

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

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SEJIMA AND NISHIZAWA SHARE THIS YEAR'S PRITZKER PRIZE



SALUTE TO SANAA

When Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA were named the 2010 Pritzker Prize Laureates, architecture's highest honor, on March 28, it was a vote for clarity and precision in architecture. Partners for more than 15 years, the pair have designed a body of work including houses, museums, and educational buildings—both in their native Japan and around the world—of singular refinement. Among their best-known works are the O-Museum in Nagano, Japan; the Toledo Museum of Art's Glass Pavilion in Ohio; the New Museum in New York; and the new Rolex Learning Center in Lausanne, Switzerland.

"They explore like few others

the phenomenal properties of continuous space, lightness, transparency, and materiality to create a subtle synthesis. Sejima and Nishizawa's architecture stands in direct contrast with the bombastic and rhetorical," the jury said in its citation. "Instead, they seek the essential qualities of architecture that result in a much-appreciated straightforwardness, economy of means, and restraint in their work." Jury chairman Lord Palumbo went even further in noting that the jury found their work "ingenious but not overly or overtly clever."

Soon after it opened last year, *New Yorker* critic Paul Goldberger wrote that the New Museum "is original, but **continued on page 8**

ANOTHER DEAL STRUCK FOR GROUND ZERO TOWERS



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MAYORAL COMMISSION COULD REWRITE LAND-USE PROCESS

Whither ULURP?

Political observers might think that the recently appointed Charter Revision Commission was impaneled primarily to make good on Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's promise to reinstate two-term limits. But buried in the fine print of the agenda is the opportunity, among other things, to **continued on page 9**

REALITY CHECK

After an acrimonious year of discussions, on March 25 the Port Authority and Silverstein Properties reached their latest agreement for redevelopment of the World Trade Center site. The deal will bring Silverstein hundreds of millions of dollars **continued on page 2**

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DEBORAH BERKE SPRUCES UP AN EAST VILLAGE ICON



Though pockets of resistance remain, years have passed since the East Village covered its anarchy tattoos with button-down oxfords and exchanged its facial piercings for iPhones. Where once squatters reigned, it is now possible to buy a latte and shop at the Gap. Recently, the city took it upon itself to tidy up one of the neighborhood's older cultural mainstays: 122 Community Center, a former public school building on 1st Avenue and East 9th Street that the city has leased to a variety of public service and avant-garde arts organizations since the late 1970s. The Department of Design and Construction (DDC) has commissioned Deborah Berke & Partners to complete a \$16 million renovation of the aging structure and bring it up to current code requirements.

While the crux of the commission **continued on page 4**

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Rebecka Gordan
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CONTRIBUTORS

MARISA BARTOLUCCI / SARAH F. COX /
DAVID D'ARCY / THOMAS DE MONCHAUX /
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ANXIETY OF ARCHISPEAK

In response to Julie V. Iovine's editorial about architects and their capacity to talk to the public, I could not agree more ("Bluntly Speaking," AN01_01.20.2010). As a graduate student at Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, I am well acquainted with architects' very intense "anxiety to out-impress each other," both among my peers and among my professors. It concerns me that GSAPP Dean Mark Wigley has summed up the profession's place in public dialogue as "the role of architects to reflect upon shelter." No longer are architects portrayed as makers or designers in conversation, no, now they are *reflectors*. Which

is to say, high-minded philosophers?

Furthermore, it frequently seems far more important in Columbia's GSAPP to "project an aura of being in the intellectual and artistic vanguard," than to address anything remotely real or tangible. In my opinion the architect's inability to write or speak at a "natural level" is a cause and an effect of this anxious unbalance. If the institutions that train architects undervalue writing and language that addresses reality while overvaluing idealistic visions of magical speculation, the future young architects of the world may likely do the same.

BRENDAN SULLIVAN
NEW YORK

CAPITAL COMPLAINT

Your paper's drive-by disparagement of Washington, D.C., as a place with "virtually no architecture community nor culture of design" is a tired old chestnut that is years out of date ("Publishing Ties that Bind," AN03_02.17.2010). It is laughable to the 1,963 architects whose membership in the Washington chapter of the AIA make it one of the nation's top 12 chapters, not to mention the 1,500 architects who belong to the Potomac Valley and Northern Virginia chapters.

Washington-area architects have been winning national-level awards from the AIA and other organizations for years. Your paper's

REALITY CHECK continued from front page in public backing to help attract private financing for Towers 2 and 3, though the public funds are contingent on the developer first securing a sizable share of outside investment.

Meanwhile, Silverstein will move forward on construction of the towers' below-grade portions and, if nothing else, the pedestal for the Richard Rogers-designed Tower 3, since further delays would slow progress throughout the site. "This is a very complex enterprise—it is a tightly constructed puzzle where a lot of pieces have to fit together," Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said at a press conference announcing the deal. "Now instead of an expensive, time-consuming redesign of this intricate job, they can get right to work."

As construction proceeds on SOM's 1 World Trade Center and Fumihiko Maki's Tower 4, the real estate market's collapse has made it difficult for Silverstein to find lending for the two remaining towers along a restored Greenwich Street. The developer asked the Port Authority to back financing for the towers, yet the agency worried it would be on the hook if the buildings remained empty amid a glut of downtown commercial space.

Both sides said this new agreement relieved the pressure each was facing as a result of prior agreements and market demands. The deal will potentially cost the city, state, and Port Authority \$200 million apiece. To access the money, Silverstein must raise \$300 million in private investment and pre-lease 400,000 square feet in Rogers' Tower 3. If this succeeds, the developer will have access to \$130 million from the city and \$80 million from the state as an equity stake. The remainder is loan guarantees of \$70 million from the city, \$120 million from the state, and \$200 million from the Port Authority.

Should the project not find funding, Silverstein will still be required to complete Tower 3 through the first few floors, which will house utilities for Santiago Calatrava's swooping PATH station. The timeline for Foster + Partners' Tower 2 has been pushed back indefinitely, though the developer is now required to at least complete it to the ground level.

One area that was not up for negotiation was the architecture. Asked whether Silverstein had considered paring back designs, Janno Lieber, president of World Trade Center Properties for Silverstein, said no. "The Richard Rogers tower for Tower 3 is the building we're going to execute," Lieber said. "And when we get to Tower 2, it is our expectation that it will still be the work of Norman Foster."

MATT CHABAN

assertion is equally ludicrous to directors and curators of institutions such as the National Building Museum, the Corcoran Museum of Art, and many other cultural organizations based here, all of which support an ongoing stream of architecture- and design-related programs.

There may be arguments for basing a national architectural magazine in New York rather than Washington, but the supposed lack of a Washington-area architecture community or culture of design isn't one of them. It's time to put this outdated notion to rest.

STEVEN SPURLOCK
PRESIDENT
AIA WASHINGTON, D.C.

GONE CONDO

Across the city, the luxury condominiums that were conceived when the economy was flush and the demand for an architecture of exclusivity seemed inexhaustible are now nearing completion and ready for inspection.

What do these projects deliver in the larger scheme of things? Everyone knows they are not really meant for the likes of the average New Yorker. I know plenty of wealthy people, but none who quite seem to meet the profile of someone at home in a super-luxury condo. This rare bird must always be dressed for show, entertains lavishly but doesn't cook—and certainly owns no worn-out pots and pans. Everywhere, display seems the paramount value: of views, of art, of self through all-glass exposure. That the buildings themselves seem to have erupted rather than developed organically in their locations is no surprise. What they deliver is a super-charged image.

The grand apartment dwellings of the past also stuck out—just look at Central Park West. But their braggadocio, derived from more traditional motifs, tended to fit within their neighborhoods; their interior floorplans conformed to pre-established norms, and besides were nobody's business. Just as out of reach, they offered something aspirational, not alien, to their neighborhoods. When completed in 1904, the Ansonia allowed anyone living in proximity to Broadway from about 72nd to 82nd streets to indulge in a Belle Epoque fantasy that was then reinforced by the Apthorp built two years later. More recently, Robert A.M. Stern's 15 Central Park West uses contextual classicism in much the same way to add prestige to the street. In the far West Village, Richard Meier's glass towers along the Hudson show how modernism can co-exist with quaint.

But as condos became shaped more for pizzazz, something went out of joint. Chelsea brokers are said to be assuming that Nouvel's condo will sell not to individuals but to corporations as event pieds-à-terre. The Nouvel is a marvelous looking work of architecture that adds enormously to the visual excitement of 19th Street, already pulsating with work by Frank Gehry, Shigeru Ban, and Annabelle Selldorf. And yet it still manages to project an air of isolation. As does the Chelsea Enclave on 9th Avenue, even though it is grafted onto the General Theological Seminary, a local landmark. A 1960 addition to the 19th-century seminary once opened its doors so that people living in the area could at certain times enjoy the magnificent garden within. To raise desperately needed funds, the seminary sold the non-historic building on the street for re-development, and now the luxurious Chelsea Enclave has been erected as a solid wall cutting off access in order, it seems, to fulfill its own exclusive-rights mission.

Such is the way of the world and of wealth. In this context, the fears that condominiums in Brooklyn Bridge Park would probably privatize the park seem warranted. That is, unless they are priced so that a few more people like us can afford to live there. **JULIE V. IOVINE**



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It might look like it has been around forever, but the pizzeria at the corner of Houston and Bowery is the latest from restaurateur Keith McNally—his 11th and most expensive project to date. As the man behind Balthazar and Schiller's, McNally knows the value of an authentic atmosphere, and the 130-seat pizzeria is no exception. "It is completely orchestrated as a stage set, and entirely genuine," said architect Richard H. Lewis, who has worked on all of McNally's restaurants for the past 15 years. Vintage metal chairs, walls of reclaimed bricks, and piers clad in subway tiles help create the old-school ambience, while tables constructed from old police barricades give the restaurant its motto: "Do not cross the line." Two gas- and wood-fired copper-hooded ovens in the open kitchen add an industrial touch, while bottle cases of reclaimed wood and handmade steel—illuminated by cold cathode tubes that glow a mild peach color—evoke an old-time liquor store. A checkered tile floor and booths of pine and painted mahogany give further ragged charm to this brand-new space. **REBECKA GORDAN**



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EAVESDROP> SARA HART

BEFORE SUBZERO, REFRIGERATORS WERE WHITE (OR AVOCADO)

Eavesdrop jetted to pollen-crusted Raleigh, NC, with an eclectic herd of reporters from the likes of *Sculpture* magazine and *The Jewish Daily Forward* to tour the North Carolina Museum of Art expansion designed by **Thomas Phifer**. We were not disappointed. The 127,000-square-foot museum is an elegant, single-story box penetrated by courtyards, pools, and gardens. The interior and exterior details are so deliciously subtle that they seemed to elude some of the mainstream press, who asked him why he didn't site the building to dominate the street. Articulate and precise, Phifer hypnotized the skeptics by explaining every strategy convincingly, and they hung on his every word. (Check out *AN* correspondent **Thomas de Monchaux**'s own critical appraisal in our next issue.) Later, as the tour wound down, and journalists were milling about in the lobby, Eavesdrop overheard two gentlemen relaxing on a bench and discussing the building's aesthetics. The one with deep architectural insight commented to his older companion: "White. All the walls are white. Everything is white! I wondered what that was about, and then I remembered that Phifer worked for **Richard Meier** for years. That's where he got his refrigerator-door palette!" Eavesdrop almost collapsed.

CHANNELING WARHOL

Attention, iPhoneys. "Is This Art?" (*isthisart.org*) is a new iPhone app "designed for people who have questions about the artistic integrity of their surroundings." Using the iPhone's camera, the app's Pittsburgh-based developers claim they will instantly provide users with an "authoritative declaration of artistic importance." This could work for architecture, thought Eavesdrop, which found three architecture-related submissions in its reservoir. The bloated, rainbow-colored "Hell, Yes!" barnacle on the New Museum in New York was panned with "I do not understand it; therefore, THIS NOT ART." The merit of **W.R. Dalzell's** apparently out-of-print book *Architecture: The Indispensable Art* was confirmed with "This work's materiality is immaterial; therefore, THIS IS ART." What is art, the cover or its contents? The same approval rating was bestowed on a bland window wall of a building that looks like a stillborn *Dwell* house. First one to submit a picture of **Danny Libeskind's** Dresden Military History Museum wins.

FAREWELL FEUD

Raimund Abraham, who died in a car accident on March 4 in Los Angeles, had been a faculty member at Cooper Union since 1971, along with other long-timers such as **Lebbeus Woods**, **Diane Lewis**, and **Kevin Bone**. And while a memorial for Abraham in Vienna at the MAK Museum is planned for June 11 (including **Peter Eisenman**, **Michael Rotondi**, **Wolf Prix**, and Woods as speakers) in spite of his renouncing Austrian citizenship in 2002, factions at Cooper Union have proved so fractious that no date or program for a memorial in New York has yet been set.

SEND VINTAGE KELVINATORS AND FRIGIDAIRE TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

KEEP IT COOL continued from front page involves upgrading the 1894 building's outmoded ingress/egress routes and substandard mechanical systems, Berke also saw the opportunity to improve the interior and how it was organized. The center's primary inhabitants—PS 122 Gallery, Performance Space 122, and Mabou Mines—all grew into their rooms organically over the years, without much thought about how they functioned as a whole. "The tenants all had different ideas about how to reorganize the space," explained Maitland Jones, principal-in-charge at Deborah Berke & Partners. "We worked with them to determine what they could share and how we could make it feel like a fully cooperative community center and cultural institution, rather than a building that houses a bunch of non-collaborative groups."

The architects quickly determined that the most economic and elegant solution was to place the



The new addition's entryway.

COURTESY DEBORAH BERKE & PARTNERS

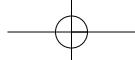
new elevator, fire stair, and mechanical ducting within a tower addition situated in a yard to the north of the building. "Typical of a 100-year-old building, it has a fragile structural system of terracotta arches between steel structural elements," said Jones. "You can't just pop holes in that."

Consigning these upgrades to the add-on pavilion also preserved the historical character of the original building, which was valued by tenants and the DDC. To minimize its impact, the addition will be constructed of light and luminous materials. The tower itself, a steel structure,

will be clad in glass with a perforated and corrugated stainless steel scrim. A canopy and marquee that jut into the street, announcing the new entrance, will also be of glass and perforated steel. The architects are adding a new cornice—the original having been removed years ago—of perforated steel and expanded metal, which will hold light in a volumetric manner and function as a code-compliant railing for a planned roof deck.

Currently, the project is in design development, and construction is scheduled to be complete by summer 2013.

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MUSEUMS RETOOL EXPANSIONS WITH HOMEGROWN TALENT



The Wadsworth Atheneum.

make it more cost-effective," said Nannette Maciejunes, executive director of the CMA.

Maciejunes commends the planning work that TWBTA did on the project, and considers DesignGroup's work a "refinement" of TWBTA's design. "It's not only to be cost-effective, it's about developing local talent," Maciejunes said. "It's about keeping those dollars in our community."

"I feel unhappy not to do the project, but I'm happy that DesignGroup is taking it over," Billie Tsien told AN. "Life is too short for hard feelings, and I like those guys."

Tsien feels that DesignGroup's work will be its own. "So much of our architectural persona is dependent on detailing and execution," she said.

In addition, Tsien believes the landscape for commissioning new cultural buildings has changed and now all elements of a project are more likely to be closely scrutinized by a broader spectrum of stakeholders. "The discipline becomes tauter. It's a different kind of architecture," she said.

In late March, the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT, announced a renovation by local architects SmithEdwards. They had previously canceled a \$50 million addition by UNStudio. The museum is housed in a string of five buildings, and the project will include interior improvements, new roofs, and facade repairs, as well as reorganized mechanical systems and a reopening of sealed-off areas, which will net the museum 8,000 square feet of additional gallery spaces. "Our main concern was less about design than about finding a firm that excelled at preservation and engineering," said Susan Talbott, director of the Wadsworth.

Talbott believes the renovation will celebrate the history of the institution, which is the oldest continuously operated art museum in the country, and reinforce the institution's core mission. "What I hear about are the woes of colleagues who have invested hundreds of millions of dollars for massive expansions, and how difficult it can be to run, support, and maintain them," she said. The Wadsworth's renovation is budgeted at \$16 million, all of which has been raised.

At the Cincinnati Art Museum, a planned addition by the Dutch firm Neuetlings Riedijk has been put on hold, while a more modest renovation of an existing building proceeds. "We are currently taking a breather from our institutional campaign. We are proceeding with raising funds for renovation of the Art Academy building, a structure we inherited several years ago," Aaron Betsky, director of Cincinnati Museum of Art, wrote in an email. "We hope to transform this into office and public space, freeing up significant areas within our existing building for education and exhibitions." Betsky said Neuetlings Riedijk never wanted to work on this portion of the project, and that much of the funding for that phase is already in hand. "We have so far received a pledge of \$2 million for this, as well as \$1.5 million of State Capital allocations, and are pursuing additional funding."

Maciejunes and Talbott agree that the economic climate has changed the way many institutions are planning for the future. High-profile architecture may be less of a priority. "It depends on each museum and on community support," Maciejunes said. "In the end, you've got to figure out how to get it done." **ALAN G. BRAKE**

LOCAL TRUMPS GLOBAL

The economic downturn is reshaping American museum expansions. Recently, two well-known museums have canceled plans by internationally known firms and commissioned more modest projects by local firms, while a third high-profile addition remains on hold.

The Architect's Newspaper has learned that after commissioning a masterplan and

addition by Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates (TWBTA), the Columbus Museum of Art (CMA) has discontinued their services and is moving ahead with a scaled-back addition by Columbus, Ohio-based DesignGroup, who had been the architect of record on the project. "The original plan was for Tod and Billie to do all the work. But with the economy being what it is, we needed to find a way to



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PAUL DEVROUAX, 1942–2010

People may not think of Paul Devrouax the same way they think of Pierre L'Enfant or Benjamin Latrobe, men who left their mark on history by leaving their mark on Washington, D.C.

But they should. Starting in the 1980s, Devrouax, along with his partner Marshall Purnell, led the rebuilding of the national capital after decades of decay, crime, and neglect.

Devrouax, who died March 22 at age 67, worked on many of the city's recent landmarks, including the new convention center, the Verizon Center, the Washington Nationals baseball park, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial underway along the Tidal Basin.

His firm's work was not only well designed, but well placed. The Reeves Center, a city office building opened in 1986, jumpstarted the renewal of the historic 14th and U street area, while the Verizon Center had the same impact on Chinatown.

Devrouax was not a Washington native. Born and raised in New Orleans and Los Angeles, he took his architecture degree from Southern University at Baton Rouge, LA. The architect first came to Washington in the late 1960s as a sergeant in the Sixth Armored Cavalry Regiment based at Fort Meade in suburban Maryland.

On April 4, just hours after King was assassinated in Memphis in 1968, rioting broke out in central Washington. The next day, Devrouax's unit received orders to move into the city and set up patrol alongside tens of thousands of other troops.

I first met Devrouax when I interviewed him for a book I was writing about the King riots. Sitting in his studio in downtown Washington, he told me about how difficult those next few days had been.

"It was something I was obligated to do," he said. "If I hadn't been in the army, if I'd been on the other side, I don't know what I'd have been doing."

That experience left a lasting mark. He returned to Washington in 1973, and five years later, Devrouax + Purnell opened its doors.

Both architects were risk-averse in their designs, and their buildings never pushed the envelope of form or style. But when it came to rebuilding a city with the debilitating complexities of Washington in the 1980s, an experimental streak could have been a liability.

Instead, their work was about melding solidity with transparency, creating buildings that at once speak to the permanence of the city's renewal as well as to its new spirit of openness and community.

The Reeves Center, opened in 1986 on the exact site where the 1968 riots began, is a balance between squat massing and—for the time and place—a daring amount of glass and street-front retail space.

The same catalyzing effect can be felt at the Washington Nationals Park, which Devrouax + Purnell designed with HOK Sport (now Populous), and which opened in 2008. The park sits alongside the Anacostia River, in one of the city's most crime-ridden neighborhoods.

The architects decided to sink the playing field below grade and keep the outfield bleachers as low as possible; as a result, fans are greeted not by the structure's ugly underside but the roar of the crowd and a spreading vista of green.

Some people strive to leave their mark out of vanity; others, like Devrouax, do it out of love for their community and a humble sense of service. Devrouax cut a tall, lanky yet imposing figure, but he was never intimidating. He had a warm smile and a rich, comforting voice.

But more than that, he gave of his time to anyone who asked. He was, according to his former associates, a teacher and a mentor; it's no surprise that, according to *The Washington Post*, at least 14 firms have emerged from the Devrouax + Purnell offices.

I experienced that same warmth about a year ago, when Devrouax joined me and two other Washingtonians on a panel at Busboys and Poets, a bookstore and cafe across the street from the Reeves Center, to discuss my book.

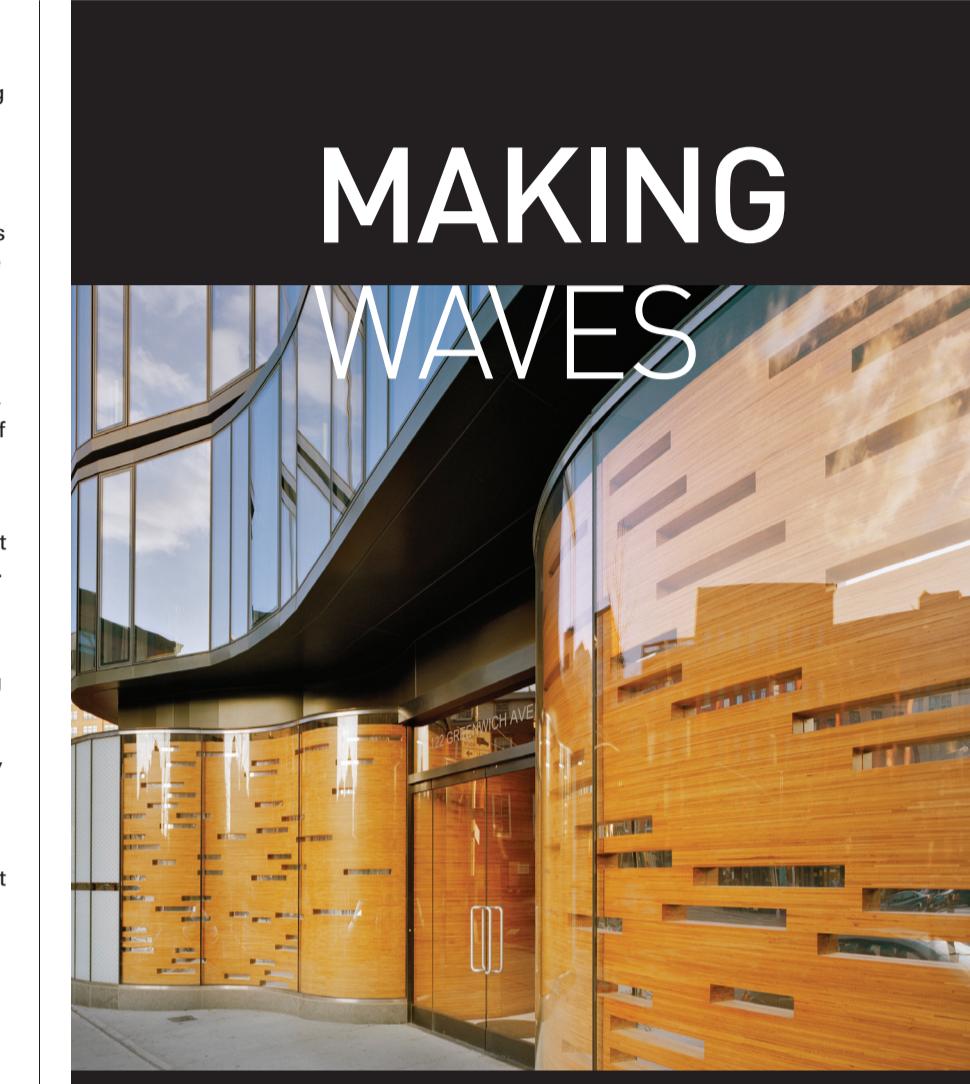
As we chatted beforehand, Devrouax pulled out his iPhone to show me a fly-through video of his firm's design for the National Museum of African-American History and Culture, one of six chosen for the final round.

The competition was in its final days, and the firm must have been wracked by deadlines and nervous impatience. Yet here was Devrouax, cool and collected, spending several hours sitting on a panel to promote someone else's book.

Of course, Devrouax wasn't there just for me. He was there to tell Washingtonians about his experience, to give even a few dozen people a little better insight into their city's history. Like everything else he did, Paul Devrouax was there to give back to his community, and to do whatever he could to make it a better place. **CLAY RISEN**



Devrouax (left) and Purnell with a model of the Freddie Mac Headquarters.



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.

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Architect: Bill Pedersen,
Kohn Pedersen Fox
Associates
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**SALUTE TO SANAA**

continued from front page
doesn't strain to reinvent the idea of a museum. Sejima and Nishizawa have a way of combining intensity with understatement." In each of their projects, SANAA seems to start from scratch, investigating new forms and materials, and employing innovative spatial, surface, and programmatic elements.

In an interview with Victoria Newhouse for *Architectural Digest*, Sejima said the Glass Pavilion's

structural glass walls "show a different kind of relationship between spaces. Everyone can see the relationship between different functions and different spaces."

In terms of Pritzker politics, the recognition of SANAA's two partners somewhat blunts two criticisms that have trailed the prize: the absence of female laureates—with the exception of Zaha Hadid in 2004—and the omission of co-recognition for Denise Scott Brown along with her husband and

Left: SANAA partners Ryue Nishizawa and Kazuyo Sejima.
Below: The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan (2004).

collaborator Robert Venturi in 1991. Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, laureates in 2001, are the only other partnership in which both principals have been honored.

The members of the jury, in addition to Lord Palumbo, include Alejandro Aravena, Rolf Fehlbaum, Carlos Jimenez, Juhani Pallasmaa, Renzo Piano, Karen Stein, and Executive Director Martha Thorne. Sponsored by the Chicago-based Hyatt Foundation, the Pritzker Prize comes with \$100,000 and a medal based on a design by Louis Sullivan. This year, for the first time since 1983, the award ceremony will be held in New York, on Ellis Island on May 17. **ACB**



HISAO SUZUKI



how much it looked like their design," said Pat Chivers, spokesperson for the Atlanta diocese.

The two groups negotiated an agreement: The church would be moved 900 miles from Buffalo to Norcross, in what Mary Our Queen touts as "preservation by relocation." As the church is dismantled, every brick will be numbered and catalogued, and the dismantling process will be filmed to aid in its reconstruction. Contractors will take moldings of any pieces that cannot be easily removed, such as the plaster on the walls and ceiling, and re-cast them in Norcross.

So far, Mary Our Queen has raised \$3 million toward the total \$15 million required for the move. "But it's building momentum," Chivers said. Support is strong in the Atlanta area, as well as in Buffalo, especially among former parishioners who like the idea of the building continuing to operate as a Catholic church.

Local preservation groups would prefer to see the church stay in Buffalo, but have officially stated their intent not to oppose the move. The Buffalo City Council, however, has been explicit in its disapproval of the plan. "[Norcross] should develop their own vernacular architecture there, they shouldn't be poaching ours," said Buffalo City Council President David A. Franczyk.

Even if the move occurs as planned, the council need not worry about St. Gerard's sparking a trend, according to Kevin Keenan, spokesperson for the Buffalo diocese. The church was constructed from large pieces of Indiana limestone, which are easier to take apart and reassemble, making it uniquely suited to a relocation. "This isn't something we anticipate we will ever do again," Keenan said.

JULIA GALEF

HISTORIC BUFFALO CHURCH TO BE REBUILT IN GEORGIA**Portable Parish**

When a shrinking congregation forced the century-old St. Gerard's Church to shut its doors in 2008, its fate was uncertain. The 800-seat church had been a pride of its neighborhood in East Buffalo, NY, boasting stained-glass windows, marble columns, and a basilica modeled after St. Paul's in Rome. But its roof was collapsing, and the parish could no longer justify maintaining it for a congregation that had dwindled from several thousand families in the 1970s to a mere hundred.

Meanwhile, in Norcross, a burgeoning suburb of Atlanta, the Mary Our Queen parish was looking to build a new home for its 3,000-and-counting members. Although parish leaders had drafted a preliminary design with an architect, they went to visit St. Gerard's after hearing of its closing. "They were awestruck at

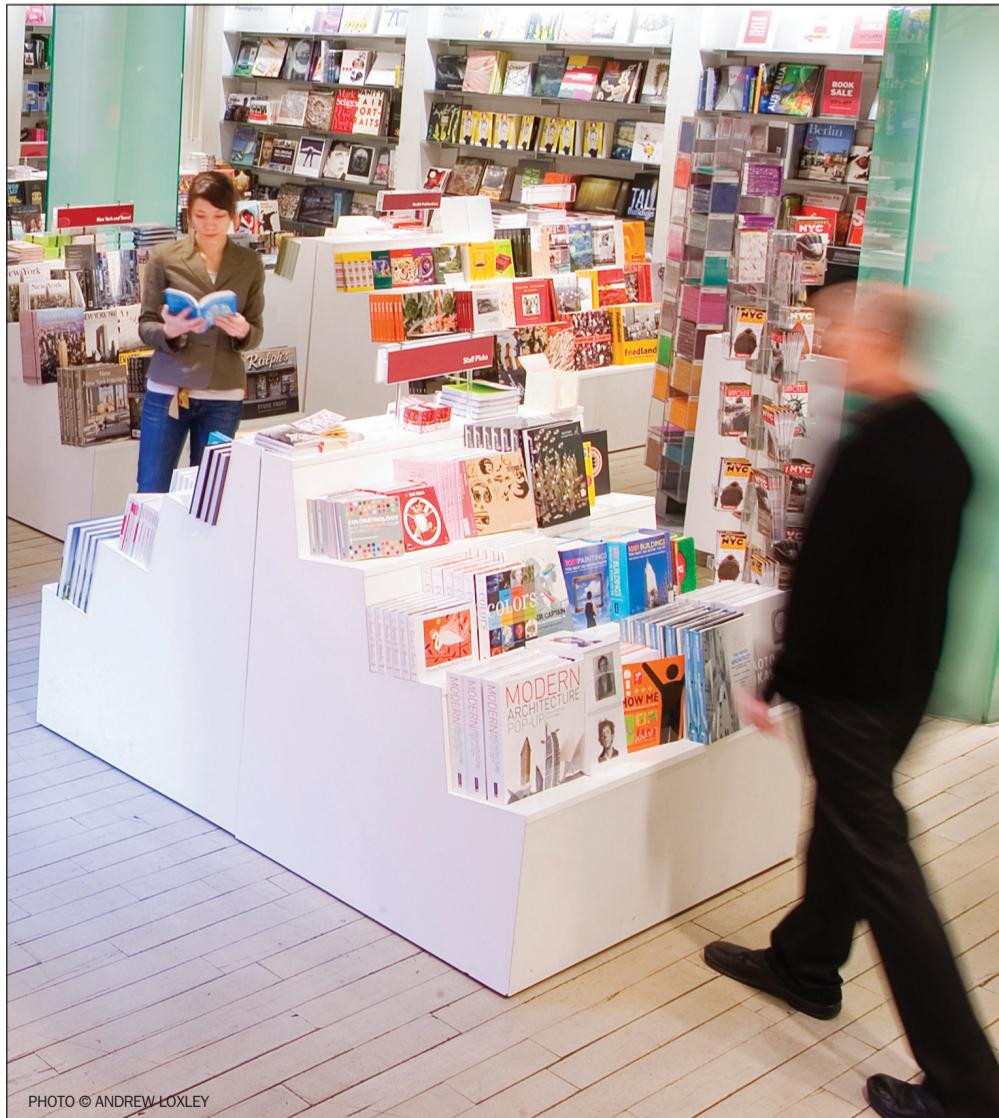


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CAMPBELL SPORTS CENTER

The 48,000-square-foot new addition to Columbia's Baker Athletics Center is sited dramatically where the Harlem River meets the Hudson, and the city visibly hangs on granite cliffs. And geology was a key factor in the design of the sports center, developed by Steven Holl with firm partner Chris

McVoy, as were ideas about movement and shifting ground so common in field sports. Imagining a diagram of "points in the ground, lines in space," the architects pushed the building's elevation over the steep slope to be supported on point foundations. The facade is activated with external, stepped ramps, and terraces that hint at both a sports dynamic as well as the neighborhood tradition of fire escapes. The five-story facility is intended to be the

Architect: Steven Holl Architects
Client: Columbia University
Location: Broadway and 218th Street
Completion: 2012

WHITHER ULURP? continued from front page
overhaul the city's Uniform Land-Use Review Process, or ULURP, the lengthy public evaluation that weighs in on many new projects, from developments like Hudson Yards to new libraries and city parks.

"If charter revision is going to do its job, it has to look at land use," said Richard Anderson, president of the New York City Building Congress, a development, business, and labor group. Currently, ULURP applications are sent from city planning to local community boards, on to the borough president, back to the planning commission, and then to the City Council, though only the last two have binding say. The chance to do it differently is tempting to many, sometimes for conflicting aims.

Developers would like to see the process simplified, with fewer toilsome environmental reviews and limits to what they see as the rising influence of disgruntled locals. Michael Slattery, senior vice president for the Real Estate Board of New York, the influential developers' group, believes ULURP is already too involved. "It seems to have morphed beyond a land-use process to a political or legislative process, and that's not the way it was designed," he said, citing among other issues the rise in Community Benefits Agreements and demands for higher wages at completed projects.

Meanwhile, planners want much the opposite, including greater community input, possibly including having the City Council, instead of the Planning Commission, trigger ULURP, thus incorporating community concerns at the beginning, not the end. Planners have tried, and failed, in the past to mandate greater community oversight. The 1989 Charter Revision eliminated the Board of Estimate and created the city's 59 community boards, but in the end the Planning Commission and council emerged with the strongest voice.

Adam Friedman, executive director of the Pratt Center for Community Development, does not see a conflict between his group and the development community. "Nobody

can be happy with the current process," Friedman said. He believes that even if heightened community involvement does add additional oversight, it will also give clarity to the entire process.

"It always comes down to a struggle at the City Council," Friedman said, citing the final phase of the seven-month ULURP process. "It shouldn't be jobs versus housing versus parks versus schools. These should work together and all get equal weight, not be a zero sum game."

Slattery maintains that land use and the legislature should not mix when talking about development. He points to the Kingsbridge Armory, a mall proposed for the Bronx that was scuttled over wage disagreements, which he believes had no role in the process. Yet Friedman also holds the project up as an example. If concerns about wages for employees had been considered by the developer from the start, he contends, the millions of dollars spent planning the project would not have been wasted.

Hope Cohen, associate director of the Center for Urban Innovation at the Regional Plan Association, and one of 15 members appointed by the mayor to the Charter Revision Commission, said she looks forward to debating these issues: "If it's a true commission, as the mayor has said, this will be a top-to-bottom review—everything's on the table, not just the electoral issues."

Some still hope the commission will leave ULURP alone. "It's a lightning-rod issue," said one planner, who believes that any changes would probably benefit developers. If that happened, Council Member Brad Lander, who ran the Pratt Center prior to Friedman, said he would "fight tooth and nail to prevent the weakening of the community's role in the process."

Others think the current reform proposals are not nearly enough. "The whole process is broken," said Jerilyn Perine, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Commission. "We don't just need to fix ULURP but zoning and planning for the entire city." **MC**

METAL-MORPHOSIS



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.

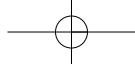
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STUDIO DANIEL LIBESKIND AND PROPORTION

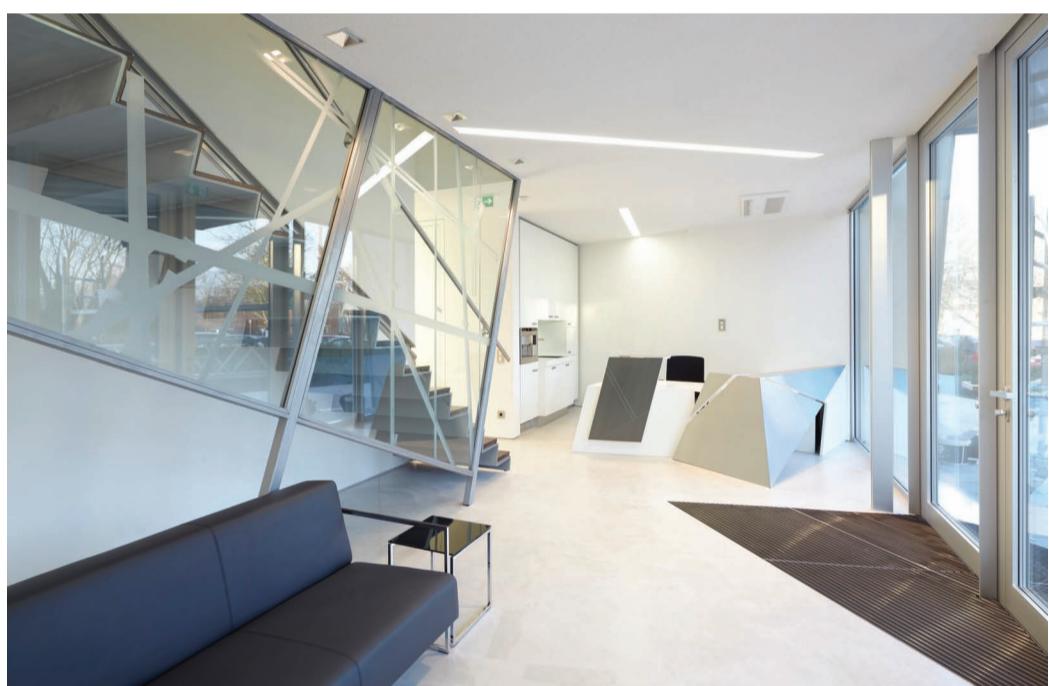
The first thing that Daniel Libeskind will tell you about The Villa, his limited-edition residential offering, is that it's not a prefab house. Yes, it is largely constructed in a factory before being delivered by flatbed truck to a site and bolted together. Yes, there is more or less a kit of parts that buyers can choose from. But this is not your average mobile or tract home. To begin with, the builder, German-based firm Proportion, will only make 30 Villas, and these will be sold with regional exclusivity—meaning that only one will be placed within a given area, so you will never see clusters of them. Furthermore, The Villa is a high-end product, as its price tag—\$2 million to \$3.5 million—attests, built to last, with a crowd of high-technology systems calibrated to meet the most stringent of the world's sustainability guidelines. It is a fine-crafted object of careful detailing, as can only be efficiently achieved within a shop. The nearest corollary might be purchasing a luxury automobile, where the model is set but the customer selects the paint, the interior, the size of the engine, and other custom features before it rolls off the factory line.

All of these things aside, the most obvious factor that separates this house from the general conception of a prefabricated home is its design: Libeskind, author of grand civic and cultural schemes, has scaled his vision of architecture to fit the most intimate of the field's disciplines. This is

not a home for Joe the Plumber. As with the architect's other work, it is sculpture—a crystal growing from a rock, according to the literature. Its shard-like volumes with knife-like edges, non-orthogonal apertures for windows, and metallic cladding bear a direct kinship to the Royal Ontario Museum addition or the Crystals shopping mall at Las Vegas CityCenter.

Inside, The Villa boasts a fluid sense of space similar to the flow of these large public works. From a central core with foyer and stairwell, functions splinter off like spokes on a wheel: a bedroom suite, an open kitchen and "Grand Room," and a "Fireplace Room." The Villa does include a basement with mechanical systems and storage, as well as well-heeled amenities like a fitness room and sauna. Buyers will have the option to go with or without a second story containing additional bedrooms and a balcony overlooking the Grand Room—making the unit either 4,300 square feet or 5,500 square feet. They will also have the option of two interior palettes: Libeskind Style or Casual Style. The latter is distinguished by warm parquet wood floors and stone bathroom detailing for a cozy feel, while the former is stark and white and sculptural, a continuation of the exterior's hard-edged purity.

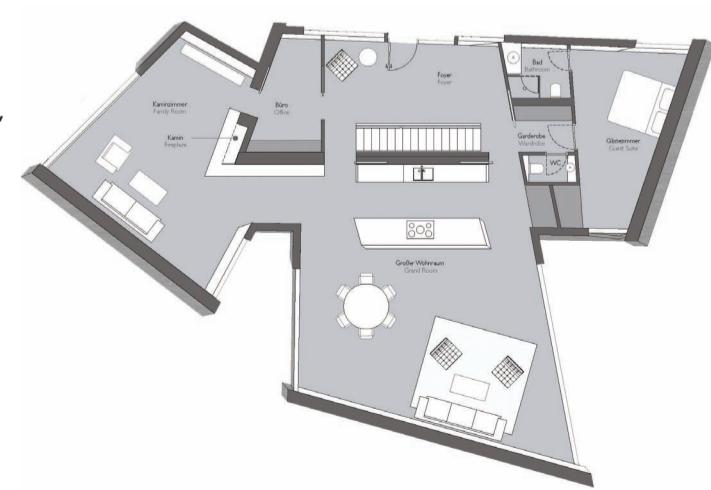
The Villa is wood-framed, a material chosen both because it is renewable and because it has the properties of a carbon sink—it absorbs carbon dioxide that would otherwise off-gas into the atmosphere. The exterior cladding is zinc—in graphite or blue-gray—and comes with an integral solar thermal system of water pipes that takes advantage of direct heat loads from the sun as well as the ambient temperature. The wall sandwich itself is very well insulated with 14 inches of



PHOTOGRAPHS: FRANK MARBURGER; PLAN: COURTESY STUDIO DANIEL LIBESKIND

wood fiber insulation, and the low-e coated insulated glass units come either double- or triple-glazed, depending on the destination of the house. Motorized external shades and internal blinds add an additional layer of sun protection to the windows. Photovoltaic panels can be installed on the roof, which also features a water collection system that diverts runoff to a cistern in the basement, where it can be recycled for toilet flushing and the like if local code permits. Buyers also have the option to purchase geothermal heat pumps, further streamlining their carbon footprint.

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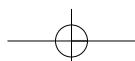
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COURTESY ATELIERS JEAN NOUVEL

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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR

Designed as a ring of low-lying, interlocking pavilions encircling a large courtyard, Jean Nouvel's new National Museum of Qatar is created from sand-colored disks that define floors, walls, and roofs, almost as if growing out of Doha's desert landscape. The inspiration for this poetic construction was the desert rose, a formation of crystallized mineral petals found in the briny layers just beneath the desert surface.

"It is a kind of architecture in itself already," Nouvel told

AN. "It surprises you, it is a mystery that nature can create such a thing—and I like architecture that is mysterious, that makes you wonder."

The bladelike petals became the starting point for a monumental building that unfolds "in a rhythm of asymmetry," Nouvel said. The disks are of varying curvature and diameter, made of steel and clad in glass fiber-reinforced concrete panels. Concealed columns carry the loads of horizontal members, while glazed facades fill the voids between disks.

Built for the Qatar Museums Authority, the 430,000-square-foot structure

will address the natural history of the Qatar peninsula, the country's social and cultural history, and the history of Qatar as a nation.

Exhibits will also include displays about the modern oil industry and the region's rapid urbanization. The structure will adjoin the historic Amiri Palace, a museum of heritage since 1975. A park that interprets the Qatari desert landscape will surround the ensemble. Groundbreaking is set for this spring, with completion scheduled for 2013. RG

Architect: Ateliers Jean Nouvel
Client: Qatar Museums Authority
Location: Doha, Qatar
Completion: 2013

AT DEADLINE

VILLAGE TRIAGE?

The bankruptcy of St. Vincent's Hospital on April 6 left West Side residents worrying about where they might find emergency care, but the 160-year-old institution's immediate neighbors were also wondering about the fate of the hospital's proposed development plans. The two major parts of its proposal—a 278-foot tower on the site of Albert C. Ledner's former National Maritime Union Headquarters, and an accompanying 450-unit condo complex across 7th Avenue to be built by the Rudin real estate family—required Landmarks Preservation Commission approval, which was granted in successive meetings last year. In its bid to demolish Ledner's historic structure, the hospital had filed a hardship application, arguing that it could not complete its charity mission without a new hospital. Because a hardship is non-transferable, it appears that Ledner's building has been saved, and that the Pei Cobb Freed-designed hospital planned for the site is now DOA. The FXFowle-designed condos across the street, however, were approved on their own merits, and the developer has expressed interest in moving ahead without St. Vincent's, which could use the proffered \$310 million for its land now more than ever.

GOWANUS ARCHAEOLOGY

The EPA's decision last month to name the Gowanus Canal as a Superfund site drew cheers and jeers, but an unexpected result is that the long-neglected area will not only get a cleanup, but also an inventory. John Vetter, the EPA archaeologist responsible for Superfund projects in New York, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico, will oversee the preservation and excavation of historically significant properties, which could be numerous given how relatively untouched the canal has been for so long. Vetter told the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* that his work is not about uncovering mobsters' discarded guns and old barges from amid the coal ash. "Archaeology is not about artifacts," he said. "Artifacts are the tools we use to tell the story of the entire events that transpired."

SHOP'S SEAPORT RESURFACES

With mall megadeveloper General Growth Properties gearing up to exit bankruptcy, the Chicago-based firm's next move could have implications for its South Street Seaport property. The restructuring plan announced on March 31 would split the company in two: The malls would stay with the original company, while new entity would take over mixed-use projects and pending developments, including a huge proposal for the waterfront side of the Seaport. The project, designed by SHoP to include retail and cultural uses and a 42-story tower, was thought sunk by the bankruptcy, but a company rep told *Downtown Express* that General Growth sees few better uses for the land.

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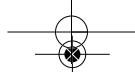
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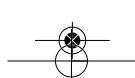


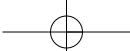
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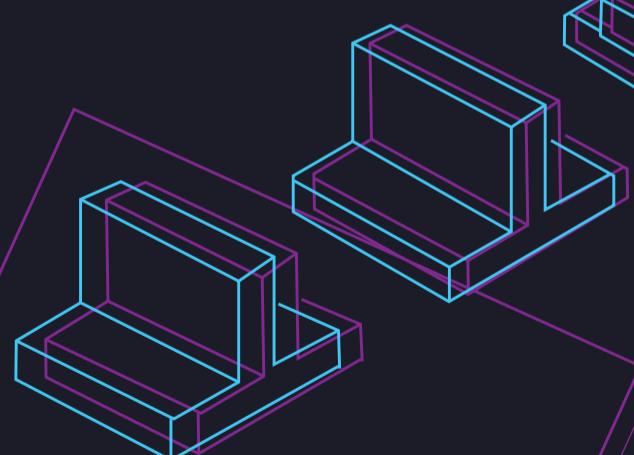
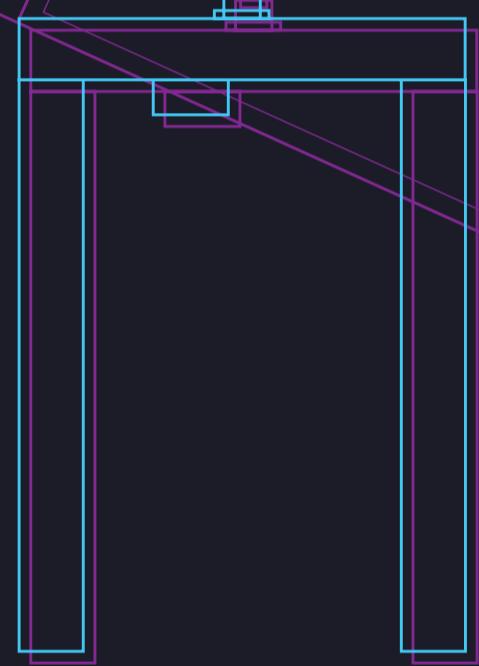
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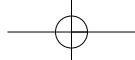
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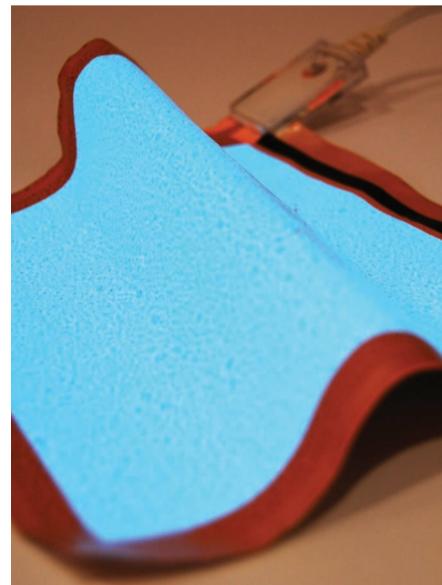
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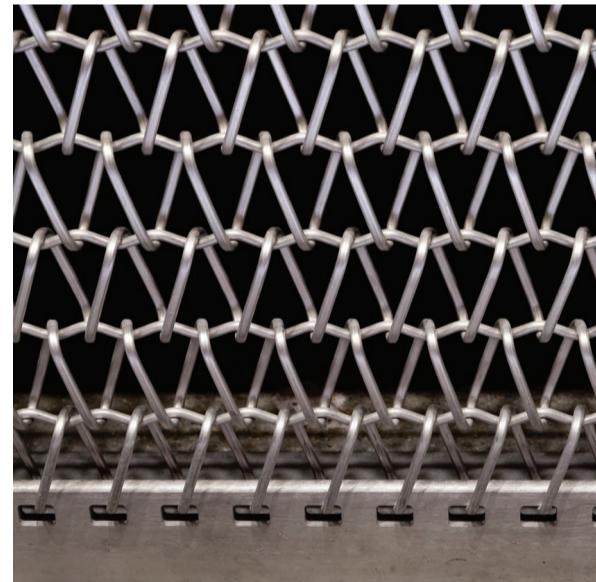
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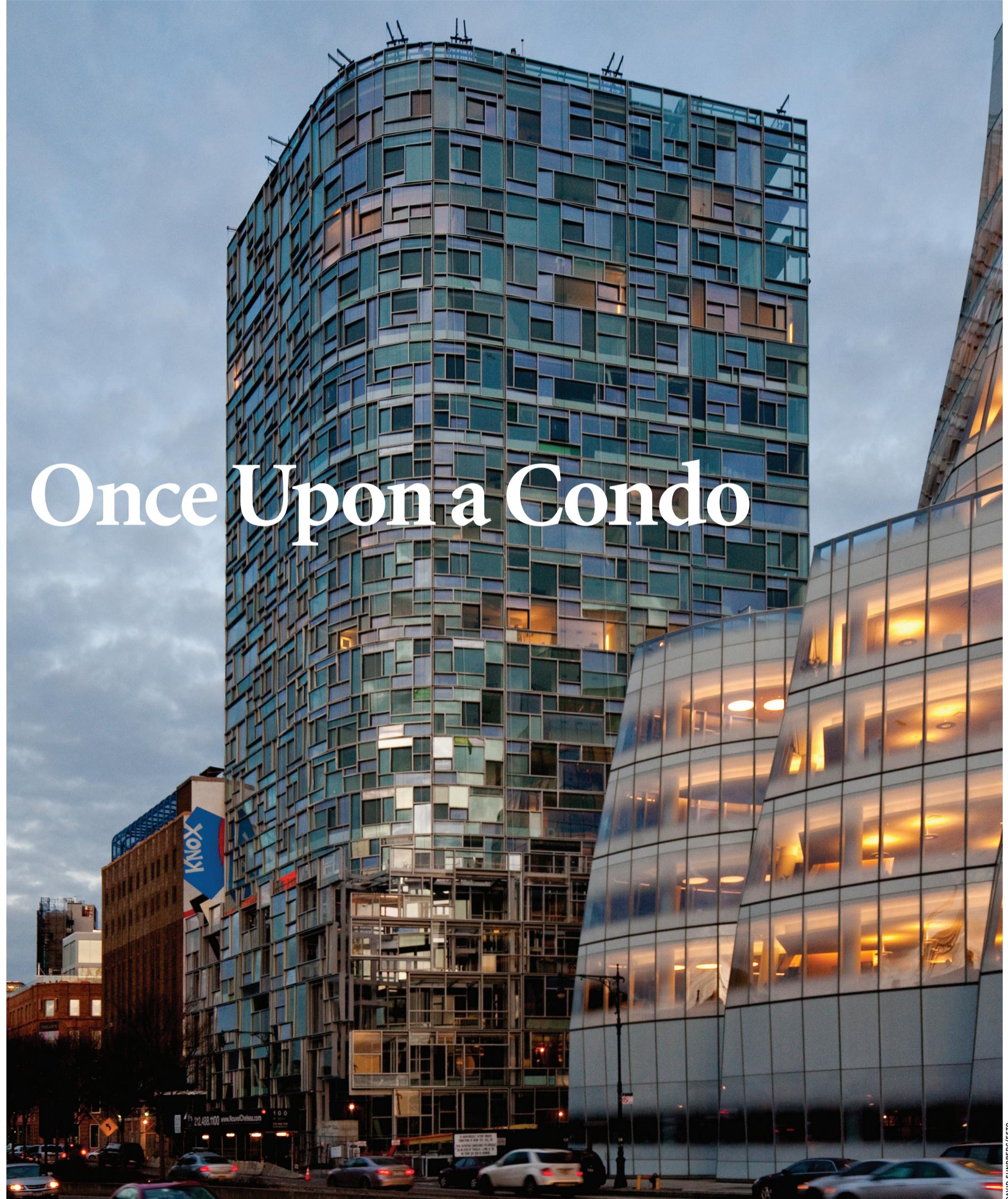
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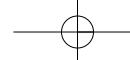
FEATURE
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 21, 2010

Once Upon a Condo



DAVID SUNDBERG/ESTO



With buyer confidence shaken, values re-calibrated, and the real money still in hiding, New York's newest luxury condominiums might seem like jewel-crested dinosaurs—big, weirdly gorgeous, and already extinct. Or are they? AN previews three architecturally daring condos and wonders if they are the last of their kind or breakthroughs in urbanly adventurous design.

100 11TH AVENUE ATELIERS JEAN NOUVEL

Walking west on 19th Street, the new condominium tower known as 100 Eleventh Avenue becomes visible through a break in the trees near the corner of 9th Avenue. From that vantage point, the building looks unassuming. Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning Jean Nouvel, the rear of the condominium is charcoal gray brick with a barely discernible, irregular patchwork of punched windows, not altogether unlike the buildings between 9th and 10th avenues, a motley collection of converted warehouses and housing projects. The somber side conceals the building's riotous curtain wall just around the corner.

The block between 10th and 11th, however, where 100 Eleventh sits, is something else: a catalogue of contemporary architectural talent, with buildings by Annabelle Selldorf, Shigeru Ban, and Frank Gehry immediately across the street. Nouvel's facade—glittering jumble of rectilinear shapes that descends to its most complex at the podium, dissolving or breaking apart as if hitting the ground in a cascade—more than holds its own among its neighbors.

The developers of 100 Eleventh, Cape Advisors, acknowledge the building's neo-Baroque level of articulation, but see it not as the culmination of a now vanished era of architectural excess, but rather as a unique profile that has suddenly become rare in

our more chaste present. "You couldn't get a building like this underwritten today," said David Comfort, a senior executive at Cape Advisors. The developers believe the building offers something to buyers—opulent, eye-catching design, and unapologetic luxury—that puts it in league with uptown trophies like 15 Central Park West, albeit with a cutting-edge downtown spin. "This is a building people either love or hate," Comfort said. "Given the neighborhood—it's an artistic area—our buyers tend to be in the arts or fashion. We're not loaded up with Wall Streeters." According to Comfort, 40 percent of the building has closed and another 20 percent is under contract. Recent deals have been struck at prices above 2007 levels—more than \$2,000 per square foot, according to the developers—and a penthouse sold for \$20 million.

Inside, the apartments, especially the full-floor upper units, serve up the spectacular, thanks in large part to the wraparound views of the Hudson, downtown, New Jersey, the rushing West Side Highway, and Hudson River Park, as well as the High Line and other architectural novelties in Chelsea. The panelized window units, seven on each floor, tend to recede from view with all the action outside. The rear of the building offers more selective vistas, its windows serving as frames above, below, and at eye level for postcard views



PAUL RIVERA/ARCHPHOTO

ONE JACKSON SQUARE KOHN PEDERSEN FOX

LEFT:
NOUVEL'S 100 11TH AVENUE IS THE LATEST ADDITION TO WEST CHELSEA'S ARCHITECTURAL PLAYGROUND.
ABOVE:
THE UNDULATING FACADE OF KPF'S ONE JACKSON SQUARE GRABS WEST VILLAGE VIEWS.

The best that most New Yorkers could hope for from the recent luxury condo boom was some exquisite new architecture to look at and improved immediate surroundings: cleaner streets, better services, less crime, and more night life. The success of these shiny new edifices—authored by some of the world's highest-profile architectural talent—has been decidedly mixed. Too often, the designs have been flawed to begin with, or their detailing poorly executed by corner-cutting developers, or the locations haven't caught up with expectations that they were to be the next big thing in posh living. On the

other hand, when done right, they have contributed positively to the urban fabric of the city. Such is the case with One Jackson Square, an 11-story, 35-unit glass vessel at the intersection of Greenwich and 8th avenues, designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF) and developed by Hines Interests and RFR Realty.

The site itself, a smallish triangular plot, had been a parking lot since the 1930s. At that time, the row of brownstones that once stood there was demolished to make way for the 8th Avenue subway line. In the 1980s, the Landmarks Preservation Commission passed a proposal for a 15-story postmodernist

TOREN SOM

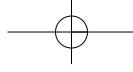
Until 2004, Downtown Brooklyn was a checkerboard of gas stations, irregularly shaped parking lots, and blocks of brick rowhouses. But with a rezoning that year, the mile-long stretch of Flatbush Avenue from the Manhattan Bridge to the Atlantic Center mall was transformed, almost overnight, by a parade of luxury condo towers that soon started construction.

Of these half-dozen monoliths, one stands out among the rest. Eschewing the brick facades and square sides that characterize so many apartment buildings in the city, SOM has created a tower unlike any of its immediate neighbors,

and even most other buildings in the city, which is precisely what developer Don Capoccia wanted. "We knew there'd be a lot of product coming on the market around the same time," the BFC Partners principal said, "and we wanted a building that would really stand out from everything around it."

Devised during the height of the real estate boom, the sleek, sustainable tower called Toren (that's tower in Dutch) was designed to draw people across the city, not only those fleeing Manhattan's skyrocketing prices, but those drawn to its unusual curtain wall, jagged shape, and staggered unit layout.

When the housing



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 21, 2010

100 11th AVENUE CONTINUED

of the Empire State and New York Times buildings. The penthouse, with 14-foot ceilings that feel even higher thanks to Nouvel's blinding white interiors, is fitted with custom light fixtures, white terrazzo floors and slab kitchen islands, and Corian cabinets and shelving all designed by the architect. Nouvel's prototype electronic fixtures have been produced for the kitchen and bath. On the roof, a terrace is nearly equal to the size of the apartment. A curious "outdoor" area is carved out behind the facade with access from the living room; enclosed on all sides but open to the sky, it offers protection from the wind, but also suggests a very expensive fish tank for humans.

The interior spaces wrapped by the curve of the facade are somewhat programmatically ambiguous, even challenging. Floor slabs are extra thick to reduce the number of columns at the perimeter, leaving views largely unobstructed but also making for some awkward juxtapositions. (There are fireplaces without enough space for a couch in front of them, both in the living space and the master suite.) Columns pulled back from the curtain wall are wrapped in wall-like

panels, from which the developers believe some owners will choose to extend walls or add doors.

The sense of spatial ambiguity is further dramatized in the building base, where the curtain wall extends out to the street, and is punctured by voids, as well as filled with outdoor rooms hung from the building frame. These lower units take full advantage of this indoor/outdoor space, a detail that the developers believe will help sell the always less-desirable lower units. There will even be trees suspended in planters hung within this zone. Where the corner should meet, Nouvel has left a jagged edge.

One proviso: The building's nearest neighbor on 11th Avenue is a women's detention center, a holdover and reminder of the area's recent, seedier past. Comfort said buyers are all well aware of their neighbors. In New York's compressed urban conditions, such adjacencies happen often enough. At 100 Eleventh, the indoor/outdoor lap pool and rear garden will be visible from the prison's caged exercise areas. Is that provocative? Guilt-inducing? Cruel? Comfort said simply, "It's New York."

ALAN G. BRAKE IS AN'S MIDWEST EDITOR.

BELOW, TOP:
100 11TH BOASTS NEARLY WRAPAROUND VIEWS OF DOWNTOWN AND THE HUDSON.

BELOW, BOTTOM:
NOUVEL-DESIGNED ELEMENTS INCLUDE LIGHTING AND TERRAZZO KITCHEN ISLANDS.
RIGHT, TOP:
A DUPLEX LIVING SPACE AT ONE JACKSON SQUARE WITH MARBLE FIREPLACE.
RIGHT, BOTTOM:
THE SCREENING ROOM AND LOUNGE FOR RESIDENTS AT ONE JACKSON.

ONE JACKSON SQUARE CONTINUED

clunker of brick columns and capitals, but it fizzled out due to lack of financing. In the meantime, the area itself had grown into something of a seedy patch. Jackson Square Park, which sits just across the street, was full of dead trees, litter, and the homeless.

Hines took an interest in the location in the mid-2000s. In order to prep the neighborhood for their new condo, the developer teamed with local business owners and residents and formed the Jackson Square Alliance (JCA). While taking its own steps to spruce things up, such as planting flowers, JCA motivated the Parks Department to usher out the bums and to conduct a renovation that involved repaving the square with bluestone and activating a Victorian-style fountain.

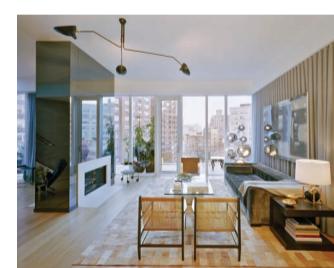
In terms of the building itself, Hines was committed to floor-to-ceiling expanses of glass. "Glass was almost a requirement from the point of view of fulfilling this sort of luxury unit," explained Trent Tesch, principal-in-charge of the project for KPF. "It was the only way to compete with the Richard Meier buildings or 40 Bond." Pulling this off in the Greenwich Village Historic District, however, required a rigorous public review process. KPF met with the community several times, having its design rejected at every turn. The Landmarks Commission, on the other hand, unanimously approved it. "We developed an argument based on the notion that the glass is going to change depending on the time of day," continued Tesch. "It has a different reading in morning, afternoon, and evening."

While contextuality may not be the first thing that springs to mind when gazing upon a glass-faced building in Greenwich Village, the project's surroundings were at the forefront of the architects' minds. The stacked, undulating, ribbon-like volumes that form each floor were a softening response to the diagonally intersecting streets at 8th and Greenwich avenues.

This theme was picked up in the lobby, a wavy corridor of sensuously curved wooden panels, CNC-fabricated by Situ Studio. KPF worked hard to make sure that the mullions of the windows—double-glazed, low-iron insulated glass units—do not line up, providing a texture and rhythm that Landmarks saw as complementary to the Village. In this spirit, the back walls of the building are red brick with punched windows.

This formal poetry on the exterior would mean little without comfortable living space on the inside. And KPF, which laid out the interiors and designed kitchens and bathrooms, delivered with spaces that feel at once spacious and cozy, and that provide ample daylight and views without sacrificing a sense of privacy. Their success can be read plainly in the sales records. Only five of the 35 units—which range from \$2 million to \$21 million—remain available at the time of this writing. Those that have sold have done so at an average of \$2,080 per square foot.

AARON SEWARD IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.



PAUL RIVERA/ARCHPHOTO



TRENT TESCH



TRAVIS DUBREUIL FOR EVAN JOSEPH IMAGES

TOREN CONTINUED

bubble burst, it was that difference from the norm that guaranteed BFC would have little trouble completing it. It helped that the developer also served as construction manager. "Now, in hindsight, this was still the right decision to make," Capoccia said. "If we hadn't, I think we'd be in kind of a jam."

Toren began as one of those odd-shaped parking lots, acquired in 2006 by BFC after the rezoning. (The firm specializes in emerging neighborhoods, working previously in the East Village in the 1990s and more recently in Harlem.) And in spite of SOM's limited experience with housing, particularly in the city, Capoccia turned to the firm because he knew one of its principals, David Childs, from their time together some ten years ago on the U.S. Commission for the Arts. Childs directed Capoccia to Roger Duffy, a young partner and one of SOM's top designers. "How do you go wrong hiring SOM to design a tower?" Capoccia said.

One of the first design decisions Duffy made was to respect the street grid, turning Toren into a rhomboid tower with an almost Flatiron aspect. "We proposed a building that had an indeterminate quality, where you couldn't tell what exactly the shape was," Duffy said. This illusion is heightened by the pixilated curtain wall of light and dark glass and dimpled metal panels, which masks the building's vertical structure without making it look overly tall.

This "camouflaging technique," as Duffy describes it, was drawn into the building's composite plinth, where the pattern was repeated with an added depth, at times up to two feet, to provide a dynamic vista for cars passing by. The plinth has the

occasional turret reaching up into the tower so the two read as a cohesive object.

Duffy said this approach was essential as the building occupies the entire zoning envelope, unlike, say, Lever House, which was under-built by half. "We couldn't just create a compelling form," Duffy said. "Few maxed-out buildings are beautiful objects because zoning isn't about beauty. But here, I think we really achieved something special."

Another unusual twist for SOM was the chance to design the building's interiors, including the "amenities spaces" typical of most luxury condos, and they were fit together in a multifloor Tetris layout not unlike the units, with the fitness room looking down on the pool and a double-height library.

As for the 240 units themselves, there is great variety among them, as SOM created a digital model of the neighborhood and determined the best views for each unit based on their surroundings on all 38 floors. Coupled with the building's unusual shape, it makes for some unorthodox living spaces. Thus far, the building is 50 percent sold, with penthouse units priced between \$995,000 and \$1.695 million.

Sustainability was also a high priority, including standard features like low-glass, but the team also sought out innovative solutions, such as preferred parking for hybrid cars and a cogeneration plant in the building. The hope is to achieve a LEED Gold rating. "I think in this down market, this attention to detail has helped him do well," Duffy said. "So many of these new buildings, they call them 'luxury' and they're not. But here, I think it truly fits."

MATT CHABAN IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.



FEATURE
19

BELOW:
ONE OF TOREN'S DUPLEX PENTHOUSES WITH EAST RIVER VIEWS.
BOTTOM:
THE MINIMALIST LOBBY AT TOREN.
RIGHT:
THE 38-STORY TOREN RISES ABOVE FLATBUSH AVENUE IN DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN.



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 21, 2010

APRIL/MAY 2010

APRIL

WEDNESDAY 21
LECTURES

Gennifer Weisenfeld
Cosmopolitan Cosmetics: Shiseido and Early 20th-Century Japanese Advertising Design
6:00 p.m.
Bard Graduate Center
38 West 86th St.
www.bgc.bard.edu

Jeff Koons, Sylvia Lavin, and Elizabeth Diller
Facility
6:00 p.m.
Princeton School of Architecture, Princeton
soa.princeton.edu

John Norton
Sustainable Architecture: Communication Through Art
6:00 p.m.
Parsons the New School for Design
Sheila C. Johnson Design Center
66 5th Ave.
www.parsons.edu

SYMPORIUM
Young Practices in Brazil
6:30 p.m.
Columbia GSAPP
Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall
www.arch.columbia.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING
Lee Bul
Lehmann Maupin Gallery
201 Chrystie St.
www.lehmannmaupin.com

CONFERENCE
Design, Infrastructure Sustainability, and Social Responsibility
6:00 p.m.
Harvard Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy St., Cambridge
www.gsd.harvard.edu

THURSDAY 22
LECTURES
Anthony Malkin, Adrian Smith, Gordon Gill, et al.
Green Giants: The Empire State Building and Sears/Willis Tower
6:30 p.m.
Museum of Jewish Heritage
36 Battery Pl.
www.skyscraper.org

Deborah Marton, Barbara Wilks, et al.
Minds in the Gutter: Storm Water Management in New York
6:30 p.m.
Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

Rafael Viñoly
The New Domino
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
cfa.aiany.org

Santiago Calatrava
6:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall Auditorium
Pratt School of Architecture
200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn
www.pratt.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

Dorothea Tanning
Early Designs for the Stage
The Drawing Center
35 Wooster St.
www.drawingcenter.org

EVENT

Sergio Cezar and Studio Sangue Bom
6:30 p.m.
Studio-X
180 Varick St.
www.arch.columbia.edu

FRIDAY 23

EXHIBITION OPENING
Lobmeyr Glass from the Permanent Collection
Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
www.cooperhewitt.org

SATURDAY 24

EVENTS
Construction Watch Tour: District Department of Employment Services
10:00 a.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

Archaeology at New York City's Historic Houses
1:00 p.m.
Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

WITH THE KIDS

Play Date with Palladio
2:00 p.m.
The Morgan Library & Museum
225 Madison Ave.
www.themorgan.org

MONDAY 26

LECTURE
Dennis Pieprz
University of Singapore and Abu Dhabi University Education Park
6:30 p.m.
NYU Abu Dhabi
19 Washington Square North
www.nyu.edu

SYMPORIUM

The Changing State of the Design Press: Now What?
Julie V. Iovine, Michael Sorkin, et al.
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
cfa.aiany.org

TUESDAY 27

LECTURES
Joanne Dolan Ingersoll
Mannequins in the Museum
6:00 p.m.
School of Visual Arts
136 West 21st St.
dcrit.sva.edu

Robert Heintges, et al.
The United Nations Capital Master Plan
6:30 p.m.
Ford Foundation
320 East 43rd St.
www.skyscraper.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Dead or Alive
Museum of Arts & Design
2 Columbus Circle
madmuseum.org

Doug + Mike Starn on the Roof: Big Bambú
Picasso in the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

WEDNESDAY 28

LECTURES
John Burns and Dennis Carmichael
A Modernist Suburb: Hollin Hills
6:30 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

John Waldman, Deborah Mans, et al.
Reviving the Estuary: Science, Politics, and Education
5:30 p.m.
Roosevelt House
47–49 E. 65th St.
www.cunysustainablecities.org

Judith Resnik
Re-presentations and Identities: Depicting Justice in Courts
6:30 p.m.
New York State Supreme Court
27 Madison Ave.
www.lmcc.net

Mark Strand
What We See and What We Know
6:00 p.m.
Frick Collection
1 East 70th St.
www.frick.org

Thom Mayne
Building an Urban Campus
6:30 p.m.
Parsons the New School for Design
Tishman Auditorium
66 West 12th St.
www.parsons.edu

Robert Gatje
Stories About Squares
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
cfa.aiany.org

EVENTS
Exploring East Harlem: Buildings Tell Stories
4:30 p.m.
Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

Times Square: Stages of Development and Impacts of Project Green Light Street Closures
7:15 a.m.
Times Square Information Center
1560 Broadway
newyork.ulii.org

THURSDAY 29
SYMPOSIA
The Complete Street
Paul Steely-White, Janet Attarian, Nicole LaRusso, et al.
6:30 p.m.
Scandinavia House
58 Park Ave.
www.mas.org

For the Greener Good: Sustainable Schools
Howard Frumkin, Steve Turkes, Glenn Cummings, et al.
6:30 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

EVENT
Building in a Dense Urban Environment
1:00 p.m.
CUNY York College Academic Core Building
160th St. at Archer Ave.
Jamaica
www.nyc.gov/safetyweek

FRIDAY 30
LECTURE
Louisa Hutton and Matthias Sauerbruch
Current Work
7:00 p.m.
Cooper Union Great Hall
7 East 7th St.
www.archleague.org

FILM
A Necessary Ruin: The Story of Buckminster Fuller and the Union Tank Car Dome
(Evan Mather, 2009), 29 min.
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
cfa.aiany.org

EVENT
Crossing the Line: The 2010 D-Crit Conference
11:00 a.m.
School of Visual Arts
Visual Arts Theater
333 West 23rd St.
dcrit.sva.edu

MAY

SATURDAY 1
EVENT
A Celebration of Arakawa and Gins
Mary Ann Caws, Arthur Danto, David Kolb, Jondi Keane, et al.
1:00 p.m.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
1071 5th Ave.
www.guggenheim.org

SUNDAY 2
EVENT
2010 Village House Tour Benefit
12:30 p.m.
Greenwich House Music School
46 Barrow St.
www.gvshp.org

TUESDAY 4
LECTURE
Sarah Charlesworth
6:30 p.m.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
1071 5th Ave.
www.guggenheim.org

SYMPOSIUM
America's Mayor: John V. Lindsay and the Reinvention of New York
5:30 p.m.
New York Academy of Medicine
1216 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org



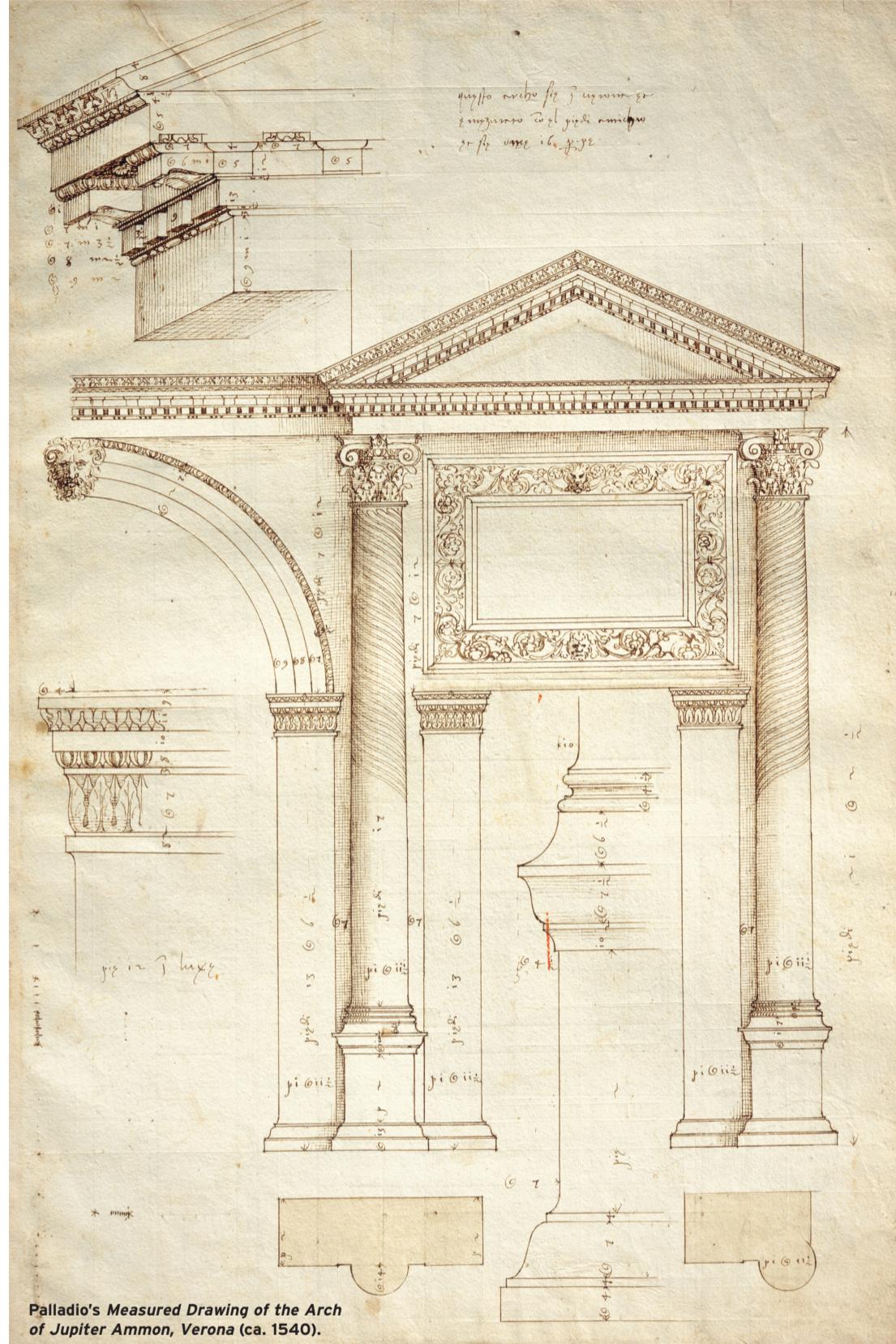
COURTESY ANNA KUSTERA GALLERY



KATE MILFORD

FAST TRASH: ROOSEVELT ISLAND'S PNEUMATIC TUBES AND THE FUTURE OF CITIES
Gallery RIVAA
527 Main Street, Roosevelt Island
April 22 through May 23

Roosevelt Island might be Manhattan's small-scaled twin, but when it comes to sanitation, the islet is leagues ahead of its big sister. On the 14,000-inhabitant island there are no trash bags heaped on sidewalks, no garbage trucks rumbling through the streets. Instead, a computer empties a network of trash chutes several times a day, whisking waste through underground pipes to a transfer station. Yet while cities like Stockholm and Seoul are taking note of this pneumatic marvel—the first urban-scale installation in the United States when implemented in 1975—New Yorkers have hardly noticed. "The system is just as cutting-edge as it was in the 1970s," said curator and architect Juliette Spertus. "Highlighting it can help us see opportunities to improve our urban environment." The exhibit explores the history of the system and milestones in New York garbage collection, while highlighting Roosevelt Island technicians like Billy Dash (above), who helps keep six 300-horsepower exhausters running to generate pneumatic vacuum pressure.



A WILD AND CRAZY GUY

Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey
The Morgan Library & Museum
225 Madison Avenue
Through August 1

Seen from the vantage point of our own time—when architecture is so supercharged, exotic, and erotic—the work on view in *Palladio and His Legacy* seems regular, almost ordinary. Indeed, some of the geometries used in recent museums particularly make architecture of the classical period seem ordinary—a rather strange feeling to have. It shows how times have changed, because I would not have been able to say such a thing 25 years ago.

But as this show reveals, there are examples where Palladio produces something that seems extraordinary by any standard, whether the 1850s, the 1920s, or today. Real weirdness is present in at least two Palladio buildings. The Villa Rotunda, of course, features four identical elevations. If one were to approach the house from a functionalist viewpoint, that would suggest there should also be four separate roads leading up to it. In fact, there was only one. The Gropius types would have been appalled by the lack of logic, whereas someone today might be rather amused.

The other example is the Porto Breganze, which sadly is not in the show. I recall seeing a slide of it in architectural history classes: There are two fully completed bays of a classical facade between columns containing a window each between the columns, meaning there are two windows all together. And how bizarre it is! It's almost like the other bays had been demolished in a World War II bombing, and all that was left standing were these bays on their own. When I mentioned this, a docent at the Morgan remarked that, no, it looked that way because the client ran out of money. That sounds

rather dubious: You would never build a building one bay at a time. You'd complete each phase first; it would be crazy to have one part finished with the plaster, the paint, the putty, the flashings, and all that stuff, and do it bay by bay. Either the docent didn't know what he was talking about or, perhaps, Palladio is screwing with us. Such irregularities might lead you to that assumption, though that would be dangerous. Of course, I am not a historian. And you'd have full denial from some annoying academic that it just wasn't so. Nevertheless, one might hint. Really, one should say something outrageous to at least make an effort to appreciate Palladio's own daring.

In the history of architecture, if you think of the bizarre moments, one would be the surreal Villa Bestegui roof garden by Le Corbusier. Here's a strict modernist (at least, he was in his early days) stepping right outside the pale, almost going on a bender to try something. By that same token, one could claim that Palladio was making the same kind of apostate's gesture. There's a sense of doing the unexpected: One has one's career nicely set up; you go on producing nice stuff; and then suddenly one does something crazy. Corbu on a bender when he is expected to do the classic modern thing is just an example. I am being careful here—I am not saying Palladio did go outside the classic norm. I am just saying it's not outrageous to suggest, and in fact it makes it rather more interesting for us today.

Someone who really studied Palladio—and let's face it, I haven't—might suggest that all Palladio really did was prepare a facade for the Villa Rotunda, and then left it to his builder—in fact, it might be said that if anyone should be credited, it should be the builder. You never know about such things, because often in those days the architect worked with one contractor. They stuck together like a firm or a team, and it was very much collaborative. The architect would draw the facade and the builder would actually build it, because the architect knew exactly what the builder could and would do. Once the

continued on page 22

RIBA LIBRARY DRAWINGS AND ARCHIVES COLLECTIONS

RUSCHA, THE DUDE

Ed Ruscha's *Los Angeles*
Alexandra Schwartz
The MIT Press
\$29.95

A Blvd. Called Sunset. Sand in the Vaseline. Dude. I think there is something dangerous going on here. The words and phrases at the center of Ed Ruscha's paintings and drawings consistently evoke the places and ideas, the tropes and attitudes that characterize Los Angeles in the popular imagination. Yet to call him an "LA artist" is to drastically understate the case: Throughout his restless, formally protean career, Ruscha has seized on the banal-sublime commonplaces of the City of Angels—swimming pools, parking lots, gas stations, the word "dude"—not only as the subject matter of his art, but as the foundation of an entire ethos. It is a testament to this highly ambiguous achievement that Ruscha's work—as well as his carefully calculated public image—often inspires the same feelings as the city itself: fascination, perplex-

Fellow Ferus Studs John Altoon, Billy Al Bengston, Irving Blum, and Ed Moses, taken by William Claxton, 1959.

ity, queasiness, exaltation.

The complex, symbiotic relationship between Ruscha and his star-dusted adoptive city (he grew up in Oklahoma) is the subject of Alexandra Schwartz's new study, *Ed Ruscha's Los Angeles*, which is, shockingly, the first full-length critical treatment of the artist. The book is loosely organized around four major aspects of Ruscha's career: his role in LA's early avant-garde art community that coalesced around the Ferus Gallery, his ambivalent engagement with Hollywood culture, his ongoing interest in the urban structures and built environment of Los Angeles, and his canny self-promotion in the media. While each of

continued on page 22



WILLIAM CLAXTON/COURTESY DEMONT PHOTO MANAGEMENT

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 21, 2010

Sidewalk Critic

Twenty Minutes in Manhattan
Michael Sorkin
Reaktion Books, \$27.00

In his recent book, architect, urbanist, and New Yorker Michael Sorkin invites the reader to take a walk with him from his fifth-floor Greenwich Village apartment to his studio in Tribeca. Written over a period of more than a dozen years, the book is much more than a description of this 20-minute experience; it is a summation of Sorkin's thinking on cities; it is a chart of the 21st-century transformations of New York; it is an appreciation of the street and the fine-grain qualities of cities everywhere; and it is a highly personal account of the city that he and millions of others call home.

Each chapter marks a different location in Sorkin's southerly walk, from the stoop of the building he dubs the "Annabel Lee" near Washington Square to the elevator of his Hudson Street studio and his subsequent studio space on Varick Street further north. Each realm of social interaction is a looping mix of descriptions, recollections, histories, critiques, and explications, with the tangential offshoots always returning to the walk, as if to acknowledge and elevate the importance of the individual's experience in the city, both physically and mentally. Crossing the street illuminates theories of psychogeography and the philosophy of Michel de Certeau. Pigeon control in one paragraph gives way to the "phalocracy of skyscraping" in the next.

A circuitous path in the first chapter (*The Stairs*) leads from the 5th-century Greek architect Hippodamus of Miletus to the Manhattan gridiron plan's shaping of apartment buildings and tenements like the Annabel Lee. Sorkin links the unrelenting grid of the city to parcelling of land, zoning

codes, and ultimately the location and construction of stairways. The reader senses the impact of bureaucratic policies that take their own circuitous route from the law books to the hallways of an apartment building—one of many illustrations of the myriad contested interests and interactions that unfold every day.

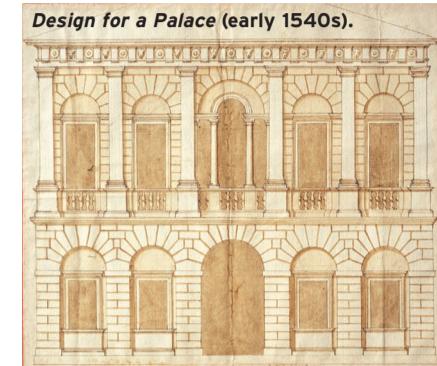
Peppered with subjects that would be at home in an introductory survey course (Le Corbusier's Radiant City, Jacob Riis' muckraking, Oscar Newman's "defensible space"), the book appeals to the general reader. And indeed, the author's constant rebounding between direct experience and urban musings, along with his conversational tone, seem aimed to reach a broader audience. For professionals and educators involved in architecture and urban design, Sorkin treads familiar ground. Still, the book's value lies in Sorkin's point of view: his familiar but marginal "on the ground" thinking rooted in the civic-mindedness of Jane Jacobs, and the 1960s counterculture's embrace of diversity and choice, anathema to many of the subjects he ruminates upon. The book becomes, in its combination of experience and history, a repository for what Sorkin holds dear about the city and its production.

A few ideas stand out from this lovely mess: the city or body as a metaphor for the urban environment; and the importance of participation over possession. The latter topic arises near the end of the book in a critique of the Trump Soho, where the celebrity developer and design team took advantage of zoning loopholes to create a residential tower in a low-scale manufacturing district. Defended by the Bloomberg administration, the tower makes Manhattan just another consumable, in this case by people able to afford \$3,000 per square foot apartments they occupy only a portion of the year. Democratic participation—à la Jacobs' battles with Robert Moses—was usurped in favor of trickle-down economics, where catering to the rich purportedly leads to

benefits for those below. Sorkin's city/body metaphor, on the other hand, sees the urban environment and the body's wants and needs working symbiotically, not set aside in favor of profit. These two ideas relate to Sorkin's vision of the city as an ongoing project, an ever-changing aggregate of elements that create the world we inhabit.

Ideas and ideals aside, what's most engaging about Sorkin's text are the personal anecdotes. New Yorkers will surely sympathize with a long rant against his landlord, the frustrations of navigating sidewalks littered with people blindly texting, or the memorable grumble, "I look forward to spitting on the first [Subaru Tribeca SUV] I see and yelling 'asshole' at the driver." Lacking illustrations, the book is nevertheless highly visual, thanks to Sorkin's colorful stories and precise descriptions of the journey.

FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR JOHN HILL WRITES THE BLOG A DAILY DOSE OF ARCHITECTURE.

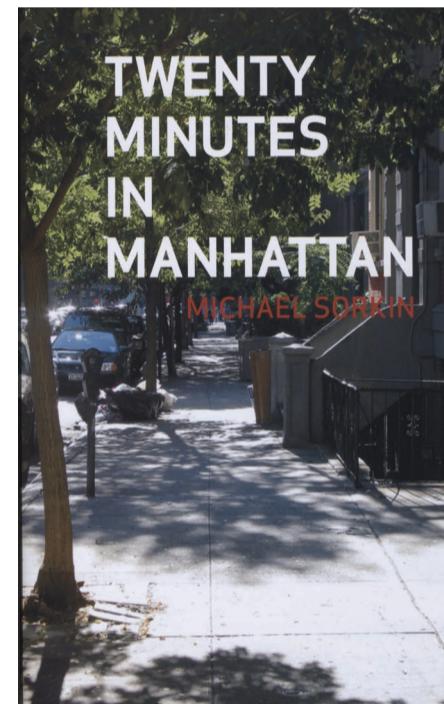


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A WILD AND CRAZY GUY continued from page 21 architect did the drawing, that was the end of it. After all, the vocabulary of the classical orders was quite limited. You knew that Old Charlie, the builder, was better at Doric than at Corinthian, so you'd make sure it was all Doric. But this is all conjecture. One should be terribly careful and one should not say it was like that, but rather that it was possible, or that it is not outrageous to contemplate. In the old days, when showing the Villa Rotunda to students, there were slide projectors and you could just show one slide and then quickly click back to it three more times. Basically that's how you'd tell the story of the Rotunda. That in itself is bizarre.

Then there was the story that Raimund Abraham always told. He loved the Rotunda because it was such an extraordinarily atypical building. He described standing in the middle of the villa right at the intersection of the two axes under the dome. And then, just for him, the owners opened up the four doors—each identical to the other—but the landscape seen through the doors was different in each case. Who knows if Abraham was even telling the truth. But it goes to show that there's nothing particularly regular about Palladio at all.

ARCHIGRAM FOUNDER MICHAEL WEBB HAS SPENT A LIFETIME MAKING AND THINKING ABOUT ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS.



RUSCHA, THE DUDE continued from page 21 these topics constitutes an original, potentially fruitful approach to Ruscha's life and work, Schwartz has unfortunately spread herself too thin. Few of the book's premises are developed in sufficient depth, and the lack of a substantive overall argument about Ruscha's relationship with LA deprives the study of a coherent narrative. What we are left with mirrors, unintentionally, some of the sprawl and tangle of a freeway interchange.

The book's strongest thread by far deals with Ruscha's strategic adoption of various mythical SoCal personae, such as the classic cowboy, the bohemian avant-gardiste, the Hollywood "bad boy," and the

"carefree California funster." As critics and historians have tended to focus more on Ruscha's formal artistic production than on the performative aspects of his career, this shift of focus is both original and overdue. Particularly appealing is a discussion of Ruscha's highly theatrical self-presentation in publicity photographs destined to appear in magazines and exhibition materials; here, the author admirably captures the disconcerting ambiguity of Ruscha's media machinations: Is he a sardonic critic or a cynical exploiter of Hollywood-style mass culture, or both? Overall, Schwartz is circumspect in her treatment of the artist's "sly, self-conscious masquerade." While she approves

of its potential as an ironic deconstruction of artistic, sexual, and social identity, she judiciously observes that Ruscha's position as a white, straight, male, critically sanctioned avant-garde artist allowed him the security to try on various provocative guises without running the risk of being ridiculed or marginalized.

Unfortunately, the problem of identity is the only theme that Schwartz treats with adequate critical and contextual depth. A chapter focusing on Ruscha's social and aesthetic involvement with Hollywood culture, typified by his close relationship with Dennis Hopper, begins promisingly enough but fizzles out in a welter of quotation and anecd-

ote. Further on, Schwartz intriguingly proposes to elucidate the relationship between Ruscha's photographic projects and new developments in contemporary urban theory; yet instead of a coherent account of this relationship, we get summaries of classic texts by Kevin Lynch, Reyner Banham, and Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown interspersed abruptly and almost arbitrarily with descriptions of Ruscha's deadpan architectural taxonomies. Here, as elsewhere, the author appears content to remain on the surface of a potentially fascinating topic.

This tendency to substitute description and citation for sustained critical analysis is the major

flaw of *Ed Ruscha's Los Angeles*. While Schwartz is often successful in evoking the profound ambiguity of both Ruscha's artistic project and his relationship to Los Angeles, she generally declines to make any sweeping or even modest conclusions about what this ambiguity might mean—either about Angeleno and American culture, or about Ruscha's place within art history. The next critic to tackle this artist's enigmatic, deceptively superficial oeuvre will need to be more aggressive in asking what lies behind the palm trees and parking lots so beloved of American art's coolest dude.

MICHAEL PAULSEN IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.



Every Building on Sunset Strip (detail, 1966).



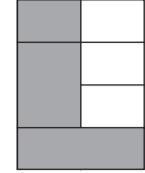
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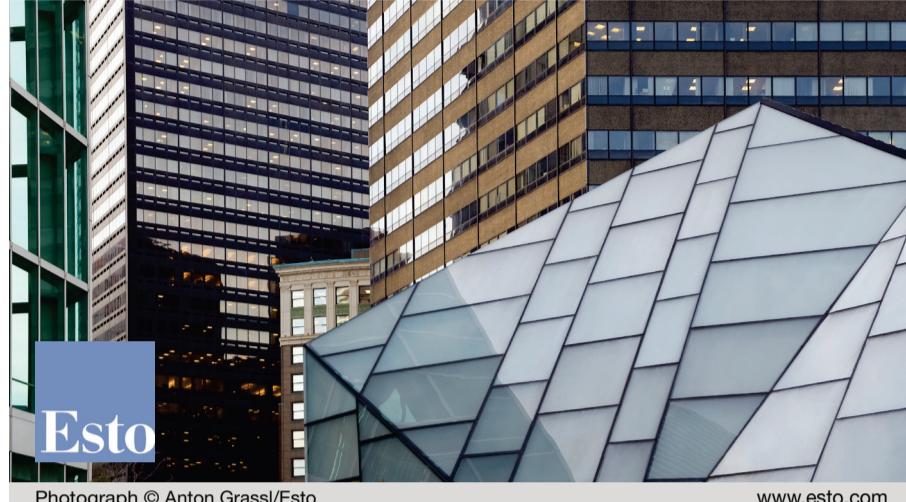
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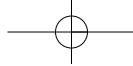
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TIM STREET-PORTER

Desert rider Reyner Banham, one of a bygone generation of candid critical thinkers.

cartoon-like charts—the overall look of the page is dazzling and this very dazzle discourages the patient taking-in of details. Sometimes this can be seen in exhibitions of countless words and images graphically arranged on walls. It would take a viewer many minutes to absorb just what is before the eyes, much less a whole gallery's worth. Overall, there is a reluctance to be discriminating, to decide what is not worth thinking about. Data, data, more data! Magazines mount in piles to be zipped through once a month.

Lastly, we partake in a culture of glib, gnostic generalizing. Easy yet world-encompassing assertions of meaning reflect the vast influence of Rem Koolhaas, with his profound originality and revelatory perceptions, presented with shards of evidence but still striking one as diagnostically dead on. (See his essays on Atlanta and Singapore in *S,M,L,XL*.) But from *Delirious New York* on, he has also produced plenty of bloated, ungrounded utterance. His followers, lacking his astounding acuity, imitate just his mode of offering huge generalities about "contemporary conditions."

The name of the game seems to be: Assert whatever you can about some special newness in our social/cultural moment. So when you cryptically write, for instance, about "the current crisis," we join you in pretending to know precisely what you are talking about. We nod our heads in jittery conspiratorial intimacy.

We suppress acknowledging that we don't really know or understand. This mental smoke screen has recently been most obfuscating among Dutch and American elites; in France it is long familiar. Intellectualism becomes a mental manner. Research—laborious, lengthy, uncompromisingly careful and responsible investigation—slackens into barstool musings. The compulsion to say something new leads to things like this real example from *Volume*: "Treating the [retail] big box as a potential form of high art could lead to an aesthetic breakthrough." Or not.

Carefully cooked slow food for thought is still available for those willing to pull off the main drag. *The New York Review of Books*, for instance, offers lots of solid fare. There is even some on the main drag. Just take the pedal off the metal.

WILLIAM S. SAUNDERS IS EDITOR OF HARVARD DESIGN MAGAZINE AND HAS WRITTEN SLOWER ESSAYS ON KOOLHAAS AND ON CRITICISM.

Hasty Habits of Mind

Intellectuals in architecture form a tiny subculture in which most know most others and thus want to offend none. Architects' careers are precarious and need protecting. We are trying to earn respect for good architecture in a culture that is not all that interested. So we believe that we should stay positive. All this produces a reluctance to be bold and candid when we come across sham and junk.

Negative criticism can seem mean-spirited. It's more pleasant to be post-critical. But the prices we pay are to have too many delusions—especially delusions of grandeur—and to waste too much time foraging dead ends. It took a ferociously demanding critic, F. R. Leavis, to save my generation of English majors from having to spend much time reading mush like Tennyson's poems or bloviation like much of Milton. To whom have we been able to turn for high standards and fearless iconoclasm? Sorkin sometimes. Huxtable back in the day. And within the academy? Sylvia Lavin and Jeff Kipnis are not timid. Some scholars like Barry Bergdoll are not afraid of wielding sharp edges.

We are often intellectually malnourished because we clutch a narrow set of ideas that we perceive, mainly through talk at juries and conferences, to be the only currently legitimate ones. If

we look back 30 years, we see a parade of short-lived must-follows: Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Deleuze. The fold. Datascapes. The surface. Patterns and tessellation. Words ending in *-ity*. And a coming-to-acclaim of designers and design modes that are marginalized within two or three years.

With this comes a scorn for passé ideas. OK, Ptolemy was wrong. But was Chaucer "wrong"? Was Paul Rudolph "wrong"? Beyond science, the category doesn't apply. Why are we feeding ourselves tiny bites when history offers us a huge banquet? In *Harvard Design Magazine*, someone said, about Sorkin's position, "It's so '60s." Of course times change, and we must change with them, but when something was created doesn't determine its value.

In fetishizing newness, we ensure obsolescence: Issues of ANY were exciting in the '90s, but do we turn to them now? And how carefully were they read back then? Robert Somol wrote in the final *Assemblage*: "Out of the 240-odd items published, I read about 12 all the way through. No shit. Five percent. Three of those were mine." Many *au courant* ideas we don't really think through, but merely think *about*, or, worse, think that we *should* think about.

Our subculture has a hard time

keeping off the smudges of the adjoining larger cultures of fashion and status-seeking consumerism. Architects reach many more people through the pages of *Elle Decor*, *Icon*, *Architectural Digest*, and *Wallpaper* than they do through *Log*, *Volume*, *Grey Room*, and *Praxis*. The style sections of newspapers breathe down our backs and tempt us to bend our values. Is serious culture always the domain of a tiny elite? Should it bother us that there are over half a million purchasers of *Elle Decor* but only one or two thousand for periodicals like *Grey Room*, *Log*, and *Praxis*? Does intelligence in the latter publications eventually trickle down to the former?

Columbia's Buell Center and its director Reinhold Martin recently posed this question to guide explorations in a 2009 conference: "How is contemporary architecture discussed and evaluated in public?" Here are some possible answers.

For every 200 of "us" there are two million like the person who wrote on Morphosis' new Cooper Union building: "Aliens, please park spacecraft elsewhere." Indeed, within our subculture, there are common modes of "serious" discourse that we should find troubling, and all have to do with a compulsion to move fast while frantically scooping up or tossing out tiny

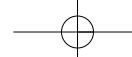
morsels along our paths. Let me offer a few examples:

Tossed-off tweets are fast food for the mind, no chewing required. We see this in blogs, but increasingly also in academic discourse. Tweets must be short. This doesn't force them to be shallow, but it sure nudges them in that direction.

Increasingly content is composed of sound bites. Conferences are overloaded with speakers who are overloaded with time to develop thoughts and present information. So books become clip binders for conference papers and talk transcripts—loose compendia of qualitatively uneven short essays, prose quips, flashy graphics, and glamorous data presentations. Creating book content becomes merely accumulating.

Information overload induces ignorance. This lazy tossing in of everything that can be grabbed partly explains the publication of a few doorstop architectural books of a thousand pages or more. Can and does anyone read such books? Are they not made just to be flipped through like magazines, with at most five minutes of reading now and then? Putatively serious essays are of bite-sized brevity. Then there are "boogazines," which occasionally present scads of information through complex but





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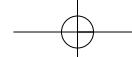
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