Mother Road

“It winds from Chicago to LA, more than two thousand miles all the way,” as the song goes, inspiring endless Googies and even a vintage television show. And now a new study shows that Nat King Cole’s famous line still rings true as Americans continue to get their kicks along iconic Route 66, to the tune of $132 million per year in economic impact. The National Park Service Continued on page 14

UP THE RIVER

Imagine floating in a gondola through East Harlem. How about leisurely kayaking through Hell Gate, the East River’s most dangerous bend? What if signage alongside the FDR drive promoted neighborhood engagement in Jenny Holzer-style graphics?

Above: First-place scheme by Joseph Wood. These somewhat outré civic solutions represent the first-, second-, and third-place winners of the Reimagining the Waterfront competition, sponsored Continued on page 18

PENNPRAXIS CELEBRATES TEN YEARS TRANSFORMING PHILLY PLANNING WELL PRACTICED

For over 30 years, Philadelphia’s Delaware River waterfront was considered a corrupt wasteland of opportunity where RFP followed RFP but nothing got built. Then, suddenly, a master plan materialized and was adopted by City Council last month. The success of “A Civic Vision for Central Delaware” is credited by many to PennPraxis, the nonprofit consultancy arm of PennDesign at the University of Pennsylvania. Praxis is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. “They reoriented the direction the city was going in,” said Inga Saffron, architecture critic at The Philadelphia Continued on page 11

Proposal for Pulaski Park in Philadelphia.

BBG VISITOR CENTER MAKES AN ENTRANCE. SEE PAGE 20

DOWNTOWN PARK RENOVATION UNEarths MURKY PAST

ONLY COLLECT

Until recently, downtown Manhattan’s Collect Pond Park was an unloved and unlovely triangle of sunbaked broken concrete adorned with a few sad benches. Crammed on Leonard Street between Centre and Lafayette, it was a park of last resort, a better-than- Continued on page 17

NEW STUDY ON THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF ROUTE 66

The National Park Service

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OBIT: LUIS MANSILLA

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THE EAST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

07 04.18.2012

FOR OVER 30 YEARS, PHILADELPHIA'S DELAWARE RIVER WATERFRONT WAS CONSIDERED A CORRUPT WASTELAND OF OPPORTUNITY WHERE RFP FOLLOWED RFP BUT NOTHING GOT BUILT. THEN, SUDDENLY, A MASTER PLAN MATERIALIZED AND WAS ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL LAST MONTH. THE SUCCESS OF “A CIVIC VISION FOR CENTRAL DELAWARE” IS CREDITED BY MANY TO PENNPRAXIS, THE NONPROFIT CONSULTANCY ARM OF PENNDISIGN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA. PRAXIS IS CELEBRATING ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR. “THEY REORIENTED THE DIRECTION THE CITY WAS GOING IN,” SAID INGA SAFFRON, ARCHITECTURE CRITIC AT THE PHILADELPHIA

CIVITAS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF COMPETITION TO REIMAGINE THE EAST RIVER WATERFRONT

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An architect wrote to me recently in near anguish that architecture criticism is in crisis. The case seems pretty compelling:

In December, the website Slate rubbed out its architecture critic post filled by Witold Rybczynski. Last month, The New Yorker gave the heave-ho to The Sky Line column established in 1996 by Lewis Mumford and for the past almost 15 years written by Paul Goldberger. And at the New York Times new architecture critic Michael Kimmelman, ten months on the job, rarely writes about individual buildings. Anyone can write architecture criticism, says Alexandra Lange in her new book Writing About Architecture (reviewed by Goldberger on page 34), but that may be just another way of saying that no one is currently doing so with real authority.

Is the media giving architecture the shaft? It certainly felt like it when former New York Times managing editor Bill Keller blogged with impious condescension about architecture as "a genre that can be, at its worst, precious and narrow" where buildings are treated "as if they were gowns on the red carpet." A whiff of hostility hovers as well over the controversy surrounding Frank Gehry’s Eisenhower memorial design which should have been making slow progress from concept through revision towards realization but has been stopped in its tracks by compulsive and eagerly covered nit-picking with no sense of trust that Gehry has long since proved his abilities.

Recently Goldberger and I chatted about the media’s versus the public’s interest in architecture. Where the former seems soured on the subject, the latter seems more engaged than ever by the look of crowded community board meetings (often for NIMBY’s sake, but true civic interest is also on abundant display), the proliferation of design-themed blogs and ample coverage on major sites such as the Huffington Post, and even Bjarke Ingels’ clips from the TED conferences that attract an average of half a million online viewers. The audience seems to be there, even if it is moving away from thoughtful consideration in the traditional sense and more in the direction of play-by-play commentary.

Still Goldberger and I both had our share of experiences where editors—those easily distracted gatekeepers to readers—dismissed architecture coverage as so much insider baseball or acted suspicious of it as an extension of someone’s marketing plan. Architects have not helped with over-complicated narratives that too often read like parodies of complexity rather than accurate representations of all the intricate forces that comprise building.

Perhaps it’s time to give formal criticism a rest. Remember that the last time architecture was a popular subject matter for public intellectuals was during the reign of postmodernism when Tom Wolfe among many others had a heyday reducing a moment of intense intellectual foment into a gong show.

Today again, architecture is at a moment of tremendous transformation when to be successful buildings must address a wider array of imperatives—social, financial, technical, sustainable, contextual—than ever. Patronage displays and destination building are a thing of the past. Even China emerged rather quickly from its fever dream of building to impress the world, while the latest Olympics in both London and Rio are stalled by avoiding show-off structures in favor of lasting infrastructure.

Architecture criticism may no longer have important friends or fans in the general media. What better time for architecture commentary to find a new voice—not one that engages strictly with any one aspect, whether of form or social responsibility, but one that takes on the entire gamut. Instead of bemoaning a crisis in criticism, architecture writers and also educators could start down that new path by focusing on plain writing making sure that it is as compelling, comprehensive, and clear as it can be. And for that there is always an urgent need for, as Mumford understood (even as he carped short-sightedly about the disappointments of Rockefeller Center), architecture remains an “index of civilization” well worth the widest possible attention.
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What happens when a global leader in shoe design employs a global leader in architecture to design a flagship store in one of the most fashionable neighborhoods in New York? Find out for yourself at the newly opened Soho space of Camper by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban. Known for his inventive blurring of interior and exterior, Ban delivers again with a striking retail design. The back wall of the store serves as an interior billboard with a large Camper logo, while the store’s windows can be adjusted, allowing the store to fully open up to the street and the Soho breeze.

The strong idea is executed masterfully, creating what lead designer Nina Freedman calls “a cohesive, integrated concept which emanates from the back wall display.” The back wall is folded, allowing shoes to be displayed in the breaks. From one direction, the logo on the wall appears whole, but from the other direction, it appears broken. Lines, light, and a corrugated metal ceiling radiate from the wall, animating the interior. Similar in concept to the back wall, the corrugation in the ceiling is painted Campers’ signature red and white, creating a distorting effect, as the ceiling appears to be different colors from different directions. — MATT SHAW


courtesy michiLL inc.

Up on the roof there is new leeway as developers will now be able to install a green roof or solar panels and sun-shading without a punitive reduction of the floor-area ratio. “Strand East” will have its own school, hospital, hotel, and hydro-electric plant. The plans don’t include an IKEA store, surprisingly, but a certain Swedish sense of order is promised in Strand’s streets: “We would have a fairly firm line on undesirable activity, whatever that may be,” IKEA project manager Andrew Cobben told Canada’s Globe and Mail recently.

Rendering to show facade with integrated PVs.

ALLEN KEY TOWN

IKEA’s property-development arm has acquired 27 post-industrial acres in East London that it plans to transform not into a sprawling store but a 1,200-home neighborhood. “Strand East” will have its own school, hospital, hotel, and hydro-electric plant. The plans don’t include an IKEA store, surprisingly, but a certain Swedish sense of order is promised in Strand’s streets: “We would have a fairly firm line on undesirable activity, whatever that may be,” IKEA project manager Andrew Cobben told Canada’s Globe and Mail recently.

COURTESY PERKINS+WILL

Up on the roof, so to speak, City Planning also worked in additional language to update the code for bulkheads speak, City Planning also worked in additional language to update the code for bulkheads and new mechanical equipment that didn’t exist years ago, like window-washing awnings and decks for rooftop access. Solar panels will be permitted to go onto rooftops, provided they don’t cover more than 30 percent of the facade, and sun shades and awnings will be allowed to go two feet beyond the street wall.

On March 28, City Planning passed the Zone Green initiative and sent it off to City Council and the mayor for likely approval. The new zoning was in response to recent developments in design and building technologies that help reduce energy consumption, but which were rarely applied due to zoning restrictions. Building owners will now be able to install a green roof or solar panels and sun-shading without a punitive reduction of the floor-area ratio. “This is responding to what we’ve seen people design into buildings,” said Howard Slatkin, the director of sustainability for City Planning.

In looking at screens, like those used on Renzo Piano’s New York Times building and sun shades, like those used at Grimshaw/ Dattner’s Via Verde, the staff at City Planning developed text that would allow architects to take additive measures to help reduce solar gain and light glare, and in turn lessen a building’s energy load. Screens will be permitted, provided they don’t cover more than a building’s energy load. Solar panels will be permitted to go onto the roofs with options that range from 4 feet for the standard flat rooftop to 18 inches for a pitched roof. On walls they may project no more than 10 inches and not occupy more than 20 percent of the surface. Solar panels will also be permitted atop trellis-like posts in commercial districts from 6 to 14 feet high, provided they are not visible from the street.

Slatkin believes that there’s potential for the solar initiatives to make the biggest impact, particularly in the outer boroughs like Staten Island, where low energy use will incur a punitive reduction of the floor-area ratio. “This is responding to what we’ve seen people design into buildings,” said Howard Slatkin, the director of sustainability for City Planning.

EAVESDROP > ISADORA MULLON

Frank Gehry’s first residential project in Asia, a twisty residential tower called Opus Hong Kong, is complete. Total project cost for the 12-story, 12-apartment building? A mere $27,000 a square foot. Gehry’s property-developer arm has acquired 27 post-industrial acres in East London, that it plans to transform not into a sprawling store but a 1,200-home neighborhood. “Strand East” will have its own school, hospital, hotel, and hydro-electric plant. The plans don’t include an IKEA store, surprisingly, but a certain Swedish sense of order is promised in Strand’s streets: “We would have a fairly firm line on undesirable activity, whatever that may be,” IKEA project manager Andrew Cobben told Canada’s Globe and Mail recently.

GEHRY HEARTS ASIA

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COURTESY MARTIN CUBBON

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Luis Moreno Mansilla, 1950–2012

From time to time, amazed by yet another display of out-of-control ego or calculating careerism, I like to think about my friends Luis Mansilla and Emilio Tuñón, who achieved so much without any of the baggage that seems to go with being a successful architect today. Luis, who died on February 22, exemplified in particular a quiet dedication to the work they made together. He was passionate about his work and lived a life in architecture to the fullest. But to say, in the manner of American self-help books, that he had a good “work/life balance” would trivialize both.

He met his wife, Carmen Pinart, at the Spanish Academy in Rome in the early 1980s when they were both in residence: she as a painter and he, an architect. Their house in Madrid was filled with her delicate paintings of their two daughters. The office he shared with Tuñón also had a family atmosphere. They worked hard, very hard. But there were also many trips, studio dinners, and an endless flow of conversation over the work they made together. That Mansilla + Tuñón are not better known in this country says more about the state of American architecture than about their work: 20 years of practice, a dozen or so definitive buildings, a string of brilliant competition victories and important prizes, including the Mies van der Rohe Award in 2007 given every two years by the European Union for the best building completed in Europe for MUSAC, a contemporary art museum in León.

Prior to forming their own practice, Luis and Emilio worked together in the office of Rafael Moneo, which is where I first met them, almost 30 years ago. Mansilla + Tuñón’s work shares with Moneo’s a sense of gravity, clarity of detail, and strong material presence. But their work departs from their mentor’s in its abstraction, its playful diagrammatic character, and in the architects’ recent fascination with serial repetition. They came into their own with the Auditorium and later the MUSAC. These two buildings chart this passage from a figural response to context to an abstract field-like strategy of aggregation. Their recent work had a kind of unbridled immediacy, a distinctive mix of gravity and play, visible in winning competition projects for the Soria Environmental City, the Vega Baja Museum in Toledo, and the recently completed Town Hall in Lalin. In this age of global practice, Luis and Emilio prefer to work close to home, where they could control the process of construction. But I suspect there was also something else at work here—a simple reluctance to deny themselves the pleasure of watching buildings take shape.

In 2008, I invited Luis and Emilio to come to Princeton to teach, fully confident in their vocation as teachers as much as in their abilities as practitioners. They had taught in the United States before, but I believe they found the intellectual atmosphere at Princeton congenial, despite the long delays that Luis had to endure entering the country. It turned out that Luis shared a name with someone on the terrorist watch list. This resulted in a minimum four-hour delay with every trip to the airport, during which he developed a friendly relationship with the immigration agent.

That family atmosphere extended to the studios at Princeton, with trips to Falling Water, to Chicago and the Farnsworth House, and elsewhere—during which it was clear that Luis and Emilio very much wanted to see the architecture and the students were just along for the ride. Those students learned a lot from Luis’ and Emilio’s passion for architecture. And in Spain, it was a matter of showing the students their own work, and their city, believing intensely that you understand a building better when you understand its place. Luis was such a good teacher precisely because he was genuinely interested in what he was teaching.

Luis died without warning, in Barcelona. He and Emilio were there to present a book of the last writings of Enric Miralles, another talented architect who died too young. After the presentation there was a long Spanish dinner and Luis returned to his hotel, where he suffered a massive heart attack. Looking back, his words that night take on a special poignancy, ‘Speaking of Miralles’ work, and its power over a generation of architects, he said: ‘I am beginning to think that, in reality, space is not a significant part of our preoccupations in life. Only time is, that spils and slips through our fingers when we try to catch it.’” And so Luis has now slipped through our fingers—abruptly so, which was uncharacteristic of him. The field has lost a figure of great promise. We will remember him for his optimism, his generosity, his intelligence, and his gentle passion for the art of architecture.

Technology-based “smart classrooms” need smart buildings to be effective. Westchester Community College’s Gateway Center, designed by Ennead Architects, meets the challenge. Erected on the college’s Valhalla campus to aid new Americans in gaining essential skills for the technologically sophisticated workplace, its long-span steel trusses enable an array of spaces programmed for the dynamic exchange of ideas. More than an inspirational entryway for students preparing for 21st century careers, the LEED Gold-certified building is a demonstration of the college’s commitment to sustainability—a symbol that the campus is investing in the future in more ways than one.

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AIA IN BOSTON: NEW NEIGHBORHOOD, NEW DRAW

Though it endeavored to be an organization with a significant public dimension, the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) was long ensconced in a small, cloistered office in Boston’s financial district—not exactly the type of environment to showcase the public virtues of architecture.

Now in its new headquarters designed by Boston’s Höweler + Yoon Architects in the Fort Point Channel neighborhood, BSA has picked up a lot of space, weighing in at 16,000 square feet, with 6,000 square feet for public exhibitions. For all of its expansive new area, much of it—frameworthy elements—are visible through the landmarked facade.

The big success of Höweler + Yoon’s layout is that the exhibition works just as well on either side of the gallery’s windows. The BSA’s Fort Point Channel neighborhood is an outlier in a frontier of post-industrial urban waterfront. Now, it is part of a district of creative offices, new restaurants, and public waterfront access. Opposite the channel, the string of public parks atop the Big Dig runs its course through the city’s business district. Each of these landscapes represents a major urban transformation that the BSA will now be able to engage, and even view from its new home.

John Gendall
WELL PRACTICED continued from front page

Inquirer. PennPraxis was created to allow both students and professors the chance to practice in a real-world environment through analyzing and developing proposals for actual urban situations. In its first decade, the program has billed some $16 million in international consultancy fees.

One of the first projects they tackled was the waterfront. Penn Design’s then-dean Gary Hack said such university/civic exchanges are commonplace in China, but many give him credit for allowing a non-professional group to join the urban process. Mayor John Street, was no less dubious, recalling her responding, “Liabilities? What are you talking about—I have five hospitals!” Hack said the same hands-on approach works for planning. “Hospitals are critical to education and I argue that it’s the same for architecture,” he said.

Skeptics were concerned that Penn was making a “pre-cooked plans.” Mayor Ed Rendell, later governor and more comfortable in smoke-filled back rooms than public planning, promoted giving the place over to the salivating casino industry. His successor, Mayor John Street, was no less dubious, but many gave him credit for allowing a non-governmental organization to take the lead. All the while, the William Penn Foundation, one of Philadelphia’s most powerful philanthropic organizations, backed up the effort financially.

As Praxis developed its waterfront plan, they relied on traditional media to gain traction and also launched an independent website called PlanPhilly.com. “PlanPhilly had more impact than anything that I can think of in years,” said Gary Jastrab, executive director at the City Planning Commission. “They really stepped in and created a whole new group that follows planning closely.”

Their approach has deep grass roots. Months of community meetings headed up by Praxis director Harris Steinberg mined pre-cooked plans. “It hasn’t hurt that shortly after, the city’s latest mayor, Michael Nutter, threw full support behind planning, giving teeth to the previously ignored Planning Commission. The mayor killed the shady Penn’s Landing Corporation and formed the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation. Jastrab credited Praxis’s work on the riverfront with spurring a citywide zoning overhaul that will go into effect this August. “They conducted what is considered an unprecedented civic outreach process,” he said. “With that central [Delaware] master plan underway, Mayor Nutter then was able to provide the political foundation for a citywide master plan.”

SPIRAL BONDING

A staircase creates a community in a building that needs one. That’s the philosophy behind the ornamental stair designed by Mitchell | Giurola Architects for NYU’s newly renovated School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Rising through a triple-height space that links classrooms and lounges, the inviting series of elliptically shaped treads and landings promotes a collaborative environment that lets students looking to learn and grow connect with mentors. Although its new high-performance curtain wall enclosure, it has helped 7 East 12th Street become a light-filled vertical campus within this prestigious university, encouraging students to climb to new heights with each step.

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CITY POINT PHASE 2

With the four-story retail complex ready to open along Brooklyn’s Fulton Street Mall, City Point’s second phase, designed by Cook+Fox with Lee Weinstein Landscape Architecture, is ready to move forward with two residential towers—standing 19 and 30 stories and holding a combined 650 units—sitting atop a 500,000-square-foot retail podium. “The whole project is envisioned conceptually as one project—a big mixed-use transit-oriented development,” said James Cole of Gensler. “This is a perfect spot for a tall building in Brooklyn.”

Cook said the towers’ skins are currently being designed, but each building will have its own identity. Landscaped areas are subtly incorporated into the site and Weinstein has created installations for the rooftops. “We’ve created a series of courtyards on the street wall where we could incorporate green spaces,” Cook said. A glass market hall leads through the site to the planned Willoughby Park by Michael Van Valkenburgh. A future third phase calls for an even taller building that Cook said will anchor the corner with a strong sense of verticality.
Robert W. Ferris, AIA, REFP, LEED AP
CEO and Co-Founder of SFL+a Architects, Co-Founder Firstfloor, Inc., providing turnkey development solutions to educational institutions.

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“If women and men are equal in all respects of society, the essential difference is that women have a heart. When I was young and with my wife getting her degree, I thought women were able to do anything with men. But I also thought women could never be as good as men for the lack of heart.”

Robert W. Ferris, AIA, REFP, LEED AP
CEO and Co-Founder of SFL+a Architects, Co-Founder Firstfloor, Inc., providing turnkey development solutions to educational institutions.

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ANN LOK LUI

"WORKING IN THE SHADOWS" continued from front page

Wang Shu’s wife and design partner, Lu Wenyu, seems to have slipped by public notice. The Pritzker’s coincidental intersection with Women’s History Month, as well as the recent publication of “Women in Architecture” statistics by the Royal Institute of British Architects, has raised questions about the foundation’s fairness of vision. Twenty years ago, the jury overlooked Denise Scott Brown in favor of her husband and partner, Robert Venturi, one slighly of many documented by her own 1976 article, “Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture.” In 2012, when statistics still look dim—women make up just one in five architects in professional practice—this year’s Pritzker award seems to reflect a larger problem in the industry.

“The jury is extremely thorough and extremely careful when they deliberate,” said Martha Thorne, executive director of the Pritzker Prize. “The jury looked at the built work, they looked at the teachings, the writings, and the other prizes. They looked at the many facets of all the people on the nominations list and they came to a conclusion that Wang Shu should be this year’s winner.”

Yet Wang Shu’s work seems to be intrinsically linked to Lu Wenyu. In 1997, the couple co-founded the firm Amateur Architecture Studio. Together, Wang Shu and Lu Wenyu went on to construct the 13 of the 14 projects mentioned in the public announcement of the prize. In 2010, the couple was jointly awarded Germany’s prestigious Schelling Prize for their work together. Wang Shu himself has spoken on his interest and belief in collaboration and the many people it takes to construct buildings. The Pritzker Prize does recognize that architecture can be more than the work of an individual and has been awarded to collaborative teams in the past: Herzog & de Meuron in 2001 and Sejima and Nishizawa in 2010.

When asked by The Los Angeles Times whether he believed Ms. Lu should have also won, Mr. Wang definitively said yes. He also commented to NPR, “Without me, no design. Without her, it cannot become reality.” However, Mr. Wang’s own position on his wife’s recognition remains unclear: The Los Angeles Times blog was the first time that Thorne, the executive director of the prize, became aware of his opinion.

To date, the Pritzker Prize has been awarded to 37 laureates, only two of whom are women. The foundation, of course, is not unaware of this history.

“I would share with you my personal and firm belief that women have not been given their rightful position in architecture,” said Thorne. “There are enormous biases. There are structural problems within education, within the profession, and within the building industries that mean that women are often left out.”

ANN LOK LUI
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MUD HALL

When viewed against the precast concrete formwork of Harvard's Gund Hall, Loeb Fellow Anna Heringer's latest rammed-earth project seems positively confrontational—and that's the point. The archaic process uses local raw materials such as clay, mud, and gravel to create durable walls. Heringer's smooth triangular forms stack up against the Graduate School of Design's 1971 Brutalist facade. Other rough-hewn walls zigzag into an open plaza through monolithic gestures that nudge into, but don't disrupt, pedestrian traffic on a heretofore-drear urban corner. Unlike a less aggressive Richard Serra, the architecture dangles with passersby.

The installation challenges sustainability theories being debated just behind the GSD's walls. The official title of the sculpture, MudWorks, has been usurped by the unofficial working title of "Mud Hall." The subversive nom de guerre places the rammed mud, flecked with Boston's white sea salts, on equal footing with Harvard's redbrick halls and GSD's concrete. Heringer's installation is an argument in layered texture and color that rammed earth is a viable material and should be taken seriously by contemporary architects. Naysayers who argue the material is too labor-intensive are not thinking enough about the laborer, particularly in poorer areas of the globe. "As an architect I can decide who's getting the profit," said Heringer of the work rammed earth gives to local workers. "When I worked in Bangladesh, I immediately saw who was getting the profit. When you buy a bag of cement, that's gone."

AIA IN DC: CAPITAL CHAPTER TO ENGAGE THE CITY

Five months after it opened, the new home of the AIA's Washington, D.C. chapter still looks pristine, with gleaming floors and unsmudged glass walls. Keeping it that way requires work, according to Mary Fitch, the chapter's executive director. Dust bunnies must be chased from the floors, and a bad pinup requires work, according to Mary Fitch, the chapter's executive director. Dust bunnies must be chased from the floors, and a bad pinup requires work, according to Mary Fitch, the chapter's executive director. Dust bunnies must be chased from the floors, and a bad pinup requires work, according to Mary Fitch, the chapter's executive director. Dust bunnies must be chased from the floors, and a bad pinup requires work, according to Mary Fitch, the chapter's executive director. Dust bunnies must be chased from the floors, and a bad pinup requires work, according to Mary Fitch, the chapter's executive director. Due to the DAC—designed by local firm Hickok Cole Architects—hosts formal and creative events, including lectures, and other events (often “multiple things per day,” Fitch noted). Passing pedestrians slow down in front of the window wall to study the exhibition in the gallery, the more curious among them venturing inside. All day long and into the evening, students arrive and depart from French classes held by the Alliance Française, which leases the lower level from AIA DC.

All this activity would have been unthinkable in the chapter’s previous home, a cramped row house on Dupont Circle. Flexible classroom spaces were at the top of the leadership’s wish list, and the DAC’s two classrooms have filled to capacity many times already. These rooms can be combined into one large hall—useful for popular events—but being able to use them as separate spaces has proved equally if not more important. Committees may hold more regular meetings, now that they’re not fighting over where to go. Chapter offices are located at the back of the building, which the staff feared might be gloomy, but thanks to internal walls of glass “there’s plenty of natural light back there,” Fitch said. Event rentals have taught staffers a crucial benefit to having a separate office.

Although its official opening was in November, the DAC is preparing for a second, higher-profile debut in May, when the AIA National Convention comes to town. AIA DC will be giving frequent tours of the space, both to official AIA tour groups and conventioners just dropping by. Mainly, the chapter will be showing off a new exhibition (from May 3) featuring the winners of the chapter’s recent unbuilt design competition. This show is a companion to Unbuilt Washington, on display at the National Building Museum.

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Amid this architectural standoff, the kind of traffic that defines the area is slowly shifting from car to pedestrian, and it was with this in mind that Harmon designed the new AIA building, officially known as the Center for Architecture and Design. “It’s in a no-man’s-land in between neighborhoods now, but we hoped that the building could serve as a role model. It’s likely to become a much more lively area,” said Harmon, noting the repositioning of an old train station across the street into a popular retail center and a proposed residential development housing up to 3,000 people that may be happening just next door.

Harmon’s design, which was selected in an open competition of North Carolina-based architects in 2008, speaks to this optimistic vision of the neighborhood’s future. The building pushes up against the northern edge of the site, its dark zinc-clad facade abutting the sidewalk and even incorporating a shelter for a bus stop. From this side, the building seems ahead of its time, just waiting for an urbane streetscape to fill in around it. But on the opposite side, the building has a much sunnier disposition, nodding to the present as well as the past: pedestrian-friendly landscaping subtly camouflages a 36-space parking lot, while generous eaves evoking the local vernacular shelter the southern facade. Striking yellow cypress harvested from the Great Dismal Swamp in the northeastern part of the state clads this side of the building. “We wanted it to look like it belonged to North Carolina,” said Harmon, of the form and materials. “It has a friendly and a tactile quality that public buildings need.”

The building, which opened this spring, aims to be a model not just for human-scale design but also for sustainability. Ample daylighting, rainwater collection, and a geothermal heating and cooling system, among other features, have put it on track for a LEED Platinum rating.

Inside, the space drew inspiration from the AIA Center for Architecture in New York, with a mix of flexible spaces that can accommodate a variety of programming. With a state membership over 2,000 strong and North Carolina State University’s School of Architecture and College of Design nearby, the new center has a built-in audience.

Members gave $600,000 toward the cost of building the center, but to help cover expenses the AIA is leasing office space on its top floor and—taking a cue from its NYC counterpart—also renting out the larger public spaces for events.

But in terms of winning the approval of the general public, the chapter must wage an uphill battle. Confronted with David and Goliath, Raleigh residents are the one throwing stones: they recently voted the center the least attractive building in the city, just ahead of the Archdale.

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Sculpture: Gyre, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art

ONLY COLLECT continued from front page

nothing place for jurors to grab a sandwich during breaks from the nearby municipal courthouses. Soon it will reopen as an oasis.

“Restoring this site has been a dream of mine for 20 years, ever since I was Manhattan borough commissioner during the Giuliani administration,” said New York City Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “Collect Pond Park was a visual and municipal blight. One end was a parking lot; the other was collapsing into itself.” The park’s uninviting appearance gave no clue to the rich narrative of its historical past, and a $4.9 million Parks Department renovation due for completion in the summer of 2012 will address its geological, built, and cultural history for the first time.

During the 1700s, the 60-foot-deep Collect Pond was the source of all of Manhattan’s fresh water, fed by an underground spring and draining out to the Hudson River through marshy land to the south. An island in the middle of the Collect Pond was an execution ground, where slaves were hanged or burned at the stake for taking part in the so-called Great Negro Plot of 1741. Collect Pond Park is also the former location of the dreaded Tombs Prison, as well as the Five Points slum, considered the worst slum in 18th- and early 19th-century New York. As businesses like tanneries, breweries, and slaughterhouses moved into the area and began to dump their garbage into the pond, the once-clear water became a stagnant, stinking mess. In 1808 the city widened and straightened the canal to speed and improve drainage. Unfortunately, the plan didn’t work as intended, and in 1811 the pond was filled in to create land to house the city’s growing population.

The availability of Lower Manhattan Development Corporation funding after 9/11 finally gave the city an opportunity to transform the forlorn park. A series of graphic signs throughout the park will feature images and text about the history of the site. Other features will include a central pond spanned by a footbridge, wave-patterned pavers, lush plantings, and an interactive spray feature for children, as well as new benches, tables and chairs, lighting, and bicycle racks. The park was designed in-house by the Parks Department, with Nancy Owens Studio and Abel Bainnson Butz serving as outside historical and planning consultants.

“It’ll be a great new park in a formerly—what’s the word I want?—insalubrious location,” Benepe said. ANGELA RICCIERS

From poison pond to new downtown park.
**SKY'S THE LIMIT**

Residential towers streaking up over 1,000 feet represent the latest phenomenon in New York’s storied skyscraper history. Of the world’s 49 completed buildings over 1,000 feet, only 12 are residential, mostly in Dubai or Asia. Two, the Hancock Center and Trump International, are in Chicago. Not to be outdone, New York has broken ground on two of four planned supertall residential towers. Russia’s ultra-wealthy investing class are

1. **TOURER VERRE**
   - Height: 1,050 ft.
   - Units: 130
   - Architect: Jean Nouvel
   - Developer: Hines
   - Address: 53 West 53rd St.
   - Status: Approved/
   - On Hold

2. **432 PARK**
   - Height: 1,388 ft.
   - Units: 128
   - Architect: Rafael Viñoly
   - Developer: CIM Group
   - Address: 432 Park Ave.
   - Status: Under Construction

3. **ONE57**
   - Height: 1,004 ft.
   - Units: 95
   - Architect: Christian de Portzamparc
   - Developer: Extell
   - Address: 157 West 57th St.
   - Status: Under Construction

4. **GIRASOLE**
   - Height: 1,080 ft.
   - Units: 128
   - Architect: FXFOWLE
   - Developer: Moinian Group
   - Address: 3 Hudson Blvd.
   - Status: Approved/
   - On Hold

Providing some of the fuel for take-off, as it is estimated that as much as five percent of their foreign investment is directed into American real estate, much of it super-luxe apartments. In fact, when a trust fund in the name of Dmitry Rybolovlev’s daughter Ekaterina purchased the penthouse at 15 Central Park West, it drove the price of the penthouse at Extell Development’s 80-story One57 up from $385 million to a cool $10 million. **MS**

**UP THE RIVER** continued from front page by Civitas, a citizen’s action group. More than 90 entrants from 25 countries entered the competition to address the crumbling East River Esplanade from 60th to 125th streets. Last year attention was focused on closing the greenway gap between 38th Street and maintaining a riverside park in the long term. The three winners of the ideas competition address crucial aspects of rethinking the waterfront. The first-place winner, Syracuse University architecture student Joseph Wood, dreamed up canals leading inland to integrate the Upper East Side and East Harlem. Second-place winner Takuma Ona was no less ambitious, but he took a holistic approach that incorporated below-water ecosystems with practical engineering and a web of boardwalks on the water. Third-place winner Matteo Rossetti envisioned strategically placed “writing the esplanade” modules, where the community could drop by and write down what they would like to see happen on that site. The modules could later be transformed into participants’ suggestions. Rob Rogers of Rogers Marvel Architects was joined on the jury by architects Adam Yarinsky, Billie Tsien, Jack Travis, Signe Nielsen, Manhattan borough parks commissioner William Castro, Warren James, and attorney Al Butzel.

Rogers explained the unconventional scheme that took first place. “This was an ideas competition, and as such, part of the notion was to create intrigue and excitement about what the East Side could be,” he said. “It is ambition beyond traditional boundaries, beyond the scheme.” For his part, Wood said he was stunned that the jury selected his design, which was assigned as part of an architecture studio. “I was very surprised because they presented the competition like a basic nuts-and-bolts problem,” said Wood by phone. “I think they took a step out of themselves to allow such a conceptual idea to win.”

The water flow of Wood’s interlocking canals would be regulated in part by gates and filtration equipment. Tiered plantings would filter storm water before flowing into the river-bound canals. In a telephone interview, Wood didn’t delve too deeply into the technical details, to say nothing of Upper East Side/East Harlem politics. “This is more about the big picture,” he said. “It could be refreshing in a way to envision a new realm of the city without having to worry about the politics. This is more to spark conversation.”

Ono, an inaugural fellow at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, used historical maps as a starting point to study features of the landscape and its geology before accentuating them in tetrapods to create “ecological infrastructures.” “I’m always inspired by projects that look beyond the contemporary landscape and back into the past to see what can emerge from the existing rubble,” he said.

Rossetti’s civic approach rounded out the selection by bringing in neighborhood participation. “It is really difficult for the community to live pleasantly in a space that isn’t the mirror of the community itself,” the Italian architect said in an email.

The winners and five honorable mentions will be presented in an exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York from June 6 through late September. **TS**

**TUNNEL VISIONS**

A new report from an independent U.S. Congressional investigation calls into question the accounting methods that New Jersey Governor Chris Christie’s used to put the kibosh on the new train tunnel between New York and New Jersey. Christie said that the project, called the Access to the Regions Core (ARC), could run up to $14 billion, but investigators found that it wouldn’t cost more than $10 billion. He also claimed that New Jersey would foot more than 70 percent of the bill, but the investigators’ report said it would have been closer to 14 percent. (It should be noted that a constant Christie critic, U.S. Senator Frank R. Launtenberg, commissioned the report.) Christie brushed off the findings at an April 10 event in New York, where he said, “So when they want to build a tunnel to the basement of a Macy’s and stick the New Jersey taxpayers with a bill of $3 to $5 billion, no matter how much the administration yells and screams, you have to say, ‘No.’”

**WILLETS POINT RAMPS UP**

For the past four years Mayor Bloomberg has had his eyes fixed on revamping Willets Point, the dreary stretch of auto repair shops, junk yards, and recycling plants that sit just north of Citi Field in Queens. “It may not look pretty, but it’s work that needs doing,” Roberta Brandes Gratz, the protégé of Jane Jacobs and author of *The Battle for Gotham*, told AN. The area lacks basic city infrastructure, such as sewers and waste water systems. But it now looks as though the mayor may realize his vision of Willets Point as a mixed-use development. On April 2, Federal Highway Administration approved a key component of the plan, ramps connecting the area to the Van Wyck Expressway.

**HIGH HOLIDAY**

We heard rumblings, but now it’s official—a 400-room, 50-story high Holiday Inn will be joining the ranks of downtown hotels at 99 Washington Street near the World Trade Center. It will be the world’s tallest Holiday Inn and the op-to architect for New York hotels, Gene Kaufman of Gwathmey Siegel Kaufman & Associates Architects, will be doing the honors. Kaufman’s other high-profile hotel projects, the Chelsea Hotel renovation and the new Hyatt near Union Square, seem to be moving full steam ahead, despite legal wrangling at the Chelsea. The Holiday Inn will likely open to guests by the end of this year.
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Less than four years ago the Washington Avenue parking lot was the most interesting thing happening behind McKim, Mead & White’s magisterial Brooklyn Museum. Replacing a lone turnstile and guard’s hut with a series of glass-wrapped, green-capped pavilions and a plaza, the new Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) Visitor Center by New York-based Weiss/Manfredi is a sight for sore eyes. Nestled within a rich context and history—the nearby Prospect Park was designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted in the late 19th century and the Gardens by his two sons in the early 20th—the Center’s most impressive feature, its steel-frame design, is also its most vital. The custom-made structure forms a curving vertebrae that is formally elegant and light on the ground, yet structurally robust.

“The building is seen as a series of threshold spaces you move through, not stay at,” said Michael Manfredi, principal of Weiss/Manfredi. Designed as a gateway, the building employs a common Olmstedian device of a path to draw visitors through a sequence of enclosed and open spaces into the Cherry Esplanade. The center rises from one story at the front to a double-height at the rear in an arrangement of coated steel, fritted glass, and pale concrete that weaves in plan and section within its surrounding environment. In keeping with the firm’s philosophy of creating architecture supports the landscape and vice versa. “As the gardens mature, the building will disappear completely but be seen as a piece of the garden,” said Manfredi.

WEISS/ MANFREDI

The center’s serpentine form responds to the site’s existing undulations and is shaped to accommodate the grade differential and maximize sunlight and views to the gardens, as well as reap the geothermal benefits of a berm. To successfully do this the exposed 10x6 columns have been welded to varying roof beam depths, ranging from 10x6 to 18x6 to form frames that are organized in a curvilinear, 12-foot on-center grid in an east-west configuration. “The great thing about 3-D modeling these days is you can share the models with fabricators, so the process from design to fabrication is much easier,” said Armando Petruccelli, project architect. Curated much like the Gardens it opens onto, the Center’s pavilions are made up of enclosed spaces and breezeways. Visible from street level, the glazed retail space with its copper-clad double-pitch roof (a nod to McKim, Mead & White) is the first of the pavilions, a simple space whose exposed structure and ducts give it a functional, urban aesthetic. Skirting its north edge is a trellis-like glazed canopy that cuts a clean shaft of light between the copper roof and the green roof. The panes are ceramic, fritted like the majority of vertical glazing to ward off birds, as well as shade the ticketing booth, gallery, and orientation space farther west. The periphery channel, which is partially structural, curves along the cantilevered canopy, forming an edge to the roof and folding with the canopy to form the stringer to an ornamental staircase. The extraordinary curving staircase offers access to a breezeway that looks into the clerestory windows of the events space, where shading is reinforced with MechoSystem’s mechanical shades. From here people can visit the landscaped berm, while staff manages the 60,000 seasonal plantings on the green roof.

Clockwise from top left: Entry plaza; axonometric diagram; vertical section cuts to show berm; breezeway and canopy.

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**APRIL 2012 CALENDAR**

**APRIL 18**

**Lectures**

Grace Le/La Gallman [3:30 p.m.]

Knowlton School of Architecture
Ohio State University
275 Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, OH
knowlton.osu.edu

Richard Sennett
Eugene J. Mackey Jr. Lecture

6:30 p.m.

Steinberg Auditorium
Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts
1 Brookings Dr.
St. Louis, MO
samfoxschool.wustl.edu

**Symposium**

Green Peril and Promise: Managing Architecture for a Green Economy

Drew Dorfman, Thomas Haytin, and Douglass Farr

5:00 p.m.

Suite 181B
KfI Furniture Showroom

AI Chicago
35 East Walker Dr.
Chicago
aiachicago.org

**Events**

Society of Architectural Historians 65th Annual Conference

8:00 a.m.

Cobo Convention Center
1 Washington Blvd.
Downtown, Michigan

G. R. Christmas, Dennis Cowley / Courtesy The Pace Gallery

**APRIL 19**

**Lectures**

Jean Guarino
Myth Busters: New Perspectives on the Chicago School

12:15 p.m.

Landmarks Illinois
Chicago Cultural Center
Claudia Cassidy Theater
77 East Randolph St.
Chicago

landmarks.org

Theo Prudon
Why Modernism Matters: DeCoMoMo and Preserving Modern Architecture

5:00 p.m.

Hafie Chicago
154 West Hubbard St.
Chicago
hafie.chicago

**Friday 20**

**Symposium**

Fashion and Health Symposium

Kim E. P. Johnson and Brad Hokanson

6:30 p.m.

144 McNeil Hall
University of Minnesota
Duluth, MN
design.umn.edu

**Saturday 21**

**Exhibition Opening**

Les Deschennes and Florian Pumhösels

Paintings Through September 9

Bucksbaum Gallery

Modern Wing
The Art Institute of Chicago
250 South Columbus Dr.
Chicago
artic.edu

**Symposium**

Green Peril and Promise: Managing Architecture for a Green Economy

Drew Dorfman, Thomas Haytin, and Douglass Farr

5:00 p.m.

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8:00 a.m.

Cobo Convention Center
1 Washington Blvd.
Downtown, Michigan

G. R. Christmas, Dennis Cowley / Courtesy The Pace Gallery

**APRIL 25**

**Lecture**

Charles Waldheim

5:30 p.m.

Knowlton School of Architecture
Ohio State University
275 Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, OH
knowlton.osu.edu

**Conference**

CEEP: UnConference

One Voice: Coming Together to Transform Education

12:00 p.m.

Radisson Plaza Hotel
25 7th St. South
Minneapolis, MN

aiamn.org

**Wednesday 26**

**Lecture**

Pete Cavallucci

Building Urbanism: Design Process at EE&K/Parkins Eastman Architects

8:00 p.m.

170 Spaulding Hall
University of Minnesota
Duluth, MN

events.umn.edu

**Saturday 28**

**Exhibition Opening**

Seventy-Fifth Annual Detroit Public School Student Exhibition

Through June 3

The Detroit Institute of Arts
5200 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, MI

dia.org

**May 1**

**Wednesday 2**

**Lecture**

Stijn Kool

Bosch Slabbers

5:30 p.m.

Knowlton School of Architecture
Ohio State University
275 Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, OH
knowlton.osu.edu

**Exhibition Opening**

Daydove Boy

Harlem, U.S.A.

Through September 9

The Art Institute of Chicago
250 South Columbus Dr.
Chicago

artic.edu

**Friday 4**

**Event**

UIC SoU End Year Show

5:00 p.m.

Architecture and the Arts Building
University of Illinois Chicago
845 West Harrison St.
Chicago
arch.ualchicago.edu

**Saturday 5**

**Lecture**

Benjamin Ball

Ball-Nogues Studio

5:30 p.m.

Knowlton School of Architecture
Ohio State University
275 Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, OH
knowlton.osu.edu

**Tuesday 9**

**Lecture**

Steven Henry Madoff

What Space Means

4:00 p.m.

Film and Video Theater

Weimer Center for the Arts
1871 North High St.
Columbus, OH

wexarts.org

Wendy Ballion

The Will of Illusion

Tramp’s O’Hall in American Art

6:00 p.m.

Fullerton Hall
Art Institute of Chicago
111 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
art.edu

**Thursday 10**

**Event**

aCArney Awards

5:30 p.m.

Merchandise Mart Lobby
Greater Chicago Food Depository

410 West Ann Leture Pl.
Chicago

chicagofoodbank.org

**Friday 11**

**Event**

AI Chicago Small Project Awards and Exhibition

5:30 p.m.

Architectural Artifacts Inc.
4525 North Ravenswood Ave.
Chicago

aiachicago.org

**Saturday 12**

**Exhibition Opening**

Studio Goodwin Sturges

Told and Retold: Picture Book Artists

Through October 28

Ryan Education Center
Picture Book Gallery

The Art Institute of Chicago
250 South Columbus Dr.
Chicago

artic.edu

**Tuesday 15**

**Conference**

See Change: The Power of Visual Communication

Through May 16

Coffman Memorial Union
University of Minnesota
Duluth, MN

events.umn.edu

**Wednesday 16**

**Lecture**

Brandon Clifford

Howard E. LeFevre ’29

Emerging Practitioner Fellow

5:30 p.m.

Knowlton School of Architecture
Ohio State University
275 Woodruff Ave.
Columbus, OH
knowlton.osu.edu

**Thursday 17**

**Lectures**

Larry Shure

Typography of Courtyard Apartments: Rogers Park

1907-1933

12:15 p.m.

Landmarks Illinois
Chicago Cultural Center
Claudia Cassidy Theater
77 East Randolph St.
Chicago

landmarks.org

**The Outdoor Office**

The Art Institute of Chicago
111 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago

Through July 15

Jonathan Olives takes a human-centered approach to interior design and research. His 2011 book A Taxonomy of Office Chairs, published by Phaidon, provides an encyclopedic history of the office chair from 1840 to the present day; building on this research, Olives presents the speculative project The Outdoor Office (above). The advent of mobile communication means that work can be done outside of traditional offices and that the utility of outdoor space is no longer limited to recreation and leisure. Olives examines how productive work environments can be created with new types of outdoor furniture and architecture, with consideration of privacy, shelter, and adaptability. The exhibition showcases the research and results of his findings, with images drawn from television, film, and existing offices, in addition to conceptual projects and models developed for new outdoor work spaces.
MOSStile is a maintenance-free vertical-garden tile made using real lichen on a resin base. Because the plant needs no irrigation, fertilization, or natural light, it can be installed in wall and decorative applications. Available in 12 colors, the tiles require spaces with humidity of 50 percent or higher. U.S. distribution: www.greenupgroup.com. www.benettistone.com

InterfaceFLOR has introduced its first system of modular aviation carpet tiles. Made with recycled raw materials, the low-cost line targets environmental goals for new aircraft construction and refurbishment. Unlike fabric and broadloom carpet, the lightweight, nondirectional tiles are recyclable and will not stretch, shrink, or develop gaps in flight. www.interfaceflor.com

The new Noraplan Unita floor covering from Nora Systems combines resilience and durability. The rubber-and-granite chip composite is available in sixteen colors, four of which have a glitter effect. The material is ideal for public areas and is Greenguard Certified for Children and Schools. www.nora.com/us

Artificial grass manufacturer EasyTurf has introduced the Revolution landscape line, using a new polymer and manufacturing process to produce a matte grass tile that moves naturally and is suitable for pet and play areas, golf, rooftop, military, and commercial-grade applications. www.easyturf.com

Glazed Thin Brick is Fireclay Tile’s first artistic brick collection, sourced from one of California’s few remaining brickmakers. The line can be specified in almost all interior and exterior cladding or floor applications, and is suitable for wet areas, including those needing sanitary surfaces such as commercial kitchens, bathrooms, pools, and spas. www.fireclaytile.com

This year the U.S. General Services Administration’s Integrated Workplace Acquisition Center awarded carpet manufacturer Bentley Prince Street with its Evergreen Award for environmentally mindful businesses. The company is launching its new Oscar Worthy broadloom line (pictured) for corporate, hospitality, and retail environments this month. www.bentleyprincesstreet.com

Available at 145 by 50 inches, Neolith tiles from TheSize are one of the largest slim-porcelain slabs on the global market. The lightweight, weather-resistant panels are suitable for high-traffic environments like airports, subway stations, and lobbies, as well as industrial kitchen and heavy-duty countertop applications. New in 2012 is the NeoTrend Iron collection available in Moss, Corten, Copper, and Grey finishes. www.thesize.es
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Regionalism Now

In an ever more interconnected and globalized world, the concept of regionalism seems both out of step and more relevant than ever. And the architects associated with an architecture of place are keenly aware that—whatever the wider world thinks—their work is not based on a menu of fixed typologies but on adaptive values. Regionalism today is not about quoting barns and silo-shaped houses but rather actively engaging with the deeper forces driving specifics of form—whether it’s time, culture, climate or cost.

Critic David D’Arcy reexamines Kenneth Frampton’s canonical essay on Critical Regionalism with fresh eyes, while AN editors survey projects and practitioners that are carving out new principles as they engage with—or resist—the notion of regionalism.
**FEATURE**

**STRANGELY FAMILIAR**

“Working within a particular region establishes a baseline. There is a preconception of what regionalism is, but we also look at it in a way that is unfamiliar. We look for something familiar and yet new.”

Roberto de Leon

**INVISIBLE PARAMETERS**

“Architecture is a political process...As a term, regionalism has a negative connotation. Using it would be a way of distinguishing oneself. A ‘region’ can be a subdivision or a city block, in terms of scale.”

Mary Ellen Carroll

It was a global landscape haunted and threatened by “the freestanding high rise,” “the serpentine freeway,” “the apocalyptic thrust of modernization,” and “pathological philistinism.”

This was the condition, not just of the built environment, but of architecture, said Kenneth Frampton, who accused architects of responding with eclectic historical nostalgia and a rapturous futurism. And it was only 1983.

Frampton’s response was a jeremiad deploiring it all. And there was much to deplore.

His alternative was critical regionalism, seizing on a term first deployed in 1981 by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre. It was a warning, a manifesto, and a call to arms. Frampton termed it “a critical basis from which to evolve a contemporary architecture of resistance—a culture of dissent free from fashionable stylistic conventions, an architecture of place rather than space, and a way of building sensitive to the vicissitudes of time and climate.”

Frampton’s enemy then was postmodernism. He and others felt besieged by a tendency that was dragging critics and resources and young talent into nostalgia or into technological rootlessness.

Frampton heaped blame, not just on the postmodernists, but on the circumstances weighing upon them. Modernism, however, tended to be left off the hook. Just root it in a real place, he counseled. Here’s how he hovered around a definition, vaguely enough to be big tent: “Critical Regionalism depends upon maintaining a high level of critical self-consciousness. It may find its governing inspiration in such things as the range and quality of the local light, or in a tectonic derived from a peculiar structural mode, or in the topography of a given site.”

Back in the 1980s, Frampton and others would foresee another persistent factor. This regionalizing trend that they hoped for would not be a revolution. “The scope of activity available to the potential regionalist is intersitial rather than global in nature,” Frampton wrote in 1988, “which will be seen to some as a deciding advantage.” Frampton also called that work marginal—not the most effective term for recruiting.

It’s now clear that Frampton underestimated the challenge—and the flexible advantage of regionalism. It was several financial crashes ago, before the Internet enabled almost everything besides dwelling to be virtual rather than tactile, and before destination architecture turned a battleground like Bilbao into a tourist mecca and turned an elite of architects into boldfaced names.

Some three decades later, regional architecture is a sensibility, rather than a movement. Like most tendencies that move from the bottom up, there are no clear rules, other than a tactility, a commitment to place, and an ethical attitude about community, all of which fuse into an approach to sustainability, a term that escaped the earliest formulations.

In a 2006 lecture, Alexander Tzonis updated the challenge: “Mindlessly adopting narcissistic dogmas in the name of universality leads to environments that are economically costly, ecologically destructive, and catastrophic to the human community.” As Yogi Berra might have said, it’s apocalypse all over again.

Like anything regional, solutions will vary from location to location. These are paths that lead to hybridization, rather than purity.

No surprise, it’s leaderless. But there are plenty of prophets, like Alvar Aalto, whose brick Synatsalo Town Hall of 1952 was a triumph of tactility for Frampton. Another one of Frampton’s heroes was Luis Barragán, whose 1947–48 Casa Estudio—an office, home, and garden in Tacubaya, a working-class suburb of Mexico City—is now being scrutinized in a new documentary by Rax Rinnekangas and the Finnish architect and critic Juhani Pallasmaa.

And adherents are growing, hailing from
Weekend House
North Shore, Lake Superior
Julie Snow Architects

Nakahouse
Hollywood Hills, CA
Titan Architecture
TIME

“Time is a regionalist perspective. Objects in a landscape age in a certain way; maintenance has to be anticipated and understood. Architects need to plan for time.”

Tom Kundig

QUIET APPROACH

“We look at the culture that wraps around a site. We look at the operational and aspiration aspects. And then, only then, we play with form and pattern. Having a quiet voice at the beginning is important.”

Julie Snow

farther afield both, in geographical and intellectual reach. In Nova Scotia, architect Brian MacKay-Lyons has been gathering architects—under the suitably oblique banner Ghost—to appraise the future of master building in terms of landscape, material culture, and community. Both Frampton and Pallasmaa have contributed but the range of engaged architects is wide, among them Deborah Berke, Wendell Burnette, Ted Flato, Vincent James, Rick Joy, Richard Kooiker, Tom Kundig, Patricia Patkau, Dan Rockhill, and Brigitte Shim. Among them is Marlon Blackwell, who is all too keenly aware that he has been scripted as American architecture’s regional everyman. Based in Fayetteville, Arkansas, he has developed an approach as likely to draw on mud towers in Yemen as the state’s ubiquitous long-haul trucks. For the Porchdog House, a post-Katrina dwelling, Blackwell rejected a retreat to the sentimental vernacular. Instead of a granny-style porch with geraniums and rockers, the Biloxi house sits on 11-foot pillars—a new prototype responsive to the elements, but also affordable enough to replicate.

Blending the mass-production possibilities of the prototype with locally resonant design defines a hybrid approach being taken by regional firms like Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, designers of the Apple Store. The product is a paradox—multiple corporate retail stores are also transparent physical gathering places for corporeal Apple customers who spend much of their time in virtual worlds. The stores are potent advertising logos, as well as local destinations.

Is this a case of regionalists already jumping ship or selling out? Only if the already-slippery definition of regionalism is seen as a rigid pledge or a straitjacket, which hasn’t been suggested by any architect. There is no required vow of poverty, chastity, or obedience. So far, no one has been excommunicated from Ghost for taking on corporate clients.

Or for creating a destination. And what, if not a destination, is the new and exquisite Clyfford Still Museum in Denver, a gambit hyped as a tourist site by destination-obsessed Denver and designed by Brad Cloepfil, a Frampton pupil at Columbia University who established himself as a practitioner of Pacific Northwest
EMERGENT VERNACULAR

“I think about a more fragmented way to look at the landscape. There are vestiges of another society apart from the barns, silos, and shotguns, elements more about mobility and part of the reality of what we see and experience around us. RVs, truck trailers and campers are all sources of inspiration, too.”

Marlon Blackwell
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# APRIL

## LECTURES
- **March 30**: Donald Friedman, *Structural Systems of the Future*, 6:30 p.m., Cooper Union, 41 Cooper St., newyork.wf
- **April 3**: Mark Klopfer, *Attenuation*, 5:45 p.m., Village Community School, 1220 Fifth Ave., City of New York
- **April 5**: Preston Scott Cohen, *EMERGING FINNISH ARCHITECTS*, 5:45 p.m., Trespa Design Centre, 62 Greene St., New York
- **April 6**: Christo, *Shadows*, 6:00 p.m., Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave., City of New York
- **April 10**: Richard Meier, *The Architectural Imaginary*, 6:30 p.m., Trespa Design Centre, 62 Greene St., New York
- **April 11**: Mark Klopfer, *Creating Spaces of Possibility*, 5:45 p.m., Village Community School, 1220 Fifth Ave., City of New York
- **April 12**: Robert Venturi, *The Phenomenology of Cities*, 6:00 p.m., Cooper Union, 41 Cooper St., newyork.wf

## EXHIBITIONS
- **April 6**: *The One, 1985* by Rebecca Medel, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 26th St. and Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia, PA
- **April 20**: *Craft Spoken Here*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 26th St. and Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia, PA
- **April 20-25**: *Emerging Finnish Architects*, Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Pl., cfa.aiya.org
- **April 25**: *Designing Homes and Neighborhoods for an Aging Population*, 7:00 p.m., Cooper Union, 41 Cooper St., newyork.wf

## EVENTS
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- **April 25**: *Craft Spoken Here*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 26th St. and Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia, PA
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## SYMPOSIUMS
- **April 20**: *Designing Homes and Neighborhoods for an Aging Population*, 7:00 p.m., Cooper Union, 41 Cooper St., newyork.wf

## CRAFT SPOKEN HERE
Philadelphia Museum of Art
26th St. and Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.
Philadelphia, PA
May 5 to August 12

Since it was founded in 1876, the Philadelphia Museum of Art has collected and exhibited crafts; the collection today includes 20th- and 21st-century works from across the globe. With Craft Spoken Here, the Museum presents the medium of crafting as a common language of technique, material, and form that defies cultural boundaries and historical categorization. Drawing from the museum’s collection as well as works on loan from artists and private collections, the exhibition will include some 40 works by acclaimed and lesser-known craftsmen alike, with contemporary pieces from 1960 to the present, including The One, 1985 by Rebecca Medel (above). Representing the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe with works in ceramic, glass, metal, wood, lacquer, paper, and fiber, the works on display show the breadth of the medium and highlight the qualities of craft that transcend culture and time.
This chronological and comprehensive photographic record of the surviving works of Karl Friedrich Schinkel in Berlin and nearby Potsdam surely ranks as one of the most mournful ever published. It is a Baedeker of ensuing historical lamentation as well as architectural genius. And it succeeds therefore more as a compendium of personal reflection by a gifted artist than as design guidebook or biographical summary per se, accomplished more conventionally a decade ago in Taschen’s K.F. Schinkel: An Architect in the Service of Beauty, by Martin Stoffens. Refreshingly straightforward descriptive essays complete the task with their frequent conclusions of late-war destruction and summaries of postwar reconstruction and often dubious preservation, just as Schinkel’s place in a design history was catalyzed anew by the admiring embrace of modernist theory. The book in sum constitutes an invaluable addition to the Schinkelbibliography, treating architecture as muse instead of with journalistic objectivity. Such an approach helps the reader see through the borrowed eyes and distilled reality of works of art. The book includes projects completed following the architect’s death at age 60, whether only partially realized in his lifetime or compromised by ensuing interventions that have dissuaded some from making a Schinkel attribution. Thanks to Engel, even those most discerning will discover works not generally assigned to the so-called father of Prussian classicism, whose name now speaks for an entire era of cultural history. Engel summons to mind the fine-art example of his compatriot painter Becher, depicting as they did, from the 1960s through the 1980s, the typologies of industrial design. In initial years, their focus was on structures at obsolescing risk and later those of common-place currency such as water tanks and storage silos. Like them, he does so by working unaweringly under an overcast Prussian sky that obscures the buildings in sharp, even relief. Excepting four images with a car or two and two others with partial construction scaffold, these are point-blank images devoid of distraction or context, which as Bergdoll points out doesn’t resemble concurrent 19th-century accuracy in any case. Even at prominent public landmarks heavily in use like the Altes Museum or the Schinkel Pavilion, there is scarcely a soul in sight. This static gray palette is compounded by the bareness of the wintertime, although there are among the 78 plates (three for each of the 26 sites) a few with summer foliage forming the pictures’ outer edge, particularly when set in a garden where such placement was endemic to its formal purpose. Likewise there is generous acknowledgment by Jesse Klingenberg, as well as Bergdoll, of Schinkel’s favored landscape colleague, Peter Joseph Lenné, perhaps happily she is wide ranging in her taste. She seems as comfortable explaining Muschamp’s intensely idiosyncratic criticism as Sorkin’s indignant yet elegant and erudite rants, and she discusses them both with sympathy and intelligence. At the end of the day her heart seems as comfortable explaining Muschamp’s intensely idiosyncratic criticism as Sorkin’s indignant yet elegant and erudite rants, and she discusses them both with sympathy and intelligence. At the end of the day her heart clearly belongs to Ada Louise Huxtable, but then again, what architecture critic’s doesn’t?

If there is a problem with this book, it emerges out of the limits of the textbook genre, which seems inevitably to encourage authors to classify and categorize. Lange declares Sorkin an activist critic and Muschamp an “experiential” one. She says that Huxtable and Mumford are focused primarily on “the form of the artifact,” and that yours truly organizes reviews “the man, not the continued on page 35
as Engel’s subtle nod to the fact of this shared creation.

Whether taken on a direct frontal, symmetrical axis or in volume-revealing “three-quarter pose,” these portraits are architecture as pathetic fallacy or, as the introduction states repeatedly, as a “21st-century palimpsest” of German culture and its fulcrum of violence and recovery. The essay (try reciting it; long sentences of Germanic circumlocution become clearer with the cadence of out-loud articulation. It has, one imagines, served well as a lecture for curator/scholar Bergdoll, who is today second to none as expert on Schinkel and his age and place), like much of the text, duly addresses Schinkel’s personal dialogue with history, echoed as it is by ongoing debate about his foremost place in this very history; proto-modernist nurtured by the revived romanticism of an emergent neo-Gothic style; proof of classicism’s constant capacity to innovative within the rules of an inherited vocabulary; or all that and more. Ignoring the fact that much of the architect’s pared-down classicism devoid of ornament seems in part an inevitable result of the endless scrimping by cheapskate Prussian monarch Friedrich Wilhelm III, his meddlesome lifelong patron as per Schinkel’s prestigious role as “state architect,” the results in any event prove his own conviction, that “historical does not mean just retaining or repeating what is old for that would destroy history. To act in an historical manner means to introduce something new that at the same time continues history.” In word like deed, there is this something-for-everyone insight into why his cherished example holds up to the beneficial scrutiny of practitioners of any applied style vocabulary, along with those who imagine themselves creating entirely new ones. Either way history is the crucible force.

The dilemma becomes manifest in Engel’s cheerless lapidary portraits of Berlin’s Bauakademie, where an advertisement-subsidized tarpaulin stretched across the severely damaged building imitates the original, as to do so in actuality continues to stir controversy of preservation-minded devotees versus those denouncing any such built simulation as false—as destroying history in just the way the architect admonished. Engel includes it in this unsparing record as apt metaphor for Schinkel and contemporary photographer alike. This book thus renders the architect as an even greater contemporary force, who merits exactly this sort of innovative observation.

Paul Gunther is the President of the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art.
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WE HONOR THOSE WHO HELPED HEAL A NATION

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS
David McCullough — Thursday, May 17
Award-winning historian and author of The Greater Journey

Hon. Shaun Donovan — Friday, May 18
Architect and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Architects of Healing — Saturday, May 19
Join us in honoring the architects involved in the rebuilding and memorials at Ground Zero, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. They sought to help our nation when we all needed their unique gifts. Now, it’s your opportunity to say “thank you.”

In addition to the inspiring stories of the rebuilding and memorial at the Pentagon and the Flight 93 National Memorial, six architects who offered their experience to help rebuild and memorialize Ground Zero will share emotions and anecdotes, including Daniel Libeskind, FAIA; David Childs, FAIA; Michael Arad, AIA; Craig Dykers, AIA; Steve Davis, FAIA; and Santiago Calatrava, FAIA.

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For all its vaunted grandeur, the Hudson River Valley is a landscape locked in existential crisis. Littered with slagheap towns and gas plants, old traprock quarries and Superfund sites, the riverfront burgs like Poughkeepsie, Kingston, Hudson, and Troy—and their long-suffering cousins on the Erie Canal—are poster children for New York’s upstate downside. For decades, this realm of strapped municipal governments and tumbling population has been tilting toward the economic abyss. Beyond the weekenders’ paradise of five-and-dimes and post-hike pubs, there lies an even grittier Hudson Valley begging for a business opportunity. As much model urban design, as a tempting redevelopment node in a network of “polycentric regional towns” prepped to compete on the global playing field. As much model urban design, a Hudson Valley building exhibition would tap new economic development ideas like “economic gardening.” Pioneered in Colorado in the 1980s, the concept promotes the entrepreneurial spirit of local citizens instead of simply handing out tax-break bonanzas to bargain-hunting corporations. Through a building exhibition, “creative competition” between cities could stimulate hundreds of projects to incubate industrial and commercial innovation, with funding awarded for proposals that demonstrate high-quality planning and design. The entire initiative would culminate in 2024 with a yearlong series of exhibitions, forums, boat tours, and other events.

Such a deliberately ambitious program calls for scores of public, private, and nonprofit partners. Brunzema’s team has begun reaching out to potential collaborators like OurHudson and Empire State Future, groups deeply engaged in cultivating vibrant upstate communities. And building exhibitions aren’t cheap. The Emscher Park effort was stoked with $1.5 billion in public funds (all, incidentally, deemed wisely spent). A Hudson Valley exhibition would need to rely far more on private support, coupled with public investment bundled, as in Germany, from existing funding streams.

America is desperate for just this type of urban innovation. Aside from the brave and still unfolding saga to downsize Detroit, our nation has shown tragically little willingness to confront, through large scale planning and design, the postindustrial present. A building exhibition to rethink the future of 19 shrinking cities would use the Hudson River and Erie Canal—the historic sources, the historic downtown. Affordable, prefabricated housing would be designed to densify over time; a municipal waste plant transforms trash into green products; a high-tech manufacturing complex takes advantage of water, rail, and air links to global networks—the whole site crossed by cable cars and packing in as many as 10,000 residents. In this vision, Poughkeepsie becomes one node in a network of “polycentric communities precisely the resources they need to begin shaping their own economic destiny. It would give all of us the faith that upstate New York has a future, and it’s more than just gravel.

Jeff Byles, AN’s former managing editor, directs research at the Van Alen Institute.
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