A new bill making its way through Congress could be the first step in turning the Hudson River Valley into a national park. In March, the House approved the Hudson River Valley Special Resource Study Act, a bill that would authorize a National Park Service (NPS) study on adding a 182-mile stretch of land on both sides of the Hudson from Fort Edward in Washington County south to Westchester County. Authored by continued on page 9

Brooklyn Bridge Park finally opened to the public on March 23, but the real cause for celebration came 12 days earlier, when the state announced it continued on page 14

Raimund Abraham was an architect famous for his drawings and models of visionary projects, as well as buildings such as the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York City and the

The Media Lab at MIT has helped pioneer some of the last quarter-century’s advances in social connectivity—wireless networks, viral communications—but since 1985, its engineers, programmers, artists, and scientists have been sequestered inside I.M. Pei’s Wiesner Building, a warren of offices and corridors walled off from the world around it. That all changed on March 5, when the MIT School of Architecture + Planning, which oversees the Media Lab, dedicated a $90 million building designed continued on page 4

Signs reading “white” and “colored” appear once more outside separate waiting rooms in a century-old train depot in Orange, VA. The depot reopened February 21 after a restoration by the nonprofit Montpelier Foundation, which maintains the property continued on page 7

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MAKI’S NEW MIT MEDIA LAB OPENS IN CAMBRIDGE

ODE TO CONNECTIVITY

CITY TAKES OVER BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK, GOV. ISLAND

SAFE HARBOR

CONGRESS EXPLORES DESIGNATING THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY

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PRESERVING TRACES OF SEGREGATION IN THE SOUTH

LEGACY OF SHAME

COLOR ME CORBU

STUDIO VISIT> GARRISON ARCHITECTS.

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Meet Vladimir Kagan at the ICFF Tradeshows, 5/15/2010 & 5/16/2010 from 2 to 4pm in the Oasiq Booth #1918

Oasiq is a Trade Showroom Representing Outdoor Furniture Collections from Vladimir Kagan, Garpa and Ego Paris.
New York has long been a laboratory for ideas about the high-density American city, in particular through its pioneering efforts to invent new forms of public space. From Central Park to Robert Moses playgrounds and bonuses for public plazas in Midtown towers, the city has helped define both the form and legislative framework for public space in this country. In 1961, for example, New York created the legislation for what are now called privately owned public spaces (POPS), and the city has over 500 of these hybrid “parks.” The legislation allowed developers to create and fund public spaces in and around their buildings in exchange for more rentable square footage. These spaces—which are overwhelmingly located in Manhattan—have become an integral part of New York’s urban life.

In the comprehensive study of POPS, Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience (Wiley, 2000), Jerold Kayden provides detailed information about their successes and failures. He points out that the program’s results have been mixed, and that “an impressive amount of public space has been created in parts of the city with little access to public parks, but much of it is not of high quality.” The book notes that while some spaces have become valuable public resources, others remain inaccessible or devoid of amenities. “In response to the perceived failure of many of these spaces and to community opposition,” the book adds, “the types of spaces permitted and their locations have been curtailed in recent years.”

In fact, a number of POPS are now threatened with privatization—always a temptation in space-hungry Manhattan. The through-block arcade that connects 56th to 57th streets at the Parker Meriden hotel is a prime example. The hotel recently renovated thepassageway, and seems to be installing seating for a new cafe in the space and discouraging public use of the area unless food and drinks are purchased from the hotel—all of which is illegal according to the rules governing POPS. In response, public space activists recently met in the hotel to protest “this taking” and raise awareness about the plight of POPS around the city. They made the point that the Department of Buildings has neither the staff nor the interest to aggressively regulate these spaces, and suggested that POPS need a group—analogous to the Prospect Park Alliance—to help defend them.

This is an important idea, and would help make the point that planning in high-density cities must grow from the bottom up. Kayden’s book was co-authored by the Municipal Art Society and the Department of City Planning, and the movement to highlight POPS has also been supported by the Design Trust for Public Space, another organization that grows out of New York’s unique planning tradition. At a time of concern about privatization across the country, skirmishes over spaces such as this one remind us that an engaged public empowered by a strong planning tradition is still the best formula for creating a truly sustainable city.

WILLIAM MENKING
ODE TO CONNECTIVITY

continued from front page

by Fumihiko Maki. A series of stacked, glass-walled volumes open to one another and to the surrounding Cambridge campus, the 163,000-square-foot structure counts as Maki’s most accomplished U.S. work to date, and sets a powerful example for how architecture can promote social serendipity.

The idea of ad-hoc encounters is by now a common trope—it was the driving logic at MIT’s nearby Stata Center, designed by Frank Gehry—but Gary Kamemoto, director at Tokyo-based Maki and Associates, said that inspiration for the new building actually came from one well-loved space buried within the Pei structure, also known as Building E15: a double-height, cube-shaped research volume. “E15 is almost opaque from the outside,” said during a tour of the lab on opening day, but the structure’s voluminous interior space could be counted on to spark collaboration. “They almost wanted to turn that building inside-out and expose everything.”

Working with Boston-based executive architect Leers Weinzapfel and structural engineer Weidlinger, Maki created seven cube-shaped lab spaces staggered vertically around a pair of interlocking atria. This complex sectional arrangement offers striking views from one lab to another, as well as transparency to the streetscape. The double-height labs themselves are ringed by glass-fronted offices at a mezzanine level, reached by spiral staircases, and carefully detailed for maximum visual connections to the labs below.

Slicing through the central atria—which are on staggered floors to further connect the labs, cafe, and lounges at various levels within the building—are three staircases colored brightly like a De Stijl composition, while transparent elevators add to the dynamic sense of motion. Mullionless glazing throughout allows views clear through the structure, which connects on several floors to the existing Pei building. In keeping with the mandate for openness, several public spaces are located on the top floor, including a rounded, 100-seat lecture theater and a 3,500-square-foot multipurpose space with views to the Boston skyline. The four-story, street-side atrium is flanked by gallery spaces and notched ground-floor corners that—as at Maki’s new Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania—draw the sidewalk within. Nearly the entire building, lab spaces included, is publicly accessible during daytime hours.

To adhere to local energy codes, an exterior screen of aluminum pipe louvers shades the lab spaces—an idea borrowed from traditional Japanese bamboo screens—while daylight is carefully modulated through the use of two different types of glass: clear insulated glass with a low-e coating for the screened areas, and fritted low-iron glass for the more public zones. The School of Architecture + Planning will make use of some of the new building’s facilities, including its digital fabrication lab. In fact, the architecture department is a bit miffed that it remains stuck in its 1916 headquarters, some distance away. “So now I’m demanding another building,” said Adele Naudé Santos, dean of the School of Architecture + Planning, with a laugh.) Maki’s design has already won praise from lab members who find it an ideal container for their work. “It’s a space that allows a lot of social interaction, and it’s very minimal at the same time,” said Sotirios Kotsopoulos, a researcher at the Mobile Experience Lab. “And the light is extremely beautiful.”

At a place where engineers are crafting the next generation of responsive environments, Maki’s ode to connectivity can be considered a breakthrough in its own right. “This is an organization that is constantly trying to reinvent itself,” Kamemoto explained. “Every time we come to the building, the research changes, and the way the building is being used changes—which will keep the building alive.”

JEFF BYLES

Clockwise from top left: The third-floor atrium; a double-height lab space; the first-floor atrium; the exterior features aluminum pipe louver screens.
WHEN THE CEILING IS TOO HIGH, PART I
“...If the paintings are too large, cut them in half!” snapped the diminutive Frank Lloyd Wright when we questioned him about the low ceilings in the Guggenheim Museum way back in 1959. “Just asking,” we responded. We never dared to add, “But what if the rotunda is too tall?” Of course, Eavesdrop was much more emotional and non-confrontational in those days.

Decades have passed, and to celebrate the museum’s 50th anniversary, the Guggenheim invited two hundred artists, architects, and designers to imagine their dream interventions for Contemplating the Void: Interventions in the Guggenheim Museum. The invitees’ much-publicized visions were offered in an online auction to raise money for exhibition programming. To our chagrin, bidding on the work by architects—Ben van Berkel, MVRDV, Greg Lynn, Shanehtta, Daniel Libeskind, among others—did not keep pace with the artists. The value of most of the lots was around $5,000, but bids for the architects’ work languished at three figures as bidding ended on March 18 (even though he used to write for us, curator David van der Leer did not spill the final beans). The auction may be over, but the works are still on view until April 28.

ROOTING FOR PETER AARON
We heard a wrenching story from Erica Stoller of Esto that we want to pass on. A few weeks ago, brilliant lensman Peter Aaron was locking up his bicycle (would that we were so responsible and health-minded) at the curb in front of the movie theater on 23rd Street and Eighth Avenue when a truck lost control and ran over him, breaking both legs while his wife watched. After long hours in surgery, Peter is doing fine and re-learning how to walk. Please send along encouragements!

WHEN THE CEILING IS TOO HIGH, PART II
Height and voids exist in real life, too. Dallas architect Bob Borson ruminates about these and other architectural perils in his thoughtful blog, Life of an Architect (lifeofanarchitect.com). Eavesdrop loved one post in particular, “Ceiling Heights and ‘Scoreboards.’” It’s the tale of a client whom Borson calls “Mrs. Pickle,” who wanted every ceiling in her house to be 14 feet (closets too), because her friends’ ceilings were 12 feet. This is called “score-boarding”—when the buzzer sounds, the team with the highest score (or the tallest ceiling) wins. Borson’s team cried foul before time ran out and exited the game with the consolation that the higher the ceiling, the better to hang oneself. There’s even mention of “FLM of the Seven-Foot Ceilings,” and once again Eavesdrop has gone full-circle.

THE MARK RESTAURANT
The 1927 Mark Hotel in the Upper East Side Historic District reopened last summer after a major refurbishment. French interior decorator Jacques Grange, known for playfully eclectic designs for clients like Yves Saint Laurent and Princess Caroline, was chosen to breathe life into the establishment and its newly opened restaurant. For the Mark, Grange fused colorful Art Deco motifs with a sort of Broadway Boogie Woogie modernism. “You can see the influence of New York in all the designs I did at the Mark—it is very creative, inventive, and artistic,” Grange told AN. The Mark is his first hotel, and so too the ground-floor eatery, helmed by Jean-Georges Vongerichten, is Grange’s debut restaurant design. At the entrance, a curvaceous bar topped with stainless steel and accompanying amoeba-shaped tables catch the eye. Beyond lies the 126-seat dining space, where rose-colored chairs contrast with Venetian glass columns and a tiger-patterned broadloom carpet. An expansive skylight, previously hidden in a second-floor banquet room, is framed by white limestone and accented by a surrounding glass artwork, one of many pieces custom-made by contributing European designers.

BOB NOORDA, 1927–2010
Back in the early 1960s, Bob Noorda was the designer in Milan with whom I most wanted to work. His famous graphic designs for Milan’s Metropolitana subway were of the highest standard. His elegant figure and gentle manners opened all doors of Milanese society, giving him access to the best clients. His manners were polite, subdued, what we used to call a “witty color.”

We started our friendship by driving to Venice every week to teach graphic design at the School of Industrial Design. That experience and closeness cemented our friendship, and in 1964 we decided to merge offices. Then with some friends in Chicago, we started Unimark International in Milan. For a year we worked together at the same desk, each one of us on his own projects, all the time exchanging our impressions and opinions. When I left for the United States, I left my clients in his hands and he took great care, losing not a single one.

In the following years, we worked on other projects together, one being the signage for the New York City subway in 1966. I remember when Bob came to New York. He spent every day underground, recording pedestrian traffic flow in order to determine where signs should be placed. I remember how we decided all details, from typeface to spacing, color-coding to implementation. Bob had a systematic mind, and it was always a pleasure to see logic prevail over emotional issues to deliver the best possible solution. His work was extremely civilized, his Dutch origin reflecting that culture and bringing a quality of spareness and essentiality to all his work. Bob’s excellent sense of typography could be seen in the endless lists of publications designed by him through the years. His wife Ornella, a prolific designer, was a complementary presence in his life, bringing a witty and fresh component to his sober style. When Unimark closed its U.S. offices, Bob kept the Milan office going, eventually under his ownership for many more years.

Bob was a designer who contributed enormously to the recognition of our profession, a noble person to whom we designers are all indebted. His example will remain a beacon for us all.

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LONG-AWAITED RESTORATION WORK COMMENCES ON LOUIS KAHN’S TRENTON BATH HOUSE

The central atrium and its flanking concrete-block pavilions, shown prior to restoration, 55 years ago.

The road to restoration has been long and full of potholes. In 1984, largely through the effort of architectural historians Susan Solomon and Lydia Soo, the Bath House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Time and poor upkeep had taken a toll on the facility, however, and in 1996 the JCC announced plans to demolish some of the adjacent day-camp pavilions. The announcement sparked international protest from groups who thought all of Kahn’s work would be erased. In 1997, both Preservation Philadelphia and the New Jersey chapter of the AIA placed the Bath House on their endangered buildings lists. In addition, a delegation that included members of those organizations, Preservation New Jersey, and Keast & Hood—the project’s original structural engineers—as well as Michael Mills of FMG, approached JCC to talk about restoration options. “What we told them was that there were grants available,” said Mills. JCC applied for and won a grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust (NJHT) that provided funds to prepare a preservation plan. FMG drew up the plans in 2003, but before work could get underway, another obstacle presented itself. In 2005, with its community in the area dwindling, JCC decided to move operations to West Windsor and sell the facility. Once again, the fate of the Bath House was up in the air. To the rescue came Mercer County. The county executive, Brian Hughes, and planning director Donna Lewis, who had taken her children to the JCC, expressed their commitment to architecture by acquiring the site and transferring ownership to Ewing Township. The township renamed the facility the Ewing Senior and Community Center, and received a $750,000 matching grant from NJHT. Finally, FMG was poised to put its preservation plans into effect.

“The bath house is in pretty rough shape,” explained Mills. “Part of it has to do with the materials used and the design. Part of it has to do with what happened after Kahn was let go.” A Greek cross in plan, the Bath House consists of four concrete-block pavilions topped by pyramidal, wood-framed roofs that surround a central open-air atrium. While the roofs are in good shape and will only be resurfaced in the black tiles of the original design, the concrete-block walls have not fared as well. In order to let light and air into the interior of the pavilions, the roofs neither shelter the walls nor are outfitted with gutters. Kahn wanted water to run over them freely, a poetic idea, but one damaging to the concrete, which is stained and coated with moss and mold. To combat future water damage, FMG is rebuilding the walls with a water-resistant coating and placing gutters discreetly along key areas of the roofs.

The restoration will also replace several elements of the original design that have been removed over time, including a mural at the entrance, as well as a set of gates that will be fabricated from Kahn’s drawings. A shallow pond that once existed at the center of the atrium will be recalled in the form of a circular, at-grade pebbled paving element. In addition, a snack bar that was added to the side of the Bath House after Kahn’s services were relinquished will be removed and replaced at a more appropriate location by a new snack bar designed by FMG. AARON SEWARD

THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER APRIL 7, 2010

LONG-AWAITED RESTORATION WORK COMMENCES ON LOUIS KAHN’S TRENTON BATH HOUSE

In the war to preserve America’s midcentury architectural heritage, another battle has been won. Contractors are now busy in south New Jersey restoring one of Louis Kahn’s early works, the Trenton Bath House. Completed in 1955 for the Trenton Jewish Community Center (JCC), the Bath House services an Olympic-sized outdoor swimming pool and day-camp pavilions, also designed by Kahn. The structure is an early example of the classical geometries and powerful spatial ensembles that Kahn would develop further in later works such as the Richards Medical Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the Salk Institute in California, and the Kimbell Art Museum in Texas.

Overseen by Princeton firm Farewell Mills Gatsch Architect (FMG), the preservation effort will return the building to its original condition and add a new snack bar and picnic area sympathetic to Kahn’s original master plan, which envisioned an entire campus for the JCC but was only partially realized before Kahn left the project. (A community center building was later designed by architects Kelly & Gruzen, and completed in 1962.) Construction on the Bath House is expected to wrap up in July, but the pool will open on Memorial Day as it has done for the past 55 years.

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BATHING BEAUTY

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MOYNIHAN STATION
GROUNDWORK MOVES AHEAD FOR

MARK REGULINSKI said that it will have a huge impact on user experience. “What the state calls phase one is really an enabling project, and it will set the foundation for everything to come after,” he said.

The firm has worked on Moynihan Station on-and-off since 2001, when it unveiled plans that included a vaulted atrium between the 1912 post office and its 1934 annex to the west—known to some as “the potato chip”—which drew mixed reactions.

James Carpenter Design Associates was brought on in 2005 to rethink the signature glass elements, and Carpenter tapped HOK to help with architectural and planning aspects of the project. After developers Vornado and the Related Companies became involved, they hired SOM, but the project was eventually shelved.

Then last September, Amtrak expressed renewed interest in moving across 8th Avenue into the Farley building, and the state brought HOK back to the drawing board, as the firm has a longstanding relationship with the train operator. “HOK did all the design work that brokered this deal,” HOK principal Wayne Striker said, referring to Amtrak’s return to the Farley building. (HOK was vying for the phase-one work, but SOM landed the job, as its drawings were nearly complete from its time working for the developers.)

The current phase is being funded in part by $83 million in stimulus money secured by Senator Charles Schumer. There will be no design work within the Farley building, however, which still lacks funding or a definitive plan.

The Farley Post Office

Greenwich Village has a current all its own, so architect Kohn Pedersen Fox wanted a free-spirited façade for new condo One Jackson Square. More than just eccentric expression, the undulating walls maximize the site’s allowable floor area in two separate zoning districts. Realizing a design this fluid demands an extraordinary level of precision. With no two window panels alike, high-tech computer modeling needed old world craftsmanship to produce the desired metal and glass waves—making the new facade at Greenwich and 8th as unique as its time-honored neighbors.

Transforming design into reality

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Architect: Bill Pedersen, Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates
Photo: © Paul Rivera

SOM Back on Board

SOM has taken up the conductor’s hat once again for Moynihan Station, the decades-overdue expansion of Penn Station championed by the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The Empire State Development Corporation announced on March 18 that it has selected SOM to recom-
**CISTA**
Moss Sund Architects and Figforty

Born out of a collaboration between Toronto-based architecture firm Moss Sund and industrial designers Figforty, the CISTA is an 8-foot-high stainless-steel cistern that holds up to 100 gallons of rainwater. Its vertical arrangement and raised tank create the water pressure needed to operate an attached hose, and a compartment in the base conceals space for a climbing plant that can be trained up the exterior trellis. The system, still a prototype, can expand horizontally or vertically.

www.moss sund.com

**Delta-Floraxx**
Cosella-Dörken

A new membrane from Cosella-Dörken is a combined water retention system and drainage board for garden roofs. Delta-Floraxx, made of a high-density plastic, substitutes for a gravel drainage layer, reducing the height and weight of materials and making it appropriate for green roof retrofits. The octagonal dimples give the layer a high compressive strength and can retain up to 22 fluid ounces of water per square foot, while allowing surplus water to drain out the bottom.

www.cosella-dörken.com

**A Drop of Water**
Bas van der Veer

Young Dutch designer Bas van der Veer designed A Drop of Water as a prototype, but expects to soon put the rainwater collection pod into production. The raindrop-shaped barrel integrates a watering can, which is filled by a drainage pipe attached to any exterior structure. Once the can is filled, surplus water overflows into the rest of the reservoir and can be used to refill the can via a tap in the barrel’s base.

www.basvanderveer.nl

**Waterproofing Admixtures**
Hycrete

Hycrete waterproofing admixtures make concrete hydrophobic, greatly reducing its water absorption. The integral waterproofing system can work in conjunction with membrane waterproofing systems, adding protection to vegetated roofs. The Cradle to Cradle-certified material can make membrane installation easier by reducing concrete’s drying time after rainfall. For applications like plazas and podium decks, the admixture can eliminate the need for a membrane system altogether, lowering installation costs by more than 30 percent. www.hycrete.com

**Extensive Garden Roofs, Sloped**
American Hydrotech

Hydrotech’s sloped garden roof soil stabilizer allows a green roof to be installed with a pitch up to 45 degrees, not only permitting vegetation to be installed on a broader range of rooftops, but also increasing visibility of the roof from below. The company’s Extensive systems are designed for safe installation where structural capabilities are a concern, incorporating low-maintenance plants in as little as 3 inches of soil.

www.hydrotechusa.com

**Ground Hog**
Rainwater Hog

Another use has been found for the award-winning Rainwater Hog. For several years the modular tanks have been used to harvest rainwater for irrigation, household use, and emergency water supplies, reducing a building’s city water use up to 50 percent. Now, under the name Ground Hog, the tanks can be used as a thermal mass unit, outperforming concrete of the same area. Individual Ground Hogs, six feet tall and one-and-a-half feet wide, cost $250 each. For orders of 20 or more, the units can be produced in any color.

www.rainwaterhog.com

**Watershed Moment**

It’s time to get smart about savvy rainwater management.

By Jennifer K. Gorsche
Lebbeus Woods

as a major intellectual force for 30 years. Born on July 23, 1933, in Liens, Tyrol, Austria, he died in a car crash in Los Angeles on March 4, 2010.

Raimund Abraham, 1922-2010, contributed from Musikerhaus in Hombroich, Germany, now nearing completion.

As a teacher, he profoundly influenced several generations of colleagues and students, primarily at The Cooper Union School of Architecture. Let us not eulogize Raimund Abrahams too quickly or too glibly. He was a deeply complex man, alive with struggles within and without, who cannot be summarized or comfortably contained in a few paragraphs. He affected the lives of many around him—students, colleagues, friends, a former wife, a companion, lovers, and his children—with the power of his vision, his work, and his presence. His charisma was not of any ordinary kind— that is, of the glossy sort that accompanies today’s ubiquitous celebrities. Rather, it was at once frightening and inspiring, heavy with moral weight, yet uplifting and liberating as an example of the creative potential of an individual.

Raimund’s creative output was not vast. In a published interview, he was once asked what he was working on. “Nothing,” he said, “I spend a lot of time sitting in cafes, reading the newspapers.” This was not altogether untrue. He worked when he had a project, or an idea, worth working on. He liked to read, talk with friends, cook, and watch baseball. He never ran a corporate office that he would have to support by chasing after building commissions. When he did work on a building project, a well-chosen competition, or a series of drawings, it was with great intensity and focus. If he needed help he would enlist the most talented and dedicated of his students, scrupulously paying them but also embracing them as members of his extended architecture family. Those periods of intensity were glorious for him and he would invite colleagues to his studio, excitedly showing them the latest work. It never disappointed in its originality, precision, and visual power.

“Architecture,” he said, “must always confront a program,” by which he meant particulars of the human condition, from the project site, to the prescribed uses of space, to the nature of the materials for building. “Confront” was the keyword in this statement, because he believed that architecture was not merely the attempt to satisfy people’s desires or needs, nor the conventions imposed by history and culture, but what he sometimes called “a collision” between these and the architect’s worldview and poetic vision. None should be compromised; rather, they should coexist in a state of creative tension. “Architecture is not a profession,” he would say, “it is a discipline.” He knew that in the crisis of creative work, it is discipline alone—an adherence to hard-won personal principles—that guides the architect through uncertainties and doubts to a decisive conclusion.

Raimund’s character is exemplary in its integrity, its commitment to architecture, and its extraordinary achievements, one that will resonate far into the future. His sudden death is tragic because he was in his prime, with much great work remaining to be done, and the resources to accomplish it fully at his command.


The Cooper Union’s new academic building by Morphosis architect Thom Mayne is not only rekindling the school’s ability to inspire new generations of art, architecture and engineering students, its dynamic, shimmering form is igniting the imaginations of all who pass through Cooper Square as well. Much of this energy is owed to the unique transparency of the building’s steel-and-glass double skin wall system, reducing solar gain while bringing to light the ability of architects, and of ornamental metal, to transform design aspirations into reality.

Transforming design into reality

For help achieving the goals of your next project, contact the Ornamental Metal Institute of New York.

Architect: Morphosis
Associate Architect: Gruzen Samton
Structural Engineers: John A. Martin & Associates; Goldstein Associates
Photo: © Joseph David

www.archpaper.com
Cambridge, Massachusetts is proud of its highbrow educational legacy. Even the local public library wears the scholastic mantle with honor, dubbing itself The People’s University—a place where everyone, including the city’s large immigrant community, can come to better his mind with an improving book or two. Many libraries these days function more like community centers—someplace to drop off the kids to use computers—than as places of intellectual pursuit, but not so here. In 2003, when Head Librarian Susan Flannery commissioned William Rawn Associates to design a 72,000-square-foot expansion to the 27,000-square-foot heritage structure, she had a very clear mandate: As soon as you enter, you should know it’s a building about books and reading.

In addition to the expansion, the overall project included a renovation by Ann Beha Architects of the library’s existing facility, which was designed by Van Brundt and Howe in 1889, and an adjacent landscaped park atop an underground parking facility designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. Along with the librarian’s mandate, Rawn considered both of these elements when developing his addition. To contrast the heavy stone nature of the older structure and open the expansion to the park, the firm decided their building should incorporate a transparent facade that would both allow visitors to enjoy the open space of the park and welcome passersby with a vision of the accessibility of knowledge.

In a cold climate such as Cambridge’s, a transparent building skin involves serious challenges in terms of comfort and sustainability. To manage these, the architects clad the addition with a double curtain wall. Very few examples of this exterior treatment existed in the United States, so Rawn and his team had to tour Europe to really see what possibilities the system offered. They took in many variations, some very simple—just a yawning cavity—others replete with bells and whistles like moving shades and interfaces with the HVAC system. Since the Cambridge Public Library is a municipal institution with a minimal maintenance budget, the architects decided on as few fussy features as possible.

Rawn worked with the engineers at Arup and the German exterior systems manufacturer Josef Gartner to tailor a double wall that fit the library’s needs. The basic makeup is one layer of glass, a 3-foot air space, then a second layer of glass in an assembly 42 feet high and 180 feet long. The outer layer of glass consists of half-inch-thick monolithic tempered low-iron panels either 8 or 12 feet high. The inner layer is composed of insulated glass units with a quarter-inch outer lite, a half-inch air space, and another quarter-inch of glass, all in thermally broken aluminum frames that go from floor to floor, a distance of 17 or 20 feet, depending. The wall’s gravity load is entirely supported by a ladder truss of 3-inch-by-5-inch tube steel sunk into concrete footings, though the truss ties back to the building’s floor plates for lateral stability. In the summer, the cavity between these layers of glass is opened at the bottom and top for a natural chimney effect, allowing air to flow in below, where it is heated by the sun, and then vent out the top. In winter the vents are closed, holding in air, where it absorbs the sun’s warmth and acts like a blanket around the building.

The architects pulled the building’s columns 15 feet back from the perimeter, leaving a cantilevered slab to meet the wall and provide ample unobstructed space for seating. This also takes advantage of the high degree of transparency afforded by the double wall. Something had to be done about the glare, however,
but without hampering views. The answer was a combined system of internal horizontal louvers that shade the top half of the wall, and an external fin of tinted glass that shades the lower half. The louvers are 12 inches deep, one-sixteenth-inch thick, and include microperforations. These leave them 20 percent open, allowing some dappled light through and bouncing the rest off the ceiling to cast light further into the interior. The louvers are always down, though they can be lifted for maintenance and window washing. They can also be tilted to optimize performance from zero degrees on a horizontal plane to 33 degrees down and forward. During the winter when the sun is low on the horizon, they are always tilted. In the summer, the louvers are horizontal in the morning until two o’clock, tilt from two until six, and then return to horizontal for the remainder of the evening.
James Garrison looks for “mutually reinforcing ideas” in his projects, meaning that program and environmental systems are highly coordinated in order to drive the form-making. But his firm’s projects don’t look overly diagrammatic or weighted with gadgets—these clean, modern buildings are of their time without looking overly trendy, something Garrison prizes.

His midsized, Dumbo-based firm works at a variety of scales, including institutional work like the recently completed renovation of the Syracuse University School of Architecture (Garrison’s alma mater) and residence halls at Bard College, as well as private residential work, both houses and apartments. The firm has also become known for sustainability and prefabricated and modular construction. But Garrison is not doctrinaire in applying any one principle or building technique. His interest is in problem-solving and building as intelligently as possible. At Syracuse, Garrison analyzed the Beaux Arts building and uncovered a natural ventilation system already built into the structure that made air conditioning largely unnecessary. His work was as much about peeling away obstructions as it was about inserting new spaces inside.

In recent years, and especially through the recession, the firm has worked for the General Services Administration, on a border-crossing station along with other current projects, as well as for New York City’s Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and a variety of nonprofit organizations. “They are very committed to making architecture,” he said of the DDC. The same could be said of Garrison, an uncommonly thoughtful architect.

ALAN G. BRAKE

ANIMAL SHELTER

This animal shelter, commissioned by the DDC, is a simple building with a versatile polycarbonate skin. The goal of the shelter is to prepare animals for adoption, and the architects put a “cat wall,” at the entrance to act as a visible invitation from the outside. The skin, while it admits light and therefore some heat, has an R-value twice that of glass. The doughnut-shaped building has a heat-exchange system and the generous ventilation required for animal shelters.

KOBE COTTAGE

This house may look like an expensive second home, but in fact is a guesthouse for families of children enrolled in a nonprofit boarding school for troubled youth. The house plan, two bars that meet in the center, allow two bedrooms to be at opposite ends of the very small building. The modular house cantilevers over a hillside, offering privacy and dramatic views of the site. With a warm wood interior and a Cor-Ten exterior, the cottage blends in with its forested surroundings.

AMBASSADOR’S RESIDENCE

Simple materials of concrete, steel, stucco, and wood contrast with generous spaces in this residence made for diplomatic entertaining. The rippled roofline, which Garrison said was inspired by vernacular boat design, accommodates heavy downpours and allows for ample ventilation. Three gardens of various sizes are integrated into the plan, and roo m porches, accessible by vast glazed sliding doors, help knit the five-bedroom house into the landscape.

NET ZERO HOUSE

This house in Red Hook, for an environmentally committed client, is expected to generate more electricity than it uses. The modular house is heavily insulated and has a solar array on the roof, solar hot water heaters, and a green roof over the garage. Its verticality allows for views of New York Harbor. The shifted boxes break up the massing, while also creating outdoor spaces that include a large covered porch at the top level.

RESTORATION PLAZA

Founded as a community development and social services organization in the 1960s, Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration occupied a 1970s-era courtyard plaza that needed a facelift. Garrison began by removing a preserved facade, which unfortunately looked like an abandoned building, to open up the courtyard space to the street. They wrapped the courtyard in glazed panels to create a “Walk of Fame” honoring the organization’s activities and founders. New lighting, a video projection screen, and new signage complete the outreach design program.
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THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER APRIL 7, 2010

SAFE HARBOR continued from front page
would hand over full control of the park to the city, with a similar move in the works for Governors Island. When both deals are complete, it will give the Bloomberg administration sole authority over hundreds of acres of burgeoning public parkland.

The end of the city-state power-sharing arrangement has been more than a year in the making, and will release both projects from the contentious politics of Albany. In exchange, the city is expected to relinquish its stake in the downsized expansion of the Javits Convention Center, which is currently underway. Roughly $50 million in city money dedicated to that project will shift to Brooklyn Bridge Park, while $30 million will go toward completing the plans for Governors Island.

“Now everything can fall into place much more quickly,” Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said at the ribbon-cutting for Brooklyn Bridge Park. “This agreement streamlines oversight of planning, maintenance, and operations.”

Regarding the handoff of Governors Island, he added that discussions were making progress. “We’re working on a deal, and I’m optimistic it will be reached soon,” Bloomberg said.

The biggest issue still facing the parks is financing. Even when the economy was good, both Brooklyn Bridge Park and Governors Island were proposed with the expectation that they would be self-sustaining. The city and state would put up most of the money for construction, but finding a way to fund regular maintenance was up to the state authorities charged with creating the parks.

The Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation came up with an innovative if controversial approach. A handful of sites along the park’s six piers would be given over to residential or commercial development, and payments in lieu of taxes would be made to the park conservancy to cover maintenance.

NOUVEL SHRINKING
When Jean Nouvel proposed his 1,250-foot Torre de Verre next to MoMA, the French architect was eager to create the next landmark on the city’s skyline.

When the City Planning Commission instead limited the tower’s height to 1,050 feet, some feared the project might be abandoned. Nouvel confirmed to CultureGrrl blogger Lee Rosenbaum on March 24, at a luncheon for his National Museum of Qatar, that he was still working on the project but it would probably be “not months” (presumably years) before new designs are released, pending satisfactory plans and economic conditions. And there is the small matter of a lawsuit filed by disgruntled neighbors that must be attended to, filed on February 25 and alleging the tower violated certain laws in acquiring its permits. Their main concern, however, is about density. About that, Nouvel told Rosenbaum, “We have to stay with the same volume. But the proportions will not be the same. It will be shorter. It will not be like a spire. It will be more like a skyscraper.” In other words, as big as ever.

ALWAYS ON THE BRIGHT SIDE
As a jarring reminder of the two deadly crane accidents two springs ago, a smaller mobile crane toppled onto 80 Maiden Lane in the Financial District on the evening of March 27, luckily causing little damage and no fatalities. The exact cause of this latest accident remains unknown as of press time, but it was believed to be a combination of human error (the boom was not sufficiently lowered) and mechanical failure (faulty hydraulics). Two days later, a Brooklyn condo under construction collapsed, injuring three workers. Last year, there were three construction fatalities, down from 19 in 2008, partly because of stricter safety standards, but also due to less construction work. While such construction accidents are unacceptable, they are also, to quote the mayor, the cost of doing business. In that sense, the pick-up in accidents might be seen as an indicator that construction is back in action.

HUDSON YARDS HOLD-UP
Related Companies has again pushed back its deadline to close on the Hudson Yards mega-development to April 31 due to snags in drafting the legal documents, according to the Observer.

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Opening day on March 27, 2008 at Heathrow Airport’s Terminal 5—designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners to radiate confident, high-tech bravura—was a complete disaster. Instead of the planned celebration, mayhem ensued when airport personnel failed at working key networking infrastructure, from following directions to their work stations to operating their hand-held computers. At the end of the day, 23,205 suitcases had gone astray, and most had to be hand sorted in Milan. National embarrassment was complete, according to Donald McNeil of the Urban Research Center at the University of Western Sydney, who has written a paper about the increasingly complex intersection of hard and soft infrastructure at airports, when Naomi Campbell pitched a fit and The Daily Mail called the supermodel “a martyr to the Terminal 5 fiasco.”

Tunnels, bridges, highways, and airports have traditionally been both the backbone of organized societies and the way they dig out of economic ruts and push on to higher standards of living. Yet events such as those at Heathrow have drawn attention to another, emerging infrastructure, one with none of the steel beams, soaring trusses, and hulking pipes we associate with the hard underpinnings that make cities work.

This so-called soft infrastructure tends to be invisible or disembodied, organic in behavior, and powered by data networks, not engines. But when the world’s financial systems—soft infrastructure of an especially indecipherable kind—collapsed in 2009, the reverberations felt every bit as shocking as the collapse of a four-span suspension bridge. As with the disastrous opening day at Terminal 5, hard infrastructure—no matter how brilliantly designed—cannot triumph without effective soft infrastructure.

The need to pay equal attention to both is fast becoming apparent across many professions, from education, healthcare, and government to architecture and urban design. Key areas of interest especially for designers include water management, layering social networks over transportation, and programming public spaces. In fact, finding ways to integrate soft solutions into building projects could be the opportunity that architects have been seeking to show how design thinking is an essential tool for building not only offices, schools, and museums, but also more smoothly functioning societies.

Efforts to explore this largely uncharted territory are well underway. Last fall the Architectural League did so with its exhibition Toward the Sentient City, based on the premise that we “are now on the cusp of a fundamental reconfiguration of physical space, one in which a vast and mostly invisible layer of technology is being embedded into the world around us,” according to exhibitions director Gregory Wessner. Installations included LED sensors measuring and reporting on water quality in real time from the Bronx and East rivers, and mobilizing opportunities for office work in public places through social software.

In February, Parsons launched a new graduate program in transdisciplinary design to engender fresh thinking about what constitutes design in a...
and design at the Museum of infrastructure. Is it whatever not talking about the old struggling to understand prepares a new curriculum at frustratingly vague. As he word—exactly is remains business, services, and landscape architect Pennsylvania, architect on the exhibition Rising of landscape, urbanism, and by meshing the demands Bergdoll considers the adap- a type of soft infrastructure, stunning visual and architec- maps and how the hard lines drawn to indicate solid divisions between land and water both misrepresent and prevent understanding— and appropriate response to—a landscape that in reality is in flux depending on the season, the climate, and agricultural uses. “The time is past for measuring forms of coastal conditions, digital interfaces, and soft infrastructure meet what we mean when not talking about the old infrastructure. Is it whatever is systems-based, sentient, dynamic, or wetware and squishy?” Barry Bergdoll, chief curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art, finds the roots of soft infrastructure in the traditions of 18th-century landscape design, where complex systems of land management sometimes manifested themselves in stunning visual and architectural effects. And while the formation of any network of exchange might qualify as a type of soft infrastructure, Bergdoll considers the adaptive networks engendered by meshing the demands of landscape, urbanism, and sustainability—especially as they relate to changing coastlines and water levels—to be the most compelling frontiers of the subject. (See “In the Swim,” page 17, on the exhibition Rising Currents now at MoMA.) From the University of Pennsylvania, architect and landscape architect Anuradha Mathur, together with Dilip da Cunha, a planner and architect, have also been exploring new frameworks and modes of representa- for ecological issues, from monsoons in India to Mississippi River floods. They are investigating histor- ical maps and how the hard lines drawn to indicate solid divisions between land and water both misrepresent and prevent understanding— and appropriate response to—a landscape that in reality is in flux depending on the season, the climate, and agricultural uses. “The time is past for measuring performance according to probabilities. Architects, engineers, and landscape designers need to build in resiliency,” said Mathur. Last summer, they pre- sented the exhibition SOAK: Mumbai in an Estuary at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Mumbai. The show and accompanying book have inspired subsequent studies of coastal conditions, with its conclusion that hard walls and defined borders must be replaced with more flexible terrains that can absorb and recirculate water as needed. “It’s not rocket science,” said Mathur. “Why push water out? Why don’t we imagine ways to hold it and to think of water conditions over time, not only at one moment, or sea- son? Boundaries need to be negotiated, not made per- manent.” (The couple were consultants for nArchitects’ entry into MoMA’s Rising Currents exhibition.) Closer to home, UrbanLab in Chicago has been concentrating on further developing a concept that architects Sarah Dunn and Mark Felsen proposed theoretically in 2006 when they won History Channel’s City of the Future competition in Chicago, a city where one billion gallons of fresh lake water are consumed each day. Functioning as a gigantic recycling machine, a citywide network of so-called eco- boulevards would treat all of Chicago’s wastewater— passing it along greenways and through vertical nodes, or living machines stocked with microorganisms, small invertebrates, scrubber fish, and plants—and returning it to Lake Michigan. As with SOAK, a key to the plan hinges on reprogramming existing hard infrastructure (around playing fields, parking lots, and airport run- ways) to double up as part of a flexible water-collecting network. Through swales, swamps, blue belts, and vegetation corridors instead of tunnels and pipes, water could thus be treated and absorbed back into the ecosystem rather than blown and channeled out of sight as sewage. More recently, the architects have worked with Mayor Daley’s office to develop an “eco- boulevard toolbox,” includ- ing recommendations for improving ongoing and upcoming road renovations. The ideas are robustly doable and include both point- and linear-based solutions for water absorp- tion, including swales along median strips and planter boxes next to sewer points. Much while much of the current thinking about soft infrastructure is focused on storm water, a second front is networking, especially as it applies to social and civic space. In a series of talks, and notably in a review of Sentinel City on the Architectural League’s blog, the Sydney-base Arup designer and urbanist Dan Hill describes such infrastruc- ture as a way to “bend the physical city” and rescale it to what he calls “walkable urbanism.” Hill could have been referring to Bike It, an initiative by Jake Barton of Local Projects, a design firm focused on public space. Bike It takes advantage of underused infrastructure—in this case, New York’s bike lanes—by layering them with an interactive network. In brief, said Barton, Bike It is a “super-charged iPhone app that calculates time and money saved, as well as calories burned plus locations of other cyclists” that could be broadcast on LED panels already embedded in bus shelters around the city. Barton sees soft infra- structure as a powerful planning and advocacy tool that promises to change people’s behavior. And while Bike It could be a model for encouraging bicycle commuters, Barton realizes there is a cultural component to soft infrastructure that could thwart the best-laid plans: People don’t like to arrive at work in sweaty clothes. And so there is Cool Biz, a governmental initiative from Japan that recommends minimal air-conditioning at work and a greater tolerance for casual clothing. Intended to lower energy costs but equally focused on office culture, pilot programs are already in place in California and Colorado. Unintended consequences are a constant where soft infrastructure and humans meet. During a recent lecture for the New School’s Design and Social Science Committee Seminar— whose theme this year is “Infrastructure: Complexity, Risk, and Design”—McNeil of Sydney’s Urban Research Center described the collision of privatized interests, political will, digital interfaces, and human error at Heathrow, where hard and soft infra- structure are intimately intertwined. Soaring spaces buttressed by structural derring-do may impress, but the real business of getting around depends on infor- mation in digital code, from e-tickets to LED announce- ment boards. The subtitle of McNeil’s paper is “The Heathrow Hassle,” and in it he detailed the Terminal 5 catastrophe that underscored the new reality that without complete integration, neither hard nor soft infrastructure is going to work. “The way we build has to be rethought, as the old ways don’t cut it,” said Hunt of Parsons’ TransDesign program. “The real oppor- tunity for designers is to have a voice. We bring the right capabilities to this kind of problem.” And better understanding may offer the sturdiest bridge to get there.

JULIE V. IOVINE IS EXECUTIVE EDITOR AT AN.

THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER APRIL 3, 2010

FEATURE 16
Regional planning, urban design, and landscape architecture don’t often get prominent exposure at the Museum of Modern Art. Rising Currents: Projects for New York’s Waterfront draws on all these disciplines, often in combination, and puts them front and center in an exhibition that posits a transformative role for design professionals in the face of climate change. In the show, startling statistics abound: In 90 years, sea levels are expected to rise 6 feet, leaving 20 percent of Lower Manhattan submerged; Ellis Island would be underwater, and the Statue of Liberty wading in her robes; contaminated industrial sites could be inundated with floodwater; Category Three storm surges could reach 20 feet. The tone of the exhibition, however, is upbeat, suggesting that designers have the means and vision to mitigate events by altering both our hard-edged tradition of sea walls and sewage pipes, and our physical and psychological relationship to the archipelagos of New York.

Architectural responses to climate change typically focus on reducing carbon emissions through energy-efficient building, increasing density and walkability, and integrating renewable energy technologies on a site. Rising Currents takes higher sea levels as a given, and its focus is on water, in particular on the area that engineer and exhibition consultants (Guy Nordenson, Catherine Seavitt, and Adam Yarinsky whose independent research informed the project overall) named Palisade Bay, the 20-square-mile Upper New York Bay. It includes five proposals for five sites by ARO with dlandstudio, Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis, nArchitects, Matthew Baird Architects, and SCAPE. The teams had an eight-week “residency” at P.S. 1, where they could share ideas or work independently, holding two public workshops that drew hundreds. They now are displaying their ideas on walls of the second floor architecture gallery more often dedicated to works from the Modern’s permanent collection.

For all the diversity in the proposals, they are not easily apparent upon viewing. There are fuzzy-edged, greened coastlines; murky water; and gray skylines. The installation is dense and requires time to read and, as it were, absorb the wall texts, scrutinize the often-tiny renderings, charts, and diagrams, and watch brief videos in which team leaders present their projects. The teams have investigated their varied sites in depth, and analysis seems to have trumped aesthetics.

Working on Lower Manhattan, ARO calls for a permeable, planted streetscape from the Battery to Canal Street. The addition of a permeable surface, the architects suggest, would prevent combined sewage overflows, a chronic New York problem (now and even more so in the future), where rainstorms overtax antique infrastructure, causing raw sewage to spill directly into waterways. ARO’s plan is among the most easily understood, and given DOT’s recent reworking of the city’s streetscapes, seems feasible. They also propose a layered salt marsh to form a grassy edge around the island and absorb storm surges.

Matthew Baird Architects were given the oil tanks and piers in Bayonne, N.J., along with Northern Staten Island and the Kill van Kull. The Baird team proposed dredging and capping contaminated soils into raised berms, and turning oil tanks into sewage storage and “biogas” plants. They also suggested reactivating the shipping piers (which, they argue, will be of greater importance once the complete melt of the North Pole opens new navigation routes), and a recycling plant. Using all local glass, the plant would manufacture glass jacks that would be piled into the bay to create artificial, wave-dampening reefs. The artist Matthew Ritchie collaborated on the creation of the prototype jacks, which are stacked around the gallery’s central table.

The Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis (LTL) plan calls for a radical reworking of the New Jersey shoreline near Ellis and
Liberty islands. This area, which is mostly 19th-century landfill, will disappear according to estimates, so LTL proposed a “cut and fill” plan, in which large trenches would cut into the land, bring water in, and the fill would raise blocks of usable land. Across these zones, they proposed a patchwork of new uses, including remediation and research centers, aquaculture, farm markets, and leisure. They also proposed a series of buildings-as-landscape along the spits of land, including an amphitheater with a floating stage, a research center, and a lodge.

Architects imagined Sunset Park and Southern Brooklyn’s waterfront as a “New Aqueous City.” In fact, they rewrote the zoning for the area to allow for new structures hanging over the water. The city would build the frames, and developers would complete the units, which would have accessible green roofs (handy to helicopters in case of calamitous flooding). A network of floating paths would connect buildings, which would be equipped with wastewater and storm-water filtration swales. “Biogas” systems for digesting sewage solids would power new ferry lines.

The digestive powers of the oyster inspired SCAPE’s proposal for the Gowanus Canal, Governor’s Island, Buttermilk Channel, and Red Hook. Looking to local industries of the past for ideas suited to the future, principal Kate Orff proposed making the Gowanus Canal an oyster hatchery, the seeds from which would be used to populate a series of rope-net reefs in the bay. Orff believes the oysters could clean the canal and the bay, though the recent EPA designation of the canal as a Superfund site casts serious doubt on the efficacy of this plan, in spite of its seeming the most readily doable among the projects.

Historically, MoMA has extolled the universal virtues of modern architecture and, to a lesser extent, planning around the world. Typically, architectural objects have been displayed as works of art, disengaged from any site. With Rising Currents, MoMA has asked these designers to get their hands dirty. Barry Bergdoll, MoMA’s chief curator of architecture and design, argues that the exhibition is an investigation of local solutions to global problems—solutions, in turn, with global implications. The exhibition capitalizes on the thinking of a younger generation of designers who merge architecture with landscape, and infrastructure with public space. Let’s hope some of their ideas make it off the museum’s walls and into the real world.

ALAN G. BRAKE IS AN’S MIDWEST EDITOR.
known as “legacy volumes.”
of what may come to be
for puppet, oops, marionette.

A global computer network
the apocalyptic nature of
a global computer network
(see Jaron Lanier’s You Are
Not a Gadget for confirmation),
AI posited a robotic boy yearning to be flesh and
in a world gradually turning from the organic
to biomimicry. The book reveals, through facsimile,
sketches, and oral history, the turmoil surrounding
Kubrick’s struggle to reconcile his own darker emotional
tendencies with what he felt the story deserved. It details
with production photographs, interviews, and models the
making of the film itself, a more “entertaining” Steven Spielberg at the helm.

Kubrick’s penchant for expanding upon the nooks and crannies of existing
genera, particularly those involving technology, is well known. After eviscerating
Mission Control’s black box in Dr. Strangelove, and
de-romanticizing space travel in 2001, the path from HAL to Artificial Intelligence was,
in a sense, preordained. In fact the progress in real time from the disembodied vowels
of your friendly ’80s-era, computer-assisted 411 operator
to the syrupy tones of a late-model GPS tracks seemlessly
with the evolution of Kubrick’s sensibility, and
parallels the linear extrapolation of progress found in the
digital realm. But what began as a potentially corrosive
adventure into the underbelly of computer legerdemain
vaulted backwards to another
time and market venture when the project was handed off to Steven Spielberg. From then on, the vision established
by the master of iconic storytelling was inexplicably
diluted with equal parts Back to the Future and E.T., creating
a brew the filmmakers hoped would be a futuristic Pinocchio
story, but which in reality became an all-too-easy
story of nice guys with chips for brains.

Nor was the film propelled
by a then-prescient insight into
then-nascent “Blue Screen” technology. And it is true
that significant new ground was broken, particularly
in the expansion of the virtual studio technologies that had
enabled Spielberg’s startlingly
vivid effects in Jurassic Park.

But in the end, the story
bats last. Even the famous
“Deep Throat” bridges, which
adorn both the cover and a
double centerfold (68 inches!) in the book, played only a bit
part in the picture’s final cut, leaving those who hungered for Kubrick’s last take want-
more.

CRAIG HODGETTS IS A PRINCIPAL AT HODGETTS + FUNG DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE IN CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA.
PAINT BY NUMBERS continued from page 20 directly tied to standpoints along the “promenade architectural.” With this choice of image, de Heer clearly acknowledges variances within Le Corbusier’s prescription for the application of color. The terms of the system are introduced through a philosophy of form and color that opposes De Stijl. And they are expanded by Le Corbusier into a process of assignment post-construction, when the interior “layout of forms” can be studied on site from strategic positions where views can be evaluated and corrected as required through the ranking of colors. The range of applied colors is ultimately sibling to red and blue (and subordinate to white), two colors that form an integral dialectic in the Purist poetics of architectonic polychromy.

De Heer’s graphic layout of the book is partially derived from the logic of the Salubra collection. Pages within each chapter are color-coded across the gutter of each spread. Even the colored end papers recall the values contained within the Salubra collection, ultimately a collection of acceptable palettes designed to aid and limit the client’s selection. Graphics aside, the appendices contain a catalog of essential items that include a list of pseudonyms, variant paintings with corresponding thumbnails, a selection of drawings of realized projects related to the subject of architectonic polychromy, and fragments from central texts written by Jeanneret and Ozenfant.

The chapters themselves are steeped in scholarship and concisely summarized. While all of them contribute to de Heer’s ultimate purpose—to establish a philosophy of Purism, then illustrate how the paintings of Jeanneret inform the architectural development of Le Corbusier in the context of legitimizing color—Chapter 2, “Disegno and Experimental Aesthetics,” provides the overarching ideological framework. This chapter concerns Jeanneret and Ozenfant’s insistence on the relevance of proportion, light-dark relations, and the economic use of color in painting.

To say that color is always subordinate to form for Le Corbusier is problematic. It is clear that de Heer wants us to realize that color is used subjectively in Le Corbusier’s early projects to classify, rectify, intensify, weaken, or provide an accent to the composition of the interior, which is delineated by the wall. In spite of this, the Purist conception of form is most commonly associated with what de Heer refers to as the “constructive” property of white. There are “associative” aspects to Le Corbusier’s method of application that call into question the objectivity of the system. De Heer provides us with evidence of a theory of painting that initially translates into a method for organizing the architectonic form of an interior bound by plan and facade, but the ordering of the emphasized elements is conveyed as a hermetic process with its own set of rules. When the plan and facade are liberated by Le Corbusier, he adapts the theory of architectonic polychromy by dissolving it into the pure expression of materials and monochromat-ic form. De Heer’s honest ability to define the tenets of Le Corbusier’s imperfect system that ironically ends in the purification of architecture through the absence of color is nonetheless immensely revealing.

This book is a critical read for any serious architect or interior designer.
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Last August, the New York City Department of Transportation and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey launched a competition for a mural to adorn the construction fence around Ground Zero. The brief called for “bold, colorful imagery reflecting the vibrancy of the downtown commercial and residential neighborhood.”

The winning design, by New York–based Sage and Coombe Architects, was a chlorophyll wonderland of flora and fauna to be printed on vinyl mesh and installed on Church Street between Liberty and Vesey streets. “The design is in the spirit of embracing the cityscape with an eye toward greening it,” said principal Jennifer Sage. “The idea was to make a garden hedge that you could peel back and look into.”

But the original completion date in December came and went with no mural installed. In January, the competition sponsors announced that none of the entries (including the winner) were “extraordinary enough” for Ground Zero. Sage and Coombe’s work, it was decided, would meanwhile be installed at another Lower Manhattan construction site, Peter Minuit Plaza near the Whitehall Ferry Terminal, which is being overhauled as an intermodal transportation hub.

The mural’s design, shown here with some tweaks to reflect its new location, pays homage to the city’s heritage as well as its icons. Topiary windmills and a wooden shoe nod to New Amsterdam, Coney Island’s Parachute Jump and Wonder Wheel make an appearance, and the Brooklyn Bridge and Guggenheim Museum get the topiary treatment as well. A cast of historical characters also inhabits the hedge: Henry Hudson winks through a keyhole, while the ghosts of Jane Jacobs and Frederick Law Olmsted float in the clouds. Civic leaders like Peter Stuyvesant and Mayor John Lindsay also get their due. “It’s a puzzle of disparate New York components, but all of the entities are the icons you think of when you think about New York,” Sage said.

The greening concept goes beyond the literal idea of the hedge to encompass other modes of sustainability. Sage and partner Peter Coombe have long pursued strategies that incorporate new technologies and green features, and the mural includes alternate means of transportation such as cyclists and skateboarders that navigate the hedge. City officials also intend to reuse the mural if possible.

As for the project’s new home, near UNStudio’s New Amsterdam Pavilion at the entrance to the Staten Island Ferry, Sage remains enthusiastic. “It’s a point of arrival, historically and today,” she said. “So many people trudging by every day are going to see it.” The firm has fine-tuned the mural for the site at Manhattan’s tip, embellishing the Dutch imagery and adjusting details like labels on subway cars to reflect the new surroundings. While the Ground Zero construction fence will now remain as is—a Port Authority spokesman said the agency will periodically update individual panels with images that reflect new construction on the site—Sage and Coombe’s mural is expected to plant a splash of color in Peter Minuit Plaza by mid-April.
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