THE LIVING, an experimental New York–based practice lead by David Benjamin, has been selected to design and build the 15th edition of MoMA PS 1’s Young Architects Program (YAP). Known for using advanced technology to mimic biological structures or respond to atmospheric conditions, The Living’s proposal, called Hy-Fi, represents a new direction for the annual pavilion program.

According to Benjamin’s proposal, Hy-Fi will use pioneering, self-building technology, and will be completely recyclable and nearly carbon-neutral.

NEW YORK CITY’S NEW MAYOR APPOINTS HIS COMMISSIONERS

BILL’S BOYS AND GIRLS

The difference between Michael Bloomberg’s final State of the City address and Bill de Blasio’s first was so vast it seems impossible the two were speaking about the same city. In the newly opened Barclays Center, then-mayor Bloomberg touted the booming development across New York—from the Atlantic Yards to the Hudson Yards. He referenced job opportunities, sustainability, and, of course, the bike-share program.

One year later, at the LaGuardia Community College in Queens, Bill de Blasio spoke of “The Tale of Two Cities”—a town racked by inequality. He didn’t talk about any big, splashy developments, but pledged to help “New Yorkers crushed by skyrocketing rents.” There was no mention of transportation, climate change, or infrastructure—all considered bright spots in Bloomberg’s complicated legacy.

But while Mayor de Blasio makes national headlines for his laser-like focus on tackling inequality, he has been appointing highly competent individuals to lead the city’s housing, transportation, environmental, and planning teams. All of these appointments, explained de Blasio, are not separate from the fight against inequality. They are central in waging it.

In early February, de Blasio appointed Carl Weisbrod—a real estate industry veteran with experience in the private and public sector—to chair the city’s planning commission.

D.C. PICKS TEAM TO REVAMP VAN DER ROHE’S MLK MEMORIAL LIBRARY

In mid-February, the D.C. Public Library announced that a design team of local firm Martinez + Johnson Architecture and Dutch practice Mecanoo had been selected to reimagine the city’s Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. The decision caps a lengthy process by the city to decide the fate of the

EMERGING VOICES 2014 SEE PAGE 12

EXPERIMENTAL FIRM TO CONSTRUCT LOW CARBON, SELF-BUILDING PAVILION

THE LIVING IS WINNING

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REX REIMAGINES 450 WEST 33RD STREET’S FACADE

ABOUT FACE

On February 13, a year after officially breaking ground on the Manhattan West megaproject in the Hudson Yards District, developer Brookfield Properties revealed new details about extensive renovations that will reshape Davis Brody Bond’s 16-story 450 West 33rd Street tower. Brooklyn-based REX has designed a new lobby and a pleated glass facade to rebrand the Brutalist structure as Five Manhattan West, a hub for creative and tech businesses flocking to the area. “It’s going to become an important lynchpin for our entire project,” said Dennis Friedrich, CEO of Brookfield. “There’s a very strong appeal for creative, tech, and media tenants interested in the space” and its 100,000-square-foot plates—one of only eight buildings in Manhattan to be so well endowed.

While the majority
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WHAT COMES AFTER "TRICKLE-DOWN" URBANISM?

With his fiery rhetoric about inequality, Mayor Bill de Blasio is clearly a man on a mission. He has moved quickly to rework police and detention procedures and close outdated facilities for the homeless. He has aggressively pushed his plan for universal pre-kindergarten, which he would pay for by taxing the very rich.

Aside from his much-hailed goals of preserving and adding to the city’s stock of affordable housing, the mayor’s goals for the physical city are vague. He, quite frankly, doesn’t seem that interested in planning and design. At least not yet.

Though he has appointed strong and experienced individuals to various housing posts, much of his team will manage and shape the city’s built environment remains unfilled. As of press time, the Department of Design and Construction, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Department of Parks and Recreation all remain leaderless or led by holdovers from Bloomberg who are not expected to stay long term. Sources within these agencies have grumbled about the slow pace of the appointments and a growing feeling of identitylessness in city government.

The exception being the Department of City Planning, which de Blasio has filled with the veteran real estate and business improvement district czar, Carl Weisbrod. While Weisbrod is undoubtedly qualified, few in design and urbanism circles seemed enthusiastic about the appointment. Can Weisbrod, a consummate insider, bring in new ideas and resist the entrenched power of the city’s real estate interests? What is his vision for the Department and for the role of planning in this chaotic and congested metropolis?

It is a radical departure from Michael Bloomberg, who had a greater impact on the physical city than anyone since Robert Moses. He staffed his agencies with hard driving private sector appointees, who sought to remake the city with mega projects and fine-grained policy changes. Bloomberg’s deputies drew on best practices from around the globe, and used the city as a lab to test them. And if Bloomberg himself became increasingly tin-eared in this third term—defending one percenters and swatting down calls to rein in Wall Street—an unanticipated effect was that many of his urban policies came to be eyed with suspicion. Good planning and design policies seemed like agents of gentrification and homogenization. The mayor’s vast personal wealth and automatic tendencies added to the notion that his planning and design initiatives were a kind of “trickle-down” urbanism—geared to please the few but eventually benefiting many more. Bloomberg failed to see how his elitist reputation was coloring his entire stint as mayor (shortly before the election he snapped that he found de Blasio’s rhetoric “racist,” an especially clumsy charge given de Blasio’s inter-racial family.)

All New Yorkers benefit from cleaner air, more parkland, and safer, more diverse streetscapes—all of which Bloomberg championed and created. But the benefits from de Blasio’s priorities: more affordable housing and a more inclusive and economically diverse citizenry. Let’s hope the many positive aspects of Bloomberg’s legacy are not abandoned as de Blasio rightly tries to turn his “Tale of Two Cities” into one. ALAN G. BRAKE

BILLS BOYS AND GIRLS continued from front page

Weisbrod is perhaps best known for his integral role in cleaning up Times Square in the 1990s and later helping transform Downtown Manhattan into a mixed-use neighborhood.

Rick Bell, the executive director of New York’s AIA chapter, said Weisbrod is “an excellent choice” for planning commissioner because he “brings to the table the skillset, the mindset, and the attitude of someone who is going to take the promised parade, the expectations of the de Blasio campaign, and realize them.”

As planning commissioner, Weisbrod will be instrumental in accomplishing one of de Blasio’s key legislative goals: to “preserve or construct” 200,000 units of affordable housing over the next 10 years. He will be joined in that fight by the mayor’s new housing team.

The mayor recently appointed Shola Olatoye—a former executive at an affordable housing non-profit—as chair of the New York City Housing Authority. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development’s new commissioner is Vicki Beer, who was the former director of NYU’s Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. And Gary D. Rodeney, from the affordable housing developer Omni New York, is the new president of the Housing Development Corporation.

Alicia Glen—the former head of the Goldman Sachs’ Urban Investment Group—is the city’s new deputy mayor of housing and economic development.

Even with a strong team beside him, de Blasio’s affordable housing goal will be exceptionally difficult to achieve. One tool de Blasio will likely use to hit his 200,000 figure will be “mandatory inclusionary zoning,” or requiring developers to include affordable housing units in new buildings. Under Bloomberg, developers were only incentivized to do so.

And since it will be no enough to just preserve existing affordable units, the de Blasio years might see significant zoning changes to offer new development opportunities. The benefit of this could be two-fold: more development would boost the number of new affordable housing units, and the housing stock overall.

In terms of transportation and the city’s streetscape, there is a lot more competition for scarce city resources. The city is poised to build on Janette Sadik-Khan’s impressive legacy of transforming New York City streets. The mayor’s selection of Polly Trottenberg—the former undersecretary for policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation—to lead the city’s DOT has been lauded by those championing safer streets and aggressive biking.

The personnel positions, and particularly hiring Polly Trottenberg, look really good from street safety and livable streets perspective,” says Ben Fried, the editor-in-chief of Streetsblog.

Trottenberg will be replaceable for more than bike lanes and pedestrian plazas; she will work alongside the new police commissioner, Bill Bratton, to implement the mayor’s “Vision Zero Action Plan” to reduce pedestrian fatalities. It has become clear with these appointments that the mayor plans to use every department, and every new official, to address the city’s inequality. Combating inequality is a daunting, if not impossible, fight to wage from City Hall, but the mayor and his team seem ready to at least throw some punches. HENRY MELCHER

Left: Pizza at Schmidt’s, Erdy McHenry Architecture. Dismissed as the “troubled surrounding neighborhood” of the Piazza, a large mixed-use development anchored by a central plaza. The Piazza can feel disconnected from the rest of the neighborhood, as Menking says. But Northern Liberties is not troubled. It’s Philadelphia’s fastest-growing community, with a 60 percent rise in population over the last decade. Multinational construction, industrial conversions, and infill development are everywhere, as are new restaurants and bars, entertainment venues, retail and service businesses, and professional offices. This is no mere cosmic boomerish. Northern Liberties has problems, but they are problems of gentrification, not underdevelopment: decreased affordability, increased traffic, high commercial turnover, and pressures on demographic diversity and community fabric. Menking is right to say to the city needs to upgrade neighborhood infrastructure—but not to spur redevelopment. That ship has sailed. We need better city supports to accommodate the new density of active uses, restore access to affordable housing, and reserve property for public needs.

As an urbanist and frequent visitor to New York, I understand Northern Liberties might look rough around the edges compared to many redeveloped Manhattan and Brooklyn communities. But if we want to shape the future of Philadelphia’s neighborhoods, we must assess their present accurately.

MATT RUBEN
PRESIDENT, NORTHERN LIBERTIES NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION

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The Living Is Winning continued from front page.

Incredible research—really out of the box

“This proposal was the one that connected bricks will be returned to 3M for additional be composted in Queens and the reflective be deconstructed and the organic bricks will towers, and after the summer ends it will The circular forms will act as cooling reflecting daylight down into the pavilion. are incorporated into the top of the structure, growing trays for the organic bricks, and The reflective brick molds function as load-bearing application of this material.”

High value agricultural products,” that it uses agricultural byproducts, rather structures that give them strength. “We like made from corn stalks and living root structures in a loose and porous way, are which are placed at the bottom of the organic bricks, which are placed at the bottom of the structure in a loose and porous way, are developed by 3M, the circular structure will organic bricks invented by Ecovative and that is expected to open in late June or early Hy-Fi Up” concert and performance series. Partly winners have included SHoP, CODA, Interboro architectural talent in the US. “People keep become one the leading showcases for architectural needs of the program,” Pedro above the concrete walls of the courtyard. The other finalists for this year’s MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program were LAMAS (Wei-Han Vivian Lee and James Macgillivray), Pita + Bloom (Florencia Pita and Urtzi Grau), and Collective-LOK (Michael Kubo, Jon Lott, and William O’Brien). Throughout its 15 editions, the YAP has become one the leading showcases for architectural talent in the US. “People keep coming up with new things,” said Gadnho. “It’s pretty amazing, the new possibilities, and it is a testament of the importance of showing new architectural talent.” Previous winners have included SHoP, CODA, Interboro Partners, and Ball-Nogues, among others. The pavilion serves as a shade structure and platform for the annual summer “Warm Up” concert and performance series. Hy-Fi is expected to open in late June or early July.

Food Network star and chef Alex Guarnaschelli recently opened the second location of her New York restaurant Butter. Located at the lower level of the Casa Hotel in Midtown Manhattan, the new upscale eatery is adorned with some of the same forest motifs found in its downtown predecessor. Despite its subterranean dining area, the space features massive windows that begin at street level and extend upward, bordering a woven canopy of black rope. Wood pervades the interior; on the tops of tables, along walls, and stacked in log form around the restaurant’s prominently displayed wood-fired oven.

At capacity the restaurant will be able to seat 175 diners at centrally located communal tables, or more intimate table arrangements. Once the weather permits, a small patio at street level will also be made available. Mark Dizon of the Dizon Collective, already responsible for the design of a number of New York social spaces, collaborated with the Butter Group on the interior of the restaurant, which is now open for business.

Scott Kelly
The current profession of architecture is as layered with design firms, consultants, and specialty practices as today’s buildings are complex and difficult to realize. With facade designers, BIM specialists, acousticians, architects of record, and a slew of other consultants there is a need for someone that can coordinate and manage these groups. This is where the project manager and/or owner’s representative comes into the process. The most important one in New York City is Levien & Company. Ken Levien (the only owners rep to be given an FAIA) founded the office in 1992 after working as an architect, construction loan monitor, and project monitor for 20 years. Since then, the company has completed over 350 jobs of various types for more than 100 clients.

In some ways Levien has defined what it means to be an owners representative, filtering through the mass of details and documents and information needed to construct modern buildings and allowing construction to begin and flow through to completion. The firm does not design buildings or work as a construction manager. It usually has about thirty projects at various stages of development in the office. The practice is always working on several commercial projects that require the firm to make sure that the design coming from the architect “matches the market the builder is trying to get to and to make money at the end of the day.” The advantage of these projects, said Levien, is that you can go to “one decision maker” and give them the options on any issue.

The firm’s primary focus—about 75 percent of its work—is the non-profit sector: cultural, religious, medical institutions, etc. While the analysis of building construction is similar in all projects, in the non-profit sector the programs are often more complicated and the clients are more aware of every decision in the process. Non-profit projects “generally cost more and are more difficult to program, because they are not repetitive,” said Levien. “The trick is to get [all the stakeholders] to come to a consensus as to what the right program is, what the right price is, and how to get there.”

**Levi, William.** *New York City Center.* New York, NY: Highlights of this $50 million Shriners auditorium project include reconfigured seating in the main auditorium with improved comfort and sight lines; enhanced front-of-the-house amenities; renovated lobbies and concessions; additional restrooms; a new, sprung stage floor; and upgraded backstage facilities. Designed by Ennead Architects, the phased schedule ensured that there was no interruption of programs during construction.

**Military Park Revitalization Project.** Newark, NJ: Military Park is a 6-acre, nearly triangular-shaped park located in downtown Newark. A reconstruction of the existing historic park designed by H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture with landscape architects Birdsalis Design Group and Heckett Landscape Design includes a refurbished southern plaza, 1.75 acres of new gardens, a restored great lawn, improved park lighting, renovated garage entrance structures, a re-purposed reflecting pool converted into a signature floral display and other built improvements to support enhanced programming.
Manhattan West is new construction—a pair of office towers and a residential building by SOM and two acres of landscape by James Corner Field Operations built over a rail yard servicing Penn Station—the 1.8-million-square-foot behemoth 450 West 33rd will remain in place.

Joshua Prince-Ramus, principal at REX, praised Brookfield for taking the sustainable approach to renovating the building instead of building anew. “This idea of renovating existing infrastructure is incredibly important. Architects and urbanists can only control around 45 percent of world greenhouse gases—the rest has to do with transportation and deforestation,” he said at the event. “We should be focusing on density.” He said the building was aesthetically “neutered,” by previous renovations and has taken on an unfortunate moniker, the Tyrell Building, a reference to the dystopian headquarters seen in the film Bladerunner.

REX’s new facade is a formal response to pragmatic challenges at the site. Originally built as a warehouse over the rail yard, the pyramid-shaped structure boasts 14-foot-tall ceilings, but day lighting was not a concern. New building codes dictating accessibility required ample headroom at the slanting walls. Prince-Ramus said his system of floor-to-ceiling tapering glass pleats maximizes interior space while addressing energy efficiency issues. The curtain wall’s under-slung surfaces are self-shaded from the sun, reducing solar glare and heat gain while creating a more transparent, lively facade from street level.

Prince-Ramus compared the new facade to Fresnel lenses, which are commonly used in lighthouse lamps to scatter light, and called the building “a beacon for the city.”

The unconventional arrangement presented its own critical challenge: how to clean the glass. REX designed an integrated track that allows window-washing carts to zigzag up and down the building. “We didn’t set out to create the coolest window washing gig in Manhattan, but it’s certainly playing out that way,” quipped Friedrich. Adding to the complexity, the entire facade will be rebuilt while the building is occupied. Prince-Ramus said a new temporary perimeter wall guarding interior spaces from weather and construction will be built first. Then the building’s non-structural precast concrete elements will be removed and new structural facade supports installed that can accept the glass pleats.

Manhattan West broke ground in January 2013, and has since made significant progress constructing a platform to enclose the existing rail yard. A large horizontal crane was built on site to accommodate the platform construction. Friedrich said the first row of platforms—built of individual concrete pieces in a segmental precast bridge system—were installed over the tracks a few weeks ago and the entire platform will be complete by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, Keith O’Connor, principal at Field Operations, provided an update of the landscape plan for the site. A series of outdoor rooms will divide the larger landscape into a more intimate environment. Spaces include an “entry plaza” along 9th Avenue with built-in benches and large shade trees, an “art plaza” with terraced open spaces for monumental art, a “garden landscape” over the tracks with lush plantings and small seating areas, a “bamboo grove” bridging over Dyer Avenue, a “magnolia grove,” and an exterior passageway cut through the southern section of Five Manhattan West leading to the High Line.

The $200 million redo of Five Manhattan West is REX’s first major project in New York City and is expected to be complete in the summer of 2016.

From Las Vegas’s star-studded cast of gaming resorts to New York landmark Yonkers Raceway, casinos are becoming synonymous with innovative design. This historic 1890s racetrack bet its future on a 21st-century overhaul of its Empire City Casino by New York-based Studio V Architecture. With a philosophy of exploring architectural expression based on contemporary technology, the award-winning firm capped its redesign with a space-age porte-cochère of steel latticework clad with ETFE Teflon-coated film. The innovative entrance stunningly reinvents the casino’s image and marks the first U.S. application of this cutting-edge material—showing a building need not be conventional to be a good bet.

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LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE THE BRICK DESERT

Softening Boston’s City Hall

Boston’s City Hall Plaza has been one of the most dysfunctional and least loved places in the city ever since the 11-acre barren expanse of brick and concrete was built in the 1960s as part of a massive Brutalist complex of federal, state, and city buildings. Known throughout Boston as the “brick desert,” the plaza has few seating options and one of the only signs of nature is a row of dying trees at one of its edges. Doing business at one of the government buildings that front onto the plaza generally requires negotiating the many staircases that traverse it. When it rains, stormwater floods the area. Now the city of Boston is finally taking some steps to improve the area, which was planned by I.M. Pei and Partners and received prestigious architectural awards in the 1970s. There is a master plan by Utile Architecture + Planning and the landscape architecture firm Reed Hilderbrand that calls for fixing the drainage system, populating the plaza with bosques of shade trees, and adding different seating options. This coming March, work begins on a two-year-long project designed by the architecture and engineering firm HDR and the landscape architecture firm Halvorson Design Partnership for rebuilding the Government Center Subway Station and for transforming the area along City Hall Plaza’s border with Cambridge Street, one of the city’s main drags.

According to the designers, it is possible to green Boston’s City Hall Plaza and without disrupting the unified Brutalist aesthetic of the place, which was modeled after the Piazza del Campo in Sienna, Italy. “There is a history there and we respect that,” said Bryan Jereb, senior associate at Halvorson Design Partnership, “but we wanted to make modifications enough to make it inhabitable.” As a result of the current project, the visitor experience on certain parts of City Hall Plaza should be vastly improved. Sloped granite walks will replace some of the staircases to ease pedestrian access from the redesigned subway station to the entrance of City Hall. A bosque of trees along the Plaza’s boundary on Cambridge Street, one of the city’s main drags, will be planted in an open-joint permeable brick paving system, which will fix some of the drainage issues and prolong the lifespan of the trees. In addition, a new glass head house designed by HDR for the subway station will replace the current brick one, further reducing the visual monotony of the “brick desert.” The plaza will also be better integrated with the rest of the city through new and wider sidewalks along Cambridge Street.

Although the long-awaited overhaul of a section of City Hall Plaza will be breaking ground in March, it could be years before Boston is able to fully renovate the rest of the place. It also is unclear when certain features, such as a grayed-out bosque of trees extending into the plaza shown on one of Halvorson’s images, actually will be built. There isn’t the budget to do all of City Hall Plaza, explained Jereb. “We had to be realistic about what the MBTA can pay for.”

ALEX ULAM
UNVEILED

TRAINING RECREATIONAL EDUCATION CENTER
In designing the new Training Recreational Education Center (TREC) in Newark, Princeton-based firm ikon.5 architects used the city itself as the basis for a plan. The new building is to be located at a point where Newark’s urban grid is interrupted by the irregular silhouette of the Olmsted-designed Weequahic Park, a collision that causes the former to splinter into two offset triangular outcroppings. The interlocking triangles that form the TREC are derived from this moment of shift in the city’s framework. Featuring a transparent facade, the building’s more open triangle will house classrooms and meeting spaces, while its larger opaque sibling is to contain a gymnasium and other recreation functions. A garden courtyard is in the northwestern corner of the building. Commissioned by the City of Newark, ikon.5 envisioned the 22,000-square-foot TREC as a civic anchor for the adjacent community and urban housing.

Architect: ikon.5
Location: Newark, New Jersey
Client: City of Newark
Completion: TBA

JEANNE GANG’S WESTSIDE STORY
Plans for Jeanne Gang’s first New York City-based building are currently on hold after the project’s developer withdrew a request for a zoning variance on the site. Gang’s High Line-adjacent “Solar Carve” was intended to be 34 percent larger than currently allowed on the lot, which drew the ire of local preservationists. The developer, William Gottlieb Real Estate, sought the variance because of the supposed hardship of building on a site that was primarily sand instead of bedrock. According to The New York Observer, after many hearings in front of the Board of Standards and Appeals, it became clear to Gottlieb that the zoning variance would not be granted. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

While the building was designed with literal carve-outs to block as little light on the High Line as possible, the 186,000-square-foot tower was still quite significant for the site. It would add to an increasingly crowded corridor of glass and steel that frames the High Line.

Gang’s tower is not doomed entirely. The developer will reportedly submit modified plans.

FACEBOOK LIKES GEHRY AND THE EAST VILLAGE
Facebook’s New York engineering team now has some sweet new digs, courtesy of Frank Gehry. As the engineers settle into their 100,000-square-foot space in Manhattan, construction crews are building Facebook’s new campus in Menlo Park, also designed by Gehry.

Mockups and construction photos of the New York space show it has all the must-haves for any social media/tech company. Bright colored paint? Check. Open work areas? Check. Funky furniture? Come on, of course, it does. According to The New York Observer, construction on the offices will not be officially complete until the spring. And if Facebook itself is any hint, they’ll be changing the layout every few months.

GUGGENHEIM’S LABOR PAINS
Nearly 50 activists recently took over The Guggenheim’s spiraling balconies to protest the museum’s planned branch in Abu Dhabi. The protestors, who are affiliated with Gulf Labor and Occupy Museums, dropped pamphlets, rolled out banners, and hung a manifesto to criticize Abu Dhabi’s poor record on workers’ rights. Gothamist reports that the activists chanted, “The Guggenheim should not be built on the backs of abused workers. The Guggenheim should listen to the voices of migrant workers. Is this the future of art?”

The Frank Gehry-designed museum will rise off the coast of Abu Dhabi on Saadiyat Island, near new works by Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, and Norman Foster. In response to the protest, Guggenheim Director Richard Armstrong said in a statement, “The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is engaged in ongoing, serious discussions with our most senior colleagues in Abu Dhabi regarding the issues of workers’ rights. As global citizens, we share the concerns about human rights and fair labor practices and continue to be committed to making progress on these issues.”

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-Susan Doban, Doban Architecture, New York City

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-Jerry Caldari, Bromley Caldari Architects, New York City

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“In hotel renovations, we see a trend to replace the traditional bathtub with a shower. The Croma Green Showerspipe, with its all-in-one, outside-the-wall design is easy to install and service—things which are always a concern, especially in the hospitality sector. The handshower is not only great for guest bathing, but also ideal from a housekeeping perspective.”
-Foreman Arden Rodgers, TVS Design, Atlanta
After approximately a decade of anticipation, Whole Foods Market has opened its first store in Brooklyn at 3rd Avenue and 3rd Street on the Gowanus Canal. It has everything a Brooklynite could want: a rooftop bar with a dozen local microbrews on tap, hydroponic greenhouses, a bicycle repair shop, a knife sharpener, displays made from wood reclaimed from the Sandy-damaged Coney Island Boardwalk. At 56,000 square feet, it seems to want to be more than a supermarket; it seems to want to be a community center.

This store is the product of the more than 350 stores in the U.S. that preceded it. Whole Foods has a system down, which includes a host of green features. This particular project is on track for a LEED Platinum rating. Robust materials selected for low maintenance and longevity fill out the cavernous space: polished concrete floors, exposed structural framing, reclaimed wood, reclaimed brick, high efficacy lighting, permeable pavement in the parking lot. The parking lot has solar carports and wind turbines; one of the most visible installations of renewable energy in the city. While the store could benefit from more daylighting, it is cleverly laid out in such a way that at any point in the store windows are visible.

The crowning glory of the space is the view from the rooftop restaurant, which looks out over the Gowanus Canal and Carroll Gardens to the skyline of lower Manhattan. The Whole Foods corporate system is not completely immune to publicity. The 350 prior stores leave their mark on this store as well. As solidly and thoughtfully as it is built, it is hard to really call it architecture. It could be a store in Birmingham, Alabama, or Portland, Maine. It is purposely familiar and takes no spatial or material risks. To call this store urban design is even more difficult. It is essentially a single story suburban box store placed into an urban industrial superfund site context, with greenhouses and a restaurant and bar perched on top. The store location is nominally at 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue, but the actual entry to the store is down 3rd Street, in through a gate, up a ramp that essentially takes the shopper to the parking lot, which is the privileged entry. 3rd Avenue is given over to the loading docks. The Gowanus waterfront is made accessible by a waterfront walk, which is the most visible and least disturbing possibility to access the waterfront. The Gowanus Canal is a superfund site.

The Coignet Building in Gowanus, Brooklyn is believed to be the first concrete building in the US.

The Coignet Building’s significance is indisputable. Designated in 2006 as a landmark of the Coignet Building, only three other known locations across the US: Portland, Maine. It is purposely familiar and takes no spatial or material risks. To call this store urban design is even more difficult. It is essentially a single story suburban box store placed into an urban industrial superfund site context, with greenhouses and a restaurant and bar perched on top. The store location is nominally at 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue, but the actual entry to the store is down 3rd Street, in through a gate, up a ramp that essentially takes the shopper to the parking lot, which is the privileged entry. 3rd Avenue is given over to the loading docks. The Gowanus waterfront is made accessible by a waterfront walk, which is the most visible and least disturbing possibility to access the waterfront. The Gowanus Canal is a superfund site.

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The world of The Living is both high-tech and closely allied with biological systems. Founded by architect David Benjamin, the firm includes or collaborates with artists, engineers, media designers, and musicians, among others. “The issues we face today are so complex, you need to take a multidisciplinary approach,” said Benjamin. “We’ve always been interested in new technology in new ways of doing things,” he continued. “Early on we developed what we call ‘Flash research,’ where in under three months and for under 100 dollars we create a prototype.” Early projects include membranes that respond to environmental conditions, which could be applied to buildings to create breathable architecture. This kind of innovative practice may seem geared toward the future of architecture, rather than the more material concerns of building in the present, but these research experiments are beginning to be translated into built form. In Seoul, South Korea, The Living created a permanent pavilion, called Living in Light, which translates air quality data in various parts of the city into an illuminated map. Residents can also inquire about air quality in their neighborhood by text message. Inquiries register on the map as blinking light. “It becomes a gauge of public interest in environmental issues and in various parts of the city,” he said. In the East River at Pier 35, The Living is working on a related project they are calling Amphibious Architecture. A 200-foot-long floating grid of lights marks pollution levels in the river, with blue indicating improved water quality and red indicating poor conditions. White lights glinting through the grid denote the presence of fish. The Living will get its largest public showing to date this summer with their courtyard pavilion for MoMA/PS1 (see The Living Is Winning, page 1). The studio is also developing a new building for the School of Architecture at Princeton University, which could translate some of this research into built form: the Laboratory of Embodied Computation. “The project is right in line with our way of thinking,” said Benjamin. “It builds an architecture out of an idea, a test.”

San Francisco firm Surfacedesign founder James Lord has worked for what he calls the “triple crown” of Bay Area landscape designers: Hargreaves Associates, Martha Schwartz, and Peter Walker. Yet his company’s work bears little imprint of these offices’ signature styles. The designers at Surfacedesign are chameleons, digging obsessively into each site to reflect its character, history, and quirks. “We pride ourselves that no project is alike,” said Lord, who began the office in 2006, and later joined up with partners Roderick Wyllie and Geoff di Girolamo. A good example of this intensive investigation is the Auckland, New Zealand, Airport: Gateway, connecting the site to points nearby. Varied sources of inspiration included native Māori history and culture, the impact of subsequent European settlers, the volcanic landscape, and the excitement of air travel. The results include an extensive overlay of large, curving earth forms best with volcanic rock and planted with wetland grasses. Alleys of trees frame views of the forms, and at night the rock faces are integrated with colored lighting. “We really want to listen and hear stories and translate them in a culturally meaningful way,” said Lord. “It’s always multiple layers. Layering and telling a story.” Two recent explorations are the Lands End Visitors Center and the Golden Gate Bridge Plaza at Golden Gate National Park. For Lands End the team was inspired to emulate the rough language of the ruins on the site (the Sutro Baths), creating an informal setting that subtly reveals itself as one approaches. It is set with benches made from trees removed from the site. For Golden Gate the goal was to defer to the bridge with a minimal landscape. “We really held back any desire to do something wacky,” said Lord. But the design nonetheless took its cues from the national treasure. Lines of pavers echo the rhythm of light and patterns experienced on the bridge, benches are abstractions of the bridge’s towers, and lookouts are elevated to allow people the clearest possible views of the landmark.

Lord studied architecture at USC and landscape design at the Harvard GSD, so he has long had a strong understanding of and appreciation for both fields. He enjoys merging his projects with buildings and challenging architects to do the same with his designs. A dramatic example is the Museum of Steel in Monterrey, Mexico, in which Surfacedesign collaborated closely with Grimshaw, who built the museum underground with a roof that resembles a blast furnace. Surfacedesign then designed the largest green roof in Latin America, planted with varied sedums in differing orientations to produce a wild, sculpture-like effect. “It’s bringing the architecture to the surface,” explained Lord. SAM LOUELL
Williamson Chong Architects brings warmth and a sense of craft to their digitally fabricated modern environments. The Toronto-based team of nine headed by Betsy Williamson, her husband Shane, and Donald Chung has taken a material-driven approach to research and design, resulting in a series of context-sensitive projects that subtly test the limits of materiality.

“Our first project—House in Frogs Hollow—got quite a lot of recognition,” said Betsy Williamson. Hunkered into a rugged landscape overlooking Lake Huron’s Georgian Bay, the house is divided into two stacked sections of wood, glass, and concrete. A concrete plinth negotiates the hillside with what the firm described as “muscular tectonics” before a glass wall opens up the living spaces to a sweeping view. “What can you do with a small budget and a stack of wood?” said Williamson. Her approach is to transform the material through fabrication. “Things that seem simple are not. That’s how we want to approach technology.” The firm has grown up with the emergence of digital practice. “When we started working there was no one doing CNC milling in Toronto, but now there are dozens of people doing it,” said Williamson.

Williamson Chong has designed three multi-generational co-housing projects, including the nearly complete Grange Double Dwelling in Toronto’s Chinatown. A series of units are stacked atop one another, culminating in a strong brick corner that holds the intersection. Williamson said affordability was key. “We went to a brick yard to get the left-over remnants for the facade,” she said. The mottled color of the various bricks will be concealed by painting the facade white.

At Abbey Gardens outside Toronto, Williamson Chong has master planned a 441-acre former gravel quarry into what will slowly become a community focused on sustainable agriculture practice and education. “The local community needed a center for collecting knowledge about food, not just a place to buy food,” said Williamson. Her team distributed a series of structures around a pre-fabricated greenhouse called the “Cradle” that wraps around a depression in the landscape.

The firm has spent considerable time researching traditional and modern wood construction across the world, from Scandinavia to Japan. Williamson said she is attracted to the material for its warmth and ease of transformation. “We are a 100 percent building practice,” said Williamson.

While Guadalajara is Mexico’s second largest city, it is still in many ways trapped in the past, specifically in the way in which manual labor continues to dominate most means of production. This is especially true of the construction industry, and that hands-on, craftsman-like approach to building is at the heart of the architecture of Estudio Macias Peredo. “We try to have an open attitude to this condition, it’s been fundamental to the work we do,” studio co-founder Magui Peredo Arenas told AN. “We are interested in these conditions and we try to make them noticed in projects. We like to think that our work is about a continuity of construction processes, materials, and skills that are nearing extinction because of contemporary ideas of progress. It is not nostalgic. We truly believe there are still opportunities and valuable contributions to architecture in this track. That’s why we use references that invoke primitive Mexican buildings.”

Peredo and her partner, Salvador Macias Corona, met at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO) in Guadalajara, where they both earned architecture degrees. They continued their education together, pursuing graduate degrees at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain. In 2012, after working at another friend’s practice, the duo founded their studio. Macias Peredo’s first project was a competition-winning installation design for Pabellón Eco 2013 at the Museo Experimental El Eco in Mexico City. The installation was simple, but transformative. It inserted a sloping ground plane within the museum’s sunken courtyard that connected the building’s floor-to-ceiling windows with the elevated street, activating a space that had previously been restricted.

Most of the studio’s work, however, is made up of residences and office projects. Standouts among the houses include Casa Arenas in Guadalajara, Casa Atlas in Zapopan, and Casa Prado in Tapalpa. Each of these projects exhibit the raw materiality, simple forms, and hand-crafted character that shows the studio’s commitment to traditional Mexican building. Meanwhile, the practice’s commercial projects, such as the Toyo Food Offices in Zapopan or the Oﬁcinas Hidalgo, prove that Macias Peredo is no stranger to sleek modernism.

The two-architect studio gets by with help from the students that Macias and Peredo teach at ITESO, who do time building models while benefitting from the educational experience, which includes an annual architectural tour of some foreign place. But Macias Peredo hope to grow their practice and one day earn the honor of designing a public project. “It’s not easy to get government work or even to try to get into public contests,” said Peredo, “but we would love to do this.”

AARON SEWARD
“Our work is focused in the thoughtful manipulation of proportion, volume, light, and material,” Gabriela Carrillo Caldez, co-founder of Mexico City–based practice Taller Mauricio Rocha + Gabriela Carrillo, recently told AN. “Process is perhaps the word having the most importance to our work. In every case we need to be sensitive to the context, the site, the whole environment. We research for materials and local construction techniques. We also need to understand the client’s needs and requests. We need to understand all the external factors.”

Perhaps an emerging voice here in the United States, this practice has been around for quite some time and earned its fair share of laurels in Mexico. Originally established in 1991 by Mauricio Rocha Iturbide as TALLER DE ARQUITECTURA and renamed TALLER [MauricioRocha+GabrielaCarrillo] in 2011, the firm boasts a robust body of award-winning work. The San Pablo Oztotepec Market in Milpa Alta, Mexico City, for example, received the Gold Medal at the VII Biennial of Mexican Architecture. And The Plastic Arts School at the Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca received the Gold Medal at the XI Biennial of Mexican Architecture. Both projects, like the rest of the studio’s work, evince an understanding of vernacular and craftsmanship.

Rocha and Carrillo have earned their own accolades from the profession in their country. Both graduated with honors from the Faculty of Architecture of Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Rocha has been a fellow and jury member for the National Fund for Culture and the Arts and has, since 2011, served as Academician of the National Academy of Architecture. Carrillo began collaborating with Rocha in 2001 and served as project director from 2006 to 2011, when the two founded the current studio. Carrillo has also taught at the Instituto Superior de Arquitectura y Diseño and the Universidad Iberoamericana.

In spite of all of this established success, Rocha and Carrillo profess an enduring fascination for architecture and a thirst for projects big and small alike. “We love to work in different scales at the same time, we don’t bother if it is a staircase or a big development,” said Carillo. “We also love to work in public and private buildings at the same moment. Running several projects at the same time helps us to develop ideas we’ve been working on a long time: each project is an opportunity to explore what interests us and develop the architectural language we’ve been working on.”

In the future, Rocha and Carillo hope to win commissions outside of Mexico. “We’ve been doing work in different states in Mexico and it has been a powerful experience,” said Carillo. “We really don’t mind the type of project. Every time the projects we receive surprise us with great sites and provocative programs.”

Ants of the Prairie is a Buffalo-based research and architecture practice “dedicated to developing creative approaches in confronting the pleasures and horrors of our contemporary ecologies.” Founded in 2004 by Joyce Hwang, an associate professor of architecture at the University of Buffalo, the firm creates visually striking structures designed to improve the natural world—and our connection to it as well.

Working with different collaborators—including students, researchers, architects, and biologists—much of Ants’ recent work has been dedicated to improving conditions for bats. If you are wondering why anyone would want to help bats, then this project is as much for you as it is for them. Hwang’s Bat Tower, for example, a 12-foot tall twisting sculpture she created in Griffis Sculpture Park, is partially intended to change the way we understand bats; or what she says are too often viewed as “urban pests.”

“In an attempt to bring visibility to bats, Bat Tower challenges notions of the typical off-the-shelf bat house,” explained Hwang. “Rather than innocuously fading into the background, the tower stands as a prominently visible outdoor sculpture.”

But the impressive tower, with its triangular plywood slats that bend back-and-forth, is more than a piece of art; it is a “vertical cave” that provides shelter and habitation for bats, which are threatened by both natural disease and human “pest control.”

Working with students at the University of Buffalo, Hwang also created “Bat Cloud” in the city’s Tiert Nature Reserve. The cloud is a “hanging canopy of vessels that is designed and constructed to support bat habitation.” From a distance, the vessels appear as a cloud, or perhaps part of an enchanted forest from a Tim Burton film. Either way, each vessel’s plants and soil provide shelter for local bats.

Looking forward, Hwang is working on a second iteration of Bat Cloud for the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam this spring. And through future projects like Habitat Wall and Pest Wall, she hopes to continue using design to improve conditions for wildlife and our connection to the natural world.

“The latter project, for example, will provide shelter for bats and other wildlife within an urban environment. Hwang says the project aims to “question our embattled notions of the word ‘pest’ by intensifying the visibility and awareness of typically ‘undesired’ animals that are critical to our urban ecosystems.”

Ultimately, the architect is interested in pursuing “projects that are about inclusion of multiple species in the built environment.”

HENRY MELCHER
In 2005, a group of four recent graduates from The Cooper Union set out to start their own fabrication, research, and design practice. Less than nine years after graduation, it is clear the ambitious move paid off for these classmates-turned-business partners. As SITU, their installations have appeared on the streets of New York and inside some of the city’s great cultural institutions.

The practice currently operates out of a Brooklyn workspace that allows them to design and build in the same place. “That’s not only a kind of practical way of getting things realized, it also allows us the opportunity to investigate ideas through building,” said Brad Samuels, a partner at SITU.

This sense of experimentation is immediately apparent in SITU’s expressive and diverse work. Their installations have an undeniable energy, but they never veer into the realm of impracticality. Their imaginative forms are all the better because they are executed with a refined toolbox and a strict adherence to function. At the Brooklyn Museum, for example, SITU transformed the Great Hall by wrapping its columns in a white fabric, creating new seating and oversized, bending canopies. The result resembled a field of white mushrooms, or whirling dervishes caught in motion.

SITU’s most visible work to-date is likely their “Heart-walk” installation, which won the 2013 Times Square Valentine’s Day Heart Competition. The heart-shaped “room within the city” is made entirely of wood salvaged from boardwalks destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. SITU says that Heartwalk “draws inspiration from the collective experience of Hurricane Sandy and the love that binds the city’s citizens together during trying times.”

SITU is currently reimagining the New York Hall of Science’s design lab in the building’s central pavilion. The permanent space will include new hands-on workshops and an interactive “treehouse.”

In the coming months, SITU’s work will appear across New York City on the side of a food truck called Snowday. The truck, which boasts a snowflake made of reclaimed wood, is part of Drive Change, an organization that provides job opportunities in the food truck industry to the previously incarcerated. The relatively young firm only plans to build on their impressive portfolio this coming year. As Snowday hits the streets and the new exhibition spaces open at the New York Hall of Science, SITU will be preparing for two new exhibitions, one in Berlin and one at MOMA. SITU is planning to work on more permanent projects and has ambitions to design buildings in the near future. But Samuels said the installations that SITU has created thus far are just as much architecture as any new building or large-scale project.

HENRY MELCHER

Rael San Fratello’s signature blend of activism and architecture was forged in the months following 9/11, when founders Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello left New York for California. The pair, who met at Columbia University in the mid-1990s, founded their Oakland practice in 2002. Their first commission, for an adobe house near Marfa, Texas, fell through, but led to other work in the border town, including Prada Marfa (2009).

“The post 9/11 political climate and the early work we did together in Texas and along the US Border have been very influential in our work,” wrote Rael and San Fratello in an email. “We consider the political, social, and environmental aspects of design central to our work.”

The US/Mexico border remains a focal point for the duo. “Because we were spending so much time adjacent to the border we found ourselves crossing it with frequency, walking along it and getting to know the people who live with this strange condition—the border fence—as part of their daily life,” wrote Rael and San Fratello. They had their own experience with border security during the site survey for Prada Marfa, when a group of Border Patrol agents surrounded them and peppered them with questions.

Rael San Fratello’s 2009 Border Wall series approaches the issue with a combination of satire and empathy, reimagining the wall between the two countries as a literal fulcrum on which trade and labor relationships are balanced (Teeter Totter Wall); as life-saving infrastructure (Life Safety Border Beacon); and as a space of cross-cultural interaction (Burrito Wall). Rael San Fratello’s work is characterized by a combination of natural materials—including earth and straw—and high technology. In 2012, the designers founded Emerging Objects, which develops new materials for 3D printing and aims to create printable building blocks. The firm’s recent projects include by-products of their research on 3D printing, such as Saltygloo (2013), a dome constructed of bricks 3D printed from salt harvested from the San Francisco Bay. Yet even Rael San Fratello’s most technologically advanced projects circle back to their interest in putting architecture to work for the greater good. “It’s no
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THE ARCHITECT’S NEWSPAPER

EAST COAST ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

BROUGHT TO LIGHT: THE HOUSES OF LOUIS KAHN
University of Pennsylvania School of Design
220 South 34th Street, Philadelphia, PA
Through May 23

Over the course of his 40-year career, Louis Kahn was constantly working on his conception of domestic spaces. The residences he designed represent one of the most remarkably varied expressions of the single-family house in American architecture. Brought to Light: The Houses of Louis Kahn puts this remarkable variety on display. Composed of sixty of the architect’s sketches, office drawings, models, historic photographs, and other materials drawn from Penn’s Architectural Archives and several private collections, the objects in this show highlight Kahn’s creative process and his poetic use of light. Put into context by color photographs of the completed buildings, many of the items on display are being exhibited for the first time. The University of Pennsylvania obtained the majority of the objects during Kahn’s eighteen-year professorship. On view is a model of the Korman House in its landscape setting and a never-before-seen video of the Esherick house, taken by the Swiss architect and Kahn scholar Urs Bittiker, which reveals the play of light through the house over a period of twenty-four hours.

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REVIEW

Architecture Without Planning
Architecture in India since 1990
By Rahul Mehrotra
Hatje Cantz, 49.80 euros

This is an unusual book. First, it contains not one single project of its architect/author’s. Second, in its measured way, it addresses some of the most burning issues of our time. Rahul Mehrotra’s Architecture in India since 1990 opens with 1990 because this is when his generation, which was just coming into its own, witnessed the devolution of the last remnants of responsibility for planning from government agencies dating from the post-independence Nehru Era to speculative profit-driven private interests, in other words to an unfettered, globalised free market, what he calls “impatient capital.”

As the book amply illustrates, the effect of the post-1990s liberalized economy has been disastrous for India. Antilla, the most expensive home in the world commissioned by India’s richest man, is just the most extreme case in point. Designed by Perkins + Will for Mukesh Ambani, it is 27 stories high, cost $1 billion, employs a staff of 600, and is equipped with a ballroom lit with chandeliers of solid gold, a 50-seat theater, nine cocktail lounges, three helicopter pads, and six underground floors of parking. To quote Mehrotra, it is “symbolic of the rising capitalism gripping cities like Mumbai through such disruptive interventions within the existing fabric. Out of scale, out of proportion, this single-family house epitomizes the crassness of capital expressing itself on the landscape, unmindful of the context.” Indeed, Antilla also provides a commanding view of Mumbai’s slums, home to 60 percent of the city’s population, and has been universally vilified as the ultimate monument to inequality.

The main complaint of the book is that India has become a landscape of “global stormtroopers” in a laissez-faire formation, whose purpose as architects is limited to representing “the power of capital and its universalising symbolism, serving as iconic beacons for investments in new terrains, reassuring external investment and capital that it is safe to ‘land’ here.” The book takes on the resulting “global follies” in the form of countless shopping malls, IT parks, gated employment enclaves, gated communities, and luxury hotels by local and foreign architects alike. It decimates many others, Zaha Hadid’s “parametric” IT park in Mumbay for its inefficient responses to the real parameters of climate, light, and airflows, as well as for its “dogmatic use of energy-unfriendly materials like metal and glass cladding, which make it uneconomical and unsustainable.” Of Robert Stern’s and HOK’s gated New Urbanism suburban developments he notes out that they have densities too low to imagine in the urban context so typical of India and that they necessarily form entities that “secede from the city and no longer rely on the formal or informal urban systems for services.”

Meanwhile, most incomprehensibly of all perhaps, agricultural land, once protected, has been deregulated, bulldozed and turned over for disastrous Indian developer-driven projects. The first part of the book is counterbalanced by a series of buildings that Mehrotra sees as the alternative. In a nutshell, they are critical regionalists. What makes them so is that they “do not reject modernism but rather the new form of internationalism perpetuated by the corporate practices.” In fact, critical regionalism means seeing the importance of modernism as a mechanism for viewing tradition afresh. Its mandate agenda and aspirations are regional. He proceeds to give a history of India’s great regionalist tradition, starting with Antonin Raymond’s Golconda Ashram, and extending to the masterpieces of Charles Correa, Joseph Stein, Laurie Baker, Balkrishna Doshi, Raj Rewal, and Christopher Benninger. He then presents the heirs of this tradition, the current generation, which in his view has deftly managed to turn the flow of global capital to India’s advantage, such as Studio Mumbai, Sameep Padora & Associates, Mahew Ghosh, Vinu Daniel, and Anagram Architects. Of particular interest is the South Asian Human Rights Center by Anagram with its sustainable, exposed brickwork lattice pattern. The book’s most eye-popping surprise is a selection of multi-cultural contemporary mosques, temples, ashrams, stupas, religious speaking.

SPEAK, MYSTICISM

Kabbalah in Art and Architecture
By Alexander Gorlin
Pointed Leaf Press, $60.00

How often is it that we consider the cultural contributions of this intriguing, ever decadent, and re-succeeding people? Their run—which has taken them from ancient Egypt through the ghettos of old Venice to the oceanic explorations of the 1400s to early human cover photograph—the glow of hundreds of candles turning darkness into a golden haven—I knew that I was wrong. The volume, Kabbalah in Art and Architecture, sets about to reveal the embodiment of the mystical Jewish teaching within the two avocations. To undertake such an act, author Alexander Gorlin must first establish a basic understanding of the texts, a goal that history has found as perplexing, illusive, and torturous as making art itself. If the late Philip Seymour Hoffman talked about the toll of an artist’s perfectionism and Rothko, who is featured in the book, committed suicide, consider this: Of the four Rabbis who first undertook to study and convey the Kabbalah, only one remained standing, sane, and able to speak of it. Gorlin contends the teachings, which attempts to explain the inner workings of G-d, are rife with allegories, metaphors, or actualities that permeate great architecture and art. Some referenced by their makers purposefully others by accident.

Most particularly, he focuses on Zohar, the Book of Radiance. Kabbalah’s foundational text, an artist’s Book of Genesis, except that it is an account of what preceded that epoch. The tale begins with a void, the vacuum the Divine leaves as G-d recedes to make room for creation. Into the space enters light, first as a single beam, then flowing forth into ten vessels. But as this illumination is a sacred force of the continued on page 19
ARCHITECTURE WITHOUT PLANNING
continued from page 18

Architecture, like the amazing temporary walkways floating on pneumatic pontoons zigzagging cross the Ganges for the feast of Kumbh Mela. Architectural practice and education needs to be rethought, away from the tendencies in evidence since the 1990s that have helped to cause dire economic, social, and environmental damage on a global scale.

With this book, Rahul Mehrotra, the Chair of Harvard GSD’s Urban Planning and Design department, has set up a platform for one of the key debates of our time. Can individual architectural interventions make up for a lack of planning? Can the devolution of planning to private interests be justified by a lack of planning? Can the devolution of planning to private interests be brought order to chaos. If the Hebrew word for this final lesson, Tikkhun, has been popularized as action for the greater good, its origins also would seem to imply the labor of “architect.”

Gorlin and the book’s designer organize the volume in chapters each of which first offer an essay that explains a concept or symbol(s) essential to the Kabbalah—citing works, artists, and architects that have employed it (knowingly or not) followed by well-captioned corresponding visuals which range in era from the 1200s to the present day.

Readers turn a page to find Moshe Safdie’s triangular void which frames Yad Vashem’s harrowing journey through the Holocaust just as the volume releases into a vast expanse: an elegy that momentarily escapes the heaviness of history to enter the vast domain of the horizon. A stream of light reflected in water pierces Louis Kahn’s Salk Institute for Biological Studies at dawn while, presented on the opposite page, a singular white band makes its way through the blue of a Barnett Newman canvas. A collage was drenched in the Kabbalah. In its entirety, Kabbalah in Art and Architecture is about universality.

Collected under one cover is an ephemeral installation of the British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy, sketches by Frank Lloyd Wright of Temple Beth Shalom, Kiefer and Steven Holl’s Chapel of St. Ignatius, a catholic place of worship that referenced the Kabbalah’s vessels of light. If the book is unfocused, so to it tantalizes the reader for his own reference.

TIBBY ROTHMAN IS A LA-BASED WRITER.
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When I think of how the body of my work has been affected by my interest in architecture, I realize that it has helped me formulate many of the working concepts I’ve developed through the years. My first interest in architecture was concerned with mass; the pyramids of the Yucatan and Guatemala, the pyramids and temples of Egypt, as well as simple early Neolithic cave sites. It was only when I began to make early sculptural works in non-sculptural materials (no bronze, marble, or steel), using instead simple, rudimentary materials, that I used architecture as a support. By this I mean support for the presentation of the sculpture (perhaps just leaning it against the wall) and building a body of work based on the floor-to-wall relationship in architecture, and to the scale of the human body. After completing the various early series’ of work, I began to have an interest in extruded materials (glass, steel, aluminum, and, of course, light) that resulted in a more classically oriented and multi-faceted approach to sculpture. The Ba-O-Ba Series, which utilized glass and neon, dealt with the post and lintel golden section. The Mirror Act Series evolved from early studio investigations into creating environments with light and reflective surfaces that were originally used as film sets. The performers moved around in a kind of fourth dimension; in what I called an infinity space. I was also interested in creating mass, or volume, with light, which is something that carries over into my architectural commissions. The new body of work entitled Elysian Plain continues to explore the relationships of objects in space and how viewers become participants as their movements are reflected on the surface of the glass. This is a continuation of a form language that has evolved through many years of producing sculpture as well as architectural commissions.
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