors. Parameter demolished and completely reframed this portion of the building with a new steel structure positioned on the existing concrete column grid. Since the existing structure wasn't completely plumb, much of the new steel had to be fabricated on site, assembled in sections on the ground and then craned up to the top and bolted in place. For cladding, the architects replicated the existing facade, except at the top two stories, which comprise an all-glass penthouse.

Adjacent to the tower portion was a 130-foot-tall silo farm, each silo a hermetically sealed concrete bunker. Fitting residential spaces into this portion proved too difficult, so the architects demolished most of it. In the center of the space they erected a 540-car parking garage wrapped with new glass-clad residential spaces, all built upon the existing foundation. Silos were left in place at the corners, as well as in a row separating the garage from the tower, where Parameter inserted linking bridges. "You can walk through the silos," said Pfaeffle, "and look 100 feet up and 30 feet down—a space that once would have killed you."



PAUL RIVERA/ARCHPHOTO



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COURTESY EE&K

- 1 Sander Architects transformed an 18th-century barn into a scientific research facility on the island of St. Kitts.
- 2 Repurposing a 1920s grain elevator into a luxury condo in Baltimore required both wholesale and surgical interventions.
- 3 The most challenging aspect of adapting a 1929 dormitory for nurses into a modern-day public school was finding room to fit a gymnasium.
- 4 The Seaholm Power Plant in Austin, Texas will become the centerpiece of an 8-acre mixed-use development that will reconnect downtown to the Colorado River.



COURTESY TBG

3 P.S. 59

NEW YORK
EHRENKRANTZ ECKSTUT &
KUHN ARCHITECTS

When New York City's Educational Construction Fund struck a deal with a developer to build a new home for P.S. 59 that would be topped by revenue-producing property, part of the bargain was the provision of swing space so the elementary school students would have a place to attend class while construction was underway. Looking for a space sufficient to accommodate 500 children, the developer found a 90-year-old dormitory for nurses attached to the Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital. Though a little narrow in plan, the building fit the bill nicely, and the hospital was willing to let it go. Together with the School Construction Authority (SCA), the developer hired Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects (EE&K) to reconfigure the dorm's musty halls into what should become the first completed school to meet the requirements of the city's Green Schools Guide and Rating System.

To bring the building up to SCA standards, EE&K started with a complete gut of the interior and the rearrangement of the stair and elevator cores. "A residential property in New York City has generous allowances

for dead-end corridors," said James Greenberg of EE&K, "but a school or anything else has very restrictive regulations for safety reasons." The next challenge was to integrate mechanical systems within the nine-foot-six-inch floor-to-ceiling heights. "It was really a Rubik's Cube to make the mechanical systems work," continued Greenberg. "We had to have everything in a single stratum. We ran split ducts with sprinklers between them. It was hairsplitting work."

The most challenging aspect of the adaptation was finding room for a gym. As nothing obvious presented itself within the existing envelope, the architects removed the roof as well as the sixth floor's columns and replaced them with a long-span structure that provides a 16-foot-high clear space from the floor to the bottoms of the beams. Raising the roof above the level of the existing parapet also gave EE&K room to insert clerestory windows. Though the building's masonry walls are load bearing, they weren't sufficient to support the new space. To remedy this, the architects ran transfer beams beneath the floor of the gym to carry the load to the steel column grid below. This also opened up space for a spring-loaded acoustic isolation barrier, to keep those studying unaware of those playing.

4 SEAHOLM

AUSTIN, TEXAS
AYERS SAINT GROSS

On a prominent site separating a booming downtown residential district from Town Lake, the Seaholm Power Plant, built in the 1950s, is one of Austin's most distinctive midcentury structures. Its red neon sign, towering stacks, and stark concrete mass are immediately recognizable landmarks. So when it was decommissioned in 1996, and following a nine-year remediation of hazardous materials, the city drafted a redevelopment masterplan and issued an RFQ to develop the site.

The winning team, including Southwest Strategies Group and Baltimore architects Ayers Saint Gross (ASG), programmed the site for new high- and low-rise construction to house a mix of office, residential, hospitality, and special-event space. The Seaholm building itself, with its cavernous turbine hall ringed by high clerestory windows, was envisioned as a retail center. "The model is the Ferry Building Marketplace in San Francisco," said Ann Powell of ASG.

While the interior of the turbine hall will be renovated to maintain its industrial, cast-in-place concrete aesthetic, the south portion of the building, one-time offices of

Austin Energy, will be retained for commercial use. The boilers and stacks that abut the north edge of the building will be semi-deconstructed, leaving parts of these elements, as well as the massive steel armature that supports them, to be integrated into a landscaped plaza that anchors the development. "The landscape architects are excited about using the physical structure," said Powell, "taking the narrative of what the power plant did and reinventing it."

The project, which is seeking a LEED Silver rating, will also take the reinvention of Seaholm's narrative below grade. In generating electricity, the plant drew water from the lake for cooling purposes. Once the water was used, it was returned to its source, but before that happened its temperature had to be brought back down. This was accomplished via a network of underground pipes, which the architects plan to incorporate into a stormwater retention and irrigation system. "We wanted to identify a way of tying old and new together," said Powell, "to take the 1950s version of how things worked and make it part of today."

AARON SEWARD IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.

02

NEW
ACROPOLIS
MUSEUM

In September 2001, Bernard Tschumi won the international competition to design a museum to contain all surviving antiquities from the Acropolis, including those housed in the British Museum since 1817. Originally scheduled to open during the 2004 Olympic Games and focus attention on Greece's campaign to get the marbles repatriated, the museum's official inauguration was repeatedly stalled by political infighting and construction delays. The public opening date is now set for June 20. Tschumi talked to Julie V. Iovine about the anxieties and opportunities of designing a contemporary building hinged so intimately upon a complicated and powerful past and uncertain future.

Clockwise from above:

The glass enclosure atop the New Acropolis Museum is rotated so that it is parallel to the Parthenon; the museum is about 110 yards below and 300 yards distant from the temple itself; the museum's entry level looks down into an excavation site; concrete columns in the main display area are 24 feet tall.

You have disagreed in the past with those who said you have to be historicist to be historical. Do you still?

I have always believed there is no such thing as a *tabula rasa*. There's always something you have to take into consideration. Sometimes it's something on your part, sometimes it's a major constraint.

In the case of a building like the New Acropolis Museum, the site and the context are so unbelievably present and powerful that you are inevitably caught within them. Either you try to act against them or you try to work with them. It has nothing to do with contextualism. I hate contextualism as much today as I did once upon a time. But it is absolutely about understanding the conditions of the site, the culture, and the constraints. It's in a sense a love of constraints.

How did you approach the historical constraints in Athens?

Of the three major challenges, the first one, as you'll notice, is that it's 300 yards from the Parthenon, the most influential building in western civilization. How do you as an architect do a building that is actually just a tiny bit bigger than the Parthenon?

Second, the site is covered with archaeo-

logical ruins that you have to keep. The third challenge is that one of the main objectives of this particular building is to hold the Elgin (now called the Parthenon) Marbles, half of which are still in the British Museum. The building has to be good enough to convince the Brits, or rather the British Museum because the British people already agree, to return the marbles.

Due to these three factors, an architect cannot start with form, cannot start with theory. You have to start with those conditions and they lead to a concept. I use the expression, "conceptualizing context." And that's what we've done: One part of the building responds to the archaeological ruins; another deals with the collection of statues and relates to the street pattern around it. And the top of the building is in direct dialogue with the Parthenon itself.

These different interpretations of the site conditions may even contradict each other. For instance, the glass enclosure of the third layer is aligned parallel to the Parthenon itself. That means it is slightly rotated in relationship to the grid below, creating a tension with the other levels. This contemporary sensibility of slight disjunctions is not what people did in earlier

periods, when they were trying to erase distinctions to make everything into one synthetic whole.

So you wanted to confront the past?

Not to be confrontational, but also not to erase its inconsistencies or paradoxes. On the contrary, I want to reveal in a subtle way that things are not as homogenous as they seem to be. Not necessarily celebrating conflict. I am not Daniel Libeskind, who invents conflicts when they aren't real.

You seem in your approach here more influenced by the mathematical than the monumental achievements of the ancient Greeks.

I had to avoid the issue of form. You are in front of the Parthenon; you are not going to compete with Phidias. It's just not possible. But if you want to make certain parallels with that culture, then rather, look to Pythagoras, the Greek mathematician. Actually, I never start with form. I start with a concept, a hypothesis, or a theorem.

The Greek papers attacked us for not trying hard enough to look like the style of the Parthenon. We wanted to be as abstract and minimal as possible, placing a great importance on the materials, or rather, the materializing of the concept. To that end,



CHRISTIAN RICHTERS

we used only three major materials: glass, concrete, and marble.

The glass is crucial in order to ensure transparency and dialogue between the frieze fragments in the museum and the temple itself. When you are walking around the frieze in the exhibition, you are actually able to look at the Parthenon at the same time.

The second material, concrete, was not only structural, but it is the background of all the sculptures. There is not a single

partition in the building, no Sheetrock walls. The columns and the large core walls provide the background for the sculptures. And we worked very hard with the contractors to get exactly a concrete with a soft, almost velvety feel to absorb the light while the hardness of the marble pieces would reflect it.

Floors are beige marble in the exhibition areas, where the statues are a little darker. All other circulation, or anyplace that doesn't have galleries, is in black marble.

This was hardly a project just about a new museum on a historic site. How involved were you in the controversy?

The enormous desire to have the return of the Parthenon Marbles precedes me by at least 100 years. And it was very alive in the '60s, too, when the actress Melina Mercouri got involved. I would have always been in favor of their return. The museum itself is a political act, since the British Museum said you can't have them back because you have no safe place for them. But the condition of their being in fragments all over the place is also absurd. There are pieces at the British Museum, at the Met, at the Louvre, and at the Glyptothek in Munich. I have a series of images showing one piece with its torso in London, a shoulder at the Louvre, another piece is someplace else, and for some reason, the penis is in Athens with the rest reconstituted in plaster all around it.

People couldn't travel as much in the 19th century, but now they can go and see the real stuff. For me, the idea of bringing the pieces back together also had to do with my fascination with literature. The frieze is a narrative story, where the movement of your own body is a means of reading it as an experience in one place. In this sense, the building has a lot of reasons—both on an artistic level as well as on a political level—to exist.

But aren't you now erasing a part of the story yourself, about the years they were elsewhere?

When you see the pieces together, it's a very strange thing. They've aged differently, depending on where they have been. There was no attempt to clean them in the same way, fortunately, so you see that, indeed, they are 2,500 years old and some have suffered in the passage of time and some are practically intact. The ones from the west side are in fantastic condition; those on the east side are not so good. The ones from the British Museum are in pretty good condition, too. The pieces themselves tell the story.

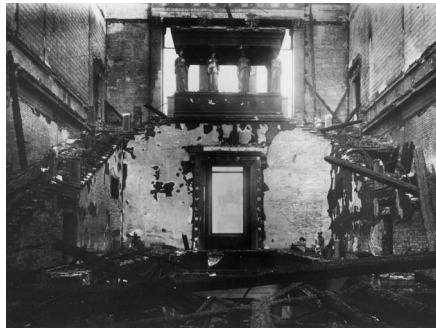
You are dealing here with a history that is thousands of years old. Would you approach the remains and relics of a more recently bombed-out museum differently?

I am very cautious in terms of projecting or imposing one's own subjectivity onto a site or onto a material. This is very problematic. You have to take a distance. You have to let the viewers, the visitors, judge for themselves. The architecture has to allow for emotions but should not dictate emotion. Let people bring their own range of emotions to the project.

Would you preserve bullet holes?

I would not try to hide prior histories at all. Here's a strange, touching example: We wanted to reconstitute the continuity of the frieze but it is a continuous rectangle, so how do you penetrate when the frieze is only a little higher than you? As it happens, we can enter at the place in the frieze where it was entirely pulverized by Turkish powder in the explosion of 1687. It's strange how you can conceptually take advantage of certain events in history.

There are also both replicas and originals in the frieze. Originally I wanted no reproductions at all, just bad black & white Xeroxes of them. But out of respect for the people coming to see them, we decided to play it straight. But it is obvious by the colorations which are real marble and which are white plaster.



ROSA MAY/SMB

03 NEUES MUSEUM

In 1997, London-based David Chipperfield Architects won a competition to restore the Neues Museum, an imposing ruin at the center of Berlin's Museum Island. Designed by Friedrich August Stüler and completed in 1859, the museum had lain open to the elements for decades after sustaining heavy damage in World War II. The architects could have argued for the structure's replication—along the lines proposed for Berlin's Schloss—or opted for the opposing strategy of the city's Kaiser Wilhelm Church: the wreck preserved in amber.

Chipperfield, working with restoration architect Julian Harrap, chose a much more difficult path. Their meticulous re-completion, to house the collections of Berlin's Egyptian and pre- and early history museums, preserves the power of the building as ruin: The architects conserved the existing fabric whenever possible, leaving the museum's half-exposed brickwork and shell-pocked facades as testament to time's decay. Yet where elements were irretrievable—including the museum's southeast bay and the entire northwest wing—modern interventions were made that followed Stüler's original volumes and room sequences. The marble staircase in the ravaged main hall (above), for example, was replaced with a reinvention made of white cement and Saxonian marble chips. The effect, here and elsewhere, can be mesmerizing: Interior open spaces like the Greek Courtyard (shown on page 31), are simply roofed with glass. Their handmade-brick walls, now sparingly retouched, convey like nothing else the richly raveled strands of time.

JEFF BYLES IS MANAGING EDITOR AT AN.



04 HIGH LINE

Of the three substantial challenges to the instantaneous success of the High Line when it opens in June, only one may be insurmountable: our preconceived fantasies.

Ever since those moody photographs by Joel Sternfeld transformed the abandoned bramble and broken-glass-strewn rail into a cause célèbre by showing it off as some kind of windswept heath with warehouse cliffs out of *Wuthering Heights*, the earth-bound reality was destined to be a hard sell.

Nor will it matter how ingeniously the team of Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Field Operations have designed its one-foot concrete paver "fingers" to spread apart, allowing the Moor Grass and Shenandoah Switchgrass to grow up between them to mimic the appearance of overgrown terrain. Blogger cynics have already started to carp about the unprecedented-for-public-parks chaise

lounges (a few using the old rails as sliders so they can be bunched together), calling them future bedsteads for the homeless and drug-users. We can expect more of the same, because when the fantasy memories of unfettered nature and the tale about the one wild pear tree that took root in toxic soil hit the pavement, there's going to be a backlash from all those too impatient to accept the fact that even wild plants take their own good time to mature. But as Ric Scofidio said on a recent walk along the stretch from Gansevoort to 20th Street now nearing completion, that's a challenge that will "solve itself over time."

Then there's the hot-potato topic of free access. The designers of the High Line envisioned it as a slow park for a fast crowd, with entry points every two to three blocks. But a fear has lingered that enthusiasts will ascend the rail like the mob of fishwives



descending on Versailles and trample its fragile ecology before it can take root. The fact is that there is no real precedent for the urban meandering offered by the High Line. In Italy, the evening stroll, or *passaggio*, is more of a mass milling funneling past outdoor cafes and fueled by coffee and Campari. America's rails to trails have streams, roller-bladers, and off-leash dogs—all verboten on the High Line. The closest match is the Promenade Plantée in Paris, although as Scofidio pointed out, it's more commonly used as a neighborhood shortcut than a destination unto itself.

Great care has gone into heightening the new kind of experience on offer up on the High Line—the chaise lounges are positioned just where the sun always shines; the south end is wider and more hard-scaped to allow for social congregation—and Parks anticipates adding food

concessions there—while the upper reaches where the surrounds are more residential narrow and soften with an actual lawn going in at 23rd Street. One of the more adventuresome features is the bleacher dropped down like a trap door—a favorite DS+R trope—right over 10th Avenue traffic. “You’ll see the city in a whole new way,” said Scofidio, “not like mice scurrying around the edges of buildings. You never get into the space of the city like this.”

As sure as the initial reaction to the High Line is bound to be disappointment, so will it grow and flourish as people become accustomed to using it. One thing more is abundantly clear: The High Line has been perfectly timed to open just when we need it most, to rediscover the civil pleasures of walking and talking with each other.

**JULIE V. IOVINE IS AN'S
EXECUTIVE EDITOR.**



Clockwise from facing page, top left: View northward of the completed section of the High Line up to 20th Street; a corner banquette where flowering vines on the fence behind will hide from view a future tower; some of the distinctive streamlined concrete and wood benches are without backs; the drop-down bleacher seating directly over 10th Avenue at 17th Street.

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EVENT

ADC Paper Expo
5:30 p.m.
ADC Gallery
106 West 29th St.
www.adcglobal.org

THURSDAY 16
LECTURE

Jose Alminana
Andropogon Associates
6:30 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St.
Washington, DC
www.nbm.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Malcolm Morley
Sperone Westwater
415 West 13th St.
www.speronewestwater.com

FRIDAY 17
EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Richard Woods
The Nature Show
Perry Rubenstein Gallery
527 West 23rd St.
www.perryrubenstein.com

Unica Zurn

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The Drawing Center
35 Wooster St.
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SATURDAY 18

EVENT

Urban Tour: Williamsburg
Its Many Faces
11:00 a.m.
Brooklyn Center for the
Urban Environment
Broadway and Hooper St.,
Brooklyn
www.bcue.org

SUNDAY 19

WITH THE KIDS

Do Unto Other
2:00 p.m.
Museum of Arts and Design
2 Columbus Circle
www.madmuseum.org

MONDAY 20

LECTURE

Terunobu Fujimori
**Architecture and Nature:
What is Terunobu Fujimori's
Architecture?**
6:30 p.m.
Yale School of Architecture
New Haven, CT
www.architecture.yale.edu

EVENT

The Downtown Dinner
Lower Manhattan Cultural
Council
6:30 p.m.
7 World Trade Center
www.lmcc.net

TUESDAY 21

LECTURE

Dr. Yasmine Abbas
neo-nomads:
(dis)place x (re)locate
6:00 p.m.
Harvard GSD
Gund Hall
Cambridge, MA
www.gsd.harvard.edu

WITH THE KIDS

Art After School
4:00 p.m.
Solomon R. Guggenheim
Museum
1071 5th Avenue
www.guggenheim.org

WEDNESDAY 22

LECTURE

David Oakey
Respect for the Future
6:00 p.m.
New York School of Interior
Design
170 East 70th St.
www.nysid.edu

CONVENTION

Atlantic Builders Convention
Through April 24
Atlantic City Convention
Center
1 Miss America Way
Atlantic City, NJ
www.abconvention.com

THURSDAY 23

LECTURE

César Pelli and
Paul Tange
Form Follows Fancy in
New Architecture
6:30 p.m.
Japan Society
333 East 47th St.
www.japansociety.org

SYMPOSIUM

Thinking on Paper:
A New York City
Drawing Tour
Through April 26
Institute for Classical
Architecture
20 West 44th St.
www.classicist.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Dustin Yellin
Dust, In the Brain, Attic
Robert Miller Gallery
524 West 26th St.
www.robertmillergallery.com

2009 Design Awards and

Building Type Awards
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

FRIDAY 24

LECTURE

Adriaan Geuze
Governors Island Park and
Public Space
Master Plan:
On the Drawing Board
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

SATURDAY 25

WITH THE KIDS

Art in Unusual Places
10:30 a.m.
Whitney Museum of
American Art
945 Madison Ave.
www.whitney.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Albert Oehlen
Luhring Augustine
531 West 24th St.
www.luhringaugustine.com

SUNDAY 26

WITH THE KIDS

Don't Be Square!
Searching for Shapes
10:20 a.m.
MoMA
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

MONDAY 27

SYMPOSIUM

Jamie Drake, Gil Schafer III
11:15 a.m.
Museum of the City of
New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

TUESDAY 28

LECTURE

Tom Angotti
Bottom-Up Planning in the
Real Estate
Capital of the World?
6:30 p.m.
48 Wall St.
www.lmcc.net

EXHIBITION OPENING

Marilyn Minter
Green Pink Caviar
Salon 94 Freemans
1 Freeman Alley
www.salon94.com

EVENT

Speakeasy Benefit Art
Auction
6:30 p.m.
Exit Art
475 10th Ave.
www.exitart.org

WEDNESDAY 29

EXHIBITION OPENING

Manon
Swiss Institute of
Contemporary Art
495 Broadway 3rd Fl.
www.swissinstitute.net

EVENT

Jean Parker Phifer
Public Art New York
Book Talk
6:30 p.m.
The Skyscraper Museum
39 Battery Pl.
www.skyscraper.org

THURSDAY 30

SYMPOSIUM

Arjun Appadurai, Kenneth
Frampton, Billie Tsien, et al.
New Architectures of India
Through May 1
The New School
Theresa Lang Student Center
55 West 13th St.
www.archleague.org

CONVENTION

AIA National Convention and
Design Expo
Through May 2
The Moscone Center
747 Howard St.
San Francisco, CA
www.aiaconvention.com

MAY

FRIDAY 1

CONVENTION

The International Fine Art Fair
Through May 5
The Park Avenue Armory
Park Ave. at 67th St.
www.haughton.com

TRADE SHOW

Kitchen/Bath Industry Show
Through May 3
Georgia World Congress
Center
285 Andrew Young
International Blvd., Atlanta
www.kbis.com

SATURDAY 2

WITH THE KIDS

Surface Design
6:30 p.m.
Cooper-Hewitt Museum
2 East 91st St.
www.cooperhewitt.org

Build a Neighborhood

1:00 p.m.
Wave Hill
West 249th St. &
Independence Ave., Bronx
www.wavehill.org

SUNDAY 3

EVENT

American Art Overview
1:30 p.m.
The Metropolitan
Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

MONDAY 4

LECTURE

Andrea Wulf
Botany, Empire, and the
Birth of an Obsession
12:00 p.m.
The Horticultural Society of
New York
148 West 37th St.
www.hsn.org

TUESDAY 5

CONVENTION

Lightfair International
Through May 7
Jacob K. Javits
Convention Center
655 West 34th St.
www.lightfair.com

WEDNESDAY 6

LECTURE

Susan Bass Levin,
Janette Sadik-Khan,
Kate Slevin, et al.
Investing in Infrastructure:
Transportation and
New York's Future
6:30 p.m.
Municipal Art Society
457 Madison Ave.
www.mas.org

THURSDAY 7

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

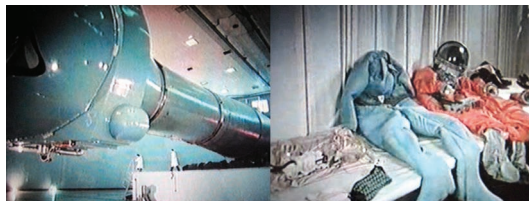
Chantal Joffe
Cheim & Read Gallery
547 West 25th St.
www.cheimread.com

Les Lalanne

Paul Kasmin Gallery
293 10th Ave.
www.paulkasmingallery.com

Adriana Varejao

Lehmann Maupin
540 West 26th St.
www.lehmannmaupin.com



COURTESY COLUMBIA GSAPP

NEW SOVIET PEOPLE WILL CONQUER COSMIC SPACE

Columbia GSAPP
200 Avery Hall and Cafe Levels
Through May 8

Envisioned as an extension of young architect Deane Simpson's research on the Soviet space program, the evocatively titled exhibition on view at Columbia GSAPP explores the pioneering space program in terms of architecture, urbanism, and media. Simpson, who graduated from the GSAPP in 1997 and is now based at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, has co-curated the show with Columbia exhibition director Mark Wasiuta. It focuses on a series of moving images and physical models developed after Yuri Gagarin's April 1961 space orbit, which catapulted the cosmonaut to celebrity-like fame in the Soviet state. The exhibition includes archival scientific and agit-prop film footage from the early Soviet program, which is converted to video and presented on 31 monitors throughout the gallery. In addition, cardboard models depict the various technical and prosthetic apparatuses that came to symbolize the cosmonaut, including flight suits and shoes, centrifuges, physical training equipment, and even the 80-yard-long red carpet that Gagarin ceremonially tread upon after returning from space. Prominently featured in the popular media of the time, of course, was Lenin's mausoleum—the architectural backdrop of this new, space-age era.

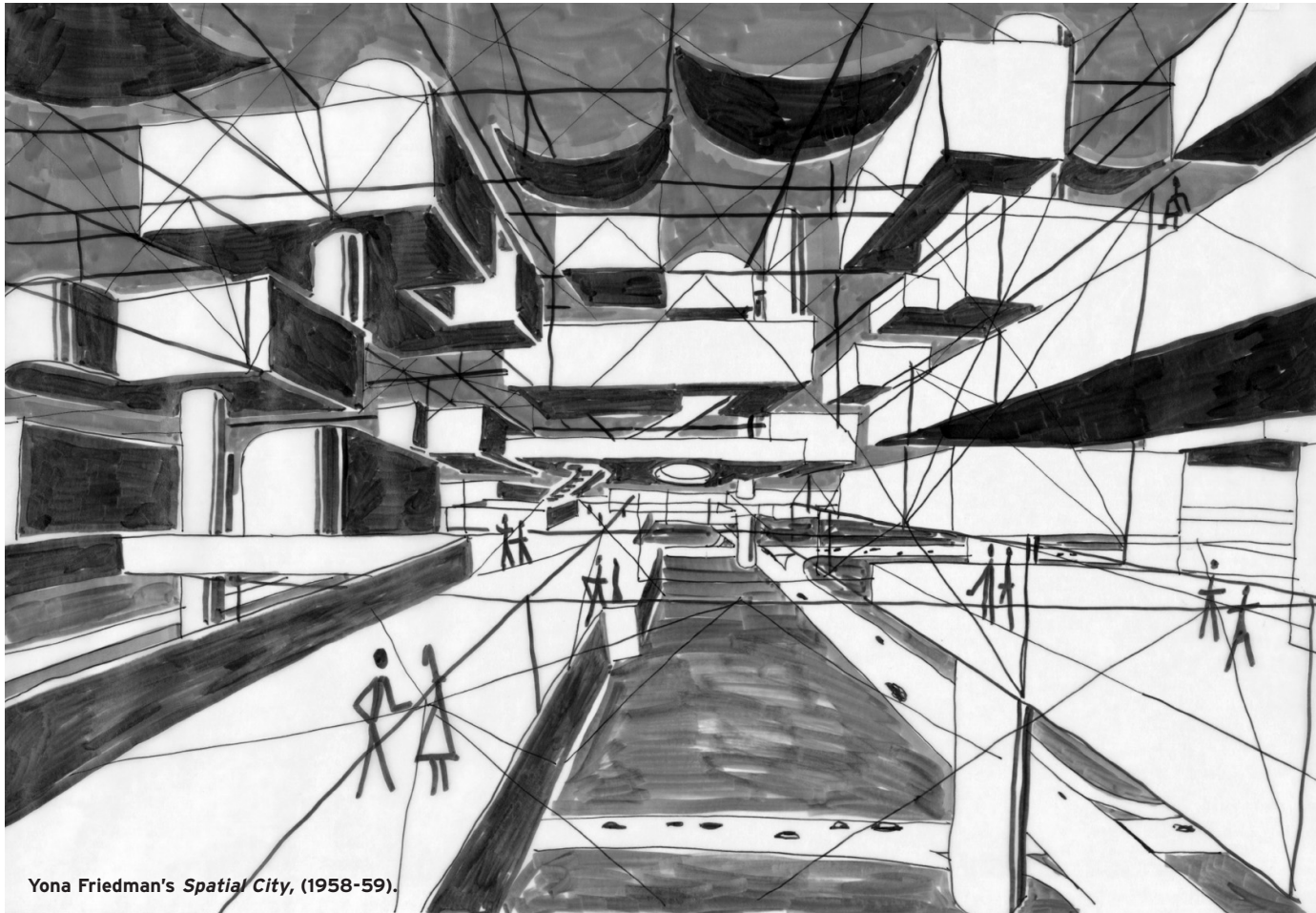


COURTESY PATRICK BLANC

VERTICAL GARDENS

Exit Art
475 10th Avenue
Through May 23

In recent years, green roofs and vertical farms designed by artists, architects, and urban gardeners have provided plenty of eye candy for the architectural press. *Vertical Gardens*, the first of five SEA (Social Environmental Aesthetics) exhibitions to be presented at Exit Art, offers a helpful state-of-the-field survey packed with architectural models, renderings, drawings, and photographs of green urban strategies. The show features over 20 projects, both realized and proposed, by designers including Abruzzo Bodziak Architects, ATOPIA, Patrick Blanc, Bohn & Viljoen Architects, Dickson Despommier, Rael San Fratello Architects, and SITE. All of the exhibited projects demonstrate the economic, environmental, and aesthetic benefits of vertical farms and gardens within the context of the city. Herzog & de Meuron's Caixa Forum Museum (2006, above) in Madrid, Spain, is one well-known example of the type: a 78-foot-high vertical garden, designed in collaboration with the French botanist Patrick Blanc, consists of 15,000 plants from 250 species that extend a nearby botanical garden into the Paseo del Prado. The exhibition is accompanied by an eight-foot-high living green wall by Edmundo Ortega and Dianne Rohrer, as well as a two-day event celebrating Earth Day on April 21–22 with a series of public lectures and eco-friendly workshops.

Yona Friedman's *Spatial City*, (1958-59).

COURTESY MOMA

FUTUR ANTÉRIEUR

Topologies:
The Urban Utopia in France, 1960–1970
Larry Busbea
MIT Press, \$24.95

The visionary urban projects of the 1960s were little appreciated by architectural historians and critics at the time, and have received only spasmodic attention since. With the exception of Reyner Banham, whose search for an “autre architecture” led him briefly

to appreciate the more technological of the groups, and Michel Ragon, a tireless promoter of “fantastic architecture,” as *Architecture d’aujourd’hui* dubbed the projects, most critics were inclined to dismiss the images produced by Archizoom, Superstudio, and their French and Austrian counterparts as utopian fantasies—“Marcuse+Fourier+Dada,” as Manfredo Tafuri caustically framed them. Recently, a growing number of younger scholars have begun to reassess the proliferation of schemes for alternative urbanisms that flourished in the late 1950s and 1960s, with monographic studies on Constant, the Situationists, Superstudio, Archigram, and attempts to systematically understand the phenomenon as a whole, such as Dominique Rouillard’s excellent *Superarchitecture* and Felicity Scott’s *Architecture or Techno-Utopia*.

Until now, however, the work of the French “school” of “spatial urbanists” has received less attention, save for a few studies by individual architects and artists such as Yona Friedman, Claude Parent, Paul Virilio, and Nicolas Schöffer. More individualist, more divided by political differences, and facing a reformist profession holding on to the theoretical and formal precepts of Team X, the French condition has been harder to comprehend as a unity. As Larry Busbea admits in his new book *Topologies: The Urban Utopia in France, 1960–1970*, these visions from this decade of theoretical and political ferment do not naturally arrange themselves into a new “school of thought.” Nevertheless, by using the general category of “spatial urbanism,” a formulation of Ragon in his 1963 compendium of ideal projects entitled *Where*

will we live tomorrow?, and by joining it to an incisive summary of postwar developments in spatial theory, Busbea makes a plausible case for a “rough composite image” of the “spatial city” envisaged by artists and architects in 1960s France.

Indeed, the strength of this short text resides in the deft way that Busbea brings together political, ideological, and theoretical themes with experiments in form, space, and urban utopia. Countering the general view that sees the architecture of “1968” as dominated by the radical resistance of the Situationists, Busbea demonstrates that “most avant-garde production of the decade in question was what we would recognize today as politically conservative,” generally aligned with the technologically progressive tendencies of post-1958 politics. Heirs to a long tradition of radical thought from Saint-Simon in the early 19th century to Le Corbusier, believers in the power of technology to overcome social divisions and at the same time suspicious of American consumerism, the French spatial urbanists explored all the potentials of the new technologies of construction to contribute to a new culture of leisure and freedom unhindered by the doctrinaire structures of socialism or Marxism.

For Busbea, then, what he terms broadly the “spatial culture” of the ’60s includes not only the critical work of Pierre Francastel, Roland Barthes, Henri Lefebvre, and Michel Foucault, but also economists like Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, philosophers of science and technique like Gilbert Simondon, information theorists like Abraham Moles, and now-forgotten theorists of space and technology like Henri Van Lier. These last two developed images of the future urban environment that joined spatial psychology to network analysis in models of mobility, flexibility, and density that were especially evocative to architects. As Busbea writes, “In Moles’ and Van Lier’s visions of the urban environment, the real and the fantastic mix (as they do in all compelling utopian thought), networks proliferate, structures transform and reconfigure, and the city itself shifts, grows, and winds toward the sky.”

Such images permeate the architectural projects and artistic experiments of Friedman’s “villes spatiales,” Schöffer’s “spatiodynamic cities,” **continued on page 42**

Champs de Bronx

Intersections: The Grand Concourse at 100
Bronx Museum of the Arts
1040 Grand Concourse
Through July 20

Conceived in 1890 as the Champs-Élysées of the Bronx, the Grand Concourse has been a barometer of the borough’s outside ambitions, reflecting its glorious rise, horrible fall, and present-day resurrection. As the first of three exhibits in a year-long series on the Concourse at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, this show offers an uneven look at the road’s origins and reign as a

middle-class oasis. But, like the Bronx itself, it’s well worth the trip.

Laid out by Alsatian-born engineer Louis Risse, the Concourse was intended as a speedway linking Manhattan with the then-verdant north Bronx. Over the years, the Concourse became one of New York’s premiere addresses, home to a trove of art deco apartment houses, most of which still survive (some sadly shorn of their ornament). The exhibit charts this evolution through Risse’s drawings, construction photographs, real estate prospectuses, news clippings, and other ephemera, presented in somewhat arbitrary fashion.

Much more absorbing is a selection of artists’ works about the Bronx, among them Diane Arbus’ 1970 photograph *A Jewish Giant at Home with His Parents in the Bronx, New York*—showing the 8-foot-9-inch-tall Eddie Carmel, afflicted with

a pituitary disorder—that capture’s the borough’s freakish destiny.

Also here is one of Gordon Matta-Clark’s *Bronx Floors* (1972-73), a chunk of floorboards and peeled-back linoleum sawn from a derelict Bronx apartment. While regularly exhibited in Manhattan, the work takes on a mournful patina when back in its rightful borough.

The unexpected gem is Finland-born artist Pia Lindman’s video *Fallow* (2000), which concerns an unlikely Bronx subject: the German romantic poet Heinrich Heine. Upon the centennial of Heine’s birth in 1797, a monument to the poet was commissioned for his home town of Düsseldorf, which spurned the offer due to anti-Semitic sentiment. After German-American lobbying, the fountain, carved from white Tyrolean marble, ended up in Joyce Kilmer Park in 1899, just down the Concourse from the museum.



COURTESY JULIE SAUL GALLERY

Once in the park, however, it was subject to further peregrinations, having been twice relocated and ravaged by vandals. In her video, Lindman is filmed overturning spadefuls of earth on the monument’s former site, as if preparing a field for sowing.

As you exit the museum, be sure to swing by the fountain, now beautifully restored at the park’s southern end. Look closely and you’ll find a profile of Heine among the pedestal’s bas-reliefs—his ironic disillusionment right at home.

JEFF BYLES IS AN’S MANAGING EDITOR.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 15, 2009

Behind the Facade

Le Corbusier: A Life
Nicholas Fox Weber
Knopf, \$45.00

It is a pleasant paradox that a literary-minded architect such as Le Corbusier has had to wait—posthumously—more than four decades before publication of a major narrative of his life. The long delay has given biographer Nicholas Fox Weber access to a considerable collection of information and interpretations published since the opening of Le Corbusier's archives, and he has packed his book with both. Weber's biography is not, strictly speaking, the first on the architect. At the end of World War II, Le Corbusier commissioned journalist Maximilien Gauthier to write an apologia for his work "at the service of humankind." Under his guidance, Jean Petit, a publisher (not architect, as described by Weber), shaped

two indispensable documentary volumes in the 1960s. And from early writings onward, many texts by Le Corbusier have had an autobiographical posture.

Recent publication of his intense correspondence with his mentors, painter Charles L'Eplattenier and architect Auguste Perret, as well as letters to his parents and the writer William Ritter, have provided a solid base for Weber's story, yet this abundance puts him in full light. In contrast to the monolithic image Le Corbusier sculpted of himself, and the demiurgic character into which he has been cast by the press since the 1920s, his inner conflicts are now clear. Wavering between becoming a painter, an architect, a businessman, or a publicist, he took a long time to find his way to designing and building. The correspondence with Ritter reveals the exaltation and the illusions of young Jeanneret-Gris during his travels to Europe, trying "to become who he was," echoing the precepts of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, a book he read with passion in 1907.

In her *Le Corbusier in America: Travels in the Land of the Timid* (2001), Mardges Bacon has shed light on the liaison between Le Corbusier and Margaret Tjader Harris, his frequent companion during his first trip in 1935 to the United States. Weber chronicles with great

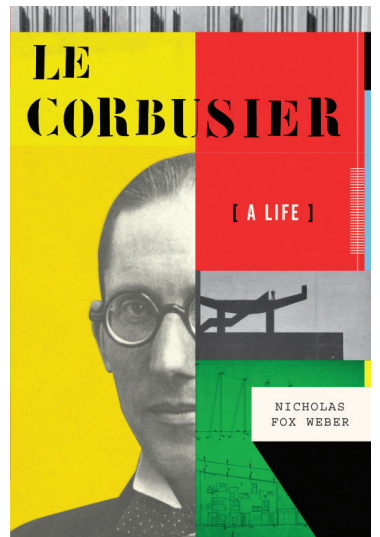
attention Le Corbusier's many affairs with women on several continents, and makes no mystery of his intense erotic drive. Still, Weber's account leaves certain questions unanswered, such as the extent of his relationship with Josephine Baker, and it omits significant friendships, such as the one with Sri Lankan architect Minette da Silva. Weber also ignores a somewhat mysterious letter sent in 1963 at the height of the Profumo Affair by Christine Keeler, the main protagonist in the scandal. Perhaps a joke by a friend of Le Corbusier, it might have been more intriguing evidence of his womanizing.

However, the fundamental feminine presence in his life, more so even than Yvonne Gallis, his companion and spouse of 30 years, remained his mother Marie Charlotte Amélie Jeanneret-Perret. Between his first trip to Italy in 1907 and her death in her hundredth year in 1960, he wrote to her at least once a week. This ongoing conversation, sometimes involving his elder brother Albert, constitutes the framework for Weber's narrative, which could be defined in a sketchy manner as an epistolary novel with glosses on architecture. The letters of "Ed" or "Édouard"—he often refers to himself in the third person—constitute a life-long attempt to convince his mother that he was

the real genius of the family and dethrone Albert, whose youthful achievements were celebrated by parents more focused on music than on the visual. At the same time one perceives, through the correspondence with her and through other indices, that Le Corbusier was capable of caring generously for relatives and friends.

Revealingly, in 1930 Le Corbusier defined his profession as "man of letters" upon applying for his first French I.D. This notion is borne out by the energy spent, beyond the private sphere, in a constant labor of persuasion and seduction aimed at the economic and political elite. Weber devotes 62 out of 674 pages to Le Corbusier's wartime illusions. The architect was mistaken about the Vichy regime's willingness to endorse his ideas for France's future, but Weber misses many points that would have required a more in-depth knowledge of French politics and French culture and language. Despite some minor slippages, Le Corbusier emerges as more naïve than manipulative, as is the case with the series of disillusion in his relationship with the United States and New York.

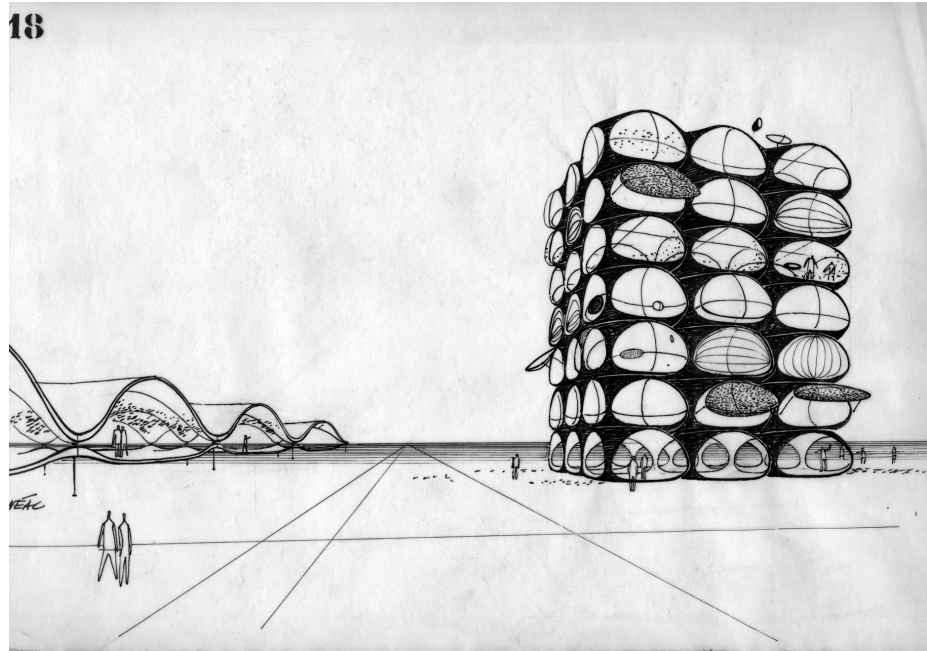
In the end, the book achieves one of its goals: restoring a human—and humane—stature to Le Corbusier. It doesn't succumb to dismissive judgments, as in many



accounts by writers exterior to the architectural field, but it falls short of helping the reader to understand his work. The descriptions of the designs and buildings, sometimes lengthy, are invariably pompous and rhetorical in a narrative overloaded with the tired tropes of the biographical genre. The reader might share the author's well-conveyed sympathy for his hero, but also be at a loss as to why a man with such an epic and Romanesque life has been so fundamental in shaping a different architecture.

JEAN-LOUIS COHEN, AN ARCHITECT AND HISTORIAN, TEACHES AT THE INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS IN NEW YORK.

18



COURTESY FRAC

Chanéac (Jean-Louis Rey), *Plastic Podhouses* (1961).

His *Spatial City* of 1958–1959, with its spidery tracery of open-work infrastructure, suspending moveable elements high above the fabric of Paris, gave an indelible image to the '60s, and his various projects emerge throughout the book as leitmotifs of later groups, such as that founded by Ragon in 1965 as the "International Group of Prospective Architecture" (GIAP). Busbea traces the internationalization of the French groups following the radical refusal of Debord, and the influence of Virilio and Parent as their "Architecture Principe" group, with its commitment to the "oblique" line, brought together a collection of "visionary" architects (including Archigram, the Metabolists, and Paolo Soleri) in the celebrated *Exploration of the Future* exhibition at Ledoux's Royal Salt Works at Arc-et-Senans in June of 1966.

The merit of Busbea's book, however, is not confined to his exploration of these diverse currents and their utopian visions. He is equally concerned with tracing their intertwined effects on the technologies and strategies of urban planning, both in their critical impact, but also in fact, as in what he calls the "wonderful confluence of these different urban factions—the utopian, the professional, and the administrative," in the planning of the Front de Seine complex by Raymond Lopez, Henry Pottier, and Michel Proux between 1963 and 1978. Here, partial accomplishment of utopian aims—vertical layering, spatial infrastructure—also demonstrated their fragility in practice, perhaps giving the lie in scale and density to the elegant drawings for Friedman's "Spatial Paris." Busbea's emphasis on such interactions extends to

a chapter on "selective" history of space-frames, the assumed armatures of most of the projects.

More convincing because less physical were the projects of Schöffer for "ambient" spaces that integrated sound, vision, and space into a psychological mechanism for urban social renewal. Building on the experiments of Iannis Xenakis in Le Corbusier's Philips Pavilion, artists like Vasarely, Restany, and Schöffer proposed a new visual aesthetics of reception, feedback, and participation that would overcome the limitations of the immediate physical environment.

Topologies, then, provides one of the most convincing accounts to date of the visionary projects of the 1960s in France, adeptly bringing together sociological, ideological, and architectural evidence to open up the epoch, demonstrating its proximity to our own in themes and prospects. But it is here, however, that one is slightly disappointed in Busbea's restriction to a purely historical frame. For by implication (and his choice of title certainly leads to the inference), the topological architecture of the '60s was a forerunner of our own topological experiments, performed today in very different cultural and ideological, if not technological, contexts. It would have been pleasant to have some of these differences and complex legacies explored in a concluding chapter. Perhaps that will be the subject of his next book, which will with similar expertise and sureness of touch explore the etiologies of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, already old before they have begun.

ANTHONY VIDLER IS THE DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AT THE COOPER UNION, AND IS THE AUTHOR, MOST RECENTLY, OF *HISTORIES OF THE IMMEDIATE PRESENT* (MIT PRESS, 2008).

FUTUR ANTÉRIEUR continued from page 41 and Edward Albert's "spatial architecture." The common flux was, of course, the space-frame, imagined as the technological infrastructure for vertical and horizontal cities that rose above the existing earthbound settlements and provided potentially infinite freedom of dwelling choice, social group, and circulation.

Without reducing any one of these and many more projects to their common denominators, Busbea carefully links them in a provocative narrative that at once gives form to a hitherto formless field, and gives political, ideological, and architectural distinction to projects that might look superficially similar. His careful research brings to light forgot-

ten figures like Van Lier, but also the architect Paul Maymont, whose floating cities and "mushroom" towers, beginning with his project for Tokyo Bay in 1959, are juxtaposed with the ideal visions of painters like Walter Jonas and his *Intrapolis* of 1964, and the important but neglected investigations of Schöffer into cybercities, with their bulging and mushroom-like centers of sexual desire. Desire, leisure, and mobility were the concerns of a generation raised on writings like Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*, and architects like Ionel Schein and Chanéac, who envisaged lightweight "pod" houses fabricated in plastic.

The core of Busbea's study, inevitably, focuses on the work of Friedman and his "Group for the Study of Mobile Architecture."

TIME AND SPACE MAN

Live Cinema/Tim Hyde:
Building in Reverse
Philadelphia Museum of Art
26th St. and the
Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Through June 21

The seemingly continual process of demolition, redevelopment, and new construction in American cities, particularly in recent, pre-melt-down years, serves as an important reminder that architecture, while predominantly considered a spatial art, inevitably carries a strong durational dimension as well. Yet even as neighborhoods and architectural styles change drastically over time, to the individual observer, buildings often appear as the solid, timeless constants that establish a basic continuity within the perceptual flux of urban life. The problem of rethinking architecture as a time-based, experiential phenomenon is central to Tim Hyde's compact, highly intriguing exhibition *Building in Reverse* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A

recent MFA graduate, Hyde uses the languages of cinema and photography to explore the complex relationship between architectural space, duration, and individual experience.

The main exhibition space of *Building in Reverse* is dominated by an installation of photo-collages, known collectively as *Untitled (Monument)* (2008-09), which present images of a friend of the artist in a banal suburban parking lot, holding up what appears to be a piece of drywall. In each image, swaths of the photograph have been cut out and redistributed, creating different effects: The drywall appears to extend into abstract geometric configurations, the friend disappears behind the parking-lot asphalt, and eventually the entire picture disinte-

grates into an almost cubist field of intersecting planes. The side-by-side presentation of these collages suggests the movement through time of a strip of movie film. No visual "narrative" emerges, however, other than the instability of the image itself. Meanwhile, the geometric patterns extending from the drywall evoke the pure, rationalist, utopian geometries of modernist and Constructivist architecture and theory, yet this "monumental" tendency is wryly subverted: The ideal architectural space of modernism has been plunked down into the contingent space of the real world, where it becomes an ungainly burden that causes the artist's friend to stumble about in a clumsy, Buster Keaton-esque fashion, an impression heightened by the structural

allusion to the filmstrip. By interweaving the domain of architectural theory and praxis with the problems of photographic and cinematic representation, Hyde raises numerous questions about architecture's claims to objectivity and rationality.

Hyde further develops his subjectivist approach to architectural space in *The Keeper* (2006), a video that documents the courtyard of a former KGB building in Kiev. Here, idealist geometry returns in the form of the courtyard's brutal, repetitive concrete arches. The head and shoulders of an elderly woman occupy most of the frame, interrupting, literally, the supposed purity of the structure. She is looking, along with us, at the space in front of her. The subtle movements of the woman, who quietly hums a tune,

Untitled (Monument) (2008-09).

as well as the handheld camera, force a confrontation between the universalizing, utopian ideology implicit in the Soviet construction and the texture of individual phenomenological experience, not to mention historical experience.

The most successful piece in the exhibition is *Video panorama of New York during which the camera fails to distinguish the city from a snowstorm* (2007), which presents a row of seven simultaneous videos derived from a single seven-hour pan across the skyline. In each video, the camera's autofocus pulsates constantly as it struggles and fails to get a read on individual architectural objects. In this work, Hyde uses the arbitrary shortcomings of a particular visual technology to probe the limits of perception in general, and our perception of the urban environment in particular. The elements of the skyline, normally read as highly legible icons of the city—as in Andy Warhol's 1964 film *Empire*, an inevitable comparison—are reduced here to inchoate, almost protozoan, and yet eerily beautiful globs of light and dark. It is this type of structurally ingenious defamiliarization of space, time, and architecture that makes Hyde worth watching.

NEW YORK-BASED WRITER AND CRITIC MICHAEL PAULSON IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

Make No Small Plans

**Bold Endeavors: How Our
Government Built America,
and Why It Must Rebuild Now**
Felix Rohatyn
Simon & Schuster, \$26.00

Barack Obama does not appear in Felix Rohatyn's new book, but thoughts of the new president hover over every page. The prominence of infrastructure funding in the president's stimulus package suggests that financier and diplomat Rohatyn's message was understood in the White House before it was even delivered. That Obama didn't need *Bold Endeavors* hardly makes its publication a moot exercise; it wasn't really written for him. It targets his opponents, and it hits them dead-on.

The air is thick these days with comparisons between the economic situations inherited by Franklin D. Roosevelt and by Obama, and between the New Deal and the rebuilding programs Obama

intends to deploy. In this context, Rohatyn strives to redefine the New Deal not as a one-time, *sui generis* response to the (first) Great Depression but as part of a long continuum of responses to crises and opportunities. From Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase and DeWitt Clinton's Erie Canal to the GI Bill and the interstate highways, federal and state governments have assumed responsibilities for the nation's scale, form, and condition that private entities could never have assumed. Recalling ten such efforts as a coherent narrative regarding public works, Rohatyn's argument is both a rallying cry on the infrastructure front and an intended knockout blow to the Reaganist/Thatcherite/Friedmanite/Randian Objectivist dogmas that have clouded debate about public-sector activism for decades.

The third word in Rohatyn's subtitle is a deliberate provocation to those who insist that only private market activity can build a nation, that taxing, spending, and regulating produce nothing but inefficiencies, boondoggles, and erosions of freedom. Rohatyn replies that ten of the best things that ever happened to the U.S. were government projects, invariably opposed by shortsighted interests. The transportation networks, expansions of

mass education, and modernizations that strengthened America, he argues, repeatedly required the state's power to marshal resources as well as statesmen's vision. Moreover, he warns, if simplistic ideology and simple greed obstruct us from making comparable investments now—when bridges, roads, rails, schools, energy and environmental technologies, and other components of the built environment show the decay that inevitably results from 28 years with privatizers in the driver's seat—we stand to lose much more than the Minneapolis I-35 bridge, the city of New Orleans, the \$63 billion in time and fuel that traffic jams annually waste, and other tangible elements of the vulnerable national commonwealth. We will squander nothing less than world leadership and a viable economy.

Rohatyn has impressive credentials as a problem solver at home in both the public and private sectors. As a Lazard Frères investment banker called in to help New York restructure its finances in the 1970s, he brought labor and financial institutions together to create the Municipal Assistance Corporation, steering the city away from bankruptcy. He proposes a similar instrument to address the current crisis: a National Infrastructure Bank that

would redirect the piecemeal array of congressional and state allocations into more coordinated, disciplined channels. The proposal will be familiar to readers of Rohatyn and Everett Ehrlich's 2008 *New York Review of Books* article that duplicates much of the book's epilogue.

Rohatyn is not a professional historian, he acknowledges, but "a person who loves history and believes in its instructive value." With no endnotes and a dozen or fewer sources listed for each chapter, the book is aimed not at scholars but at a general readership more interested in page-turning narratives than comprehensive analyses of evidence. There is little sense of history as a complex play of competing perspectives here. This is a history of personal struggles and a parade of victories. More internal complication would have made *Bold Endeavors* a different kind of book, in some respects a stronger one. Not all advances are equal. Eisenhower's highway system, celebrated in Chapter Ten, undid many salutary effects of the transcontinental railroad championed by Lincoln, completed after his death despite infighting and corruption, and celebrated in Chapter Three. Rohatyn acknowledges past errors, such as abuses of immigrant Chinese railroad laborers, more readily than

unintended consequences of recent choices.

What many historians would view as reductionist liabilities, the politicians and executives who are likely to read *Bold Endeavors* may see as strengths. Tales of conflict are persuasive in ways nuanced considerations are not, and persuasion is critical if President Obama and his successors are to extend Rohatyn's list of achievements. Keynesians are back at the helm, high-speed rail and energy conservation are off the back burners, and congressional interrogation forced former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan last October to concede that his Randian market fundamentalism, self-regulation through self-interest, didn't work, but opposition to Obama's stimulus has hardly vanished. The American Society of Civil Engineers has estimated we need to invest \$1.6 trillion just to bring the national infrastructure up to safe standards, let alone prepare for future expansion. If Rohatyn's argument helps more readers reframe infrastructural history to emphasize continuities between past projects and the ones needed now, he'll have performed an indispensable public service. Again.

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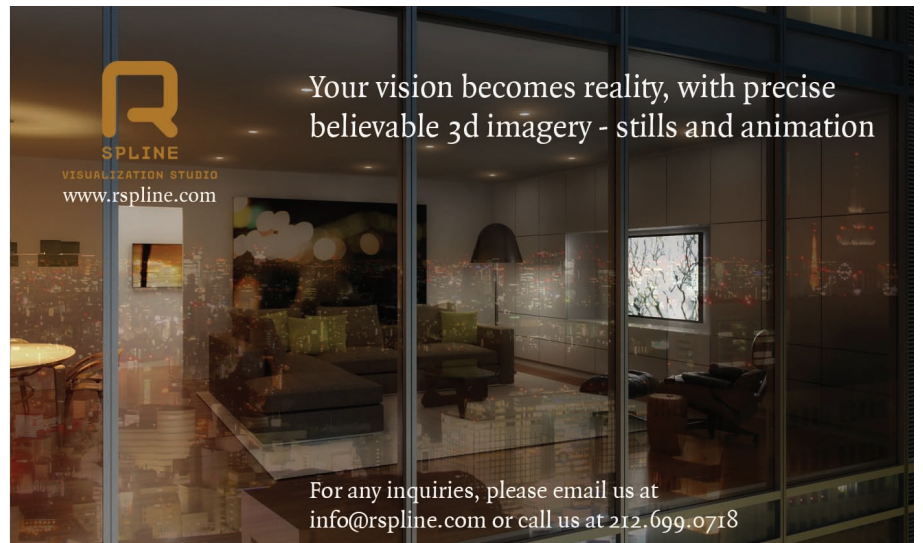
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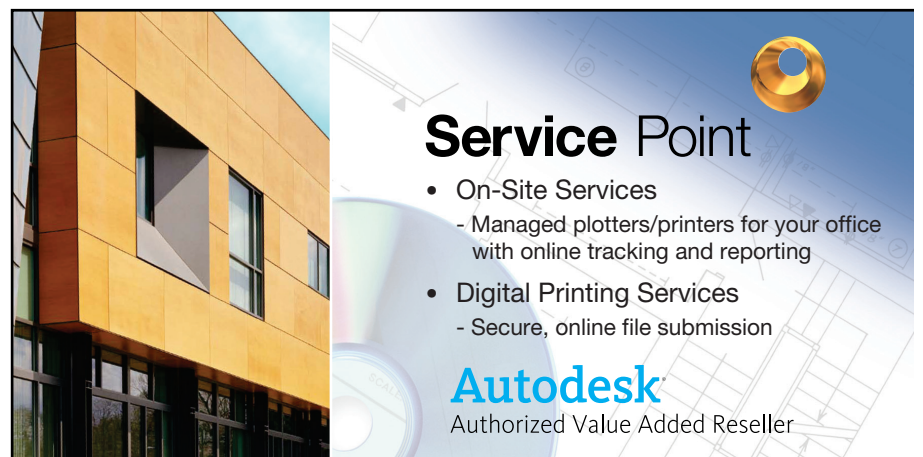
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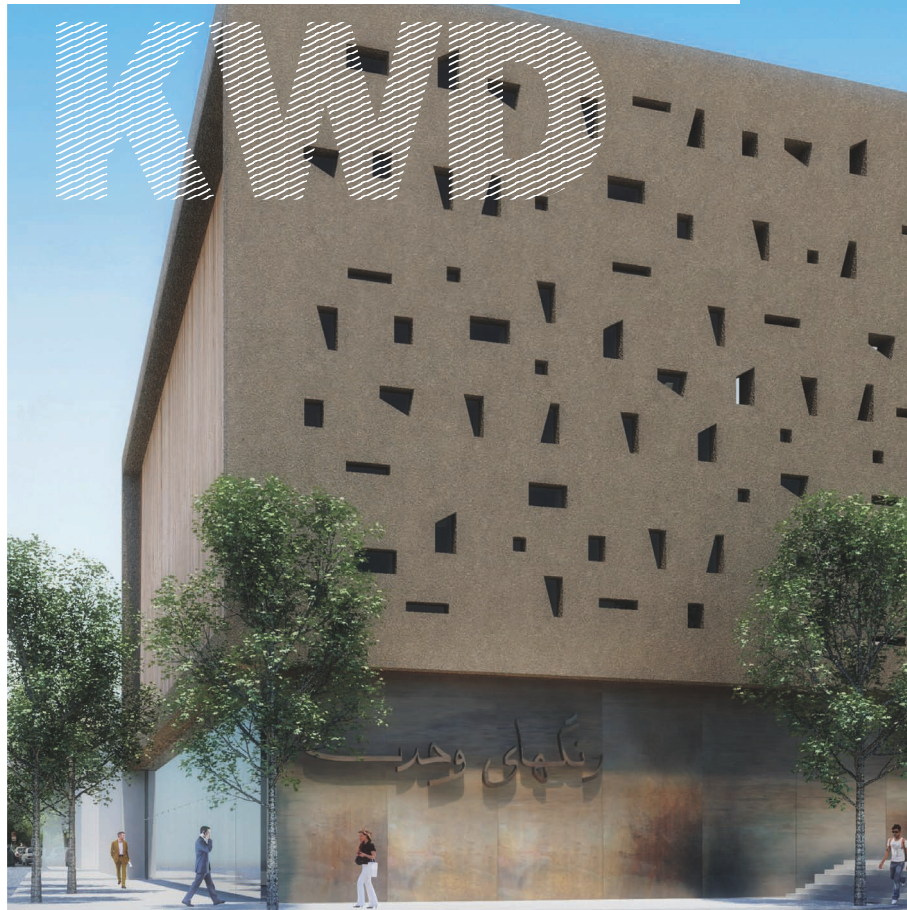
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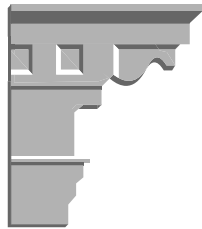
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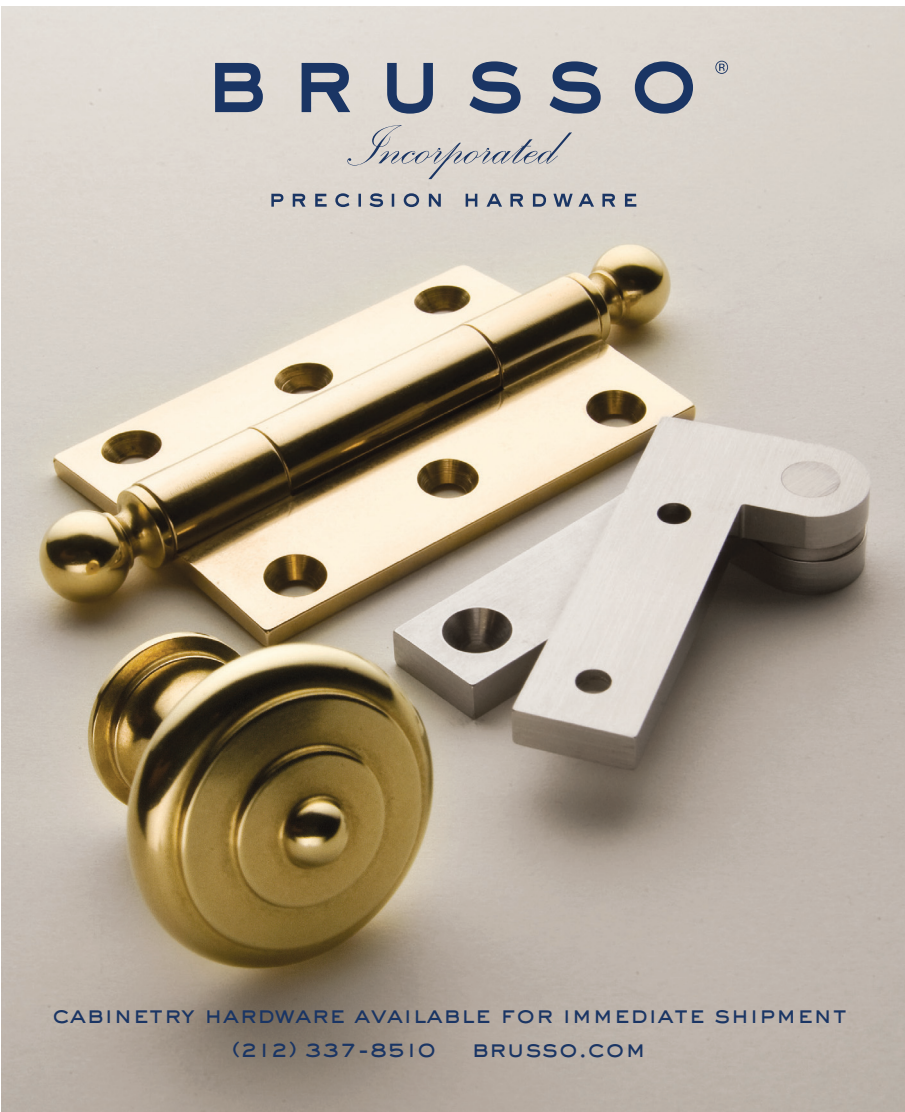
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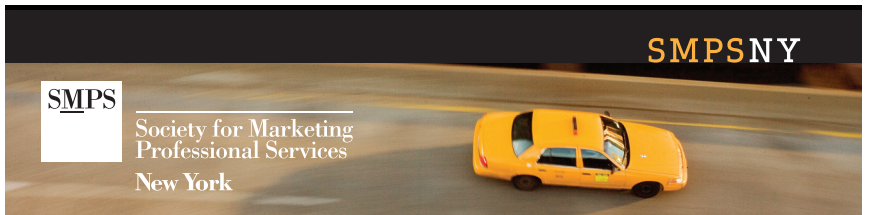
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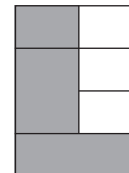
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A MISGUIDED U.S. POLICY OF NOT SPONSORING PAVILIONS AT INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS IS A MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR ARCHITECTS AND THE NATION

WORLDS AWAY

In May 1956, a young federal employee named Jack Masey was asked to create a pavilion for an agricultural exposition in Afghanistan. The United States embassy in Kabul had been lobbying for a pavilion ever since it learned that the Soviets and the Chinese were planning large shows of their own. With the fair scheduled to open in August, Masey had just three months to create a pavilion that would help the U.S. outshine its Cold War rivals.

Masey, an army veteran and graduate of Yale's architecture school, contacted Buckminster Fuller, creator of the geodesic dome. Within days, Fuller had drawn plans for a 110-foot-diameter building, which was fabricated in the U.S. and airlifted to Kabul. There, it was erected by Afghani workers, who, according to Masey, were visibly proud of their involvement. (By contrast, the Soviet and Chinese pavilions were built by imported technicians.) Thousands of Afghans visited the dome, which contained a working TV studio and other displays of American know-how. A photo taken in the pavilion during the fair shows a group of young men in traditional garb, suitably agog.

Masey tells this tale in his new book *Cold War Confrontations: US Exhibitions and Their Role in the Cultural Cold War* (Lars Müller Publishers, 2008). The book, coauthored with Conway Lloyd Morgan,

couldn't be more timely.

Next year, the eyes of the world will be on Shanghai, where the Chinese government will host a world exposition (informally called a world's fair) from May 1 to October 31. Nearly 200 countries are building pavilions, many by important architects chosen in national competitions. The host city will try to match the showmanship of last summer's Beijing games, and, unlike the made-for-television Olympics, the expo will likely attract tens of millions of Chinese visitors.

But whether the U.S. will be at the fair is still an open question. Under a misguided 1999 law, the State Department is prohibited from spending money on international expositions. Last year, the department authorized a private group, headed by Washington, D.C. lawyer Ellen Eliasoph and California amusement park executive Nick Winslow, to solicit donations for a privately funded pavilion. Last fall, unable to find sponsors, they abandoned their quest. Now they are trying again, and the Obama administration, according to Winslow, is rallying behind them.

Meanwhile, Clive Grout, a Canadian architect chosen by Winslow and Eliasoph, has designed a U.S. pavilion that may or may not get built. Time is running out. "The U.S. government can only commit

to participating in the Shanghai Expo if the necessary funding from the private sector can first be secured," a spokesman for the U.S. Consul General in Shanghai confirmed by email last week.

That the United States wouldn't attend a giant international gathering, at a time when so much is at stake in U.S.-Chinese relations, seems unimaginable. Sadly, though, it is not unprecedented. The U.S. embarrassed itself with a tacky pavilion at the Seville expo in 1992 (timed to the 500th anniversary of Columbus' first voyage, with the U.S. meant to be the guest of honor). It ignored the next expo (in Hannover, Germany, in 2000), insulting a crucial ally. At the insistence of Toyota, whose retired chairman conceived the 2005 expo in Aichi, Japan, the U.S. did have a pavilion. But the building's creators, who had to rely on corporate funding, put more thought into the VIP suite (where those sponsors could entertain clients) than into the main event, a film about Benjamin Franklin.

If the U.S. pavilion for Shanghai gets built, it, too, will have a lavish VIP suite, Winslow said. The exhibition will be by BRC Imagination Arts (the company behind the Franklin movie in Aichi). The building is by Grout, who designed a number of pavilions for the 1986 Vancouver Expo, and went on to master-plan the 2002 Swiss Expo.

According to Grout, the pavilion he has designed for Shanghai—where the theme is "Better City, Better Life"—will be "a celebration of an American metropolis in 2030, focusing on health, sustainability, and community." The 60,000-square-foot building will employ "a very contemporary vocabulary of metal and glass," he said. The glass will be covered in a decorative film made by 3M, a sponsor of the pavilion. Grout is waiting to see which other companies give money, so that—if there's time—he can incorporate their products into the design as well.

As his clients scrounge for handouts, Grout is collaborating with a Chinese architecture and engineering firm, which is creating working drawings even as design development continues. "We are under tremendous pressure," he said. "We don't have a lot of time to study or investigate. I'm just focused on the fact that this is going to open in May of 2010, and we've got to get it into the ground. Until somebody tells me different, that's my responsibility, to keep it alive." He added: "We don't yet know how much money is going to be available. It's not the way to create a crackerjack pavilion."

That is a far cry from Masey's day, when pavilions were symbols of national pride and funded by the government. Masey's employer, the United States Information Agency (USIA), made its first foray into exhibition diplomacy with barge- and truck-borne displays touting the Marshall Plan, helping to win the hearts and minds of western Europeans, and it participated in hundreds of large expos and small trade fairs over the next five decades. According to Masey,

it was the USIA that gave Fuller, George Nelson, Charles and Ray Eames, Ivan Chermayeff, and Thomas Geismar their first peacetime commissions.

Among the highlights of Masey's tenure was the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959. Best known as the site of the "kitchen debate" between Nixon and Khrushchev, the fair attracted 2.7 million visitors during its six-week run. The interest of Soviet citizens was, according to observers, palpable.

Even more poignant is the tale of the 1956 exhibition in Brussels. Though the fair had an atomic energy theme, the U.S. chose to present its human side in a stunning circular building by Edward Durell Stone. (Among other exhibits, there was a fashion show organized by Jackie Kennedy's sister, Lee.) A separate building was designed to house an exhibition on race relations in America. The goal was to counter Soviet claims that the United States, with its history of segregation, was in no position to lecture the Soviets on human rights. Called *Unfinished Business*, it depicted progress being made toward racial equality.

The show created a furor at home, with Senator Herman Talmadge of Georgia writing to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that the pavilion represented "an unwarranted invasion of the rights and prerogatives of the states of the south," where "segregated society has proved to be in the best interest of all races concerned." The exhibit was replaced with one devoted to public health, which Masey calls "an unworthy end to one of the most successful examples of architectural propaganda ever attempted by the United States."

But there were to be other successful U.S. pavilions, at Montreal in 1967 (a giant Fuller dome) and Osaka in 1970 (a fascinating, inflatable building). Indeed, since at least the 19th century, world's fairs have produced important architecture, as the assumed temporariness of the structures frees designers to experiment. (Both the Crystal Palace and the Eiffel Tower were built for international expositions.) Recent fairs have been filled with estimable structures, from MVRDV's startling Dutch pavilion in Hannover to Foreign Office Architects' Spanish offering in Aichi. In Shanghai, expect great things from Denmark's BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group), Italy's BiCquadro, and Spain's Miralles Tagliabue EMBT. England's pavilion was designed by Thomas Heatherwick, chosen in a competition over Zaha Hadid and London Eye designers Marks Barfield.

But the U.S. no longer turns to its top talent. Ironically, Shanghai officials commissioned Yung Ho Chang, head of the architecture program at MIT, and Edwin Schlossberg, a prominent New York exhibition designer, to create their pavilion for Shanghai. Chinese business leaders have chosen American experts to sell themselves on their own home turf.

Congress should immediately end the ban on public funding for international expositions, and allocate the \$100 million or so it will take to build a pavilion worth texting home about. Jack Masey, 85 and still working, might have a few ideas.

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