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Every year, The Art Newspaper, the august art tabloid out of the U.K., publishes its data-crunching Exhibition & Museum Attendance Figures for museums around the world. And once again the Museum of Modern Art figured prominently in the top ten of multiple lists, including presenting three of the 20 most popular exhibitions for the year (the design show Talk to Me was in fact number 20) and standing at number three for total art museum attendance.

MoMA has long since proved its might in terms of establishing an agenda for art, and particularly architecture stretching from Philip Johnson’s groundbreaking 1938 National Style show to Barry Bergdoll’s Raising Currents exhibition last year. So it is paramount that MoMA use its considerable clout and weight in decisively on the fate of the American Folk Art Museum (AFAM), now standing empty and engulfed on three sides by MoMA, the building itself to the east and property it owns and plans to develop with Gerald Hines on the west and north. MoMA, in fact, owns the AFAM building having bailed out the struggling institution last summer when it was forced to give up its flagship due to fiscal mismanagement and retreat to a second-floor gallery near Lincoln Center. It’s hard not to hear the licking of chops: Jean Nouvel’s supercollar for the site currently works its way around and behind AFAM but it would surely make real estate sense to simply gulp it up.

AFAM, a small masterwork by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, two outstanding talents in contemporary architecture, is a delectable morsel—only 40 feet wide, its more remarkable feature is its facade of 63 cast panels of white bronze, a material common to propellers and fire hoses but never before used architecturally, textured like concrete, and faceted with subtle origami-like folds. In one stroke, the architecture tells the story of the institution’s key interests: material, craft and scale. On completion, it was awarded ARUP’s Best New Building in the World for 2001 and graced innumerable magazine covers around the world. It was the first new ground-up museum in New York in 30 years going back to Marcel Breuer’s Whitney; one might say AFAM breathed warm, sensual life into a poorly understood and too easily dismissed architectural voice, Brutalism.

Something has to be done to prevent the cannibalism of a small icon by an as yet to be built icon, if only to prove that contemporary architecture is not instantly disposable. In an impromptu conversation with a Hines vice president, I was told that the developer would as soon see the building erased from the site, but that Hines was waiting to hear from MoMA, noticeably silent on the subject. Tod Williams and Billie Tsien are also hanging fire. At a press conference for the new Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, Williams spoke with anguish and concern about the fate of AFAM. He knows that New York real estate is a take-no-prisoners game, but he is still hopeful, noting that one of the museum’s floors aligns perfectly with one of MoMA’s. Williams said he, too, has heard from no one at MoMA. There are compelling reasons for MoMA to come up with a solution and a way to incorporate at least the AFAM facade into the new tower that will be conjoined to the museum only at a few interior levels. Several expansions of the museum have all included the original 1939 Goodwin and Stone facade. That may have been about preserving legacy, but saving AFAM could be on message, too. In its materials—apart from the white bronze, there is bush-hammered concrete, cast resin, and salvaged timber on the inside—it speaks to a modern interest in texture and fabrication that MoMA has left largely unexplored, and that could contribute to the museum’s professional commitment to a wider understanding of modernism.

Paul Goldberger has suggested online that MoMA turn AFAM into a home for its director, something like Saarinen’s house for the director of Cranbrook. Surely MoMA can do better (Besides, Glen Lowry is already comfortably ensconced in the Museum Tower). At a time when MoMA is talking the talk of responsible treatment of quality resources and of architecture’s ability to solve complex problems, it should act accordingly and find a way to incorporate not destroy AFAM. JULIE V. IOVINE
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TO RUSSIA, WITH LOVE

Is Russia the new China? Probably not, but there are a couple of projects to watch in Putinland. Rem Koolhaas has locked up the commission to transform a crumbling Soviet-era building into a hip new home for the Garage, the contemporary art center in Moscow run by Dasha Zhukova. Bankrolling the creation of a 58,000-square-foot kunsthalle, complete with the obligatory café, shop, and “learning center,” is billionaire Roman Abramovich, Zhukova’s longtime boyfriend.

MAXXED OUT?

Meanwhile, Rem’s former Russian stomping grounds of the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (OMA created a new masterplan for the sprawling museum complex) will get a megascale of Santiago Calatrava in the form of a summertime retrospective. The exhibition, the first for a contemporary architect, is part of a broader museum initiative to spice up all those classical antiquities and orthodox icons with art of the 20th and 21st centuries. “Santiago Calatrava: The Quest for Movement” opens June 27 with career-spanning paintings, architectural models, and sketches. Things will really get moving with kinetic sculptures as well as an installation with four giant projections.

MOVE OVER, FABERGE

As for museums in southern European climes, Building Design reported on their website that the Maxxi Museum in Rome has been put into “compulsory administration by the Italian government,” at least until the board raises most of the museum’s 11 million euro operating budget. The Zaha Hadid-designed museum for contemporary art has attracted almost half a million visitors a year since opening in 2010, but following massive government spending cuts, sounds like it will have to lure molo more.

SEND CAVIAR, TAPAS, AND LEFTOVER LIRE TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

IN THE BALANCE

Paul Rudolph’s Orange County Government Center moved a tentative step closer to demolition on April 24 after a subcommittee of the county legislature approved $14.6 million to finance the design of a new $75 million complex. Republican Al Buckbee crossed party lines to vote against the proposal, making the vote a four-to-four tie. Committee chair Michael Pillimeier, also a Republican, cast the deciding vote. The tight tussle hints that the plan may not have the two-thirds majority of the legislature needed to proceed. Throughout April, preservationists fanned out over the county—DOMICOMO, New York Tri-State held three meetings, Rudolph scholar Timothy Rohan gave a lecture in nearby Newburgh, New York, and in Goshen, designLAB delivered a presentation about their Rudolph renovation project at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

The building has not been lacking for attention from the mainstream press either. After dedicating front-page coverage to the preservation fight, The New York Times held an online debate under the provocative heading “Are Some Buildings Too Ugly to Survive?” which included the line describing the Brutalist style as one “which uses raw concrete or other materials to make art galleries look like fallout shelters,” from Anthony M. Daniels, a contributor to the conservative arts journal The New Criterion.

The Orange County debate seems to boil down to traditional versus contemporary tastes, even as Republicans took pains to distance themselves from the role of aesthetic conservatives. “I would never ask to take a building down because of what it looks like,” county executive director Eddie Diana told AN back in March. Diana attempted to couch his decision to destroy the Brutalist masterwork in terms of fiscal responsibility only after his initial $338 million proposal for a new building was rejected. The new plan costs $75 million. Meanwhile, his estimates for renovating the Rudolph building climbed as high as $77 million. Plans for the new county building call for a 175,000-square-foot facility. Robert Miklos of designLAB wrote to Diana that Dartmouth’s comparable Rudolph building added 22,000 square feet to a 155,000-square-foot existing building, making a total of 177,000 square feet, but at a cost of $35 million. The Times Herald-Record reported that that number is probably closer to $43 million after design fees and furnishings are factored—still less than Diana’s demolition and replacement proposal.

Many questioned the proposal’s financing, with scrutiny centered on bond arrangements and whether a new building qualifies for financing from FEMA (the building sustained damage in Tropical Storm Irene). Before voting against the proposal in the committee, legislator Myrna Kemnitz told AN, “You can’t use FEMA monies to build new.” Kemnitz, a consistent critic of the project, said that aesthetic arguments aside, the finances just don’t add up. “The entire project was put out there by politicians who are willing to go on the premise that people will never check.” At press time, a full vote by the legislature was scheduled for May 3.

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CRIT>THE BARNES FOUNDATION

To travel from New York to Philadelphia is to go from urbanity without architecture to architecture without urbanity. New York’s sparkle and spectacle transcend the mediocrities of its architecture collection, in which grim vernaculars are unrelieved by the developer-driven banality of would-be landmarks. Philadelphia’s building stock, pound for pound the country’s best, has to contend with the usual downtown desolations of postindustrial depopulation and bombastic city planning.

The dilemma is acute at the new address of the Barnes Foundation, an unusual art institution now in a skiffly new home by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects on Benjamin Franklin Parkway. That piece of City Beautiful urban renewal drove a miniature Champs-Élysées between the city’s downtown and its Museum of Art (a Schinkel-esque temple on a miniature acropolis), and adorning it with aspirational Beaux Arts institutes, academies, and libraries. But those faded glories are now adrift between unwalkable lots, haphazard highway ramps, bleak alleged parks, lumpen residential towers, and the tortured posterior of a loading dock and its duty as a civic, if not legal, parking lot.

The Barnes has its own tortured history.Founded by pharmaceutical magnate Albert Barnes in 1922, it has been wrenched between its status as a private collection and its duty as a civic, not entirely public, institution.

Classical prodigy Paul Cret (whose masterful little Rodin museum neighbors the new building) designed a villa for Barnes in suburban Merion, PA, to house a collection that would eventually include 7 van Goghs, 46 Picassos, and 181 Renoirs. Barnes’ will, a posed masterpieces with the work of local artists and artisans to dubious effect.

After financial scrapes and legal twists, the foundation’s trustees found a way to move the collection to Philadelphia’s Museum District, with the stipulation that Barnes’ hanging and Cret’s room layouts had to be exactly replicated.

Those rooms, some 20,000 square feet of them on two levels, now form a bar building facing the parkway, spaced by an atrium from a parallel structure behind, containing administrative offices, temporary galleries, and the main public entrance. Above that atrium are angular light scoops whose interior geometry recalls a near-identical detail in Williams and Tsien’s C.V. Starr East Asian Library at Berkeley, and whose exterior is expressed as a glasy, floating box—a fancy hat just jarring enough to the comportment below to bring the building into the current century. The replica galleries dutifully duplicate the basics of the Cret originals and their approximate solar orientation, but add coved ceiling profiles for additional daylighting and subtly extend Cret’s plan to accommodate a light well and teaching spaces.

Underground, more classrooms, an auditorium, and a discreet gift shop are lit by that light well, which is planted with hardy ginkos. With a reported $150 million distributed across a total 93,000 square feet, plus four acres of grounds, the money is there to be seen. The exterior and atrium interior are clad in vast panels of luminous Isioled lime stone, whose mot tle and hue uncommonly match the bark of the parkway’s plane trees. The building’s massing and material evoke its precursors’ classical posture without recourse to formal pedantry. Throughout, there’s a mature version of Williams and Tsien’s characteristic vocabulary of sandblasted concrete, burred woods, and meticulous metal trim.

What elevates the building above mere good taste is the choreography of the entry sequence. Working with landscape architect Laurie Olin, Williams and Tsien have drawn out the building’s approach: visitors from all directions are filtered through low terraces toward a free-standing ticket pavilion; and from there, along and across a long reflecting pool that sneaks, Barragán-like, under a high wall that abuts the chilly self-regard and pious propriety to which places like the Barnes can be all too prone: thus Philadelphia and New York, architecture and urbanity. Barnes and Barnum, together at last.

ARCHITECTURE CRITIC
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The Challenge

Fold, fill, or weave were the marching orders given to students at Parsons’ School of Constructed Environments. The students were armed with Xorel, a woven polyethylene fabric from Carnegie Fabrics that has the textured appearance and malleability of fabric but is as tough, stain resistant, and durable as a plastic. The company engaged the students to design soft structures made from the tech fabric for the firm’s booth at this year’s International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) at the Javits Center. Faculty member and architect Granger Moorhead and his brother, industrial designer Robert Moorhead, came up with the exercise for the class in temporary structures.

Granger Moorhead asked the students to break out into teams focused on folding, filling, or weaving. The installation had to be experiential so that visitors to the booth could walk through, under, or beside the design. The folding and weaving teams quickly attracted students, while filling took on just two. Carnegie staff and Parsons faculty weighed in on which submission would work best at ICFF.

The weaving group used a paper-backed version of Xorel to create dozens of wide fabric loops bound together at two points. The voluminous waves were striking in mock-up photos and watercolor studies, but jumping from the plan to the Javits Center would be a bit of stretch—too precarious and precious for the duration of the show. Next.

The filling group of two took durability into serious consideration, drawing inspiration from bags usually found on construction sites as tieback weights. The group used an unbacked version of the fabric to create glorified tiebacks held together with industrial grommets. The result was amusing and inviting to the touch, but the stacking method might not meet the exacting design sensibilities at ICFF. Nice try.

The folding group walked away with a winning design based on an origami approach. They also used a paper-backed version of Xorel. Usually used for wall covering, the paper-back structure facilitated precise origami cuts to create pyramid-like shapes with extended tabs at the base of each plane. The tabs were then attached to each other, giving designers freedom to create larger compositions. When joined together, the forms evolved into cloudlike shapes, with several pyramids scaled up for variety. “It’s very poetic and a simple building block,” said Granger Moorhead.

With formal issues decided, the students went on to explore a new process created by Carnegie that allows for digital printing on the paper backing the fabric. Since the woven polyethylene surface is translucent, any printed pattern underneath shows through. To go even more baroque, the polyethylene surface itself can be textured through. To go even more baroque, the polyethylene surface itself can be textured through. To go even more baroque, the polyethylene surface itself can be textured through. To go even more baroque, the polyethylene surface itself can be textured through. To go even more baroque, the polyethylene surface itself can be textured through.

Transforming design into reality

Since its construction in 1982, the Jacob K. Javits Center has been one of the world’s leading examples of space-frame design. But the I.M. Pei & Partners-designed exhibit space needed updating to put its best face forward for the 3.5 million visitors it receives each year. So owners engaged Epstein Global and FXFowle Architects, who developed the recladding program that is dramatically increasing the building’s transparency and energy efficiency. Targeting LEED Silver with a glazing system that will enable the building to exceed energy code requirements by 25 percent, the new face of Javits proves that being old doesn’t have to mean retiring.

For help achieving the goals of your next project, contact the Ornamental Metal Institute of New York.
The architects from Perkins+Will had already completed the massing studies and master plan for a new hospital at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore when Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg donated $120 million toward the $1.1 billion project. But the gift to his alma mater came with a condition: infuse the project with art. And not just "plop art," but art integrated into the architecture.

As a result, the curtain wall of the Children’s Center, named for the mayor's mother, has incorporated art. And not just "plop art," but art integrated into the architecture. 

In turn they visited his studio screen the frit pattern in ceramic was refined and then sent to the architects for transfer to AutoCAD. Quality control was key. “When working with custom silk-screen patterns, it’s important to understand how it’s going to lay out,” said Viracon’s Bob Carlson. “You may think that if you didn’t have it right, the misaligned pane might blend, but actually they jump out at you really quickly.” 

Normal the factory handles about 100 different units at a time, but for this project the number jumped to 2,000. Coordination was key. “Working with custom silk-screen patterns, it’s important to understand how it’s going to lay out,” said Viracon’s Bob Carlson. “You may think that if you didn’t have it right, the misaligned pane might blend, but actually they jump out at you really quickly.” Quality control coming out of Harmon was tight. Of the 20,000 intricately patterned panes, only about 15 had to be adjusted on-site. The Charlotte R. Bloomberg Children’s Center opened officially on May 1.
OUT OF THIN AIR

Designed by Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret in 1938 but apparently never built, the Refuge Tonneau was envisioned as a compact and efficient mountain retreat from extreme weather. Almost 75 years later it has been reconstructed for the first time by luxury Italian furniture brand Cassina as part of their exhibition for this year’s Salone del Mobile in Milan.

The aluminum dodecahedron structure—inspired by a merry-go-round in Croatia—ingeniously accommodates up to eight dwellers on two levels in its efficient pine wood interior. The lower space includes four single beds, while two double beds are tucked into a mezzanine above. A heater for warmth, the bare essential nature of the space from snow melt. The warm pine interior keeps the bare essential nature of the space from feeling too austere.

Using the original sketches, Cassina re-created the mountain hut with the help of Perriand’s daughter and longtime assistant, Pernette Perriand-Barsac. In a world facing increasingly severe weather conditions and frequent natural disasters, the efficiency and dignity of the Refuge Tonneau offers numerous lessons both for designing quick and compact housing and living lightly on the land. It’s a reminder of the truly revolutionary thinking of the first generation of modernists, whose buildings and objects continue to stand with their originality and relevance.

NYU INCHES CLOSER TO PLANNING VOTE

NYU 2031, the New York University’s expansion plan, went before City Planning for a public hearing on April 25. The plan calls for more than 2 million square feet to be added to the campus core in Greenwich Village. With an overflow crowd expected, Planning moved the meeting to the much larger venue of the auditorium at the Museum of the American Indian. Several speakers from the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation turned up at the last minute to cobble together a cohesive anti-expansion presentation out of three-minute time allotments. Matt Urbanski of Michael Van Valkenburgh seemed a bit shaken by hisses and shouting coming from the crowd. Grimshaw’s Mark Husser defended the need for the Boomerang building’s underground light wells to provide natural light to the nearly one million square feet of below grade space. Commissioner Amanda Burden said that, as the light wells take away from public space, “you have to do a better job of arguing for that,” she said. The deadline for the Planning vote is June 6.

JOCKEYING FOR PROMINENCE ON PARK AVENUE

L&L Holding Company, owners of a midcentury office tower at 425 Park Avenue, are looking to build a new, high design office tower on that site. It would be the first new office tower built on Park Avenue since the 1980s. Some of the biggest names in architecture are competing for the job: Ateliers Jean Nouvel, Ateliers Christian de Portzamparc, Herzog & de Meuron, Foster & Partners, Zaha Hadid Architects, OMA, Maki and Associates, KPF, Richard Meier and Partners, Rogers Sink Harbour + Partners, and Renzo Piano Building Workshop. Vishaan Chakrabarti is running the competition.

COOPER HEWITT GOES UPTOWN

While the Cooper-Hewitt’s Upper East Side manse continues to undergo renovations, the museum is renting a 1,200 square foot space for children’s workshops at 111 Central Park North. The new Harlem spot is part of a series of pop up exhibits and programming that keeps the museum on the radar until the $54 million renovation is completed. Todd Oldham designed the new space with teens from the museum’s “Design/Prep” program.
A TOWNHOUSE IN GREENWICH VILLAGE PROVIDES A FAMILY WITH A REFUGE OF ELEGANT CALM

Architect Steven Harris of Steven Harris Architects and interior designer and painter Lucien Rees Roberts of Reese Roberts + Partners figure that they have together worked on some 60 townhouses in New York, but the 1840s charmer on Bank Street was the first one to need a complete facelift. The bricks on the facade were loose enough to remove by hand. Once they rebuilt the front, reusing the original bricks and adding a fifth floor with replicas, they blasted off the rear garden facade to create a two-story glass wall framed in industrial steel sash, being careful to maintain the same shape and proportion of the window panes of the front. "It can be so distracting when you look through an historic front and see a starkly modern structure at back," said Harris.

The balancing act between past and present, historic and modern guided all aspects of the renovation and interior design in an approach the architect described as "modernized traditional or domesticated modern." That meant detailing the interiors with baseboards, moldings, and casings around the doors—familiar prewar details—all slightly streamlined or abstracted. Even the fireplace that fits in seamlessly is actually based on a 1840s French...
Facing page: Sofa by Christian Liaigre for Holly Hunt; Club chairs from A. Rudin; Floor lamp by David Weeks from Ralph Pucci; Vintage Knoll swivel chair from Wyeth; Fine sisal grasscloth wallpaper from Stark. Left, below: Kitchen Tay wood cabinets custom-designed from Tabu; Fittings by Dornbracht; Custom-designed walnut island counter; Miro stools by Riva 1920; Pendant light by Artemide; Dining table and chairs by Riva 1920. This page: Bean desk and Marlowe chair by Ceccotti; Arm chairs by Poltrona Frau; Brera bookcase by Riva 1920; Ceiling light by Serge Mouille from Gueridon.
original amped up in drawings by Rees Roberts and digitally carved from limestone. Only the master bath, an amenity that would not have existed in the original, is fully modern with silver travertine walls, meticulously detailed doors with flat casings and a reveal, and sleek X-shaped fixtures by Duravit.

The furnishings are a combination of custom-designed, showroom originals, vintage modern, and pieces that the homeowners collected on their travels. The owners are Chinese-Australian and, according to Rees Roberts, brought to the project “a refined sensibility about texture and color that was impressively subtle.”

A nearly monochromatic palette hovering around beige, ivory, and wood tones holds it all together, as do the extra-long planks of fumed oak boards for the floors throughout. Wall treatments of Sisal Grasscloth from Stark in the living room and master bedroom, and silk fabric from Zimmer + Rohde in the dining room add the texture that keeps it from being too quiet. “Clients often ask us if we should add pieces here and there,” said Rees Roberts, “but we encourage them not to have more than they need. Space is the luxury.”

While chandeliers—a contemporary Murano with pink optical globes, a 1940s classic by Serge Mouille, and a shrouded Flos by Dutch wunderkind Marcel Wanders—and a smattering of modern antiques (notably a Michael Coffey console in the foyer), introduce a degree of sculptural drama, the overall aesthetic is intentionally cool and collected. The years of experience with urban townhouses in the city have led the architect and designer to one absolute understanding: “For anyone living in New York, serenity is an ambition,” said Harris. **JULIE V. IOVINE**
SHIP SHAPED
ARCHI-TECTONICS FLOATS BIG IDEAS FOR RETAIL IN SHANGHAI

Luck is taken seriously in China, so a series of fortunate events during design and construction for the new Ports 1961 flagship store in Shanghai bodes well for its future. The first project in China for the New York-based firm Archi-Tectonics encountered few hurdles thanks to a client with established manufacturing and construction contacts, according to Archi-Tectonics founder Winka Dubbeldam. Located in an art deco building on Shanghai's historic waterfront known as the Bund, the 2,800-square-foot space's high ceilings and monumental proportions were both imposing and inspiring for the whole team. "The construction manager had studied mathematics and recognized that this space embodied certain mathematical rules and got so excited about it," said Dubbeldam.

To create a lighter, more human-scale environment, Dubbeldam took a cue from the history of shipbuilding in the neighborhood and devised a wooden "liner" to produce a space within a space that evokes both a ship's hull and the layers of fabric used in constructing fashion. Made of boards the Ports team salvaged from an old house undergoing demolition, the reclaimed wood was re-milled then intentionally roughened and rubbed with silver paint and oil to create a luminous textured surface. Within this rugged shell, smooth islands of fiber-reinforced gypsum emerge from the limestone floor to serve as display tables. Other elements, as if underwater, appear to float: vitrines with multiple shelves (designed by New York architects Gabellini Sheppard), mannequins made of stiffened poly-ester mesh, and clothing racks are all suspended from the ceiling.

Just when the team thought the job was done, they realized that they still needed to pick one more piece, an exit door. A fortuitous last-minute find turned out to be the store's showpiece, a 600-year-old antique Chinese door of wood and bronze. "It's fun to help develop bigger, longer term brand strategy and then think about how local information can influence that," said Dubbeldam, who has gone on to design a Ports 1961 in Paris.

MOLLY HEINTZ

Left: Main space lights by Cooper Lighting; Nickel chrome tables, mannequin hangars, and padded leather walls by Archi-Tectonics Design and locally fabricated; Hanging cradle shelving units and rods by Gabellini Sheppard Associates; polished limestone tile floors. Top: Dressing room walls upholstered in gold metal polyester weave manufactured by Ports 1961. Above: salvaged antique door.
DOODLE SOFA
BY FRONT MOROSO
The pattern quilted into this leather sofa is based on accumulated doodles the design team sketched during design meetings.
morosodesign.it

DALA STOOL AND OTTOMAN
BY STEPHEN BURK
DEDON
A mesh frame of powder-coated aluminum provides a structural shell, which is interwoven with an eco-friendly synthetic fabric to create a colorful family of outdoor seating.
 dedon.de

MIA STACKABLE CHAIRS
BY JEAN NOUVEL
EMU
Defined by its hieroglyphic profile, the aluminum and steel MIA chair now in production by Emu was originally designed for a restaurant at the Nouvel-designed RBC Design Centre in Montpellier, France.
ma.emu.it

PILA CHAIR
BY RONAN AND ERWAN BOUROULLEC
MAGIS
Solid ash legs combined with plywood back and seat create a chair that is light but structurally strong.
magisdesign.com

LUMINOUS TABLE
BY TOKUJIN YOSHIOKA
GLAS ITALIA
Inspired by light’s relationship with the material world, Tokujin Yoshioka designed a table completely of clear glass whose sand-blasted legs add an element of contrasting opacity.
glasitalia.com

ROPERO WARDROBE
BY ALEJANDRO VILLAREAL
HIERVE
This glass and oak modular wardrobe or shelving unit displays rather than conceals allowing users to select candy-colored backdrops of drawers and shelving.
hierve.com

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hierve.com

WORK HARD, PLAY HARDER
The practical and durable meet the whimsical and experimental at this year’s international furniture fair in Milan. By Molly Heintz
AOL wanted an energetic vibe for its new Palo Alto offices and design firm O+A delivered.

As wealthy tech companies continue to descend upon Palo Alto to complete their tech 2.0 makeovers, one of the biggest surprises has been AOL. Despite its purchase of The Huffington Post and various new ventures, the old-school (at least by tech world standards) company still wasn’t known for innovation or risk. Perhaps that’s why they asked O+A to design an edgy office. The design, points out O+A director of design Denise Cherry, is meant to embody the new mantra of AOL: “transparency, collaboration, creativity, playfulness.” It’s also designed to rekindle the “the energy of a startup.”

Built into an existing office building, the makeover uses unfinished materials, exposed ceilings, and concrete floors to suggest a rough-around-the-edges feeling, contrasted with simple, white walls and punctuated with a high-energy palette of colorful carpeting, modern furniture, sculptural neon lighting, and custom graphics.

“We wanted to play with this idea of stripping back the building to its basics as a parallel to the focus of AOL’s new culture,” said Cherry. Thus, sanded-down and sealed Oriented Strand Board, typically a construction-grade material, lends walls and benches a finished but still raw finish.

Spaces are casually organized to reflect the current philosophy that “an idea can happen anywhere,” said Cherry. The open plan is dotted by groupings of loud furniture and fiberglass-clad “pods” to allow intense congregation or alone time; a “town hall,” a large, bright space that is the core of the office, makes room for larger groups. More traditional conference rooms are also available for those few times when workers need to have an old-fashioned meeting.

SAM LUBELL
Lobby lights “Mod” pendants from Lite Control; Workstations by Inscape with Herman Miller seating; Lounge seating by Blu Dot, Coalesse, Haworth, and De La Espada; Conference tables by Mash Studios; Custom-designed conference pods with acoustics by Auralex.
A plane of light, translucent scrims, and monumental desks define the ethereal new offices for media-production company LOGAN. It’s a space where the work is the focus and all clutter and distraction have been stripped away. “We wanted to avoid doing the standard loft renovation,” said Ilias Papageorgiou, an associate principal at SO-IL, the architects for the project. Most of the employees of this film and video company work on a contract basis, so the office serves as a touchdown space for a variety of collaborators. “The space can accommodate people as the company expands and contracts,” he said. The ceiling is a backlit, stretched PVC membrane that creates an even light throughout. “It’s nearly shadowless,” he said. Two custom tables extend the length of the two side-by-side spaces. A clear glass wall divides the space to create a conference room and semiprivate offices. Nylon scrims cocoon the entire space, including the windows, to varying degrees of opacity when viewed at different angles. The ghost-like outline of the windows and old pipes are faintly visible through the scrim. “We wanted to show traces of the old building,” he said.

A series of soundproof rooms, arranged in an L shape frame the space. The rooms are lined with custom pleated felt walls, prefabricated by Toronto-based FELT Studio. While informality reigns at most media companies, SO-IL makes the case that serenity boosts productivity.
Get into it

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An interior public space often creates interesting opportunities for experimentation. When it’s a hotel serving multiple publics those opportunities, and challenges, multiply. In Lower Manhattan, the new Conrad Hotel, replacing the former Embassy Suites and now owned by Goldman Sachs, presented Ann Arbor, Michigan-based architect Monica Ponce de Leon of Monica Ponce de Leon Studio (MPdL) with an impressive but monumental lobby and public space in need of definition. As a right-of-way for the neighborhood of Battery Park City, the space had to remain open and accessible at all times. Thus stairs, leading up to a second-level lobby, became an important part of the equation, as did a grand, multi-story Sol LeWitt painting that hangs in the center of the space.

In order to contain the potential oppressiveness of the 14-story open space while maintaining the clarity of the volume, MPdL worked with Feature Walters to fabricate fiberglass strands anchored to tension rings and organized in ghostly shapes suspended overhead that fill the space visually without sacrificing the liberating sense of height. Stone paving furthers the feeling of a plaza, and even the hefty size of the metal handrails belong to the language of public space. Because the space is so tall, “it truly feels public,” Ponce de Leon said. “If it were two stories, it would not.”

The building’s physical engagement with the urban fabric is complex. On entry, visitors only get a glimpse of the Sol LeWitt which is oriented at a diagonal to the front door. Only on climbing the stairs is it gradually revealed as it draws people up to a public landing with furniture in the shape of curvaceous sectional sofas where lobby surfers are already happily ensconced. MATT SHAW

**ARTFUL LODGER**

MONICA PONCE DE LEON TRANSFORMS THE PUBLIC SPACES OF A NEW DOWNTOWN HOTEL
SILVERBACK
KI BISI AND LOUIS POULSEN

Founded in Copenhagen by Lars Larsen, Bjarke Ingels Group, and Jens Martin Skibsted, KIBISi has teamed up with Louis Poulsen Lighting to launch Silverback, a minimal silver fixture with a white diffuser. An LED version will be launched in fall 2012.
louispoulsen.com

MANTA RHEI
SE’LUX

Light fixture manufacturer Se’lux and media installation design firm Art + Com have released a new collaboration called Manta Rhei. The kinetic light sculpture is made with paper-thin OLED modules and in future iterations will be scalable to clients’ needs.
selux.us

PLASS
FOSCARINI

Pllass—the name combines “plastic” and “glass”—is inspired by traditional Murano glassmaking techniques but instead uses rotational molded transparent polycarbonate to achieve a radius and curve that could not be produced with glass.
foscarini.com

EYES E4 PENDANT
SENS E

Stated for release in fall 2012, the Eyes collection from Sensa has been remade with handcrafted glass shades and will include a new pendant version. Each of the cube’s six touch-sensitive sides can be switched on and off.
spirit-of-senses.ch

POTENCE PIVOTANTE
NEMO

The result of a rediscovery project with Charlotte Perriand’s daughter, Nemo put the Potence Pivotante lamp into industrial production last year and is now extending the range with double-length.
nemo.cassina.it

PIANI TABLE LAMP
FLOS

Available in black, white, red, and green, the Piani table lamp by the French Bouroullec brothers seems a throwback to the library lighting of yore, but with an LED light source and a catch-all base for small items, the piece is thoroughly modern.
flosusa.com

CSYS LED TASK LIGHT
JAKE DYSON

Industrial designer Jake Dyson has introduced his CSYS LED Task Light, which uses heat pipe technology to divert heat from LEDs. The lower temperature increases the light’s lifetime, allowing more than 160,000 hours of continual use.
jakedyson.com

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**CALENDAR**

**MAY 2012**

**WEDNESDAY 9**

**LECTURES**

Bill Walsh

Building in the 21st Century: Radical Transparency of Building Products

12:30 p.m.

National Building Museum

401 F St.

Washington, D.C.

nbn.org

Lance Jay Brown

Who Needs Space?

Public Land in the Nation’s Capital

6:30 p.m.

National Building Museum

401 F St.

Washington, D.C.

nbn.org

Omar Freilla

New York’s Cooperative Economy

6:30 p.m.

Museum of the City of New York

1205 5th Ave.

nyc.org

**CONFERENCE**

Reinventing Older Communities: Building Resilient Cities

Through May 11

Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn’s Landing

201 South Columbus Blvd.

Philadelphia, PA

philadelphiafed.org

**THURSDAY 10**

**LECTURES**

The Vanishing Friend

Dr. John Hall

Westminster Abbey: A Place for Royal Celebration

6:00 p.m.

Westminster Abbey

London, England

nbn.org

Alexandra Lange, Chappell Ellison, Molly Heintz, et al.

Writing about Architecture: Mastering the Language of Buildings and Cities

7:00 p.m.

Van Alen Institute

30 West 22nd St., 6th Floor

vanalen.org

Arturo Ortiz Struck

Housing Settlements of Xalocato

7:00 p.m.

Paul Desmarais Theatre

Center for Canadian Architecture

1920, rue Balle

Montréal, Québec

cca.qc.ca

**FRIDAY 11**

**LECTURE**

Car Guo-Qiang

5:00 p.m.

RISD Auditorium

Rhode Island School of Design

17 Canal St.

Providence, RI

ris.edu

**EVENTS**

2012 AIANY Design Awards Panel: Honor Award

6:00 p.m.

Center for Architecture

536 LaGuardia Pl.

cfa.aiany.org

**TUESDAY 15**

**LECTURE**

Mark Purcell

“A Great Number of Useful Books”:

The Country House Library

6:00 p.m.

The Union League of Philadelphia

Institute of Classical Architecture & Art

140 South Broad St.

Philadelphia, PA

classicist.org

**FILM**

L. M. Pai

“Building China Modern” (Anna Makepeace, 2010), 53 min.

2:00 p.m.

Bonne J. Sacerdotte

Lecture Hall, Uris Center for Education

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

1000 5th Ave.

metmuseum.org

**WEDNESDAY 16**

**SYMPOSIUM**

Regional Planning: The Shape of Things to Come in the Delaware Valley

7:00 p.m.

Van Alen Institute

1785 Massachusetts Ave. NW

Washington, D.C.

cfa.aiany.org

**THURSDAY 17**

**LECTURE**

Kenneth Frampton

& Mark Wigley

Conversations in Context

5:30 p.m.

The Philip Johnson Glass House

199 Elm St.

New Canaan, CT

philipjohnsonglasshouse.org

**CONVENTION**

AIA 2012 National Convention and Design Exposition

Through May 19

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

801 Mt Vernon Pk. NW

Washington, D.C.

convention.aia.org

**FRIDAY 18**

**LECTURES**

Ned Cramer,

Julie V. Levine,

Philip Kennicott, et al.

Connecting Architects to the World of Print and Digital Media

2:00 p.m.

AIA 2012 National Convention and Design Exposition

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

801 Mt Vernon Pk. NW

Washington, D.C.

convention.aia.org

Judith Shyne

Rudolph Schindler’s Kings Road House

7:30 p.m.

Embassy of Austria

3524 International Court NW

Washington, D.C.

diacdc.com

**WEDNESDAY 20**

**LECTURE**

Vilhjalmur Einarsson

Jane Jacobs Do? Bing Thom

Harriet Tregoning,

Susan Szemany, et al.

6:00 p.m.

National Building Museum

401 F St.

Washington, D.C.

nbn.org

**EVENTS**

Society Hill Open House & Garden Tour

10:00 a.m.

Old Pine Community Center

401 Lombard St.

Philadelphia, PA

sozialhystxivi.org

Around Manhattan: Official NYC Architectural Boat Tour

2:00 p.m.

Pier 62

Chelsea Piers

West 22nd and Hudson River

aiany.org

**MAY 21**

**LECTURE**

Robert W. Jackson

Highway under the Hudson: A History of the Holland Tunnel

7:00 p.m.

Lecture Hall

92Y Tribeca

200 Hudson St.

92y.org/tribeca

**SYMPOSIUM**

Fit City 7:

Promoting Physical Activity through Design

Joseph J. Alintra, Rick Bell, Janette Sadik-Khan, et al.

8:00 a.m.

Center for Architecture

536 LaGuardia Pl.

cfa.aiany.org

**TUESDAY 22**

**LECTURE**

Steven Jaffe

New York at War: Four Centuries of Combat, Fear, and Intrigue in Gotham

5:30 p.m.

Tentemplet Museum

103 Orchard St.

tenement.org

**EVENTS**

EXHIBITION OPENING

Capital of Capital: New York City Banks and the Creation of a Global Economy

5:00 p.m.

Museum of the City of New York

1205 5th Ave.

nyc.org

**EVENT**

Guess-A-Sketch!

A Benefit for the Architectural Boat Tour

6:00 p.m.

Center for Architecture

536 LaGuardia Pl.

cfa.aiany.org

**WEDNESDAY 23**

**LECTURE**

Srima Khuras

Feeding the Future:

Tour & Talk

6:30 p.m.

The High Line

thehighline.org

LARA FAVARETTO: JUST KNOCKED OUT

MoMA PS1

22-25 Jackson Avenue

Long Island City, NY

Through September 18

Lara Favaretto’s installations and sculptures at once perform and memorialize their decay. Often incorporating elements from previous installations in new works and using discarded industrial material, Favaretto makes futile and impermanent gestures, ephemeral monuments to aspiration and failure. The works describe loss: found paintings encased in yard, obscuring and preserving the original; cubes made of confetti, decomposing throughout the span of an exhibition; car-wash brushes, whirling and wearing down against metal plates (above). These mechanisms celebrate futile motions, becoming memorials imbued with the reality of their own obsolescence.
A 1:96 scale model of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Falling Water.

overreach. The whole history of the American house—architectural, technological, social—is simply too much to fit into five rooms.

The first gallery has murals of photographs of American houses through the eras, from bungalows and soldiers’ barracks to Hearst Castle and Marina City. Two dollhouses on display suggest the gap between the physical structures we inhabit and the ideals bound up in the notion of “home.”

The next room features a row of six full-scale, tackle house sections that use characteristic materials and technologies from different periods of American architecture, beginning with adobe and ending with structural insulated panels. Interactive but not dumbed-down, the exhibition explores the evolution of American building techniques.

Down the middle of the same room is a row of television sets. The high point of the exhibition, all at 1:96 scale—Monticello, the Gamble House, Vizcaya, a Sea Ranch house, and looming over the rest, the Hancock Tower. There is some overlap with the wall sections, but as with much of the show, the takeaway is unclear.

Are we meant to compare these iconic structures within the context of building history? If so, it’s illuminating to learn that Fallingwater inspired the trend for sliding glass patio doors, less so to be told that McKim, Mead & White influenced Robert Stern.

The gap between mainstream housing and capital-a Architecture, between social history and design history, is never quite acknowledged. One gallery shows a bewildering array of nearly 200, mostly commonly household objects: Atari game console, plunge bath, Barcalounger, butter churn, lawn sprinkler, and so on. Visitors will enjoy pointing out familiar objects from their own childhoods. This reviewer’s associative powers are not strong enough to form a meaningful proposition about the evolution of the urban landscape.

The quotation is apt, because House & Home ends up being mastered by its own conceptual nature of construction details that ignore differences in scale, and he lamented the missed opportunity to develop, even hypothetically, a more comprehensive scheme for local redevelopment. While Frampton contemplates the Economist on formal and conceptual grounds, Scallabret describes the same project from the perspective of professional practice and the interplay of architect, client, and consultant architect. He reveals the extent to which many of the important design decisions were, to some extent, determined in advance of the Smithsons’ participation, dismantling the misleading notion of the architect as a lone, creative genius.

In addition to the more well-known essays, such as Reyner Banham’s “New Brutalism,” the anthology sheds lights on many of the Smithsons’ lesser known projects, built in the 1980s, when a new generation of architects had already stropped the Immaterial for postmodernism. David Turnbull, for example, discusses the set of buildings the Smithsons designed for the university campus at the USAF Academy (1948-54), a period coinciding with their involvement since 1976 with the International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD), summer workshops in Urbino, and later Siena, organized by their then 10 colleague Giancarlo De Carlo. This is a good point of entry to the crucial and earlier themes, such as the idea of urban layering instanced by the Economist, and introduces new ones arising out of the ILAUD workshops. Turnbull parses through the Smithsons’ late concept of “comglomerate ordering” (an idea that is not so easy to pin down but refers generally to tectonic means of organizing the environment). His essay is followed by Peter Salter’s personal account of working in the Smithsons’ office. Salter notes how the office redrew entire projects after they were completed, taking into account any changes that were made during the construction process. This unusual exercise was perhaps done in an effort to develop a rigorous, visual logic for building details. The Smithsons, notes Maddalena Sciremini in another essay, “set themselves the task of ‘Anglicising the influence of Mies,’” but despite their efforts, detailing, as Frampton and Turnbull suggest, was not exactly the Smithsons’ forte.

Interspersed throughout the anthology are reflections on the Smithsons’ oeuvre at particular moments in their career. While some of these reflections are personal homages by well-known architects (Emic Miralles and Peter Cook), others contextualize the couple’s thinking within a broader framework of historical and critical inquiry. Beatrix Colonna builds upon the Smithsons’ own homage to the heroic modern period and reflects on their indebtedness to architect-couples before them, such as Charles and Ray Eames, Le Corbusier and Charlotte Perriand, and Gerrit Rietveld and Truus Schröder-Schröder. Mark Wigley, in the second chapter, considers the Smithsons’ career and publication output from the perspective of the editing process, which hinges a lifelong investigation to a refined point.

All together, the anthology constitutes what Rizzolasda calls a prism for considering the work, a metaphor that corresponds to the couple’s own thinking on layering, interweaving, and the open-ended nature of the urban fabric. Many of the essays finely knit together how various ideas—“new brutalism,” “ordinariness and light,” “the mat,” “conglomerate ordering,” the “charged void,” and so on—were made manifest in their designs, and conversely, how their projects serve as tangible evidence of their thinking. But if the reader is left with any doubt about the overall logic, Wigley offers this insight: editing their last, two-volume monograph, titled The Charged Void (2002 and 2003), the Smithsons poltically constructed, in retrospect, “a seamless and singular research project, stressing the relentlessly gradual ‘evolution’ within each project, between projects, and with the projects of previous generations.” Clearly if future generations are to continue learning from the Smithsons, we should, as Wigley states, pick up where they left off, carefully incubating degates and productively mining the gaps.

In many ways, this “picking up” is precisely what Rizzolasda’s anthology does for the Smithsons’ oeuvre.
With spout and handles that can be mounted virtually anywhere around the washbasin, create your ideal bathroom with Axor Bouroullec. Learn more about this collection and designers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec at www.hansgrohe-usa.com/Axor
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TRENDS: New technologies expand options for finishes, hardware & more
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Last month, SieMatic’s BeauxArts.02 kitchen collection made its New England debut at the company’s Back Bay showroom in Boston, just a few months after its first U.S. introduction in New York. To create the second interpretation of the BeauxArts line, the company continued its successful partnership with Chicago-based designer Mick Di Giulio. The redefined design includes lighter, more linear components and proportions in addition to new finishes and modern elements, like steel- and glass-fronted cabinets.

“The BeauxArts.02 provides our designers with new freedom,” said Walter Banta, marketing manager of SieMatic Möbelwerke USA. “The new elements can be combined to create both transitional and contemporary kitchen designs.”

Integration with the company’s S2 designs is one of the unique benefits of BeauxArts.02 (also shown on page 31). “A variety of finishes and style elements come together to create a truly unique kitchen,” said Banta, who added that while white kitchens are still very popular, new color introductions including Sterling Gray and Lotus White tie in with contemporary palettes as well.

Looking to the future, SieMatic remains focused on design leadership by integrating the kitchen with other living areas in the home. That’s the idea behind the company’s other recent introduction, FloatingSpaces shelving. “We have offered shelving systems in the past, but the FloatingSpaces panel and shelving system allows architects and designers to seamlessly blend kitchen and living spaces, creating more options than ever before.”

Available in a full range of finishes, the line includes flexible wall configurations and functional elements available in many lengths and materials to further integrate living space into the kitchen. Though Banta won’t give anything away, he hinted that the company plans to release more designs in this vein at the company’s annual in-house products exhibition, HausFair, in September.

JENNIFER K. GORSCH
SieMatic BeauxArts.02
the latest interpretation

Designed with Mick De Giulio, BeauxArts.02 is everything you want in a kitchen and everything you’d expect from a SieMatic original. See more online and at your nearest SieMatic showroom.

The stringent requirements set by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) underscore our dedication to the environment and exemplary conduct at all levels of the manufacturing process.
This summer, the New York showroom of GD Cucine will launch Seta, the Italian company’s latest modern kitchen design. Designed with understated details and new storage options, the system offers a clean backdrop for a range of interior styles. Flat doors can be fitted with a variety of hardware profiles, such as a new slim, recessed pull attached to the top or bottom of drawers and cabinets. The line also includes new drawer hardware from German manufacturer Blum, an integrated LED lighting system for cabinet interiors and exteriors, and new storage fittings for trays and cookware.

“People want a more natural finish,” said Simone Biscontin, GD Cucine’s design director. To meet the demand, Seta presents a range of new door finishes including a rough-hewn oak called seghettato, which can be combined with new laminate finishes that replicate stone and with smooth lacquers available in 19 colors.

Another of the company’s 2012 introductions comes from a recent partnership with their Italian neighbor, tile maker Cottoveneto. “We are collaborating with them to create kitchen door fronts covered with micro-mosaic tiles made from stone,” said Biscontin. “It is customizable for the client. If they come in with a drawing we can replicate it.”

Outside the kitchen, GD Cucine is also bringing one of their bathroom designs to the United States for the first time. The inaugural Fontane series designed by Enzo Berli, and part of the Dogi collection, brings wood finishes into the bathroom. Ash and oak are used not only for cabinets and shelving but even for bath and shower enclosures thanks to a special heat-treating process that renders the wood waterproof and stain proof. “It’s a nice transition between a contemporary line and the more traditional,” said Biscontin. “We see a lot of people asking for this.”

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425.455.8300
TECH TERRIFIC
A new generation of appliances designed to satisfy any home chef.
By Jennifer K. Gorsche

1 LA CORNUE
Designed by French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte, La Cornue’s W line features a cabinet-like oven and matching three-drawer sideboard along with an induction table with matching remote-controlled hood in tempered gray glass and lacquered metal. lacornueusa.com

2 ELITE TRIO REFRIGERATOR KENMORE
Kenmore’s new 31-cubic-foot refrigerator has the most storage space of all the company’s models, efficiently organizing space with an extra Grab-N-Go door compartment accessible from the exterior without opening both doors. kenmore.com

3 SOUS VIDE SYSTEM KITCHENAID CHEF TOUCH
KitchenAid’s Chef Touch sous vide cooking system seeks to bring professional low-temperature cooking technology to the residential market with a three-part system that includes a steam oven, shock freezer, and vacuum machine. kitchenaid.com

4 BUILT-IN SPEED OVEN SMEG
Smeg’s new speed oven is a 30-inch-wide mini oven that can cook meals 10 to 15 times faster than a traditional oven in a fraction of the space. The oven features ten cooking modes including convection, broil, and microwave settings. smegusa.com

5 MONSOON DCBL ZEPHYR
Ventilation hood manufacturer Zephyr has introduced a new full-size, one-piece liner insert hood that can duct vertically and horizontally. The system also features new Bloom LED lights, LCD controls, and DCBL noise suppression technology. zephyronline.com

6 FREEDOM INDUCTION COOKTOP THERMADOR
Thermador’s new Freedom Induction Cooktop has a 6½-inch color touchscreen display that recognizes the size and shape of pots up to 21 by 13 inches and adjusts the cooktop accordingly while also controlling power settings and cooking times. thermador.com

7 LCD REFRIGERATOR SAMSUNG
Samsung’s new LCD refrigerator features an 8-inch Wi-Fi enabled LCD screen with kitchen-specific apps that allow the user to upload and share photos, monitor Google calendars, check weather, and access recipes from Epicurious. samsung.com
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At first, Luis Barragan's words “Don't look at what I do. See what I saw” might seem like an odd call to arms for an architect whose work is famously empty of things. But not on second thought. In fact, Barragan’s may be the only words needed to guide a voyeuristic look at some 260 photographs that British minimalist architect John Pawson has snapped over the past ten years for his own edification.

A Visual Inventory (Phaidon) opens an illuminating chink into the thought processes and aesthetic revelations of an architect who has mistakenly been tagged a believer in less-is-all. Images such as a tapering streak of light alongside an extruded wall sculpture by Donald Judd, two partially constructed bridges on a highway viewed from an airplane flying over North Carolina, or the fuchsia petals of a red camellia fallen on the granite steps of a Marcel Breuer villa on Lake Maggiore abundantly testify to a sensibility that is ever alert and constantly charged by visual stimuli.

These pictures give minimalism a new name: lush. The book is organized in carefully selected pairs on facing spreads allowing images to talk to each other and trigger sharper perceptions: Grey concentric rings from rain drops plopping in a puddle on stone at a Japanese teahouse near Antwerp makes even more startling the image on the opposite page, also grey circles as if printed on a dusty floor, but actually a circular irrigation field some 2,600 feet in diameter seen from an airplane over the Rockies in winter.

Pawson's avowed "scattergun approach"—always at the ready with a digital Canon S100, he is never afraid to use it—catalogs what appears to be a career of constant travel and fantastic access to architectural and cultural lodestones and exotic realms. Each image is accompanied with a straightforward, disarmingly chatty account of what he saw and why he snapped. Traveling through the pages of A Visual Inventory is both eye- and mind-opening.
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