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Princeton was very much Ralph’s school during his tenure there from 1989 to 2002, shaped as much by the force of his personality as by the programs, publications, and curricula he initiated, and the talented teachers and students he attracted. The list of faculty alone is impressive: those teaching there during his reign included Juan Navarro Baldeweg, Caroline Bos, continued on page 7

A quick fix might aim to bring the Port Authority Bus Terminal up to par with its splashy Times Square neighbors. By the end of June, the façade will be awash in graphics and light when a 6,000-square-foot stainless steel fabric embedded with LED lights wraps its way around the corner of 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue. The technology, known as Mediamesh, was developed by GKD-USA, the result of a collaborative effort between a German light engineer and an American metal fabric manufacturer. Only four years old, the product allows LED imagery to wrap around buildings without disrupting interior views to the outside. But in the case of the Port Authority, the mesh allows exhaust fumes to escape while masking several giant X-trusses and a façade that hasn’t exactly endeared itself to New Yorkers. continued on page 3

Situated on the banks of the East River, Brooklyn Navy Yard Building 268, the rusting skeleton of a former ship repair shed, will soon be transformed into “a cathedral of sustainability,” according to Baldev Duggal, founder of Duggal Visual Solutions, who holds a long-term lease on the site from the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Duggal will invest $7 million in the building, including $2 million from the city, and plans to blend his industrial printing company with sustainably-designed event spaces to create a new green hybrid called The Greenhouse. Duggal said he stumbled head first into the green movement after viewing Al Gore’s movie An Inconvenient Truth about the effects of climate change. continued on page 10

That’s All, Folks!

On May 11, officials from the Museum of Modern Art and the American Folk Art Museum announced the sale of the Folk Art building to MoMA. Completed in 2001, the Todd TWBTA’s Folk Art Museum was completed in 2001.

MOMA NABS ACCLAIMED WILLIAMS TSIEN MUSEUM; MET TO USE WHITNEY’S BREUER

PORT AUTHORITY PLANS LED LIGHT SCREEN FOR 42ND STREET

Bright Lights, Big Terminal

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RALPH LERNER, 1950–2011

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The Kaleidoscope Collection

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IN THE INSIDE TRACK

The Austrian fin-de-siècle modernist Adolf Loos wrote a satirical sketch about the controlling architect that remains a sharp cautionary for architects today. To recap: An architect visits the home he has designed for a client who is nervous that the architect might find something awry. The client feels relieved, however, that he is at least wearing the bearing walls the architect designed for him. Loos delivers the punchline: “Of course,” thundered the architect, “but for the bedroom! They completely disrupt the mood here with those two impossible spots of color. Can’t you see that?”

The attitude that only the architect has a feeling for what’s right for a space that he or she designed persists to this day and has become an especial hindrance, particularly when it comes to interior design projects where so much, if not everything, is going to be subjected to uses and layers of accumulated stuff well beyond the purview of the creator’s vision.

It is high time to get over the Gesamtkunstwerk frame of mind, and bring to interiors some of the collaborative zeal now invigorating architects’ relationships with engineers and landscape designers. Many larger firms have interior design departments, but how closely do the architecture and interiors staff really work? Is reviewing a variety of suggestions really collaborative?

Recently, at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair, it was very clear that architects and interior designers do not often travel together to look at what’s new in furniture or furnishings, a joint effort that could improve a project’s success in terms of comfort-guaranteed style, integrated technologies, and comprehensive sustainability. Not to mention, the chances for a more sophisticated color palette, perhaps the easiest piece for an architect to misconstrue. As soon as people get educated, they get scared of color,” bemoaned Alexander Girard, an architect who loved nothing better than offsetting something minimal with a splash of extravagance in form and color.

The recently opened Miller House in Indianapolis wouldn’t be the masterpiece it is without that input.

That not hyperbolic contrasts are the all-purpose solution. But something has to move architects beyond the Gran Confort as specification of last resort whenever an important seating arrangement is required. It cannot be that there are no other choices; the alternatives out there are legion. It feels more as if the architects themselves do not have the confidence to try something beyond certified classics.

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Sustainability. Not to mention, the chances for a more sophisticated color palette, perhaps the easiest piece for an architect obliviously to misconstrue. As soon as people get educated, they get scared of color, Girard said, noting that downward numbers could persist over the last six months. AIA chief economist Kermit Baker said that the overall trend has mostlysted their design work and now needed credit to move forward. “A lot of the public stimulus has run its course, and the theory was that the private sector would pick up where the stimulus ran out,” said Baker. But 60 percent of the panelists responded that delayed financing has them sitting at least one incomplete project. “Some of them are probably dead,” Baker said of the projects. In addition to the credit crunch, severe weather also depressed figures. The storms that whipped through parts of the South last month had an effect and analysts continue to keep an eye on the rising waters of the Mississippi.

Indeed, as a region the South dipped further down from 49.7 in March to 48.3 in April. The Midwest kept its head above water at 51.2 from March’s 51.4. Unfortunately, the West took their all-too-familiar backseat. After finally pulling into positive territory at 50.9 in March, they’ve stumbled back to 47.7. The sector breakdown saw residential rise from 50.8 to 53.9, commercial/industrial fall from 54.7 to 49.9, institutional fell further from 48.0 to 48.9, and mixed practice slipped from 49.8 to 46.2. Project inquiries for the month were at 55.0; in March they were 53.9.

Baker pointed out that the overall trend of the last six months AIA chief economist Kermit Baker began to analyze reasons why. Based on comments from ABI survey respondents, he said several conditions required. It cannot be that there are no other choices; the alternatives out there are legion. It feels more as if the architects themselves do not have the confidence to try something beyond certified classics.

One of the driving strategies in architecture today is research, whether it’s into climate change, material explorations, or digital feats of derring-do. That same curiosity needs to be brought to bear on interior design knowledge, not in order to create total works of art, nor to impose a spurious sense of order to a necessarily flexible space, but rather so that architects can be seen as engaging fully in the complete spectrum of design processes. Architects want to taken more seriously as problem solvers, but first they need to be trusted with the spaces that people care about the most: the rooms where they live.

JULIE V. IOVINE

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG TERMINAL continued from front page

Besides needing an aesthetic readjustment, the terminal is at capacity and in need of serious overhaul. Vornado Realty’s ten-year effort to build a tower above the structure and infuse the Port’s coffers with cash has yet to materialize (though there are currently rumblings of a Chinese investor). In the meantime, advertising dollars derived from the signage will help fund improvements at the terminal and at other facilities, according to Port Authority spokesman Steve Coleman. In a totally separate project, Coleman said that the Port is looking to upgrade the interior lighting with the more energy efficient LEDs.

This is the largest scale application of the technology to date in New York (it has also appeared on a smaller scale at the Crowne Plaza in Times Square). And while the Port Authority will likely be using the signage for advertising, the medium has been used for art installations, including a 4,000-hour video loop of a woman basket weaving that graces California State University’s Menden Library in Fresno.

Tom Powley, president of GKD USA, said that because the metal fabric is a tensile structure it could be hung over a large area without the need of extensive steel support. For the second phase of the project, the remaining uncovered trusses will be lit by LEDs facing the surface of the truss. A lighting program will pull the dominant color from the billboard display to dictate the color of the truss lights. Preferable viewing distance to see the photo imagery of the corner display ranges from 80 to 100 feet. The space between the light bands determines the translucence of the material from the street level. In some cases revealing the facade may be desirable, but at the Port Authority, tighter will be better.

TOM STOELKER

WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM

BILLINGS INDEX TUMBLES BACK TO NEGATIVE TERRITORY

HOPING PATTERN

In what can only be described as an about face, the Architectural Billings Index (ABI) took a bit of a tumble into negative territory last month. The April ABI fell to 47.6 from a barely positive 49.8, leaving even October’s low of 48.7. At the end of 2010, words like “rebound” were cautiously bandied about, but for the past three months the ABI skated along the edge of positive territory hovering around 50. (Any score above 50 indicates an increase in billings, and below 50 a decrease.)

Now with numbers the lowest they’ve been for the last six months AIA chief economist Kermit Baker began to analyze reasons why. Based on comments from ABI survey respondents, he said several conditions...
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NEW PROGRAMS STREAMLINE APPROVAL PROCESS AND CONTRACTS

In a long overdue trend, two recent developments dealing with private contracts and city applications are streamlining paperwork for architects, contractors, building owners, and developers. At the convention in New Orleans, AIA Contract Documents unveiled their Next Generation Service that allows collaborators to fine tune contract documents at a digital cloud. In New York, the Department of Buildings announced a pilot program called “Get it Done. Together.” That program brought senior representatives from seven different city agencies under one roof, providing industry members and property owners with one stop shopping for project approvals.

The Next Generation Service allows users to tailor familiar AIA documents to suit project needs. “People are very comfortable with the text of AIA contract documents, because they know the language and understand the relationships in the documents from having used them,” said Ken Cobleigh, managing director and council for AIA Contract Documents. Cobleigh said the new service allows users to clearly track changes in the final version. "All they want to do is see how the document has been changed so they can understand how a particular party has responded to those relationships written out having to read and reread manuscript documents."

The innovation is in how the interested parties arrive at those changes. Instead of a flurry of emails between architect and owner, then owner and contractor, et cetera, the document author works on the document online through their browser. The author could be the architect, contractor, lawyer, or owner, depending on who in the delivery model starts the process. The author then sends an invite to all the parties involved with a set time period for them to review the document. Once online, the various parties face a Word document and can use track changes to alter it where they see fit, though they have limited access with a reduced set of functions. The author is able to monitor the document status online. Once everyone has finished putting in his or her notes, the author can close the session and finalize the document.

There are other bells and whistles. Once the project data (i.e. project names, addresses, etc.) is entered into one document, it can then be captured for transfer to other documents relating to the project. A clause library helps users build their own language and keep it consistent (this too can be transferred to other documents). The final document is a locked PDF that can be sent as a clean document with an addition/deletion sheet presented at the end or shown complete with track changes. User trials will begin this fall, and the service is expected to be up and running by the first quarter of 2012.

Back in New York, the DOB meetings were not virtual but face-to-face. More than 180 letters were sent to property owners whose projects faced disapproval by city plan examiners multiple times. For the month of May, instead of hop-scotching from one city agency building to the next, architects, owners, and engineers were able to sort through their various applications and plans with several city departments all at once and in one designated place per borough. The DOB initiative brought together representatives from the Fire Department, Landmarks Preservation Commission, DOT, City Planning, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. The ultimate goal was to approve as many projects as possible for the month.

Now with the pilot complete, the DOB is set to review the program. “We’re going to get everybody together to talk about what worked and what didn’t and decide how we can streamline our joint agency processes,” said DOB spokesperson Ryan Fitzgibbon. She added that the agency hopes to incorporate parts of the program into their day-to-day operations. A report on the findings will be out in 90 days. TS
POD WITH A VIEW

High above Harlem’s City College campus, a Solar Decathlon entry is being assembled on a rooftop overlooking the quad. Team New York, composed of students from City College’s Spitzer School of Architecture, Grove School of Engineering, and the art department are designing a sustainable house whose lifespan may extend beyond the biennial contest. The team’s “Solar Roofpod” entry addresses the problems of urban density and heat island effect while tapping into the energy and produce as much or more energy than it consumes.

The Roofpod footprint measures 746 square feet and is prefabricated as two steel frame units. It sits on a modular frame that collapses or extends to accommodate the width of a midrise rooftop, be it a multi-unit apartment building or a cast iron office tower. The collapsible frame distributes the weight of the Roofpod onto the buildings’ load-bearing walls while providing enough depth for containers to hold soil, thereby giving the building the potential to create a green roof. For the purposes of the contest, the frame must meet measurement regulations, but it’s easy to foresee how the system could extend to cover an entire rooftop.

The solar panels fixed one foot above the Roofpod house use both photovoltaic technologies and solar thermal collectors to provide electricity and heat water to household appliances, provide adequate hot water, and produce as much or more energy than it consumes.

City College’s Sustainable Penthouse for Solar Decathlon

CITY COLLEGE’S SUSTAINABLE PENTHOUSE FOR SOLAR DECATHALON

The New York City Housing Authority invites New York State Licensed Architectural and Engineering Firms to submit proposals to provide Architectural and Engineering Services on an “as needed” basis to include Local Law 11/98 Cycle 7 Inspections, brickwork restoration and roof replacement contract documents, Special Inspections and associated services. Qualified firms shall have a minimum of two years experience as an ongoing concern and must have provided Professional Services on projects of similar magnitude. RFP’s will be available for pick-up starting May 26, 2011 at 90 Church Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10007. A $25.00 fee is required at the time of pick-up payable by check or money order to “NYC Housing Authority”. It may also be accessed on the NYCHA website. Any questions regarding this RFP, please contact Ms. Kristine Simmons at (212) 306-3188 or email kristine.simmons@nycha.nyc.gov.

DUE DATE: June 23, 2011 at 4:00 PM

All Proposers are urged to attend a Pre-Proposal Conference which will be held on: June 14, 2011, 1:00 to 3:00 pm at New York City Housing Authority, 90 Church Street, 5th Floor Ceremonial Room, New York, NY 10007.

Michael Bloomberg
Mayor of the City of New York

John Rhea, Chairman
New York City Housing Authority
RALPH LERNER, 1950–2011 continued from
front page
Christine Boyer, Preston Scott Cohen, Beatriz Colomina, Liz Diller, Antoine Grumbach, Wes Jones, Laura Kurgan, Thomas Leser, David Lewis, Enric Miralles, Farshid Moussavi, Fritz Neumeyer, Guy Nordenson, Jesse Reiner, Lindy Roy, Joel Sanders, Ignasi de Sola-Morales, Ben Van Berkel, Michael Webb, and Mark Wigley. These were among the “Young Turks” he brought in to complement the already-established forces at Princeton: Michael Graves, Anthony Vidler, Mario Gandelsonas, and Alan Colquhoun. In addition to remaking his staff, Ralph also remade the school, undertaking some much-needed renovations including a new lecture hall and rewiring the studios to make his vision of a computer at every design desk possible.

Lerner received his Bachelor of Architecture from The Cooper Union and Master of Architecture from Harvard University. He worked for Coffey, Levine, and Blumberg Landscape Architects, Haus-Rücker Architects, Richard Meier, and Ulrich Franzen before opening his own practice in Charlottesville, VA, and then in partnership with Richard Reid in London, England. He taught at the University of Virginia, The Polytechnic of Central London, Harvard, and Princeton, where he was named dean in 1989 and also the George Dutton ’27 Professor of Architecture in 1994.

His own practice achieved international prominence with his 1986 first-prize win, designed with his wife, architect Lisa Fischetti, in the competition to build the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi, India. Overseeing the construction of this enormous project consumed much of Lerner’s professional attention beginning in 1990 (construction is still underway), and, as it completed, its postmodern appearance reminded him of a style he’d left behind in the intervening years. Indeed, his most recent work, such as the award-winning Louise Nevelson Plaza (in conjunction with Smith-Miller + Hawkson Architects) in downtown Manhattan, and the Lower School Building at the Princeton Charter School, demonstrated a decidedly more modern urbanistic aesthetic, reminiscent of Lerner’s early work.

But the role he relished most was as empire-maker and educator, so it is little surprise that when the opportunity presented itself in 2002 to build a school almost from scratch in Hong Kong he grabbed it, taking with him several recent Princeton grads to serve as the foundations of a new faculty there. His success in making the department of architecture at Hong Kong University as important in China as Princeton was in the U.S. emboldened the school to open an affiliated “study center” in Shanghai that became the basis for an international summer program as well as joint-study programs with the mainland. Ralph’s determination to make no small plans was just underway when he was diagnosed with the brain cancer that brought him back to the States and forced his resignation from Hong Kong earlier this year.

To those of us at Princeton during his time, Ralph was alternately a boss, a mentor, a supporter, a peer, a critic, and, to some, a father figure. He wore these different hats as needed but always with a wry smile to tell you that he was on your side, always a supporter and friend first, regardless of the role he was playing at that moment. It is in all these capacities, but most of all as friend, that he will be terribly missed.

KEVIN LIPPERT IS THE FOUNDER AND PUBLISHER OF PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS.
TOURISM 2.0

What if you could wander around a city learning about the buildings and sculptures you see around you without having to fumble to dig through a clunky guidebook? That day has arrived, at least for iPhone and iPod Touch users, thanks to the group Culture Now, a non-profit with a mission to map history, art, and architecture in the public realm. With their new Museum Without Walls application, culture is a click away for people on the go. Culture Now president Abby Suckle thinks of culture as a “treasure hunt, almost like urban archeology to uncover really interesting artworks and the stories behind them.”

Recently the organization’s Museum Without Walls application won an Honorable Mention for Best Overall App in New York City’s 2011 BigApps 2.0 contest. The app allows a user to take all maps, podcasts, audio tours, and photos that Culture Now has to offer out onto the street, effectively turning a city into one big museum. It also allows users to “see” buildings that are no longer standing, giving a new and very modern meaning to the concept of heritage tourism. Users of the New York City version can listen to commentary on podcasts by architect Hugh Hardy, parks commissioner Adrian Benepe, as well as Pratt professor (and The Architect’s Newspaper editor-in-chief) Bill Menking.

The idea for the app began around ten years ago when professional design organizations formed Culture Now in response to the devastation of September 11th. Made up of over 400 volunteers, they embarked on an ambitious goal of offering recommendations for rebuilding Lower Manhattan. That effort evolved into the creation of a physical map of the area’s rich cultural and historic sites in an effort to draw people back to devastated Lower Manhattan. From there, it grew into a collection of maps, both print and interactive, which were designed to inform people about museums, historic buildings, sculptures, installations, and murals. This collection, in turn, spawned a series of podcasts and the award-winning iPhone app. The idea of “a museum without walls” isn’t new, but Culture Now has taken that concept to the next level. The app calls up a range of art information, from details about public works by artists such as Louise Nevelson and Alexander Calder to the history of Union Square. Users can curate their own tours of over 20 cities in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, and British Columbia.

During July, Culture Now will be featured as part of an exhibition that starts at the Center for Architecture but may travel around other boroughs as a pop-up architectural exhibition that addresses the digitization of the built environment. ALYESA NORDHAUSER

DIETER RAMS AND VITSOE CELEBRATE HIS UNIVERSAL SHELVING SYSTEM

DESIGN THAT STAYS DESIGNED

Dieter Rams doesn’t call himself a designer. Instead, the world famous German industrial designer writes “architect” on his passport entry card. And it was as an architect in the early 1950s that Rams got his start building additions and installations for a little known new German manufacturer, Braun.

As design director for Braun from 1956 through 1995, Rams set the company firmly on a course toward a vision of modern design as compact, sleek, and irrefutably correct. A record player (the SK4) that Rams designed in 1956—compressed ash white with a transparent acrylic lid and confident aluminum knobs—was nicknamed “Snow White’s Coffin.” Braun feared it would sink; instead, it practically put Braun on the map as a design trailblazer and set the standard—rectangular box with clear lid—for record players that stuck for as long as LPs lasted. Another design, a 45-rpm player with detachable transistor radio from 1959 (below) foreshadowed the Walkman, and is now highly collectible.

When Rams designs something, it stays designed. Danish manufacturer Niels Vitsoe asked him in 1960 to design a shelving system with flexible components. More than 50 years later, the 606 Universal Shelving System has achieved that irrefutably; it stays designed.

Design that stays designed: it doesn’t need more designs, we need more and better thinking about our resources that exist,” Rams said on a recent visit to celebrate a new Phaidon monograph on his work and to see the Vitsoe showroom where a small exhibition of his furniture was on show. And is there something he wished he had been the first to get designed? Oh yes, he said, “Everything by Eames.” — JULIE V. IOVINE
There is a hidden romanticism behind the design of the new Soumaya Museum in Mexico City, a story of a highly anticipated proposal and the hope for a resurrection of the grandeur of Mexican architecture. Mexicans have been waiting for something like this to happen for a while. They demand opportunities for architecture and design, and for pleasure at the street level. The city needs icons to survive and to maintain its status. With buildings, however, expectations sometimes come with disenchantment. The Soumaya, while a gorgeous object, rises pretentiously, with troubled construction techniques and flawed exhibition design.

Designed by Fernando Romero Enterprise, or FREE, one of Mexico’s most acclaimed young firms, the museum opened in March in Plaza Carso, a new real estate development in Polanco, a vibrant and cosmopolitan area of Mexico City. It hosts the private art collection of the man sometimes called the wealthiest man on earth, Carlos Slim Helu, the Mexican telecommunications tycoon, who is also Fernando Romero’s father-in-law. The Soumaya holds more than 6,200 artworks in 60,000 square feet of exhibition space, as well as a 350-seat auditorium, a library, offices, a restaurant, a gift shop, and a multi-purpose lounge.

There is no doubt that the Soumaya is an interesting object within its context. It rises as a vortex with a skin made of 16,000 hexagonal tiles of mirrored steel; a photogenic image. It is a complex composition of twisted steel rings and columns, infusing character into the area. It breaks away from its surroundings and becomes an abrupt icon within the city.

But while it possesses a strong formality on the exterior, the same cannot be said about the interior. While the outside is a complex and somewhat convoluted shape, the inside is an awkward compromise between promenade and envelope. The relation between outside and inside is neither intrinsic nor well established, and the building negates the seemingly self-supporting structure.

Romero’s little experience—his firm opened in 1999—and lack of understanding of museum typology is noticeable. The design contains a blatant reference to the iconic and often-criticized ramp of the Guggenheim Museum in New York by Frank Lloyd Wright. However, at the Soumaya the ramp is less formal and powerful: there is no rotunda or views to give meaning to the spiral, and it does not allow users to orient themselves within the space. Its interiors first deliver a generous vestibule, a white vastness that shows off its fluidity and invites users to explore the building. But its subsequent promenade is less effective. Its spiral ends at the top floor, directing views to the structure above, where one immediately notices the unresolved geometry between trusses and walls, showing the poor level of detailing and construction supervision. Furthermore at the Soumaya, daylight—an important opportunity for poetry, and especially enjoyable for scrutinizing the works of Rodin and other European masters inside this museum—is not given its due. Likewise daylight does little to accentuate the museum’s sculptural details, so the experience relies mostly on artificial lighting.

Romero worked for OMA a few years ago. Its leader Rem Koolhaas has always been an advocate for social change, and perhaps Romero absorbed that while thinking about the museum as an object for urban identification and a sense of place. With the Soumaya, Slim has given the gift of free enjoyment of his art collection to everyone in Mexico, perhaps a small gesture of social responsibility. But the expectation of one of the best museum designs in the world hosting one of the most precious collections in Latin America is disappointed. It could be something much better. It started with a spectacular design on paper and ended in poor execution. We were expecting much more from the wealthiest man on earth.

LUIS OTHÓN VILLEGAS IS A MEXICO-BASED ARCHITECT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AT CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS SUPERIORES DE DISEÑO DE MONTERREY.
**That’s All, folks** continued from front page

William H. Tsien-designed Folk Art Museum was widely heralded at the time of its opening. The institution has struggled with its finances since then, including its debts to pay for the highly-wrought, brooding building, known for its folded white bronze facade and spiraling sequence of intimate galleries. Thus far, MoMA has declined to say what its intentions are for the building, or the amount paid for it. Adjacent to MoMA and surrounded by an empty lot that could be developed, the comparatively tiny 39,000-square-foot Folk Art Museum building represents both an architectural asset for the larger museum and a major development opportunity. MoMA, working with Hines, had been pushing to develop the surrounding land into a large gallery and condominium tower designed by Jean Nouvel, which would have to wrap around the Williams and Tsien building. The Department of City Planning has asked Hines and MoMA to scale down the Folk Art Museum building or MoMA’s intentions for it.

Arguably the best known of Williams and Tsien’s buildings, the richly detailed American Folk Art Museum interpreted the spirit of craft and materiality common in folk art in a contemporary architectural idiom. “It’s not a building where you can rip out the interior and keep the shell,” Williams said. “The structure and the interior are one and the same.” The American Folk Art Museum will continue to operate out of its much smaller branch at 2 Lincoln Square across from Lincoln Center. No date has been set for it to vacate the 53rd Street property. For Williams and Tsien, it is a remarkably swift turn of events for their acclaimed building to face an uncertain future only ten years after it opened. “I’ve got a knot in my stomach,” Williams said. “But I believe in good people, good intentions, and positive outcomes.”

In other museum news, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art announced a new partnership where the Metropolitan will use the Whitney’s Marcel Breuer-designed building as additional gallery space for its modern and contemporary collection. Whitney officials have long maintained that the museum does not have the funds to operate two facilities, so the agreement will allow the institution to move to a new Renzo Piano-designed building in the Meatpacking District. 

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**Undercover Park**

Five finalists have been selected to overhaul the President’s Park, just south of the White House in Washington D.C. The National Capital Planning Commission has charged the firms with finding a more aesthetically pleasing approach to securing the area. Much of post-9/11 D.C. incorporates barriers marked for other uses, such as Olm’s low-slung white marble benches circling the Washington Monument. The new designs need to provide access to the southern fenceline of the People’s House while accommodating D.C. traffic and security. The five finalists are Hood Design Studio, San Francisco; Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, New York; Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architects, Watertown, MA; Rogers Marvel Architects, New York; and SASAKI, Watertown, MA.

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**Really Big Kid Zone**

Sustained resistance from their Village neighbors has not thwarted NYU’s 2031 expansion plans; they’ve just looked to other neighborhoods. The university has leased 120,000 square feet at Brooklyn’s MetroTech Center and also retained Kohn Pederson Fox to design a 170,000-square-foot campus on their hospital grounds along First Avenue. This is not to say that they’ve abandoned expansion plans in the Village or wooing the neighbors. A storefront gallery space called NYU Open House designed by James Sanders & Associates invites the public in to view new 3-D models of revamped plans for the Silver Towers and Washington Square Villas.

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**Marty’s Mad**

Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz is taking his ball and playing elsewhere. Since 1991, the free Seaside Summer Concert Series has been held at the Asser Levy/Seaside Park nestled between Coney Island and Brighton Beach. But noise complaints and lawsuits from two nearby synagogues have forced the borough president to take the show on the road this year, albeit just up the block to West 21st Street in Coney Island. Markowitz noted that the Robert Moses-era band shell at Asser Levy was there before the synagogues and that the opposition had only succeeded in halting plans for $64 million renovation of their own neighborhood park.

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**Unedited**

Duggal said it was not the architect’s design that was being undermined by the opposition, “It’s that the building is not a whole. We’re not planning a commercial scheme.”

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**Navy Green** continued from front page

of global warming on the environment. “That really got to me. I felt we had to start educating our own people to be green,” he said. “It’s good business. We’re not just putting on a show.”

Gregory Okshsteyn, principal at Studios GO, has designed the project to reflect its industrial surroundings while synthesizing a complex program. “The program list is two or three pages long,” said Okshsteyn. And it continues to evolve: “Mr. Duggal is always coming up with new ideas on a daily basis.” Beyond the industrial space, plans call for a green-product incubator, an eco-lounge with a cafeteria serving farm-to-table food for workers and visitors to the Navy Yard, and event spaces. “It’s ambitious,” said Okshsteyn, but his firm, with a background in hospitality design, plans to emphasize the space’s social interaction. “Architects aren’t playing with program enough,” he said. “What if a building is a complete hybrid condition driven by an undefined program?”

To accommodate the programmatic flexibility that Duggal has imagined, Okshsteyn kept the design simple. “We approached the building as a motherboard,” he said, “a shell that new technology can later be plugged into. We did the minimum to be the most effective. When things get too complicated, it’s hard for them to evolve.”

A new second floor will be inserted into the existing 30,000-square-foot structure and will be accessed by a grand staircase in the lobby, whose risers will double as the seating for an amphitheater. Duggal’s manufacturing operations are tucked under the soaring second floor in a sealed environment. Okshsteyn plans to wrap an 18-foot-tall band of split-faced concrete blocks around the lower floor of the building to emphasize its industrial use, while the second floor, predominantly clad in unstructured glass, soars 45 feet above. A north-facing wall will contain eight 20-foot-by-20-foot glass windows that can slide open to maximize connection to the water and provide dramatic views of the Williamsburg Bridge. The Greenhouse’s sustainability goals are just as ambitious as its design. Duggal decided to forego LEED certification for the project but is pushing for a zero-carbon footprint that will allow the building to be completely self-sustaining. A variety of sustainable approaches, both simple and high tech, are planned for the building. Nearly 100 solar panels on the steel and concrete roof will provide electricity for lights inside The Greenhouse, sending surplus energy to its neighbors. Okshsteyn is investigating applying solar film to the building’s windows and a 500-gallon tank could harvest rainwater for use in the building’s bathrooms. In addition to high-tech systems, existing glass will be reused in the building and even an 18th-century cannon found on the site will be reclaimed as part of the final design.

Phase one of the Greenhouse is under construction and includes first floor manufacturing space and a shielded second floor. Okshsteyn said site demolition and asbestos abatement has been completed, and the rest of the space must be ready by October, in time for new printing equipment to be delivered to Duggal.

Of his idea to combine active industrial space with public venues in a sustainable building, Duggal said, “I love to break tradition. Traditions are made to be broken, otherwise we would never have progress.”

Brandon Lklyro
to comment on the architectural merits of the curator of architecture and design, declined Modern Art.” Barry Bergdoll, MoMA’s chief American Folk Art Museum at a critical time, museums will provide funding for the beneficial arrangement between the two property. After carefully considering this MoMA has the right of first refusal on the to sell its building at 45 West 53rd Street, as Museum of Modern Art regarding its decision Folk Art Museum recently approached The a new second floor will be inserted into the existing 30,000-square-foot structure and will be accessible by a grand staircase in the lobby, whose risers will double as the seating for an amphitheater. Duggal’s manufacturing operations are tucked under the soaring second floor in a sealed environment. Okshytan plans to wrap an 18-foot-tall band of split-faced concrete blocks around the lower floor of the building to emphasize its industrial use, while the second floor, predominantly clad in unobstructed glass, soars 45 feet above. A north-facing wall will contain eight 20-foot-by-20-foot glass windows that can slide open to maximize connection to the water and provide dramatic views of the Williamsburg Bridge. The Greenhouse’s sustainability goals are just as ambitious as the design. Duggal decided to forego LEED certification for the project but is pushing for a zero-carbon footprint that will allow the building to be completely self-sustaining. A variety of sustainable approaches, both simple and high tech, are planned for the building. Nearly 100 solar panels on the steel and concrete roof will provide electricity for lights inside The Greenhouse, sending surplus energy to its neighbors. Okshytan is investigating applying solar film to the building’s windows and a 500-gallon tank could harvest rainwater for use in the building’s bathrooms. In addition to high-tech systems, existing glass will be reused in the building and even an 18th-century cannon found on the site will be reclaimed as part of the final design.

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MoMA, working with Hines, had been pushing to develop the surrounding land into a large gallery and condominium tower designed by Jean Nouvel, which would have to wrap around the Williams and Tsien building. The Department of City Planning had asked Hines and MoMA to scale down the proposed building, or the amount paid for it. Adjacent to MoMA and surrounded by an empty lot that could be developed, the comparatively tiny 39,000-square-foot Folk Art Museum building represents both an architectural asset for the larger museum and a major development opportunity. MoMA, working with Hines, has decided to continue to operate out of their much smaller branch at 2 Lincoln Square across from Lincoln Center. No date has been set for it to vacate the 53rd-Street property. For Williams and Tsien, it is a remarkably swift turn of events for their acclaimed building to face an uncertain future only ten years after it opened. “I’ve got a knot in my stomach,” Williams said. “But I believe in good people, good intentions, and positive outcomes.”

In other museum news, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art announced a new partnership where the Metropolitan will use the Whitney’s Marcel Breuer-designed building as additional gallery space for its modern and contemporary collection. Whitney officials have long maintained that the museum does not have the funds to operate two facilities, so the agreement will allow the institution to move to a new Renzo Piano-designed building in the Meatpacking District. AGB

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A cartoon by Joe Dator in the May 9 issue of The New Yorker shows two headset-wearing office workers seated side by side in oil drum-like enclosures. "So how do you like the new cylindricals?" reads the caption. Elsewhere in the same issue, a drawing by P.C. Vey shows a suited gentleman peering over a chest-height workstation wall addressing a coworker: "We’re ready to begin the next phase of keeping things exactly the way they were."

Such cartoons are timely markers of how aware Americans are that getting the job done in an office environment is changing. The reasons are many, including the global economic downturn (also the recovery), downsizing, environmental awareness, shifting attitudes about creativity and efficiency, and even stepped-up goals in maximizing real estate investment. All these factors are forcing architects, interior designers, and office furniture manufacturers to adapt to the sea change in how virtually all clients now do business.

"The days of Dilbertville are over," said Perkins+Will New York director of interiors Joan Blumenfeld. "Nobody wants to work in a traditional cubicle anymore." With her colleagues, including principal and global discipline leader Janice Barnes, Blumenfeld has conducted a series of research studies on office design over the past decade and reports that, since 2008, there has been a revolution in how most workplaces—whether media, law, banking, trading, accounting or others—operate.

"LEED certification requirements regarding daylight and air circulation have been a big driver in the move toward open plan office design," Barnes added. Panel wall dividers are routinely no higher than 42 inches or disappearing altogether, so-called "benching" seating (where employees are lined up in rows or grouped in areas with few separating partitions) is commonplace, and communal tables or breakout rooms are supporting teamwork more than ever before.

"The culture of work continues to change at a quicker pace," concurred industrial designer and consultant Jeffrey Bernett, principal of CDS, who has designed for Knoll, B&B Italia, and for the past 18 months has helped oversee, coordinate, and design most of Herman Miller’s new furniture systems line called Canvas Office Landscape. "Most businesses have been shifting away from private offices, employees are each occupying smaller footprints, and new technologies in handheld devices have allowed a freeing mobility that allows teams to work and congregate in more places within the workplace. You are no longer tied to your desk."

Manufacturers widely began preaching the gospel of open plan furniture systems in the 1980s, touting features such as integrated wiring for maximum power and "flexible" panels and components (overhead storage bins, desk lighting, coat closets and the like) as a progressive alternative to the build-out of private offices surrounding "secretarial" pools or worker bull pens. Once installed, however, most arrays of cubicles in the American workplace typically stayed put and were more monolithic than modular. Now, flexibility, transparency, and ease of reconfiguration are more of a reality than a marketing pitch.

"Systems furniture used to be panel-based, with storage and desk surfaces cantilevered off the vertical wall," Barnes noted. Now the trend is toward leg- or wheel-based mobile pieces, with shared storage, tack boards, and other elements that fit into a kit of parts. "Offices today have three generations of employees working together as a team but with very differing communication and tasking styles," said HOK senior principal Rick Focke. "How do you please everybody? I’ve been in this industry for 38 years, and it has been fascinating to see how top management is really listening to their employees to focus office design on a cross-section of people rather than on a fixed system of furniture as a facilities line item."

Texting has replaced speaker-phone conferencing, desktop computers have shrunk to notepads, and office teams are not only grouping in enclosed conference rooms but anywhere in the office,
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Texting has replaced speaker-phone conferencing, desktop computers have shrunk to notepads, and office teams are not only grouping in enclosed conference rooms but anywhere in the office,
including the lunch room.

Following this new work interaction flow-chart, designers have been creating a variety of spaces within the office environment to suit a range of work styles and activities. But now they have a lot of product options to work with: furniture manufacturers are taking flexibility to a new level in their effort to meet the needs of a diverse workforce. “The entire industry of office furniture has changed within only a few years,” said architect Jane Smith, principal of the interiors practice Spacesmith that on May 2 announced its strategic alliance with Davis Brody Bond Aedas. “Furniture has become a more integral part of creating the interior space, not an element dropped into an enclosure. It’s taken on a seriousness and ability to really shape the environment in terms of pathways, social interaction, and structure more than ever before.”

Chairs have not been left out of the mix, and even ergonomics are departing from the prescriptive. At NeoCon next week, Herman Miller will also be showing their popular and innovative SAYL chair designed by Yves Béhar that, with its “3-D intelligent back,” provides support while allowing a full range of seated movement. Side chairs too will include the entire line-up of intelligent, foam, and hard plastic backs.

“It’s a delicate dance for us to make sure as a manufacturer we remain very aware of changes in communication and information technologies and changes in personal interaction within the workplace,” said Haworth principal designer Dan West. “We’re designing systems that are simpler to specify, interchange, and even integrate with existing furniture systems.” He points out that storage modules are taking on the structural load of supporting a horizontal work surface from panels. And stackable units, open bookshelves, and multiple options such as leg choices or paintable trims are increasingly in demand in the marketplace. Next week at NeoCon, Haworth will demonstrate Reside, a benching system accommodating greater user densities (industry-speak for sitting closer to your coworker); woodworking surfaces; 120-degree, non-linear configurations; and angled legs. Then there’s Beside—pull-up and stackable storage/filing units. And, finally, Belong, a set of accessories such as blotters, cubbies and screens that can personalize a work station and still maintain a consistent look.

As an example, for a recent project for the trading company Market Axess, Smith specified Teknion’s Marketplace line with dark-stained engineered flint-wood end panels, Acuity task chairs by Allsteel, and Visavis 2 guest chairs designed by Antonio Citterio for Vitra. Along the bench of workstations, each with sleek flat-screen trading monitors, elements such as storage or media/conferencing can move and shift down the line as needed, allowing traders to expand and contract their workspaces more fluidly.

While companies such as Apple, Microsoft, and Blackberry have emphasized that work can be done anywhere from a subway platform to a mountaintop, work within an actual office now means performing almost anywhere within the company’s brick-and-mortar facility. A generational, 24/7 mentality has blurred the idea of workplace altogether.

“I work everywhere, I play everywhere,” says designer Béhar, founder of fuseproject and in May named Designer of the Year by Condé Nast Traveller’s Innovation and Design Awards. “I am very mobile in our office, feeling happiest when I just interact with projects and people where they just happen to be. My own office is open, transparent, horizontal, wall-less. In my home, I can work anywhere, there is no dedicated workspace. (I am currently writing this from my kitchen table).”

To better understand the variable needs of people collaborating at work, Steelcase, the 60-year-old stalwart in the office furnishings business, employed a human-centered design methodology when designing media:scape with HD videoconferencing that included behavioral research and ethnographic video. With collaborative work increasing significantly and now representing more than 80 percent of today’s activities in the office, Steelcase designed a system to help workers solve increasingly complex problems with teams who are distributed across the globe.
Steelcase showcased media:scape at the vanguard TED Conference in March to help participants come together with colleagues across different locations, time zones, and continents using furniture specifically designed to foster deeper, more democratized collaboration.

“No single person can know enough to make decisions in a globally integrated world. At Steelcase, we studied the ways work has changed and found that teams need spaces for true collaboration where they can easily share complex ideas, drawings, or explanations and co-create new solutions,” said Jim Keane, president of the Steelcase Group.

Practicing what they preach to clients such as law firm Fox Rothchild LP and pharmaceuticals giant GlaxoSmithKline, architectural firm Francis Cauffman decided to configure their own Philadelphia studio into a more open layout. They were one of the first to specify an installation of Allsteel’s Stride system, which was introduced last year at NeoCon. The array of workstations features no dividing panels. A custom option designed by the studio makes the furniture multitask as much as the staff itself: lateral files are topped with upholstered cushions between desks to double as guest or “quick-meeting-with-a-colleague seating,” said design principal Keumpyo Kim Hong. Behind each workstation desk, a long table facilitates meetings or project reviews. “The open plan has fostered a feeling of tighter camaraderie,” Hong said.

Hong and her team also recently completed the North American headquarters for the Almac Group in Philadelphia. The workplace design needed to reflect a connection to its European properties and also accommodate the American corporate culture. Thus, workstations are closer together with low partitions creating a more exposed feel. Individual work areas are smaller in comparison to the American average of 200 to 250 square feet per person to foster more collaboration. “There’s a new informality to how employees interact,” Hong noted. “Meetings can be quick sound bites as you move through an office.”

One forward-looking designer and thinker about work modes is Boston-based industrial designer Jonathan Olivares (his Smith Storage System appears on the cover). He is the author of the new book, A Taxonomy of Office Chairs (Phaidon), based on a thorough study, sponsored by Knoll, of innovative task chairs from the mid-1800s up to today. “I wanted to find something that on the one hand has a rich technical history, and on the other is related to the human body in an intimate way,” Olivares said. “The office chair is that perfect synthesis.” A well-designed chair is the key component of a suitably-designed ergonomic workspace, he noted. Next up, Olivares is studying how to build “legitimate” dedicated, outdoor workspaces (as opposed to taking your laptop to the nearest park bench). “Three people working indoors would consume 10,000 kilowatts per hour of office resources, while outside in a corporate or college campus that would be reduced to 100 kilowatts,” he said. “Outdoors is the next office frontier.”

Sending your staff outside for a meeting may be a terrace too far for most companies at the moment. Still, furniture companies are clearly stepping up the pace in adapting to new social norms and quickly emerging technical innovations. “The industry is behind the way people actually want to work and even the very reason why they enjoy working,” Béhar said. “We should deliver more pleasure in the workplace.”

WILLIAM WEATHERSBY IS A NEW YORK-BASED WRITER AND EDITOR.
Kravet has added its eco-friendly high-performance Crypton line to its new Guaranteed in Stock program. More than 145 fabrics will be shipped within 24 hours of an order, ensuring project timelines stay on track. Made with 50 to 100 percent recycled fiber content, all fabrics pass a 50,000 double-rub durability rating and are engineered to resist stain, moisture, mildew, bacteria, and odor. www.kravet.com

KnollTextiles recently introduced its new Ink collection, a collaboration with Pentagram partner Abbott Miller. The collection is a study in ink on paper and features three patterns: Drip, a series of interconnected letters; Drop (pictured), a striped ink-dot pattern; and Run, a “modern toile” created by guiding small ink drops across a page. All three patterns are 52 inches wide and made with 70 percent vinyl and 30 percent recycled polyester (backing). www.knolltextiles.com

To celebrate its 30-year anniversary, Carnegie is rolling out 71 new colors to diversify its classic Meteor fabric panels, which are also suitable for upholstery and wall coverings. Panels are woven of inherently flame retardant yarns and are Cradle-to-Cradle Silver certified. The new color options are grouped into four categories: primary brights (pictured), dusty hues, deep darks, and new neutrals. www.carnegiefabrics.com

InterfaceFLOR’s new Red Carpet Collection includes three floor patterns designed for a range of corporate interiors. The Reduce pattern (pictured) is a linear design, while the Redesign and Redeliver have sheared and carved motifs that add dimension. Each is available in 32 neutrals in addition to bold red. Tiles contain up to 38 percent post-consumer recycled content and are installed with glue-less TacTile connectors, which prevent tile movement and curling. www.interfaceflor.com

Vitra’s new ID Chair Concept by Antonio Citterio will include a mesh backrest option called Diamond Mesh, a 3-D pleated textile that allows for the air circulation of a standard mesh seat but with the comfort of an upholstered chair. Backrests are available in several heights, with optional head or lumbar supports. A complementary Silk Mesh seat upholstery is also available. www.vitra.com

In collaboration with design partner Clodagh, Bentley Prince Street will introduce a new version of its 80 percent wool flat weave carpet. Called Natural State, the basket-weave pattern incorporates Protex soil and stain protection and is available in ten colors. All of the company’s standard broadloom products are certified to the NSF 140-2008 Sustainable Carpet Assessment Standard at the Platinum level. www.bentleypricestreet.com

Innovative Coverings Take a Front Seat at This Year’s Show.

By Jennifer K. Gorsche
The Architect's Newspaper introduces a new, local online resource guide for the design community, allowing users to search their city for the products and services they need.

Contact Lynne Rowan for information
Email: lrowan@archpaper.com
Phone: 212.966.0630

Your City.
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WWW.ARCHPAPER.COM
WEDNESDAY 1
Lecture

THURSDAY 2
Lecture
Jeffrey Head, Alisa Tseverinou, Massimo Vignelli Conversation: Massimo and Matter: Shaping the Knoll Identity 6:00 p.m. Bard Graduate Center 38 West 86th St. www.bgc.bard.edu

EXHIBITION OPENINGS
stillspotting nyc 2:00 p.m. Tenement Museum 108 Orchard St. www.tenement.org

EVENT
Greta Linday Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next 6:30 p.m. Mid-Manhattan Library 455 Fifth Ave. www.nypl.org

EVENT
Tom Vanhoven Crossing Sustainability and Mobility 6:00 p.m. Center for Architecture 536 LaGuardia Pl. cfa.aiany.org

WEDNESDAY 8
LECTURES
Bjarne Mastenbroek Real Sustainability: New Buildings by Search 12:00 p.m. Center for Architecture 536 LaGuardia Pl. cfa.aiany.org

Alan Greenberger, Michael Parley, David Kanovsky The Zoning Resolution at 50 6:00 p.m. Scandinavia House 58 Park Ave. www.scandahouse.org

EVENT
Bruce Taper Measuring Cities: Carbon Zeors or Carbon Heroes 6:00 p.m. Panza Brinkhoff 1 Penn Plaza www.nyplanning.org


Julie Snow Conversations on Architecture 7:00 p.m. The Architects Building 52 Broad St. Boston www.architects.org

EXHIBITION OPENING
GLIMPSES of New York and Amsterdam 2040 6:00 p.m. Center for Architecture 536 LaGuardia Pl. cfa.aiany.org

FRIDAY 10
LECTURE
Brian McGrath, Mojdeh Baratino, Regijn van de Berg, et al. Rising Water and the City: A New Design Challenge? 12:00 p.m. Center for Architecture 536 LaGuardia Pl. cfa.aiany.org

EVENT
Archiprix International: The Capital of Your World 4:30 p.m. Center for Architecture 536 LaGuardia Pl. cfa.aiany.org

SATURDAY 11
LECTURE
Tanja Bruguera, Peter Marcuse, Damon Rich, Radhika Subramaniam City as Stage 3:00 p.m. The Kitchen 512 West 19th St. www.thekitchen.org

SYMPOSIUM
New York/Amsterdam 2040: Breathing, Eating, Making, Moving, Dwelling 11:00 a.m. Center for Architecture 536 LaGuardia Pl. cfa.aiany.org

TUESDAY 14
SYMPOSIUM
Alternative Fuel Vehicles Technologies & Infrastructure: Bringing Innovation to our streets 8:30 a.m. NYU Kimmel Center 60 Washington Square South www.wagner.nyu.edu

EVENTS
Museums Mile Festival 6:00 p.m. Fifth Ave. www.museummilefestival.org

Behind the Scenes: An Architectural Tour with Andrew Dolkart 6:30 p.m. Tenement Museum 108 Orchard St. www.tenement.org

The exhibit Louis Kahn drew inspiration from his travels, both in foreign lands and closer to home. A new exhibition brings together drawings, watercolors, pastels, and oil paintings Kahn made between the late 1920s and the early 1950s during trips around the United States, Canada, Europe, and Egypt. From New England churches to Egyptian rock quarries, the collected works offer Kahn’s interpretation of diverse landscapes and cityscapes, like Coastal Village, No. 2, Isle Madame, Nova Scotia (1936), above. In the exhibition, Kahn’s artwork is contextualized with his postcards and other travel ephemera.

THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER JUNE 1, 2011

INNOVATIVE FACADES, THINK TRESPA

TRESPA Design Centre 62 Greene Street New York, NY 10012 212-334-6848 trespa.nyc.com

TRESPA Design Centre, your headquarters for architectural inspiration. More of an experience than a showroom, it moves visitors and showcases TRESPA’s building envelope design concepts.

Visit the TRESPA Design Centre in SoHo, Monday-Friday, 10:00am-5:00pm.
The New Museum exhibits OMA's Cronocaos in a partially renovated Bowery space.

**HERE TOMORROW, GONE TODAY**

Perhaps no architectural manner has become historic more rapidly than the Millennial Dutch. Although its tactics (a pun, a weird world map, a calculated askewdness, a profoundly purported disinterest in beauty) remain evergreen, to deploy the particular formal habits epitomized by OMA and company constitutes, suddenly, a historicist gesture.

Some of this may be due to the recent gyre of events (stolen election, terrorist attack, willful war, great recession) that have rendered the seemingly XL of 1985 ever more XS. And anything vaguely prophetic and apocalyptic in sensibility, as that work surely was, comes with a sell-by date.

But a critical reason for this speedy consignment to history can be perceived in OMA’s own current Cronocaos project, currently exhibited by the New Museum in a largely untouched former kitchen supply store nearby on the Bowery. The nominal

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**MONO MANHATTAN**

How can it be that the economy of New York City can grow, while the quality of life plunges for ordinary people? Look at the price of architecture, we are told. The culprit, according to *The Vanishing City*, an hour-long inquiry by filmmakers Joy Senko and Fiore DeRosa, is New York’s policy to incentivize luxury development, which erodes the tax base and shrinks the availability of affordable housing.

We are reminded that Manhattan is becoming a gilded ghetto in a documentary that is not a lecture, but a cri de coeur from a chorus of critics, most of them telling you the bad news that you know already. Readers of this newspaper may know the critics, too. Planner Tom Angotti, sociologist Saskia Sassen of Columbia, and Kent Barwick of the Municipal Art Society chart the process by which builders are rewarded for chillingly refined high-rises that rose before the Wall Street crash in what had been affordable neighborhoods for those of us who don’t work for hedge funds. The policy forces the rest of us to pay high taxes to finance services and drives the workers needed to serve this economy out of town, or at least out of Manhattan. If you have an ordinary income, you lose. You lose even more if you have children. And it’s all legal.

It’s a grim reality, and it’s the policy of the Bloomberg administration. One strength of *The Vanishing City* is that it takes Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg at his word, and quotes him. Bloomberg announced to New Yorkers and to the world that New York was not akin to Walmart but a luxury product. In comments like that, Bloomberg wasn’t just a snob with a tin ear. He was fueling the transformation of the urban landscape away from the mix of rich, poor, and everything in-between that gave New York its charm and vitality. Let’s not forget that the city voted to re-elect him—twice.

We get the majority of this message in PBS-style testimony filmed as high-rise battering rams from the other side, although we do see plenty of the new architecture, including buildings by Jean Nouvel in Soho and Chelsea. Regular people are shown being forced out of buildings where they have lived for years, by landlords who claim improbably that they need multi-unit dwellings for themselves. Once again, it’s all legal. Critics like Assemblywoman Deborah J. Glick and NY State Senator Tony Avella of Queens call for the public to fight back, although we don’t hear that a growing number of politicians are supported by developers who are part of the problem. We also don’t hear much from the other side, although we do see plenty of the new architecture, as high-rise battering rams that are intended to frighten and intimidate. (Couldn’t there be high-rise affordable housing? Won’t it be necessary in any program to keep middle income New Yorkers in Manhattan? The analysis never goes that far.)

*The Vanishing City* leaves us in the early days of the financial meltdown, when construction halted led to a landscape of overbuilt and unfinished residences.

The real change is that *The Vanishing City* has been overtaken by events, which means that this documentary won’t be seen too widely. The economy has revived to embolden the very forces that this film attacks. New York is abuzz and bustling with yet more construction for the beneficiaries of what economists call the jobless recovery. Luxury spires are eating their way into Chelsea, Harlem, the lower East Side, even planned for Willett’s Point in Queens, where a hotel and convention center threaten to displace small businesses. The city is vanishing now at an even faster rate than this call to arms imagines.
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Mon., June 20, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Pre-Conference Seminar
ARE 4.0 Prep Seminar: Structural Systems
You'll learn about seismic, wind, and lateral forces and practice designing a schematic framing plan for a one-story building.

Wed., June 22, 10:30 a.m.–Noon
The New ADA Requirements: What You Need to Know
John Salmen and Andrew Yarrish of Universal Designers and Consultants will help you understand the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

Tue., June 21, 2:30 p.m.–4 p.m.
Legal Questions in Green Building
You Were Afraid to Ask Your Lawyer
Attorneys Christopher Cheatham and Stuart Kaplow discuss the legal implications of sustainable design and construction.

Thur., June 23, 8:30 a.m.–10 a.m.
Pursuing Opportunities in the Public Sector Marketplace
Aram Kailian, Leo A. Daly's director of government programs, offers advice on how to succeed when going after public-sector work.

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Driving the Conversation

The fact that schools of architecture repeatedly pull off great events is nothing new. Frank Lloyd Wright’s famous 1951 lecture at Columbia has been meticulously archived. Harvard’s annual Walter Gropius lecture has been given by one of the most established practitioners in any given year since 1961. Nor is it uncommon for schools to deliberately organize provocative conferences as when Yale hosted a real ideological battle in a public forum between Peter Eisenman and Leon Krier in 2002. As recent history has demonstrated, interesting debates and critical experimentation are no longer the purview of agents like the IAUS-established in the 1960s as an alternative to the institutions mentioned previously—which are again returning to university culture. As Raim Koehlhaas insists at his academic lectures, architectural ideas have a broad audience beyond captive student audiences conveniently dwelling in studios adjacent to the university auditorium. At the same time, I believe that the production of architectural events in universities is more and more a curatorial act. In addition to the professors and deans traditionally involved, more engaged administrators are not only coordinating and organizing events but also giving input and direction. The need for additional curation is clear, these events are occurring at a sometimes dizzying rate, with a typical week consisting of a Monday night panel discussion on sustainability issues in China, a Wednesday evening architecture lecture by Richard Rogers, a Friday lunchtime debate on urban zoning policy, and a Saturday conference on African cities. Furthermore, the ability and desire of these ambitious events to draw outsiders—practitioners, renters, artists, policy makers, students from other schools and faculties—has an undeniable impact upon the school’s students, faculty and discourse at large. In producing programming, not just in the form of events but also exhibitions, publications, and relevant web content beyond that with an archiving mandate at its core. The communications mandate at its core. The communications mandate at its core.

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