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At press time, the New York design community is celebrating the inaugural NYCxDesign and the city is concluding a trio of international art fairs, all while one of the city’s greatest art, architecture, and engineering institutions is in the middle of a meltdown. The president and trustees of the Cooper Union voted to abandon the school’s commitment to tuition free, merit-based education—arguably the distinguishing characteristic of the school’s greatness and international reputation. Hundreds of students, alumni, and activists have occupied the Foundation building and have been staging protests outside as well as creating buzz and connecting with other activists, student groups, and the public through a robust and sophisticated social media campaign (follow them on twitter at @FreeCooperUnion for a sample).

The outrage of the students was quickly justified by a thorough and scathing assessment of the school’s finances in the Times, which detailed decades of mismanagement, including over-reliance on hedge funds with costly administrative fees, lack of diversification of the school’s investments, poor real estate decisions, and an absence of alumni solicitations and donor cultivation. Overall, as portrayed in the Times, the administration and trustees appear amateurish and ill equipped to support and protect the very special institution with which they have been entrusted.

Perhaps most galloping is the school’s latest, ill-gotten trophy, the new engineering building designed by Morphosis. The building, which cost $150 million, was constructed not with funds from generous donors, but through a mortgage (at a nearly 6 percent interest rate). The officials with the school, according to the Times, believed they could attract the donor after the building was completed, a line of reasoning that runs counter to typical philanthropic practice and smacks, quite frankly, of a gambler’s addiction to chance. “I was shocked by that,” Jacob Alsperger, an architect and former Cooper trustee as well as a former president of the alumni association, told AN. “The idea seemed to be to attract big names through expensive architecture, but Cooper’s culture has always been that architecture didn’t need to be flashy to be good.”

Let me be clear, I do not blame Thom Mayne for the reckless fiscal behavior of Cooper Union’s leadership. After all, it is not an architect’s job to act as his client’s accountant. Still, the building raises questions of what the architecture in question is expensive and designed by a noted architect.

City officials are using the limited-term lease as a tool to prompt the arena to establish a plan that would allow for Penn Station’s critical infrastructure challenges to be addressed. The number of commuters passing through the station, which already operates well over capacity, is expected to increase in the coming years. “It is a false framework to make sure that we don’t end up in the long-term with no resolution for Penn Station,” Karnovsky told AN. While several commissioners expressed support for the 15-year term extension, Commissioner Irwin Cantor questioned whether a 15-year permit extension would “create an atmosphere of necessity,” as opposed to a five or ten year permit. Karnovsky argued that 10 years wouldn’t provide the Garden with adequate time for planning. In the case that the 15-year mark approaches and the Garden has reached an agreement with the city and railroad, but needs more time to either relocate or implement major improvements, the arena would be granted an additional extension. However, if the Garden fails to come to any decisions during this time period, the City Planning Commission would reevaluate and move forward with its own agenda to update the station. To ensure that the Garden is working towards a plan, the DCP is suggesting a progress report be required about every five years for the CPC to review.

For a number of civic groups the hope is that the arena will relocate, but DCP said this isn’t necessary. “We have to plan for the possibility that there will be no plan for relocation, and rebuilding Penn Station from top to bottom is a hugely complicated process,” Karnovsky said.
HIGH MARX
Freshly anointed “Design Mind” of the year by the National Design Awards, Michael Sorkin dazzled the full house at the annual graduation conference hosted by SVAS’s Design Criticism MFA program. Sorkin startled the audience attention with his opener, “Our world is going to hell!” and then never let up—Presenting concepts for self-sustaining cities, the architect/professor/gadfly took a break from urban planning to critique some other types of design. “Get ready for the worst graphic design of the day,” he said, clicking to a page of his employer, The City College of New York, and its weingly gargantuan “the.” Following his presentation, Sorkin and moderator John Hockenberry debated the appropriateness of a request Sorkin had received to write a good review of a recent tour on TripAdvisor—from a guide who had just taken him through the Dharavi slum in Mumbai. In vintage Sorkin style, the Design Mind lamented, “Everything is being assimilated to a system of consumption!”

SUGAR SMACKS
Creative Time’s annual spring benefit at the defunct Domino Sugar factory in Brooklyn received lots of press coverage for its glittering guests, including honorees Julian Schnabel. But, GalleryNY was one of the few to flag the fly on the soup. Across the street from the entrance, protestors in hazmat suits handed out “invitations” blasting the controversial company hired by two trees—the developer with big plans for Domino—to oversee asbestos abatement. So...that wasn’t powdered sugar on the chocolate soufflé?

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JUDD FOUNDATION RESTORED AND SET TO OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

SOHO SPRING
Following a three year renovation, the Judd Foundation—the SoHo home and studio of the late artist Donald Judd—will open to the public on June 3, and is sure to become a New York destination for art and design enthusiasts. The building includes works by Jean Arp, Carl Andre, Larry Bell, John Chamberlain, Marcel Duchamp, Dan Flavin, Frank Stella, and others, all installed by Judd, alongside furniture and art by the artist-owner.

A team of specialists approached the building with reverence and care. New York firm Architectural Research Office (ARO) lead the project and the renovation of the interior; Walter Melvin Architect master-minded the dismantling, restoration, and reinstallation of the cast iron facade, which was engineered by Robert Silman Associates; and Arup supplied museum quality mechanical engineering. “Everyone realized it was a once in a lifetime project,” said Adam Yarinsky, principal at ARO.

“The rationale was to preserve the space as Judd created it, as a place to view art,” continued Yarinsky. “We put in everything that a modern building requires with as light a hand as possible.” This included an enclosed fire stair, updated elevator, new offices for the foundation located in the basement, as well as state of the art mechanical systems, and new windows. Each floor of the Spring Street building is distinct, and served different functions—a gallery, dining room, study, salon, sleeping area—offering a glimpse into how Judd lived, worked, and socialized. “It’s a place where you can experience his work directly,” Yarinsky said.

Tickets will be limited and offered through a timed process, as the building can only legally accommodate two groups of eight at a time.

Visiting the building is nothing less than transporting, simultaneously to the private world of Judd and his contemporaries, as well as to a mid 20th century Soho artist community, and to the 19th century, when the building was first completed. The rustic quality of the space—its wavy glass windows and wood burning stove, its well worn floors and streaming natural light—a rich and unexpected setting for the works, many of which are associated with the development of minimalism. In a world of white box galleries and corporatized museums, the Judd Foundation is a vivid reminder of the human impulse behind the creation of seminal art and artistic movements. AGD

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WARBY PARKER

Warby Parker—the American eyeglass brand named after two people who figure in Jack Kerouac’s personal journals—recently hired New York City creative works studio Partners & Spade to design its first flagship retail store in SOHO. Anthony Sperduti and Andy Spade, co-founders of the studio, sought a style that would embody the sophistication, simplicity, and intellectual appeal associated with the brand. “Taking the cue from the origin of the brand’s name, the space was inspired by classic library and reading room designs, referencing not only materials, but organizing principals, replacing books with eyewear,” Sperduti told AN. The designers outfitted the storefront space with rolling ladders crafted by Putnam Rolling Ladder, custom-made brass library lamps, long, white-painted wood tables, and Rosewood shelves lined with old books purchased from the Strand bookstore. Customers can browse Warby Parker’s eyeglass selection the same way they would browse books in a library. An open skylight at the back of the store floods the space with natural daylight, which nourishes plants that overflow from custom-built vases. The seating areas feature mid-century furniture, while a terrazzo floor with a laid-in logo lends the brand a sense of old fashioned permanence. VINCENZA DINAGGIO
Plans for the development of the Greenpoint, Brooklyn, waterfront have been simmering on the backburner since the 2005 rezoning that opened previously industrial land to mixed-use purposes and increased allowable building heights. Now, the heat’s been turned up.

On May 6, before a crowd of local residents, developers unveiled two significant projects set to rise along the edge of Newtown Creek: the colossal Greenpoint Landing project and the development at 77 Commercial Street.

Park Tower Group, the developer of Greenpoint Landing, detailed their plans to build more than twenty towers on a 22-acre site. Most of the 30- to 40-story buildings, comprising 5,500 apartments, will be market rate with nearly 1,500 units reserved for affordable housing.

“Greenpoint Landing will reconnect this vibrant neighborhood to the waterfront, said Gary E. Handel, president of Handel Architects, which is designing the project. “Urban design, architecture, and landscape [led by James Corner Field Operation] all share a common goal, which is to make a development that links into existing neighborhood fabric, brings it down to the waterfront, and then ties into the beautiful necklace of parks that is arising on the Brooklyn waterfront.”

While the bulk of the development is residential, it will also include retail, a public school for Pre K through 8th grade, and more than a mile of promenades along the water. Handel plans on using materials, such as brick, stone, concrete, and metal, which draw upon “the industrial heritage of the site.”

A number of community members, however, expressed their concern about the integration of affordable housing in the development. Others questioned whether the already limited transit in the area could handle a growing population of commuters, and how these developments would withstand rising sea levels and flooding.

“The sense that I got from that meeting is that people are upset or discontent with aspects of the 2005 rezoning and they want to be able to voice that,” said Councilman Stephen Levin. “The fact of the matter is the zoning went through in 2005. That was eight years ago. Greenpoint Landing has a significant as of right footprint. If folks want to have an impact and work on convincing the developer to adopt or enter into conversation about these issues, they have to be organized.”

Regardless of objections from the community, Park Tower is moving full speed ahead. They will enter a 6-month Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) this June and begin construction by end of 2013 or beginning of 2014.

Also in attendance were representatives of developers David Bistricer and Joseph Chetrit, who disclosed the latest developments with the long-awaited Box Street Park and a Cetra/Ruddy-designed residential building at 77 Commercial Street. Last year, the developers bought a site on the waterfront for $25 million and recently struck a deal with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to pay $8 million for development rights of the adjacent parking lot, which currently houses the MTA’s Access-A-Ride buses. The city will allocate that money for the construction of the 3-acre park. The developers will then be able to transfer air rights to 77 Commercial Street, significantly expanding the development. The next step is finding an appropriate location for the MTA parking lot.

This isn’t the first time that money has been earmarked for this park. Levin said that several years ago the city put aside $14 million or $15 million in the budget for the project, but it was later rescinded.

“I am hopeful that by the end of the Bloomberg administration we’ll start to see this [park construction] happen,” said Levin. “We’ve put a lot of work in this. We have had a lot of success in re-engaging with the administration. There is really no excuse for this not to happen.”
A CENTRAL AMPHITHEATER DEFINES TEN ARQUITECTOS’ DESIGN FOR THE 53RD STREET LIBRARY READING STAIRCASE

Only months after releasing Foster + Partner’s plans for the controversial renovation of its Main Branch on Fifth Avenue, the New York Public Library (NYPL) has unveiled Ten Arquitectos’ design for the 53rd Street Library, which will stand on the former site of the much beloved Donnell Library.

In the last few years, scarce funding coupled with substantial operating costs has compelled the NYPL to rejigger its branches. In some cases, this has meant closing, downsizing, or merging locations. But beyond financial constraints, the Library faces a greater and even pricklier challenge that puts in question the role of the institution: how to best serve the public at a time when demands and needs are changing. In an attempt to function both as a traditional resource for scholarly endeavors as well as a venue for community events, the NYPL is trying to adapt and re-imagine the spaces these libraries inhabit. “Libraries are evolving, or need to, into something more,” said Andrea Steele, managing partner at TEN Arquitectos. “We realized first and foremost that it had to be a public civic space.”

It has been five years since the Donnell Library closed its doors. In 2008, NYPL sold the property to Orient Express Hotels, which had planned to build a hotel along with space for the new library, but then abandoned the project when the economic crisis hit. Now Tribeca Associates and Starwood Capital own the property and have committed to carving out room for the library at the base of a 50-story hotel and residential development.

The firm accomplished this by creating a glass frontage through which light filters into an open terraced seating area that will be used for a variety of activities, such as special events, reading, or gathering. “The stepped landscape and open plan will create a gradation of public and private spaces for reading and studying,” said Steele. “The light and sound will intuitively tell you how to behave.”

The space will be a mix of concrete and glass, featuring minimal touches such as perforated metal panels cladding the walls. “All the materials are very modest in their actuality, but we wanted them to be experientially rich.”

Below: The terraced seating area provides an open, flexible space for reading or events.

A state-of-the-art arena with unparalleled sightlines and an interior environment as dynamic as its sculptural exterior, Barclays Center is New York’s first major new entertainment venue in nearly a half century. But while the arena’s unique steel paneled facade may stop traffic outside, it’s the elegant long span steel roof structure inside that enables crowds to enjoy column-free views of show-stopping performances. Architects SHoP and AECOM with structural engineer Thornton Tomasetti made sure that, long after its first sold out performance, Brooklyn would have a new living room where every seat is always the best seat in the house.

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In a statement, Diller Scofidio + Renfro indicated the possibility that the Folk Art Museum building could be retained as part of their project. "DS+R has exhibited within MoMA's walls since 1989 and now we've been invited to rethink the museum's walls. This is a complex project that also involves issues of urban interface, concerns that are central to our studio. We have asked MoMA, and they have agreed, to allow us the time and flexibility to explore full range of programmatic, spatial, and urban options. These possibilities include, but are not limited to, integrating the former American Folk Art Museum building, designed by our friends and admired colleagues, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien." Much of the architecture community has rallied to save Williams’ and Tsien’s building. "The principals of Diller Scofidio + Renfro have asked that they be given the time and latitude to carefully consider the entirety of the site, including the former American Folk Art Museum building and the residential tower being developed by Hines. The principals of Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Renfro have asked that they be given the time and latitude to carefully consider the entirety of the site, including the former American Folk Art Museum building and the residential tower being developed by Hines. The principals of Diller Scofidio + Renfro have asked that they be given the time and latitude to carefully consider the entirety of the site, including the former American Folk Art Museum building and the residential tower being developed by Hines. The principals of Diller Scofidio + Renfro have asked that they be given the time and latitude to carefully consider the entirety of the site, including the former American Folk Art Museum building and the residential tower being developed by Hines.

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When erected in 1952, the United Nations Secretariat symbolized the latest advances in curtain wall construction. But rapid deterioration by the elements soon masked the transparency envisioned in the original design. Only after HLW International and R.A. Heintges & Associates undertook its replacement as part of a 21st-century update has the facade’s intended splendor been revealed. Now, along with adding the energy efficiency and blast-resistance required by its prominence, it gives the city a long-denied glimpse of the grandeur that helped shape global architecture in its day.

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Design Architect, Architect of Record: HLW International
Architect of Record, Facade: R.A. Heintges & Associates
Photo: UN MP John Woosraff and Peter Brown

BRANDEN KLAYKO
New York City–based architecture firm Corgan Associates has reimagined houndstooth patterns and boucle textures in the Refined Collection of carpets. Classic patterns are layered in unexpected combinations for a fresh look, while variations in gradation lend a polished feel. Available in both modular and broadloom weaves, the collection features between 10 percent and 40 percent recycled content.

manningtoncommercial.com

A partnership between Robert Allen Contract and DwellStudio resulted in the Metallic Yarns line of the Modern Couture textile collection. Plaids, stripes, checks, and ikats are rendered in a broad color palette with metallic flecks and accents. Sunbrella Contract fibers make the collection perfect for a range of indoor and outdoor applications, from upholstered walls to wrapped panels.

robertallendesign.com

To meet the needs of the nomadic workforce, Coalesse tapped Milan-based Toan Nguyen to design the Lagunitas line. Made to accommodate a solitary task session, a working lunch, or a brief touchdown to checkemails, the collection features more than 50 combinations of seating, tables, and privacy screens perfect for laidback productivity.

coaless.com

The Lineal Corporate line of seating for public and office spaces presents function and elegance in proportional dimensions. Originally available only with a cantilevered chrome base, the collection’s 2013 update offers a star base, with or without wheels, that facilitates a swivel return system on a central adjustable base.

andreuworldamerica.com

High-resolution photographs of authentic wood grain create compelling visuals for the Lazer Cut Hi-Res Woods collection. Layering images between the panels of 3Form’s Varia Ecoresin creates varying degrees of translucency that are unachievable with real wood. The product is GreenGuard certified for building materials, finishes and furnishings, and children and schools.

3-form.com

The challenge of crafting flexible and individual work zones in an open concept office is met nimbly by Engaging, a freestanding screen with writable surfaces. A lightweight aluminum frame on swivel castors or glides facilitates easy repositioning by its users while providing strength to support up to a 50-inch display monitor.

ki.com

High-resolution photographs of authentic wood grain create compelling visuals for the Lazer Cut Hi-Res Woods collection. Layering images between the panels of 3Form’s Varia Ecoresin creates varying degrees of translucency that are unachievable with real wood. The product is GreenGuard certified for building materials, finishes and furnishings, and children and schools.

3-form.com
David Ritch and Mark Saffell of 5d Studio designed Float to embody the principles of modern sculpture, while handling the functional demands of the workplace. The line incorporates a light and airy casegood system with a full-height workwall balanced by lower level cabinets and a peninsula desk that rests on a thin stainless steel base.

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Henry Hope Reed, 1915-2013

Historian, author, and self-styled man of letters from an era when such amateurs had a loud voice in civic dialog and resulting public policy, Henry Hope Reed spent nearly a century working and living in Manhattan, which became his frame of architectural reference and the crucible of his ideas. He is the last surviving founder of the preservation movement with its alternative vision to the wholesale post war displacement essential to global modernist hegemony and its reliance on the car and attendant vertical hierarchies and linear sprawl.

His path attracted the label of nostalgia, if not outright reaction with its perceived rejection of all innovative design solutions, technologies, and divisions of labor in meeting contemporary needs. Over time, Reed went a step further, calling for a classical design vocabulary to be applied in all new construction in line with his vision of a past “Golden City” needlessly abandoned by the rupture of modernism. It is this singular perspective that finally earned his reputation as obstructionist curmudgeon. Brendan Gill once said his fellow critic and gadfly would not be happy until every subway car featured Corinthian pilasters at well-proportioned intervals.

His co-creation of Classical America in 1966 as a nonprofit organization devoted to advocacy, publications, and awards led eventually to its merger with the younger Institute of Classical Architecture, functioning nationwide today via 16 chapters dedicated to stemming the erosion of cultural memory by promoting the achievements of the past as a resource for contemporary design. Reed’s opposition gave way to the more ecumenical pursuit of sustaining a body of knowledge for those seeking to understand and variously apply it. Marketplace realities were and remain a big reason why.

What was lost in the acerbic fray of his final career chapter, when many stopped listening, was his pioneering role in recognizing and in turn safeguarding Central Park as a work of landscape architecture. The pioneering founder of the Central Park Conservancy, Betsy Barlow Rogers, knows best. “Reed’s 1967 book Central Park: A History and Guide written when holding the title ‘Curator of Central Park,’ which he invented with the blessing of Mayor Lindsay, was my primer when, as a new New Yorker, I was discovering my adopted city’s green heart,” she said. Reed’s lead paragraph summons exemplary wit: “Many other well-informed persons believe that one day in the last century the city fenced off 840 rocky acres of Manhattan Island and declared them park.” He salvaged Olmsted and Vaux from the creative scrap heap, as Moses was busiest working to dismantle their now seminal contribution to the conjunction of nature and design.

A year earlier in 1966—a half decade before Earth Day—he implored Lindsay to ban car traffic from the park at all times. Reaction as radical progress; the Futurist, proto-modern vision of speeding vehicle versus man was called into doubt. While it took force on weekends, fifty years later his goal for a permanent ban still awaits the approval of the necessary legislation.

The renowned chapel thus began to take shape. Henry testified, “In the creation of an Air Force Academy the Government I believe is not taking advantage of a great opportunity that this Government has not offered them up until now.”

The same debate continues today, made worse by tight budget battles, but finally the hopeful if often brittle theme of Reed’s lifelong project—preservation, protection, and appreciation—remains a big reason why.

More than a decade has held forth as an editorial advisor to The Architect’s Newspaper, and served as a part-time role. In his stead, Cranbrook Trustee and University of Notre Dame, with the support of Chicago investor Richard Driehaus, created the annual $50,000 Henry Hope Reed Award for “an individual working outside the practice of architecture who has supported the cultivation of the traditional city, its design, and art through writing, planning, or promotion.” It is bestowed every year along with the Driehaus Prize for Traditional Architecture, which for more than a decade has held forth as an alternative to the Pritzker Prize, despite its relative obscurity.

On Capitol Hill, July 5, 1955, the House Appropriations Committee of the 84th Congress considered the 1966 appropriation to the Department of Defense as Reed sat by side with Frank Lloyd Wright. Unexpectedly allied in testimony critical of the initial Skidmore Owings & Merrill proposal for an Air Force Academy in the Rocky Mountain foothills of Colorado Springs, their complimentary view was the absence of and necessity for some sort of anchoring gathering place of shared value. The renowned chapel thus began to take shape. Reed convinced the House Appropriations Committee of the air force academy.

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The same debate continues today, made worse by tight budget battles, but finally the hopeful if often brittle theme of Reed’s lifelong project—preservation, protection, and appreciation—remains a big reason why.

More than six months after Hurricane Sandy swept through New York City, homeowners are still struggling with the aftermath of the storm. To help with the recovery efforts, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) just issued a Request for Qualification looking for developers to rebuild one- to four-unit homes in the city that were damaged by the storm. Funding for the effort will come from Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery money, and all projects must meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The deadline for proposals is June 5, 2013.

It was several years in the making, but plans for the massive $500 million Fenway Center project in Boston are finally coming to fruition. According to the Boston Globe the development would bring housing, office space, retail, parking, and a new commuter rail station to the neighborhood. Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick’s administration sketched out a preliminary 99-year lease with John Rosenthal, President of Meredith Management Corp., which enables the developer to move forward with his plans for a sprawling 4.5-acre complex near the ballpark. Once the state board green lights the project, Rosenthal could break ground by the end of this year.

Reed Kroloff will leave his full-time position as director of Michigan’s Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum for a part-time role. In his stead, Cranbrook Trustee and Academy Governor Allan Rothfeld will serve as a special advisor to assist Cranbrook President Dominic DiMarco during the transition period. Kroloff presided over the construction of a new wing during his time as director. He also founded the academy’s first National Advisory Council and oversaw the formulation of a new strategic plan for the institution. Kroloff was previously head of Architecture magazine and served as dean of architecture at Tulane University. He currently serves as an editorial advisor to The Architect’s Newspaper.
The Onondaga Community College is located approximately 20 miles south of Syracuse, New York. The two-year educational institution is best known in the region for its music program, which boasts faculty from the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and the Society of New Music as well as a competitive indoor percussion ensemble. The school recently decided to build upon this reputation by constructing a $20 million, 45,000-square-foot addition to its Ferrante Hall building. International architecture firm Cannon Design designed the new structure, which is currently under construction. It features a 150-seat music recital hall, a music resource center, instrumental/choral and percussion rehearsal rooms, 20 practice rooms, 16 faculty office and teaching studios, and eight music-oriented smart classrooms.

Onondaga’s campus is split more or less in twain by a 60-foot-deep wooded ravine. In the school’s conception, the addition would run along the edge of the gully at Ferrante Hall’s western extremity. Cannon Design had another idea. Why not build the addition as a bridge across the divide and connect Ferrante to the Gordon Student Center on the other side? The solution would not only satisfy the institution’s programmatic needs, it would also provide a sheltered pedestrian link between the campus’ halves. As it was, Onondaga sufficed with an uncovered bridge that exposed its student body to the inclement elements of Central New York’s unforgiving winters. The school liked the idea and Cannon’s engineers got busy working out a structural system capable of spanning the roughly 200-foot-wide abyss. While the design team explored many options, in the end it settled on a system of three 30-foot-high by 200-foot-wide trusses, built up from some of the largest rolled structural steel sections available, that support the building in a single clear span from bank to bank. Due to the fact that there was limited staging space on either side...
The Value of Collaboration

When well-known manufacturers collaborate with product designers and architects, it is usually with an eye on a specific product that they would like developed or re-engineered. When two well-known manufacturers, each with their own strong brand identity, collaborate, the relationship and the resulting products are of an entirely different nature.

LAUFEN has the best of both worlds; they have worked with boutique product design firms and larger, well-known manufacturers. Recently LAUFEN announced what can be called a trifecta collaboration because it combines the talents of a boutique product design firm and the ingenuity and strong brand identity of a larger manufacturer, as well as their own strong brand. Called Kartell by Laufen, the collection was unveiled for the general public at Salone Internazionale del Mobile di Milano in April. The artistic direction for the project has been entrusted to architects Ludovica + Roberto Palomba, the renowned designers and trend-setters for bathroom ware.

The Design

Architecturally, the bridge building makes a subtle reference to music. The design of each truss was carefully calibrated to handle the deflection imposed by the building’s varied program. Since the recital hall is a single two-story space, that end of the structure needed to support less weight than the other end, which supports two one-story spaces and their extra floor. Deflection also posed another challenge. If the truss was loaded at the wrong moment it posed the threat of cracking the exposed concrete floors and shearing the curtain wall anchors. To safeguard against this, the construction team carefully sequenced the installation of the building’s elements and also pre-loaded the truss to neutralize deflections.

Technological Innovation

Developed over three years, the innovation of the Kartell by Laufen collection lies in the beauty of Kartell’s plastic materials and LAUFEN’s revolutionary new ceramic material, SaphirKeramik. SaphirKeramik allows performance characteristics that were unthinkable until now. A radius of curvature of the corners up to 1-2 millimeters (until now the maximum reached was 7-8 millimeters) for washbasins thin as blades, of an extreme lightness, not only visual but actual – SaphirKeramik is a material weighing half that of normal ceramics.

The Kartell by Laufen Collection

With design and quality as its watchwords, the Kartell by Laufen bathroom reveals itself as integrated architecture; an interconnected ecosystem where washbasins, sanitaryware, faucets, shower bases, bathtubs, lights and accessories coexist beautifully. The rigid geometry of the ceramic items is tempered by the multicolored lightness of the plastic elements. The palette of colors has been reinvented; leaving aside primary colors, it reflects the tones of the earth, the oranges of sand, steel blue, warm whites tending towards yellow and cold ones turning into blue that emerge.

“Kartell by Laufen is a project based on a common understanding of the two companies about the value of emotions. Emotions and dedication define the novel idea of this bathroom and guided the project throughout the entire development. The same sense of mindfulness to the materials and the same understanding of research and development have made the two companies perfect partners – or, one could say, soul mates.” Alberto Magrans, Senior Managing Director LAUFEN

Sustainability and Ethics

A shared vision of the collaborators is that the process and the product must be sustainable. A cradle-to-the-grave approach is one that considers the total production impact, respect for the environment, the recycle-ability of materials, the need not to waste either energy or water and to limit CO2 emissions during transport. The result: the imperishable ceramics of LAUFEN and the indestructible plastic of Kartell.

The Companies

LAUFEN and Kartell share a great deal: an industrial approach to production, dedication to continued research and technological innovation, an international market, world-wide distribution and a genuine passion for design. On one side of the design equation you have Kartell, the Italian family company that has marked the history of design and revolutionized the use of plastic materials for over 60 years. On the other, LAUFEN – Swiss, rigorous and reliable. For 120 years, LAUFEN has deepened its commitment to developing the bathroom as a living space and they continue to innovate the production of ceramic sanitaryware. Serving as the link between these two players are the designers Ludovica + Roberto Palomba, themselves leaders in designing for the bathroom and with whom LAUFEN has collaborated previously on the award-winning Palomba Collections.

Kartell by Laufen will be available Fall 2013.
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It might raise some suspicions to hear a mega-chain like Target requesting a “non-corporate” space for a new recreational center at its headquarters. But according to Minneapolis-based architect Julie Snow, who the company hired to work with its own design team, Target’s Plaza Commons—housed in an existing two-story building at Nicollet Mall and South 10th Street—is the result of intense collaboration and zero big box bureaucracy. Snow said Target’s CEO “insisted on the sit test” for every piece of furniture. But before the design team got to work on the downtown Minneapolis building, the space spoke for itself. “We were awed,” Snow said. “It was like walking into some historic ruin.”

The interior design philosophy was between preservation and reinvention. Snow said the goal was to retain the raw character of the existing space, which was originally designed as a shoe store and formerly housed local institution Let It Be Records. The interior’s enormous concrete columns are robust enough to support a building four times as tall. Wherever there were floor gaps, the designers covered them with steel plates, “We could have filled them with concrete,” Snow said, “but we wanted that patchwork to be evident.” The terrazzo floor is among the few material elements that appear finished. That’s not to say the rugged space is entirely roughhewn. The liberal use of Hickory wood in the second-floor loft space brings a level of warmth and comfort to the 22-foot-high central area. The mezzanine is geared for physical relaxation, Snow said, playing host to table sports and video games. As an alternative work area and lounge, the space needed to be welcoming. To that end the design team opened a back wall onto an urban courtyard that features a basketball court and fire pit. An operable hangar door shuts the opening during colder months, but natural light meets most of the building’s needs year-round.

The red elevator frame bespeaks the building’s corporate brand, but the furniture throughout is eclectic. Dutch design firm Droog provided a horse-shaped floor lamp, along with a black plastic table lamp shaped like a pig. Large MOOI light fixtures bring a touch of sleek modernism to that industrial feel, rounding out a commons whose charm is in the singular touch of its interior design and the building’s concrete bones. The architect of record, Ryan A+E, Inc. provided design-build services, with additional structural engineering from Erickson Roed & Associates.

CHRIS BENTLEY
The United Nations complex on the bank of the East River in Manhattan feels like a world unto itself. Amid the scruffy commercial realities of New York, the UN reflects an idealistic vision of shared decision-making, global partnership, and conflict resolution through diplomatic debate and compromise. The complex’s design speaks to these aspirations. While the exterior blends American corporate modernism with a dash of Brasilia-style formal exuberance, the less well-known interior is highly varied, including a recently restored space designed by the renowned Danish designer Finn Juhl. Originally funded by the Danish government, the UN Trusteeship Council Chamber opened in 1952. The chamber was devoted to resolving issues of decolonization. The council was formally dissolved in 1994 and the room now serves as a multipurpose meeting space. Central to Juhl’s democratic vision were the room’s large, curved conference tables arranged in a horseshoe shape, which positioned all the speakers on equal footing. The tables were removed in an earlier renovation, which undermined Juhl’s design. The contemporary Danish furniture designers Kasper Salto and Thomas Sigsgaard were selected through a competition to create new tables as well as to modify Juhl’s FJ51 chairs. The designers took inspiration from Juhl’s original drawings, which are archived by the Designmuseum Danmark. (The governments of Sweden and Norway also sponsored major chambers in the Secretariat building, which have also been meticulously restored as a part of the overall renovation of the UN complex, which began in 2007.)

The chamber is wrapped in bands of warm wood. Large abacus-like lighting fixtures—colored boxes staggered across the ceiling plane within a grid of wooden rods—animate the ceiling. Delicate, wall-mounted, brass light fixtures point up at the ceiling and down at the floor, providing further illumination. A teak sculpture by Henrik Starke depicts a woman releasing a bird, symbolizing the liberation of the colonies. Dashes of bright color and rich craftsmanship give the chamber its Scandinavian charm, reflecting the accessible, humanist qualities of Danish modernism.

ALAN G. BRAKE

RESTORATION OF THE UN TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CHAMBER
NEW YORK, NY
DESIGNED BY FINN JUHL IN 1952, WITH CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS BY KASPER SALTO AND THOMAS SIGSGAARD
While the W only opened in Hollywood back in 2010, the hotel has already replaced the original rooftop pool deck for its condos with a new space designed by Rios Clementi Hale Studios. The old deck, designed by Daly Genik Architects, was beautiful but severe. Rios Clementi Hale opted for a more casual approach, which they call an “outdoor living room.”

The inspiration, said designer Mike Sweeney, is LA’s mix of beach and city, which plays out with a combination of hard elements like concrete and metal, and soft elements like wood and colorful foliage. Visitors walk up a small flight of stairs, surrounded by a dense growth of green and purple native and low water plants, to the pool, as if they were passing through the dunes at the shore. The pool deck is organized around a series of meandering pathways and informal spaces that allow for many activities to go on at once. Sweeney said the arrangement makes “it feel like you’re in a garden in the midst of all these rooftops.”

The scene from the roof is dominated by Hollywood’s jumble of towers, billboards, streetscapes, and hills. The architects placed a double-layered water jet cut aluminum sunshade for the barbecue on the east edge of the space as a nod to the omnipresent signage. More shade is provided by fabric cabanas and the abundant plantings. Custom, irregularly-shaped polished concrete fire tables, imbedded with Micah, add a splash of mysterious darkness and nod to the neighborhood’s legendary Walk of Fame. The matte flooring around the pool is light grey concrete.

The central organizing element of the project is a curving spine that bisects the roof, traced to the south by a giant curving Ipe wood daybed, that, Sweeney notes, matches the large scale of the surrounding city. The slatted Ipe fence behind the bed provides a sense of shape and enclosure, but doesn’t block any views. The daybed as well as the other Ipe furniture on the deck was custom built on site. This warm and soft material, tempering the hardness of the city and the rooftop, also clads a self-serve bar area and a gym to the west.

SAM LUBELL
COLUMBUS CIRCLE DUPLEX
NEW YORK, NY JOEL SANDERS ARCHITECT
Located in the Time Warner Center, this duplex apartment has sweeping views of the city and Central Park to the Northeast. The original layout chopped up the view, so architect Joel Sanders sought to "liberate the curtain wall" with a series of smart interventions, changes in section and materials, and changeable walls and furniture, which create distinct spaces within an open plan.

Sanders has long played with peekaboo bathrooms and voyeuristic views in designs for hotels and bachelor pads. "For a long time it was about exploring new models of domesticity, often for alternative lifestyles," Sanders said. This client, however, is a nuclear family, a husband and wife and two children who split their time between New York and the Netherlands. "It's a sign of the times that these ideas have become more mainstream," he said.

On the apartment's first floor, Sanders created two distinctive seating areas, built around a custom double-sided sofa. One faces out toward the park, on a plush brown carpet, which is meant to link the interior to the park, while a painted midnight purple ceiling evokes the sky (the client insisted on a color scheme that included purple and bright yellow, which appear as accents throughout the apartment). The other side faces back into the apartment as well as a small media area. The area furthest from the view is a work/kitchen/storage area wrapped in warm wood, divided by a translucent service core that features a desk peninsula with built-in data and electric. The dining area, which also faces the view, has a polished white concrete floor. This trio of materials—carpet, wood, and concrete—is used throughout the apartment to define areas of comfort, areas of dining and bathing, or areas of work and storage. An angled cove with inset lighting cuts through the ceiling plane, reinforcing the different zones within the open plan.

The wood used in the kitchen area wraps up the stairs to the second level where it runs across the floor and frames a discreet desk area. The master suite subdivides into three bedrooms with sliding walls. One sleeping area is a murphy bed hidden behind a built-in sofa. In the bathrooms, switchable glass walls blink from translucent to transparent in a flash, offering views out to the park or total privacy with the flip of a wrist.

For a contemporary family with international addresses, the flexible design allows for moments of togetherness and solitude, views out to the city beyond and reflective moments within the serenity of the apartment—just how many want to live today.

Alan G. Brake
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Sophie Pich is a contemporary Cambodian painter and sculptor known particularly for his unique rattan and bamboo sculptures. He uses these two culturally meaningful materials to create organically flowing, three-dimensional, open-weave forms. Most of his works simulate the natural fluid forms of human anatomy and plant life. For example, “Morning Glory,” a mesh sculpture inspired by the blooming vine that served as an important source of nourishment for the Cambodian population during the 1970s, gently slinks across the floor before gracefully opening into a delicate, faithful, nature, and the rich, and the sometimes-tragic history of Cambodia.

FILM The Cinema of Immigration: I Remember Mama 7:00 p.m. The Queens Museum of Art 290 Congress St. BSA Space

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LECTURE Building Philadelphia: Ed Bacon and the Future of Philadelphia 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Philadelphia Center of Philadelphia 1100 Arch St. philadelphia.org

EVENT Plot Volume 2 7:00 p.m. Van Alen Books 30 West 22nd St. vanalerbooks.org

WORKSHOP Feng Shui for Architecture, Design and the Environment 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. The Moderns 900 Broadway, #202 cfa.aiany.org

WORKSHOP Central Park: Then and Now 12:00 p.m. The Museum of the City of New York 1200 Fifth Ave. mcnny.org

LECTURE Design to Prevent the Damaging Effects of Mold 5:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. Pauli Design Center 1604 East Lancaster Ave. Paoli, PA aiaphiladelphia.org

EVENT All Shapes and Sizes: New York’s Non-Traditional Housing Types 6:30 p.m. The Museum of the City of New York 1200 Fifth Ave. mcnny.org

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Three-dimensional thinking is inherent to the architectural design process, where buildings and structures originally conceived as mental visions eventually become built form. Over the last several decades, the transition from concept to construction documents to built form has been subject to significant evolution at the hands of the digital revolution. In *Digital Workflows in Architecture*, Scott Marble aims at sparking the dialogue with one question: How far have we come? For Marble, the dialogue is a collaborative exploration of how the digital landscape of the AEC community is transforming relationships; relationships of designers to tools, the relationships of architecture to production, and relationships between the roles we play. A self-proclaimed "machine addict" with over twenty years of experience in practice and academia, Marble was first enthralled by the ability of computer models to drive computer numerical control (CNC) machines—the lure of file-to-fabrication. Years later, Marble’s perspective and extensive network of likeminded digital workflow gurus allow him to connect the dots and bridge generations. Ultimately, this evolution has diminished the “culture of the sole designer,” and instead spawned an open and inclusive process that contributing author David Benjamin calls “democratizing design.”

Marble’s 280-page assemblage and commentary on digital workflow is an objective, grounded body of research that appropriately focuses on philosophies and interactions in practice, avoiding a narrative tethered to specific tools, software, or applications. For Marble, the three dimensions of his thesis are design, design, design—assembly, and design industry. These three dimensions are procedural, material, and organizational. Marble’s intent is to frame the work of the AEC industry as a whole.

The clear organizational structure of the text, the relief of beautifully visually communicated (but exhaustive) case studies, and the timely insertion of editor’s notes develop a rhythm that allow for the absorption of ideas without overwhelming readers with the complex nature of the topic. An initial theme to surface is how the role of the hand has radically changed since the integration of computer-aided design (CAD). Early integration of digital technology in architectural practice as a drawing tool. With time, digital technology’s application in architectural practice has expanded to a driver for tooling materials. This adaptation was gradually "removing the hand as the basic interface of both design and fabrication," as Neil Denari (NMDA) describes in Precise Form for an Imprecise World. How would architects, engineers, and fabricators respond to this paradigm shift? How would change from scaled drawings to 1:1 modeling alter the practitioner’s workflow? Industry leaders who serve as Marble’s supporting cast note the significance of physical prototyping. For instance, Ben van Berkel (UNStudio) states how beneficial it is to "step out of the digital workflow and work with physical models" in his essay,” Diagrams. The book closes with an academic assessment, but not at the risk of losing a cohesive message. The clear organizational structure creates context, a broader dialogue, and commentary on digital work and commentary on digital workflow that is itself representative of digital practice in the architectural discipline.

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GORDON MATTA-CLARK AND 112 GREENE STREET
Gordon Matta-Clark: Conical Intersect
Bruce Jenkins
Bloomsbury, £19.95
112 Greene Street: The Early Years (1970-74)
Jussaym FLOYD
Radius Books, £50.00

Bruce Jenkins’ *Gordon Matta-Clark: Conical Intersect* (2011) reads the artist’s 1975 work on Rue de Beaubourg in terms of a kind of un-shrouding of Paris. Jenkins’ detailed documentation of Matta-Clark’s process is itself revealing, peppered with quotes that define the work primarily as a critique of the planned Centre Pompidou, citing a title card in the Conical Intersect film that describes the work as “non-u-mentally carved through plaster and time to mark the skeletal margins facilitated an art practice driven by “a certain cinephilia,” noting an oft-cited anecdote about a spatial intervention, it was its temporal decay. Occupation of these urban spaces in the city—through deconstruction and precast mock-up panels; on the right, an overview photograph of the project site under construction. In the captions, it states "highly skilled in-house workers" were chosen over computationally milled foam (due to cost, no less) to produce the 3D form liners. Despite the complexity, the level of digital modeling, and the immense accuracy, the project ultimately relied upon handcraftsmanship provided by skilled labor. So what are the opportunities for the architect in this web of modeling inputs that are increasingly reliant on engineers, specialists, and fabricators? Will the designer-maker rise to prominence? In the words of Mayne, “Architects will experience a new role—maker/artist.”

The book closes with an academic tone; John Nastasi’s account in *Designing Education*. As opposed to Shift 2D to 3D, calls “malleable procedures that Thom Mayne, and the designer-maker role moving forward, Nastasi believes there is a "broadening role continued on page 27..."
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GORDON MATTA-CLARK AND 112 GREEN STREEET continued from front page women’s bodies marginalized, noting however that “rather than worshiping the monuments [women] take a critical view of...the rules of architecture.” The critique of architecture that Angest argues is made possible by the experience of a female gendered body also shows the position of atteny from which the dancers at Greene Street launched their spatial experiments. Matta-Clark draws on the embodied spatial experiments of artists such as Suzanne Harris.

Though Matta-Clark receives the most attention in the 112 Greene Street exhibit, the foregrounding of the dance work of Suzanne Harris and Rachel Wood recognizes the extent to which their work defined the radical nature of the group’s spatial interventions. In this light, Matta-Clark appears much more centered in the dance world, and the physicality of his work creates affinities with these dancers that re-situates his detections. In this light, Matta-Clark draws on the embodied spatial experiments of artists such as Suzanne Harris.

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The following is an excerpt of an interview with Peter Eisenman conducted by writer and architect Iman Ansari. It was originally published in Hamshahrī Architecture in Iran.

Iman Ansari: Between the object and the idea of the object, your approach favors the latter. The physical house is merely a medium through which the conception of the virtual or conceptual house becomes possible. In that sense, the real building exists only in your drawings.

Peter Eisenman: “Real architecture” only exists in drawings. The “real building” exists outside the drawing. The difference here is that “architecture” and “building” are not the same.

Did you ever wish your houses were not built?

No. If there is a debate in architecture today, the lasting debate is between architecture as a conceptual, cultural, and intellectual enterprise, and architecture as a phenomenological enterprise—that is, the experience of the subject in architecture, the experience of materiality, of light, of color, of space, etc. I have always been on the side opposed to phenomenology. I’m not interested in Peter Zumthor’s work or people who spend their time worrying about the details or the grain of wood on one side or the color of the material on the surface. I couldn’t care less. That having been said, it is still necessary to build. But the whole notion of the idea of “cardboard architecture” meant that the materiality of the work was important as an “anti-material” statement. Probably the most important work I did in the conceptualist realm was the cardboard architecture houses. Pictures of house II, for instance, were taken without sunlight so you have no shadows, and no reveals or things like this, and in fact one of the pictures we took of House II was in a French magazine that said it was a “model of House II.” I have achieved what I wanted to achieve, which was to lessen the difference between the built form and the model. I was always trying to say “built model” as the conceptual reality of architecture. When you see these houses and you visit them you realize that they are didactic and important exercises—each one has a different thematic—but they were conceived not with meaning in the social sense of the word or the cultural sense, but in the “architectural meaning.” I never thought I would want to build anything but houses because I thought they gave sufficient room to experiment with non-functionalities, since there is no one type of functional organization for a house, but there are many structuralizations. But that later proved to be problematic. The second thing was that I didn’t believe it was necessary to ever visit my houses. In other words, there were houses that for the first six months or years they were open I didn’t even go to see them because I thought it wasn’t that important; the important thing was laid in the drawing. The architectural biennale Architecture has two thousand drawings for House II. I would draw and draw because I never knew what I was looking for. I knew the general parameters, but I had no formula for setting up how to achieve it. Each house has an idea behind it.

Do you think because these houses existed cognitively they lost their true meaning the moment they were physically realized—the moment the “real architecture” turned into the “real building”?

Manfredo Tafuri once said to me: “Peter, it seems you can’t build no one will take your ideas seriously. You have to build because ideas that are not built are simply ideas that are not built.” Architecture involves seeing whether those ideas can withstand the attack of building, of people, of time, of function. Tafuri said history will not be interested in your work if you haven’t built anything. I think that’s absolutely correct. If I had built nothing, you and I wouldn’t be talking now.

What would the building mean in that context? Do you believe the built house or the “real building” stands for the “built-model” of the “real architecture” that exists only conceptually?

Sometimes it does and sometimes it’s beyond, and sometimes it’s less. When you see the Aarnooff Center in Cincinnati, the spatial experience is extraordinary. The didactic drawing itself is another thing. But they are two different things. I had to build Cincinnati, I had to build Wexner. I had to build Santiago, which is my latest project. You have to see it because you cannot draw it. You cannot cognitively understand what is happening. One has to see it. I can do it because I can make it in a way that is very different conceptually in terms of what I was after. There are three phases in the work. One is the purely conceptual artifacts, which, as you suggested, may not have necessarily had to have been built. The second is the ground projects, which are at a different scale and many of them had to be built. And finally you have Santiago, which is a hybrid project because it is neither a ground nor a figure.

In your Cannaregio project, we witness a new order that initiated the Cities of Artificial Excavation, and characterizes your work after that: The movement from structure to site or text, or better, from structuralization of the object, to the textualization of the site. Or from linguistic operations to textual operations—both texts are quite correct about the site but they are no longer syntactic and grammatical, they are other. And if you say the early houses are analogically grammatical exercises, these are no longer analogical to language. I have lost the faith that language could be somehow an analogical model for architecture. I thought I had to find what I was doing within architecture rather than without. As in reading that I’m doing, the work that I’m doing, has more to do with the text of architecture. And that didn’t happen accidentally. The first architectural biennale was Europa-America. Even for the first Portoghis would like to think that the Strada Novissima in 1980 was the first biennale, Vittorio Grotti’s Europa-America in 1976 was the first architectural biennale. I think Vittorio some years earlier and he had apointed me as the head of the American section of the first architectural biennale in Italy. At the same time I was supposed to finish up the working drawings for House X. The client dug a hole waiting to begin the project. I spent the summer in Italy and didn’t pay attention to the drawings. I came back from Italy and the working drawings were not done, and the client was furious; he fired me and refused to pay my bills. I was depressed, and I realized that my intellectual side had gone. I left my side and my entrepreneurial side had gotten away out of work. So I went into psychoanalysis and began to learn about the relationship between your living and in living in your body, with the reality of the earth, the ground. When Tafuri wrote “The Meditations of Icarus” in Houses of Cards, he meant that Peter Eisenman was Icarus, and to be Icarus meant that you wanted to fly and to look into the sun, as Icarus did. And to look into the sun meant that you were totally out of touch with the reality of the earth and the ground. Icarus, of course, gets too close to the sun, his wings of wax melt and he falls to earth. Icarus was the son of Daedalus, who made a labyrinth that was guarded by a Minotaur. It was an interesting mythology, which had to do with the ground, digging into the ground and making marks on the ground. I realized that what was wrong with my architecture was that it wasn’t from the ground, from inside the unconscious, beneath the surface. So the first evidence of this occurs in Cannaregio in 1978, where for the first time I did a project totally in the ground. And it was a real project, it was named after the ground. But it’s also not real. It’s conceptual; and uses Cortesius’s unbuilt hospital project as an initial context. In 1980, I’m invited to Berlin. The first project I did after Cannaregio was Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin. That project dug into my own unconscious, producing a work that we don’t know whether it’s for the left or the right. In fact the mayor of Berlin said, “Look, I can’t build this because everybody is going to hate this project. I will not build a project like a steel cage that exists only on paper.” But I certainly had to do with the individual, and his or her being in the space. No question that when you walk on a wall that is 3.3 meters high it is the only space you can walk on, you are now walking on a new datum in Berlin, which is the datum of the Berlin wall. So wall is not even an anymore, it is now part of the fabric of this project. And then when you go into the watchtowers and you walk up and you cannot see anything because it is not built, you can conceptualize what it would be like. It would be quite an extraordinary experience. That’s why architecture, finally, has to involve the subject in an architectural manner.
Three-dimensional thinking is inherent throughout the architectural design process, where buildings and structures originally conceived as mental visions eventually become built form. Over the last several decades, the transition from concept to construction documents to built form has been subject to significant evolution at the hands of the digital revolution. In Digital Workflows in Architecture, Scott Marble aims at sparking the dialogue with one question: How far have we come? For Marble, the dialogue is a collaborative exploration of how the digital landscape of the AEC community is transforming relationships; relationships of designers to tools, the relationship of architecture to production, and relationships between the roles we play. A self-proclaimed “machine-addict” with over twenty years of experience in practice and academia, Marble was first enthralled by the ability of computer models to drive computer numerical control (CNC) machines—the allure of file-to-fabrication. Years later, Marble’s perspective and extensive network of likeminded digital workflow gurus allow him to connect the dots and bridge generations. Ultimately, this evolution has diminished the “culture of the sole designer,” and instead spawned an open and inclusive process that contributing author David Benjamin calls “democratizing design.” Marble’s 280-page assemblage and commentary on digital workflow is an objective, grounded body of research that appropriately focuses on philosophies and interactions in practice, avoiding a narrative tethered to specific tools, software, or applications. For Marble, the three dimensions of his thesis are design, concept, design assembly, and design industry. These three dimensions are procedural, material, and organizational, and set the framework for organizing a collection of fifteen narratives and ten case studies from eighteen contributing authors. Similar to the cultural shift away from the sole designer in practice, this body of work embraces collaborative assessment, but not at the risk of losing a cohesive message. Following each article, Marble subtly interjects a brief commentary, which creates context, a broader dialogue, and identifies key synergies that are representative of digital practice and the AEC industry as a whole. The clear organizational structure of the text, the relief of beautifully visually communicated (but not exhaustive) case studies, and the timely insertion of editor’s notes develop a rhythm that allow for the absorption of ideas without overwhelming readers with the complex nature of the topic. An initial theme to surface is how the role of the hand has actually changed since the integration of computer-aided design (CAD). Early integration of digital technology and issues of Mash-up as a drawing tool. With time, digital technology’s application in architectural practice has expanded to a driver for tooling materials. This adaptation was gradually “removing the hand as the basic interface of both design and fabrication,” as Neil Denari (NMDA) describes in Precise Form for an Imprecise World. How would architects, engineers, and fabricators respond to this paradigm shift? How would change from scaled drawings to 1:1 modeling alter the practitioner’s workflow? Industry leaders who serve as Marble’s supporting cast note the significance of physical prototyping. For instance, Ben van Berkel (UNStudio) states how beneficial it is to “step out of the digital workflow and work with physical models” in his essay, Diagrams, Design, and the Making of Form. Denari describes the reduced (in some cases, obsolete) role of the scaled drawing and how scaled drawings have been replaced by “a certain cinephilia,” noting the film of the work also lends credence to realization.” The need to introduce digital models into physical space, test them, exploit their limits, and re-inform the digital model is essential to keeping the boundless realm of the digital abyss grounded in the reality of material properties, fabrication processes, and first principles of design. In Designing Assembly and Designing Industry, the common thread explores the swing from linear flows to something more iterative with feedback loops. These loops occur in modeling cycles between architects and specialty contractors, both digital and physical testing, and is an approach that Shane Burger (Grimshaw Architects) describes as a concurrent design approach “from both top-down (form and program) and bottom-up (component and fabrication) directions”—a “discovery that happens in the realm of open concept and material constraints. Frank Barlow and Regine Leibinger describe this “profundity of ideation and handling of materials as an ongoing process” with “one mutually intertwined activity.” Project delivery strategies are currently confronting the repercussions of digital workflows, which shun the linear approach of the past for a more dynamic set of processes. In the final essay of Shift 2D to 3D, calls “malleable and persistent.” It is as though the one-off digital workflows for any given project are increasingly mirroring the unique project delivery models in use. The juxtaposition of digitally formed and mathematically fabricated solutions requires collaboration of a maker with a designer as early and often as possible. Mayne and Marty Doshier’s workflow case study of the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas is brief at just two spreads, but captures the logic that made me realize there is still plenty of room for improvement toward the true workflow: on the left, four images of molds making, fabrication process, and precast mock-up panels; on the right, an overall photograph of the project site under construction. In the captions, it states “highly skilled in-house workers” were chosen over computationally milled foam (due to cost, no less) to produce the 3D form liners. Despite the complexity, the level of digital modeling, and the intrinsic accuracy, the project ultimately relied upon handcraftsmanship provided by skilled labor. So what are the opportunities for the architect in this web of modeling inputs that are increasingly reliant on engineers, specialists, and fabricators? Will the designer-maker rise to prominence? In the words of Mayne, “Architects will experience a new phase, a new role.” The book closes with an academic tone; John Nastasi’s account in Designing Education. As opposed to the practical direction of the reduced role moving forward, Nastasi believes there is a “broadening role.”
Flipping through the case studies it is easy to see that the digital technologies and workflow have generated many complex solutions. My sense is that, too often, the digital culture begins with “what can we do with digital technologies” instead of “what should we be doing?” If complexity is the result of the digital workflows, then there needs to be clear benefits added. In the design process, the integration of more players earlier in the design is more expensive, but with the belief that it avoids downstream costs. What is the improvement in the built form? Is the performance more responsive to its context? Is it more energy efficient? Does it use less material? These are the types of questions that must be addressed and the metrics that can support digital technologies’ added value.

The book’s narrative missed opportunities to examine what digital culture has weakened in practice and academia. What qualities do the “most ambitious architecture students” have? Is a digital aptitude developed at a loss of the fundamental building and material technology training? How is curriculum adapting? What is the building and material technology training? Developed at a loss of the fundamental qualities do the “most ambitious architecture students” weaken in practice and academia. What are the types of questions that must be addressed and the metrics that can support digital technologies’ added value?

Scott Marble has adeptly curated the role of digital practice in architecture, not as sole author, but as facilitator of dialogue. Digital Workflows in Architecture left me with a number of questions, including, what’s next, and where are these evolving trends leading? What effects do non-linear workflows and collaborative modeling have on contractual and legal liability aspects of delivering a project? All challenging questions to consider, and instead of addressing them, Marble’s book focuses on extracting a comprehensive cross-section of the diverse thinking and application of digital technology in practice. Documenting collective progress to date, Digital Workflows in Architecture serves as a valuable reference and launching pad for future generations of digital design thinking.

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Gordon Matta-Clark and 112 Greene Street

The Extreme Physicality of 112 Greene Street's program of radical performance and urban intervention. Suzanne Harris is shown rigging her body into the air in a work called Flying Machine (1973) that used a harness and pulley system that is uncannily similar to the one we see Matta-Clark using to negotiate the vertical space of the Humphrey Street building a year later in the work Splitting (1974).

Though the “split” of Humphrey Street is the visual-analytical artifact that makes Matta-Clark’s work so compelling, his dancerly engagement with the house is clearly central to the meaning of the work. His joy in feeling the home respond to his body is captured in Matta-Clark’s declaration that the Humphrey Street building “performed like a perfect dance partner, finally gave way to his shoulder.”

The extreme physicality of Matta-Clark’s work refuses to be contained by the prescribed spatial sequences of the city, and instead works through the tropes of dance to create the city anew. As Matta-Clark was commissioned by larger institutions to create building cuts for them, he reasonably worried that the cut had lost its critical effect and would become nothing more than a design element. Such stasis threatened Matta-Clark’s social agenda, as he always sought to destabilize the systems that reified social stratification. Towards the end of his career, before he died at age 38, Matta-Clark expressed the desire to begin working with ropes, nets, and balloons to experiment with spatial suspension through ephemeral material, and interstitial spaces. This unrealized turn toward more fluid structures shows the continuum of Matta-Clark’s work and grounds his practice in the experimental dance work first articulated at 112 Green Street.

Sacha Frey teaches Architectural History at The Pratt Institute.
It’s all in the details: from Kwinter & Co’s vision, we custom crafted this bed with nailhead detailing and serene bedding.

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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
The following is an excerpt of an interview with Peter Eisenman conducted by writer and architect Iman Ansari. It was originally published in Hamshahri Architecture in Iran

Iman Ansari: Between the object and the idea of the object, your approach favors the latter. The physical house is merely a medium through which the conception of the virtual or conceptual house becomes possible. In that sense, the "real" building exists only in your drawings.

Peter Eisenman: "Real architecture" only exists in drawings. The "real building" exists outside the drawing. The difference here is that "architecture" and "building" are not the same.

Did you ever wish your houses were not built?

No. If there is a debate in architecture today, the lasting debate is between architecture as a conceptual, cultural, and intellectual enterprise, and architecture as a phenomenological enterprise—that is, the experience of the subject in architecture, the experience of materiality, of light, of color, of space, etc., that has always been on the side opposed to phenomenology. I'm not interested in Peter Zumthor's work or people who spend their time worrying about the details or the grain of wood on one side or the color of the material on the surface. I couldn't care less. That being said, it is still necessary to build. But the whole notion of the idea of "cardboard architecture" meant that the materiality of the work was important as an "anti-material" statement. Probably the most important work I did in the conceptualist realm was the cardboard architecture houses. Pictures of House II, for instance, were taken without sunlight so you have no shadows, and no reveals or things like this, and in fact one of the pictures we took of House II was in a French magazine that said it was a "model of House II." I have achieved what I wanted to achieve, which was to lessen the difference between the built form and the model. I was always trying to say "built model" as the conceptualist realm was the cardboard or the color of the material on the surface. I was always interested in the phenomenologist realm was the cardboard architecture. And then when you see these houses and you visit them you realize that they are didactic and important exercises—each one has a different thematic—but they were concerned not with meaning in the social sense of the word or the cultural sense, but in the "architectural meaning." I never thought I would want to build anything but houses because I thought they gave sufficient room to experiment with non-functionalities, since there is no one type of functional organization for a house, but there are many different architectures. But that later proved to be problematic. The second thing was that I didn't believe it was necessary to ever visit my houses. In other words, the built house that for the first six months or year they were open I didn't even go to see them because I thought it wasn't that important; that important thing was left in the drawing. The Canadian Centre for Architecture has two thousand drawings for House II. I would draw and draw because I never knew what I was looking for. I knew the general parameters, but I had no formula for setting up how to achieve it. Each house has an idea behind it.

Do you think because these houses existed cognitively they lost their true meaning the moment they were physically realized—the moment the "real architecture" turned into the "real building"?

Manfredo Tafuri once said to me: "Peter, if you don't build no one will take your ideas seriously. You have to build because ideas that are not built are simply ideas that are not built." Architecture involves seeing whether those ideas can withstand the attack of building, of people, of time, of function. Tafuri said history will not be interested in your work if you haven't built anything. I think that's absolutely correct. If I had built nothing, you and I wouldn't be talking now.

What would the building mean in that context? Do you believe the built house or the "real building" stands for the "built-model" of the "real architecture" that exists only conceptually?

Sometimes it does and sometimes it's beyond, and sometimes it's less. When you see the Atrono Center in Cincinnati, the spatial experience is extraordinary. The didactic drawing itself is another thing. But they are two different things. I had to build Cincinnati, I had to build Wexner, I had to build Santiago, which is my latest project. You can't see it because you have to feel it, you cannot know it. You cannot cognitively understand what is going on. One has to see it and experience it in a way that is very different conceptually in terms of what I was after. There are three phases in the work. One is the purely conceptual artifacts, which, as you suggested, may not have necessarily had to be built. The second is the ground projects, which are at a different scale and many of them had to be built. And finally you have Santiago, which is a hybrid project because it is neither a ground nor a figure.

In your Cannaregio project, we witness a new order that initiated the Cities of Artificial Excavation, and characterizes your work after that: The movement from structure to site or text, or better, from structuralization of the object, to the textualization of the site. Or from linguistic operations to textual operations—because texts are quite correct about the site but they are no longer syntactic and grammatical, they are other. And if you say the early houses are analogically grammatical exercises to linguistic exercises, these are no longer analogical to language.

I have lost the faith that language could be somehow an analogous model for architecture. I thought I had to find what is architecture, rather than without architecture. The reading that I'm doing, the work that I'm doing, has more to do with the text of architecture. And that didn't happen accidentally. The first architectural biennale was Europe-America. Even though Paol Portoghesi would like to think the Strada Novissima in 1980 was the first, I think Vittorio Gregotti's European Architecture in 1976 was the first architectural biennale. I met Vittorio some years earlier and he had appointed me as the head of the American section of the first architectural biennale in Italy. At the same time I was supposed to finish up the working drawings for House X. The client dug a hole waiting to build the project. I spent a year in Italy and didn't pay attention to the drawings. I came back and the working drawings were not done, and the client was furious, he fired me and refused to pay my salary. I was depressed, and I realized that my intellectual side, or cultural side, and my entrepreneurial side had gotten way out of whack. So I went into psychoanalysis and began to realize that the difference between living in your head and living in your body, with the reality of the earth, the ground. When Tafuri wrote "The Meditations of Icarus," in Houses of Cards, he meant that Peter Eisenman was Icarus, and to be Icarus meant that you wanted to fly and to look into the sun, as Icarus did. And to look into the sun meant that you were totally out of touch with the reality of the earth and the ground. Icarus, of course, gets too close to the sun, his wings of wax melt and he falls to earth. Icarus was the son of Daedalus, who made a labyrinth that was guarded by a Minotaur. It was an interesting mythology, which had to do with the ground digging into the ground and making marks on the ground. I realized that what was wrong with my architecture was that it wasn't from the ground, from inside the unconscious, beneath the surface. So the first evidence of this occurs in Cannaregio in 1978, where for the first time I did a project that was not about the ground. And it's not only in the ground, it's also urban. But it's also not real. It's conceptual; and uses Corbusier's unbuilt hospital project and the architectural equivalent of "figure-ground." And then I'm invited to Berlin to do the Checkpoint Charlie project, which includes the garden of walls. You can't walk on the ground of Berlin even though it is a project inscribed in the ground. Then I did the Wexner Center. A number of these projects fall within the concept of artificial excavations. The ground afforded the critical dialogue with the then-current (1978-1980) theory of Figure-Ground Architecture: the black and white drawings of Collin Rowe and the contextualists, work done for Roma Interotta using the Nolli map of Rome. What I was doing was the reverse. What I was doing was the attack of building, of people, of time, of the left wing is going to hate it; the right wing is going to hate it. But it certainly had to do with the individual, and his or her being in the space. No question that when you walk on a wall that is 3.3 meters high it is the only space you can walk on, you are now walking on a new datum in Berlin, which is the datum of the Berlin wall. So the wall doesn't even exist anymore, it is now part of the fabric of this city. And the reason you go into the watchtowers and you walk up and you cannot see anything because there is no viewing out. And then you see the ruins below. All of this is about the experience of moving up and down and across of the human subject. So there is no question that the human subject enters the project, and you cannot understand unless you can conceptualize what it would be like to be the human subject. Even though it's not built, you can conceptualize what it would be like. It would be this extraordinary experience. That's why architecture, finally, has to involve the subject in an architectural manner.

Is it fair to say that you have moved away from the structuralist principles that defined your early work? When exactly does the individual subject of architecture and the subjective experience of space come into play in your projects?

The work up to Cannaregio was structuralist, and then became post-structuralist. Cannaregio was a hinge from the past to the present. The first project I did after Cannaregio was Checkpoint Charlie. I had this project dig into my unconscious, producing a work that we don't know whether it's for the left or the right wing of Germany. Berlin said, "Look, I can't build this because everybody is going to hate this project. The right wing is going to hate it; the left wing is going to hate it." It but certainly had to do with the individual, and his or her being in the space. No question that when you walk on a wall with a 3.3 meters high it is the only space you can walk on, you are now walking on a new datum in Berlin, which is the datum of the Berlin wall. So the wall doesn't even exist anymore, it is now part of the fabric of this city. And the reason you go into the watchtowers and you walk up and you cannot see anything because there is no viewing out. And then you see the ruins below. All of this is about the experience of moving up and down and across of the human subject. So there is no question that the human subject enters the project, and you cannot understand unless you can conceptualize what it would be like to be the human subject. Even though it's not built, you can conceptualize what it would be like. It would be this extraordinary experience. That's why architecture, finally, has to involve the subject in an architectural manner.