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.

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 York critic Paul Goldberger wrote that the New Museum “is original, but continued on page 8

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 8

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

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
Across the city, the luxury condominums that were conceived when the economy was flush and the demand for an architecture of exclusivity seemed ineluctable 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-lux 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 erupated rather than developed organically in their locations is no surprise. What they deliver is a supercharged 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 AIA Meeting 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 quint.

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 graced 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 condominums 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.
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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 checked tile floor and booths of pine and painted mahogany that glow a mild peach color—evoke an old-time liquor store. The architects quickly gave further ragged charm to this brand-new space.

**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 delicately 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 in its precise, Phifer hypothesized 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, iPhones. “Is This Art?” (thisisart.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 don’t understand it; therefore, THIS IS 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 the 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 Rotundi, 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.

**KEEP IT COOL**

continued from front page involves upgraddng the 1894 building’s out-moded 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 Mattland 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 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.

**SEND VINTAGE KELVINATORS AND FRIGIDAIRES TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM**
Oasiq Spindel Rocking Chair
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 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.

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.”

At the Cincinnati Art Museum, a planned addition by the Dutch firm Neutelings 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 Neutelings 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.”

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ALAN G. BRAKE
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, Devrouaux, 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 Calvary 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, Devrouaux’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 Devrouaux + 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 Devrouaux, do it out of love for their community and a humble sense of service. Devrouaux cut a tall, lanky 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 Realtors, he pulled out his iPhone to show me a fly-through video of his firm’s design for the Reeves Center.

I experienced that same warmth about a year ago, when Devrouaux 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, Devrouaux 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 Devrouaux, cool and collected, spending several hours sitting on a panel to promote someone else’s book.

Of course, Devrouaux 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
said the Glass Pavilion’s Architectural Digest, Sejima and programmatic elements. Innovative spatial, surface, materials, and employing investigating new forms and seems to start from scratch, of their projects, SANAA understatement.” In each of combining intensity with and Nishizawa have a way idea of a museum. Sejima doesn’t strain to reinvent the continued from front page of Pritzker politics, the recognition of SANAA’s two partners somewhat blunts two criticisms that have trailed the prize: the recognition of SANAA’s and different spaces.” In terms of Pritzker politics, the omission of co-recognition with the exception of 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 collaborators. 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.”

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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.”

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When a shrinking congregation forced the century-old St. Gerard’s Church to shut its doors in 2006, its fate was uncertain. The 800-seat church had been a pride of its neighbor- hood in East Buffalo, NY, boasting stained-glass windows, marble columns, and a basilica hood in East Buffalo, NY, boasting stained-glass windows, marble columns, and a basilica 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 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 $2 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.

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

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and the development community. “Nobody does not see a conflict between his group
Pratt Center for Community Development, emerged with the strongest voice.
59 community boards, but in the end the
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trigger ULURP, thus incorporating community
Council, instead of the Planning Commission,
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higher wages at completed projects.
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designers’ group, believes ULURP
Anderson, senior vice president for
Building Congress, a development, business,
Robert, president of the New York City
It has to look at land use,” said Richard
Yards to new libraries and city parks.
new projects, from developments like Hudson
PUBLIC EVALUATION that weighs in on many
WHITHER ULURP? continued from front page
overhaul the city’s Uniform Land-Use
Review Process, or ULURP; the lengthy
public evaluation that weights 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, some-
times for conflicting aims.
Developers would like to see the process
simplified, with fewer toilsome environ-
mental 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 influ-
cential developers’ group, believes ULURP
is already too involved. “It seems to have
morphed beyond a land-use process to
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.
Planner’s bill 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.
“Just as a child 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 dis-
agreements, 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 com-
mission, 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 com-
unity’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.”

WHITHER ULURP?

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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into reality

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

MC

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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Photo: © Joseph David

MC

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

Transforming design
into reality

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

Ornamental Metal Institute of New York
Publisher of Metals in Construction
211 E 43 ST | NY, NY 10017 | 212-497-5554 | www.ornmetal.org

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

MC

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MC
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 crew 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 6,500 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 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.

These energy saving and generating technologies feed into a sympathetic climate-control system. Under-floor radiant heating works in tandem with an HVAC system on a 90-percent heat exchange. Overall, the house uses less than 40 kWh/m2, in compliance with Germany’s KfW40 standard. If you order one, Proportion will deliver it in six to eight months, depending on the permitting process. It will arrive at your patch of dirt in wall sections that an affiliated contractor will bolt together and finish inside. With a little more time and money, they’ll also build you a Libeskind garage and a Libeskind swimming pool—basically everything you need to live in a villa in the 21st century.
IT’S THE PREMIERE OF SOMETHING PREMIER.

Davis & Warshow unveils the world’s first next generation Kohler Premier Showroom in the A&D Building. This new showroom experience offers architects and designers a vibrant and exciting presentation of kitchen and bath products in an environment that encourages in-depth interaction. For over 80 years, architects and designers have relied on Davis & Warshow’s unparalleled service to help them achieve results that inspire. Stop by and experience it today.
UNVEILED

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 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 become 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 Qatar’s desert landscape will surround the ensemble. Groundbreaking is set for this spring, with completion scheduled for 2013.

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

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
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 general partner, while a 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.

NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL IN LOWER MANHATTAN IN NEED OF NEW TEMPORARY HOME!

Due to overcrowding in downtown Manhattan elementary schools, our middle school is being forced out of its 30 year current location in Chelsea. The New York City Department of Education has contracted for a new school facility, which the middle school will occupy in 4-5 years.

The site location should be between Canal Street and 34th Street, preferably on the West Side. The facility needs to include the following:

- Accommodations for 270-300 students plus administration offices
- 11 classrooms of 600-800 square feet
- 3 to 4 office spaces for administrators
- Multiple toilet facilities
- Auditorium
- Gym

Occupancy Fall 2011
Principals only, please.

The Clinton School for Writers and Artists Relocation Committee
Please contact schoolNYC@gmail.com
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"...a nice alternative to fluorescent [products]."

CAREENA™

"...uniform luminosity and good brightness control..."

"...unique picture frame lens design..."

"...good color qualities and overall brightness."

For more information on SLOTLIGHT LED and CAREENA, please visit www.zumtobel-led.com.
### Concrete Cloth

Product description:
This flexible, cement-impregnated fabric called Concrete Cloth sets after being sprayed with water and becomes fire- and water-proof once hardened. Available in 1.1-meter sheets in three thicknesses, the cloth can be cut with basic hand tools and molded into a range of shapes for architectural, landscaping, and design applications.

Website: [www.concretecanvas.co.uk](http://www.concretecanvas.co.uk)

### Peanut Trident Inflatable Dome

Product description:
This summer, inflatable structure manufacturer Inflate will launch its largest product, a nearly 8,300-square-foot clear-span dome called Peanut Trident. Part of the company’s line of off-the-shelf temporary and portable structures, the Peanut takes less than a day to erect and can accommodate high wind loads and customized finishes. Standard materials are rip-stop nylon and polyester-reinforced PVC, but other tested fabrics can be used.

Website: [www.inflate.us](http://www.inflate.us)

### Superflex Crosslink

Product description:
SuperFlex is a durable, lightweight electroluminescent lighting sheet that can be applied to other fabrics and surfaces and remains lit even if crushed or punctured. Made with electroactive polymers, the flexible material can be customized in any color and size to create a uniformly diffused light source bright enough to illuminate rooms, billboards, and outdoor shelters.

Websites: [www.crosslinkusa.com](http://www.crosslinkusa.com) [www.materialconnexion.com](http://www.materialconnexion.com)

### Tensotherm Birdair

Product description:
Birdair’s Tensotherm tensile fabric contains a layer of Nanogel aerogel insulation sandwiched between two layers of the company’s Teflon membrane. Nanogel is the lightest solid material in the world, allowing the fabric to maintain its malleability while diffusing natural light and preventing heat loss and solar heat gain with an R-value of 12.

Website: [www.tensothermroofing.com](http://www.tensothermroofing.com)

### Tensioned Ceiling Cambridge Architectural

Product description:
The newest application in Cambridge Architectural’s line of architectural mesh fabrics is a flat-tensioned ceiling system that can extend hundreds of feet in length, seamlessly. Pictured is the Scale pattern, a flexible, open-weave mesh suitable for shade and screen structures like facades, parking garages, and pavilions.

Website: [www.cambridgearchitectural.com](http://www.cambridgearchitectural.com)

### Biotex Flax Composites Evolution

Product description:
Biotex Flax contains a renewable and recyclable resin, allowing the flax composite to be used in a range of load-bearing applications when formed with heat—providing the same stiffness as glass fibers but with half the density. It is a lighter reinforcement material than fiberglass. Available in three standard weaves, the fabric’s pattern can also be customized.

Websites: [www.compositeevolution.com](http://www.compositeevolution.com) [www.materialconnexion.com](http://www.materialconnexion.com)

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**DURABLE COVERINGS FROM A DIFFERENT CLOTH.**

**BY JENNIFER K. GORSHE**

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**URBAN FABRIC**
Once Upon a Condo
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 8th 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, owners by Annabelle Selldorf, Shigeru Ban, and Frank Gehry immediately across the street. Nouvel’s facade—a glittering jumble of rectilinear shapes that descends to its most spectacular, thanks in large part to the wraparound terrace and dramatic curved curtain wall, jagged shape, jagged shape, jagged shape, jagged shape—authorizes some of the world’s highest-profile architectural talent—has been decided 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 best that most New Yorkers could hope for from the recent luxury condo boom was some elegant 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—authorizes some of the world’s highest-profile architectural talent—has been decided 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

ONE JACKSON SQUARE
KOHN PEDERSEN FOX

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 Dutch) was designed to draw people across the city, not only those residing Manhattan’s skyscrapers, but those drawn to its usual curtain wall, jagged shape, and staggered unit layout. When the housing
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, while 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 programatically 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 punctuated 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 provision: The building’s nearest neighbor on 11th Avenue is a women’s detention center. 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. BRADKE IS THE MIDWEEK EDITOR.

A illustrates the 100 11TH ROOFTOP NEARLY 300A VIEWS OF DOWNTOWN AND THE HUDSON. BELOW, BOTTOM: NOUVEL-DESIGNED ELEMENTS INCLUDE LIGHTING AND TERRAZZO KITCHEN ISLANDS.

RIGHT, TOP: A DUFFLE SLEEPING SPACE AT ONE JACkSON SQUARE WITH MARBLE FIREPLACE. RIGHT, BOTTOM: THE SCREENING ROOM AND LOUNGE FOR RESIDENTS AT ONE JACkSON.

ONE JACKSON SQUARE CONTINUED

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. In a city where money talks, that’s as glowing a testimonial as could be desired.

AARON SHERWOOD IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.

Toren continued. This occasional turret reaching up from 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 underbuilt by half. “You couldn’t just create a compelling form,” Duffy said. “Few mixed-use 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/Tatara 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 building and determined the best use 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.

The building has 50 percent sold, with most of the remaining units priced between $995,000 and $1.695 million. The building was also a high priority, including standard features like low-e 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. Duffy said, “So many of these new buildings, they call them ‘luxury’ and they’re not. But here, I think it truly fits.”

MATT CHERAM IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.
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.
**DIARY**

**APRIL**

**WEDNESDAY 21**

**LECTURES**

Ganeshi Lal Weisenfeld
Cosmopolitan Ceramics: Esheloid and Early 20th-Century Japanese
Advertising Design
6:00 p.m.
Barclays Graduate Center
38 West 86th St.
www.barclays.edu

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

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

**SYMPOSIUM**

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

**EXHIBITION OPENING**

Lee Bul
Lemairen Maupin Gallery
201 Chrystie St.
www.lemairemaupin.com

**CONFERENCES**

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 Maltin, 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 Martin
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

**EXHIBITION OPENING**

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

**EVENT**

Sergio Cazar and Studio Sangue Born
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

**CONFERENCE**

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
205 Madison Ave.
www.themorgan.org

**MONDAY 26**

**LECTURE**

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

**SYMPOSIUM**

Julie V. Irvine, Michael Sorkin, et al.
6:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.cafa.aiyian.org

**TUESDAY 27**

**LECTURE**

Joana Dreninger
5:30 p.m.
School of Visual Arts
36 Battery Pl.
www.arts.cuny.edu

**EVENT**

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

**SYMPOSIUM**

The Complete Street
Paul Steele-White, Janet Altatt, Nicole La Russo, et al.
6:30 p.m.
Scandinavia House
58 Park Ave.
www.mca.org

**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**

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

**SYMPOSIUM**

The Serious City
John V. Linnard and the Renaissance of New York
5:30 p.m.
New York Academy of Medicine
1216 5th Ave.
www.mca.org

**EXHIBITION OPENING**

Doug + Mike Starn on the Roof! Big Bambú
Picasso in the Modern
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.mta artmuseum.org

**WEDNESDAY 28**

**LECTURE**

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.
Revising the Estuary
Science, Politics, and Education
5:30 p.m.
Roosevelt House
47-49 E. 65th St.
www.conysustainablecities.org

Judith Resnik
Re-presentations and Identities: Deporting Justice in Courts
6:30 p.m.
New York State Supreme Court
27 Madison Ave.
www.lmc.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
68 West 12th St.
www.parsons.edu

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

**EVENT**

Crowning the Line:
The 2010 D-Ciit Conference
11:00 a.m.
School of Visual Arts
Visual Arts Theater
333 West 23rd St.
akritav.edu

**MAY**

**SATURDAY 1**

**EVENT**

A Celebration of Arakawa and Gins
Mary Ann Caws, Arthur Danto, David Kolb, Jonidi Keane, et al.
6:00 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.gkh.org

**TUESDAY 4**

**LECTURE**

Stefan 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.mca.org

**FAST TRASH**

**ROOSEVELT ISLAND’S PNEUMATIC TUBES AND THE FUTURE OF CITIES**

**EVENT**

Roosevelt Island
427 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 island 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 controls 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 cutting-edge as it was in the 1970s,” said curator and architect Juliette Spurts. “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 help keep six 300-horsepower exhausters running to generate vacuum pressure.
DUDE

THE

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The MIT Press

Alexandra Schwartz

Ed Ruscha’s Los Angeles

A Blvd. Called Sunset. Sand in the Vaseline. 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 underestimate 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, perplexity, 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

A WILD AND CRAZY GUY

Palladio and His Legacy: A Transatlantic Journey
The Morgan Library & Museum
229 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 an architectural history class: 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 window 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.

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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—there 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 explanations, 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 “phallocracy 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 a residential development. He described the Rotunda because it was such an extraordinary building. He described the dome. And then, just for him, the Rotunda. That in itself is bizarre.

Twenty Minutes in Manhattan 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.

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 junster.” 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 in fact overdue. Particularly appealing is a discussion of Ruscha’s highly theoretical self-presentation in publicity photographs destined to appear in magazines and exhibition material; here, the author admirably captures the disconcerting ambiguity of Ruscha’s media machinations. Is he a sardonic critic or a cynical, talented Hollywood-style mass culture, or both? Overall, Schwartz allows him the security to try on various provocative guises without running the risk of being ridiculed for his recognizable face. One should be terribly careful to make sure it was all Doric. But this is all overdone. You knew that Old Charlie, the builder, was better at Doric than at Corinthian, so you’d better at Doric than at Corinthian, so you’d...

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 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 extraordinary etiolic building. He described standing in the middle of the villa right at the intersection of the two axes under the dome. 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.
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Hasty Habits of Mind

Intellectuals in architecture form a tiny subculture in which most know many 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 writing what was wrong. But was Chaucer “wrong”? Beyond science, the category doesn’t apply. Why are we feeding ourselves tiny bites when history offers us a huge meal? If we pay are to have too many delusions—especially delusions of bite-sized briefness. Then five minutes of reading now and then? Putatively serious essays like magazines, with at most a few doorstop architectural books of a thousand pages or more. Can and does anyone browse magazines, with at most a few doorstop architectural books of a thousand pages or more? Can and does anyone browse magazines, with at most a few doorstop architectural books of a thousand pages or more?

Last year, we partake in a culture of gib, gnomic generalizing. Easy yet world-encompassing assertions of meaning reflect the vast influence of Rem Koolhaas, with his profound originality and revelatory perceptions, presented ed 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—slacks into barstool musings. The compulsion to say something new in 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.

Desert rider Reyner Banham, one of a bygone generation of candid critical thinkers, has written slower essays on Koolhaas and on criticalism.
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