THE EAST
ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

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REBUILD BY DESIGN MOVES AHEAD AS LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS ALLOCATE FUNDS AND ISSUE RFPS.

REBUILD RESET

COURTESY ZUS

When Hurricane Sandy brought catastrophic destruction to New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut three years ago, government officials and designers seized the opportunity to shape space at an unprecedented scale through Rebuild by Design, a 2013 competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD, in collaboration with local partners, including the Municipal Art Society and The Van Alen Institute, selected six teams (and one finalist) to create resiliency plans for seven coastal areas in three states. HUD allocated $930 million to implement the first phases of the plans. As of **continued on page 15**

Above: The New Meadlands: Productive City + Regional Park in New Jersey

SANAA CRAFTS A WEIGHTLESS, WINDING COMMUNITY BUILDING THAT BLENDS WITH THE LANDSCAPE IN NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT

State of Grace

IWAN BAAN/COURTESY GRACE FARMS

If there were any architecture firm equipped to design a building with the ironic prompt to "make it blend in and draw people outside," it's Pritzker Prize-winning Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA. Grace Farms Foundation, a private nonprofit organization, selected the Japanese firm to design a multipurpose building for an 80-acre farm property in New Canaan, Connecticut.

"It was extraordinary that even though they were halfway around the world in Tokyo, they understood that we were trying to create a place of porosity, while also being in harmony with the landscape," Sharon Prince, president of the Grace Farms Foundation, said.

The resulting 83,000-square-foot glass structure is divided into five volumes that curve through the property on slender columns. An anodized **continued on page 8**

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL RENOVATIONS FINALLY NEAR COMPLETION

GOD IS IN THE DETAILS

Shrouded in scaffolding for three years, renovations on St. Patrick's Cathedral are nearly complete. Initiated in 2006, renovations **continued on page 5**

CONTENTS

06 THE WATERGATE TURNS 50

16 IN DETAIL> WTO PERIMETER FENCE

20 BILLION-DOLLAR DEVELOPMENT HITS CAMDEN'S WATERFRONT

38 KEN SMITH'S STUMPS

05 EAVESDROP
32 CALENDAR
35 MARKETPLACE

A radical glass addition to a historic brick home

COURTESY MACHADO SILVETTI

A NOVEL PRESERVATION PROJECT TAKES SHAPE IN VIRGINIA

Glass en Masse

Virginia is a house-museum mecca. It's the home of Colonial Williamsburg, Stratford Hall, and Monticello. What could another museum add to the state's cultural heritage infrastructure?

The Menokin **continued on page 9**

STUDIO VISIT>
MATHEWS NIELSEN WORKS FOR THE PUBLIC
SEE PAGE 12

COURTESY MATHEWS NIELSEN

AN LANDSCAPE ISSUE

AN INVESTIGATES THE WAYS IN WHICH LANDSCAPE DESIGN IS BEING USED TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES. WE VISIT DETROIT FOR ITS APPROACH TO GRASS-ROOTS FARMING URBANISM THAT IS REVITALIZING THE CITY AND LOOK AT HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP CONNECT LANDSCAPES TO THE PUBLIC. SEE PAGE 26.

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LANDSCAPE OPERATIONS

An ongoing debate resurfaced at the Chicago Architecture Biennial. One critic in particular, Patrik Schumacher of Zaha Hadid Architects, criticized the curators, saying that it seems that "contemporary architecture [has] ceased to exist, the discipline's guilt and bad conscience has sapped its vitality, and driven it to self-annihilation. Architects have now en masse dedicated themselves to doing good via basic social work."

His complaint is part of an ongoing crisis in architecture that has divided the discipline. In one camp is a group of architects who work to build new forms, many of whom are divorced from a particular social or political agenda. Often, advanced technology is involved, though it is not mandatory. In the other camp, a group far less concerned with form-making, and more with attempting to make the world better through design and architecture-related thinking and practice.

What has emerged, perhaps as a result of the fallout of the 2007 economic crisis, is a more expanded field of architectural thought, propelled by progressive urban politics and a hope that architecture can still make an impact in the world. These projects often eschew traditional notions of building altogether, looking to activism and conceptual art as fertile productive territory.

Of course, architecture is at its best when it encompasses both lines of thought—beautiful, inspiring solutions to relevant, urgent problems. But recently, architects seem to struggle to reconcile these differences.

In the realm of landscape architecture, however, these ambitions seem to be in harmony more than ever.

Landscapes are no longer simply beautiful complements to buildings or vague public social spaces. Designers and clients are activating landscape design to operate environmentally as flood barriers and water remediation zones, among other goals. Rebuild by Design (front cover) harnessed this potential after Hurricane Sandy, and hopefully the proposals will come to fruition, as they are currently being moved forward by their respective governments now that HUD has stepped aside.

Landscape architects are also tasked with operating socially to create new public spaces, connect of previously separated neighborhoods, and reclaim underused land in and around infrastructure, often in synch with other rebuilding and recovery efforts, such as waterfront development or neighborhood revitalization.

In our landscape feature (p. 26), we profile some of the ways landscape plays out as a political agent in Detroit, where artists, activists, and farmers are using ecological planning and landscape design to create a new kind of urbanism—one that provides green space and fresh food while promising a better city for future generations.

While landscapes are growing in size and scale, technology is being implemented successfully to plan and execute bold new landscape forms, such as the green swoops and concrete curves of Brooklyn Bridge Park and the High Line. Landscape architecture incorporates Rhino, Grasshopper, and even Arduino and advanced robotics, to give new life to green social spaces across the country. Invivia, a team from Cambridge, MA, was recently selected to build *99 White Balloons* at Circle Acres Nature Preserve in Austin, Texas. The project utilizes movement sensors to activate the installation when people are nearby and a series of weather sensors to illuminate the installation according to temperature changes.

Technology is implemented on the front end of design, too. The Trust for Public Land's Climate Smart Cities initiative, for example, aggregates layers of GIS data to make it easier for cities and designers to use in a graphic interface. The data allows users pinpoint the sites that will best match their ambitions for the city.

In the other half of our landscape feature (p. 28), we look at socially activated projects that marry design and urban politics by engaging the public through visual software and presentation. As landscape design becomes more relevant and powerful in the urban sphere, perhaps architecture could learn a thing or two about how to get along? **MATT SHAW**

UNVEILED

ARTES AMANA

SO-IL have released their design for a new art gallery, called Artes Amana, in Brooklyn. The seemingly tensile structure has a 22,000-square-foot floor plan that will also house studio, private exhibition, and multimedia project spaces for artists.

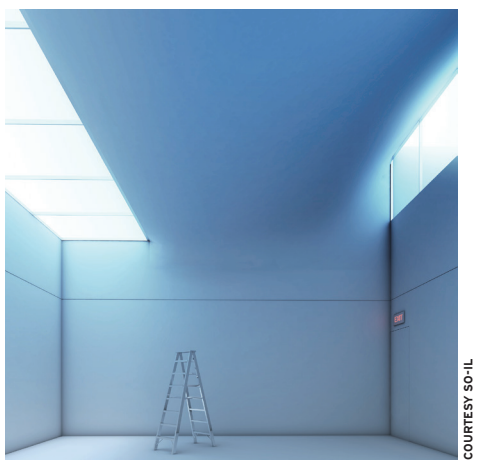
Using an all-concrete form, the subtractive design offers an inviting aesthetic that will provide soft lighting for the interior layout via subtle curvature and vacuous spaces.

Lighting and circulation according to SO-IL are "collaborative constraints" that define the contours, resulting in a "nearly edgeless interior" intended to challenge the perception of defined space, reminiscent of Willy Wonka's "Wonka Vision" studio.

Located in an industrial neighborhood, the gallery is due to start construction next year, with the difficult task of forming the concrete headed by Reginald Hough Associates. Florian Idenburg and Jing Liu, who formed SO-IL in 2008, are working with a number of collaborators including Andrew Reyniak as the architect of record for the gallery.

The building is set to be completed in 2017. **JASON SAYER**

Architect: SO-IL
Client: Artes Amana
Location: Brooklyn, NY
Completion Date: 2017



COURTESY SO-IL

COURTESY STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS

CORRECTIONS

In "5 Experiments" (*AN*_10_09.02.15) we incorrectly called Steven Holl a "Pritzker Prize-winner." While Holl should have won a Pritzker, he, alas, has not.

In "Bohlin in Baltimore" (*AN*_10_09.02.15) we incorrectly listed Philadelphia architects Bohlin Cywnski Jackson as the architects of the garage-to-maker space conversion on the south Baltimore waterfront. They are not working on that project, but are the master planners of the urban waterfront campus of Under Armour. Ayers Saint Gross has worked for UA in the past, but is not working on the new project.

We regret the errors.

UPDATE

In "Act II for House VI" (*AN*_10_09.02.15) at the time of press, Peter Eisenman's iconic house was in the process of being sold to the new owner, architect Thomas Schmitt of Brooklyn. The sale fell through, however, and has since been scrapped.

EAVESDROP> THE EDITORS

BLOWN OVER IN THE WINDY CITY

The number of projects in the Chicago Cultural Center right now is a bit dizzying, but we can only imagine what the place was like during the installation. It is a small miracle that it all fit, let alone got assembled correctly. The process was not without snafus, however. Multiple sources reported to *AN* that in the final hours before the preview opening on October 1, the large circular construction by Spanish architects **Selgascano** (of Serpentine fame) and **helloeverything** actually collapsed. Fortunately, it was sturdily put back together for the opening. The team recovered with an elegant tension cable design that worked quite well, and is to be commended under such a last-minute timeframe.

BACK TO THE BENCH

The city's newest subway station, 34th St-Hudson Yards, opened in early September, extending the 7 line over to the Far West Side. The station is squeaky clean, with stainless steel and glass that looks like it cost $2.42 billion. (It did.) While it looks like a contemporary version of a subway station, the typical benches you will find in most stops have not changed. Apparently, there was no redesign for the trusty old wooden benches, which now contrast more than ever with their surroundings.

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The St. Patrick's Cathedral altar was previously renovated in the 1930s and 40s.

PHOTO BY AUDREY WACHS

GOD IS IN THE DETAILS continued from front page stalled due to the 2007 economic recession, but began again in earnest in 2012. Pope Francis' New York visit on September 24th advanced the project time line.

The Archdiocese of New York commissioned New York architects Murphy Burnham & Buttrick (MBB) to spearhead the renovation. Opened in 1879, the original structure was designed by James Renwick, Jr., one of 19th century America's preeminent architects. MBB's Jeffrey Murphy, the renovation's lead architect, stresses that the St. Patrick's Cathedral project is about "conservation, not restoration." While restoration brings a building back to a specific style or time, conservation incorporates features from multiple time periods to display a full history of the space. St. Patrick's Cathedral is beloved locally and protected nationally: the Cathedral, as well as the Rectory, Lady Chapel, and Cardinal's Residence on the same block, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Commenting on the renovations, Reverend Monsignor Robert T. Ritchie referenced Cardinal Timothy Dolan's opinion that "the conservation of St. Patrick's Cathedral is about spiritual renewal." During renovations, the church continued to welcome tourists and worshippers. Priests held their usual seven masses per day, calibrating their voices to be heard over the construction noise. The project is also a financial commitment for the Archdiocese, which estimates that interior and exterior renovations have cost $175 million so far.

Over nine years, approximately 140 designers and consultants, along with a team of 20 engineers, oversaw more than 30,000 interior and exterior repairs and modifications to the structure. Sustainability plays a major, and visible, role in the conservation process—the Archdiocese of New York invested in green energy, with ten geothermal wells planned for the site. The wells extend 2,200 feet underground and will provide 30 percent of energy for cathedral.

Raymond Pepi, founder and president of Building Conservation Associates, led the forensic analysis of the Cathedral. That analysis enabled the design team to make restoration and conservation decisions on the basis of the strength and integrity of the building's woodwork, plaster, stone, and glass. So far, around 150 masons, painters, carpenters, and other builders have labored on the project.

At times, there were over 100 people working at once on the Cathedral. To coordinate the activity, MBB partner Mary Burnham said the team used Autodesk's BIM 360 Field, an app that allows each team member to identify problems, flag repairs, suggest conservation methods, and also allows the design team to follow up on the work as it's completed.

Transparency, inside and out, is a salient feature of the new design. Monsignor Ritchie is emphatic that the Cathedral keep its doors open to all. New programmatic elements include sliding glass doors at the main entrance on Fifth Avenue so that, even in winter, the 9,000-pound double bronze doors flanking the entrance may remain open without letting in the cold.

Pollution, particularly candle soot, turned the ceiling and parts of the walls army green (low smoke candles are the norm going forward). The renovations reveal the original tri-colored, plaster cast ceiling that Renwick cleverly designed to look like stone. The interiors were curated to increase the space's comfort and reduce visual clutter. The design team worked with the clergy to reposition signs and statuary to harmonize with the space. Preservationists restored the glass and glazing on 3,200–3,300 stained glass panels *in situ*. MBB vented the bottom of the windows to improve air circulation, and maintain a more even temperature around the delicate glass. While most of the glass would have been severely damaged by removal, approximately five to six percent of panels in need of intensive repair were removed and shipped to master glass restorer Ettore Christopher Botti of Botti Studio.

The exterior received the same level of scrutiny and care. The renovation team blasted the facade with a mixture of glass and water to reveal any damage to the building. The original structure, said Murphy, was supposed to look as if it was "poured into a mold and deposited on the sidewalk." Uneven aging of the stone and grout caused the exterior to appear more variegated than intended. The current, cleaned facade recaptures the mid-19th century look of the building.

AUDREY WACHS

OPEN> RETAIL

COURTESY SNARKITECTURE

> KITH BROOKLYN

233 Flatbush Ave
Brooklyn
Tel: 347-889-6114
Designer: Snarkitecture

750 all-white Air Jordan 1s hang from the ceiling at apparel retailer Kith's new store in Brooklyn. Actually, they are 1:1 plaster-cast replicas, senior associate for Snarkitecture Ben Porto said, claiming that real shoes would strain the ceiling.

Complete with a cereal bar, per the request of owner Ronnie Fieg, the firm has created alternative sensory experience with cereals being served in Mylar bags that fit into small shoeboxes.

Working with Kith for a second time, Snarkitecture has installed a linear monochromatic, reductive interior emulating the original New York City store, solidifying Kith's visual identity and reinforcing the Snarkitecture aesthetic. The white canvas supplied by lead designer Daniel Arsham allows the colors from Kith's product range to do the selling while a clever use of mirrors and metal supports blend into the background.

When asked if Snarkitecture's style would limit them in terms of the amount of different retailers they could design for, potentially compromising brand identities, Porto argued that each approach was different. With Kith they worked with Fieg to produce a unique aesthetic—something they aim to do in the future.

For now, Snarkitecture are happy to continue working with Kith and have said to expect more cereal bars. **JS**

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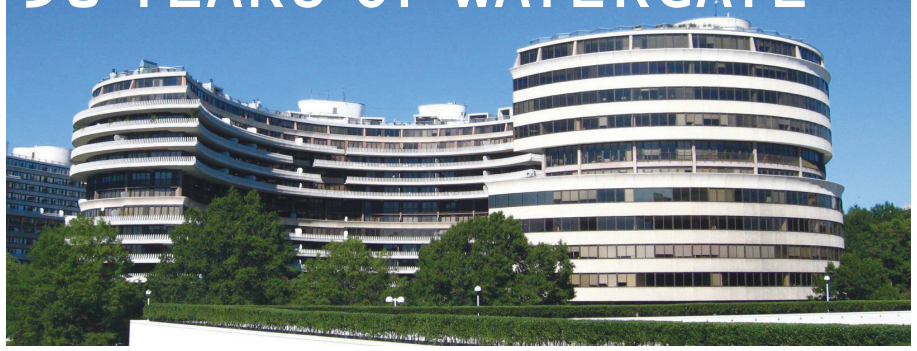
50 YEARS OF WATERGATE



It's hard to hear the word "Watergate" and not think about Richard Nixon's tricksters breaking into the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in 1972. But in fact the five-building Watergate complex is a truly remarkable architectural set piece. Their stylish massing, design details, and modernist gardens have a striking presence on the Potomac River in Washington, D.C.

The complex, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary, was designed by the Italian architect Luigi Moretti (Corning, Moore, Elmore & Fischer were associate architects). The project began in 1967 and cost $75 million to construct. It was Moretti's single American project.

Perhaps as a response to the problematic urban conditions and their attendant racial segregation of postwar Washington, D.C., it was conceived as a "city within a city" and was designed with all the amenities its residents would need without leaving the complex: a hotel with 24-hour room service, health club, restaurants, shopping mall, medical and dental offices, grocery, pharmacy, and a post office.

It consists of six 16-story buildings comprised of 1,400 apartment units, a 350-room hotel, offices (where the National Trust for Historic Preservation is now headquartered), 19 townhouses, and three levels of underground parking. It is not simply its size that stands out but also the architectural qualities of its mass and its small details that are unique for a project of its size in the United States.

The Watergate's website claims that it was "The first major construction project in the United States in which computers played a significant role in the design work."

I am not skeptical about this claim, but it is true that in a large complex where the designers are working on massing and scale, details are often lost. In this project, however, the small design details are extraordinary. For example, beautiful black and white patterned terrazzo on the lobby floors are unique in the United States and channel Italian architecture to bring a design flare to a city not known for its flamboyance.

It is worth noting that the three-acre landscape of interlocking private and public spaces in the complex (which have been altered and updated numerous times) were designed by Boris V. Timchenko, a noted D.C.-based landscape architect and included more than 150 planters, tiers of fountains designed to enliven its public spaces, landscaped rooftop terraces, privacy planters between apartments, and swimming pools.

WILLIAM MENKING

KERRY H. STOWELL; ALL OTHER IMAGES COURTESY WATERGATE

This rendering of Atlantic Avenue illustrates the proposed diverse uses of space.

COURTESY NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

THE ONGOING AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEBATE SURROUNDS BIG ZONING CHANGES IN EAST NEW YORK FOR EAST NEW YORK

IN THE RE-ZONE

Right now, zoning and land use are being hotly debated in Brooklyn's East New York neighborhood. On September 21, the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) announced two changes to the city's zoning regulations that will have major long term impact on land use and affordable housing. That same day, the DCP released the highly anticipated East New York Community Plan (ENYCP), a comprehensive rezoning of residential areas in East New York, Ocean Hill, and Cypress Hills, as well as the commercial corridors that run through the neighborhood. Chosen for its proximity to rail, subway, and bus lines, East New York is one of the first places where these new zoning changes will be put into action.

The first change, Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, would affect large-scale residential development in medium- to high-density areas. New zoning would require 25 or 30 percent of floor space in buildings with ten or more units developed in these areas to remain permanently affordable, as defined by the Area Median Income (AMI). In New York City, the AMI is $86,300 for a family of four. The second change, Zoning for Quality and Affordability, is intended to encourage high-quality construction and promote affordable housing in these same neighborhoods.

Residents of East New York are concerned that despite the stricter affordable housing requirements, the ENYCP will precipitate gentrification and residential displacement in the mostly low- to moderate-income area.

Though the ENYCP does not offer an exact breakdown of housing distribution by income, *Housing New York*, the city's housing policy framework released in 2014, gives insight into potential numbers. That document outlines the city's intention to preserve or create 20 percent of 200,000 units of affordable housing for very low to extremely low-income households (households earning 50 to 30 percent of AMI, respectively).

Policy analysts at Real Affordability for All (RAFA), a division of ALIGN, and an umbrella group of 50 organizations that advocate for low-income New Yorkers, claim that the new provisions will not provide enough affordable options for East New York residents or the city at large. Using Census data, RAFA contends that, citywide, there's a lack of affordable housing for households making less than 50 percent of the AMI ($43,150 for a household of four in 2015). Excluding households that receive housing vouchers, there's a shortage of 403,932 units for the 710,649 households in this income range.

The city's percentages of affordable housing under Mandatory Inclusionary Housing are derived from averages. To attract a range of incomes, for example, apartments could be available at the 30, 80, 40, and 90 percent affordability thresholds for an average of 60 percent affordability. In East New York, there is more overall demand for apartments in the 40 percent or lower range. Incentives like the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, however, incentivize the creation of units in the 60 percent range.

Maritza Silva-Farrell, campaign director at ALIGN, stated that the plan is not addressing the needs of low-income individuals, and will lead to "more displacement [of residents] and gentrification of East New York."

Finding affordable housing in New York is a struggle for many. *Housing New York* cites an "affordability crisis": almost 55 percent of households spend more than one third of their income on rent.

Rachaele Raynoff, press secretary for the DCP, emphasized that the East New York Community Plan goes beyond the proposed requirements, requiring 50 percent of new units in the rezoning area to be affordable to area residents. Raynoff stressed that "to get affordable housing as a zoning regulation, the rates [we] have proposed are the best ones." Moreover, the ENYCP, according to Raynoff, is part of a "jigsaw" of legislation and policy between the NYC Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development, and state and federal entities to promote sustainable growth in select neighborhoods.

If the ENYCP is adopted, 1,200 units will be built by both nonprofit and for-profit developers over the next two years, though there are no developers selected as of yet. First, the plan must undergo a Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (which includes a public comment period) and gain approval from all 59 Community Boards, five borough presidents, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council.

AW

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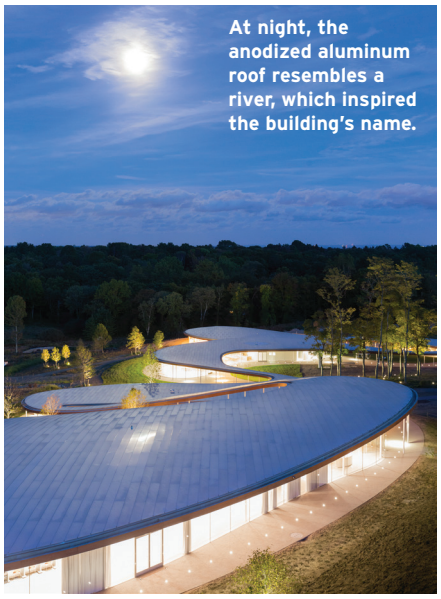


At night, the anodized aluminum roof resembles a river, which inspired the building's name.

STATE OF GRACE continued from front page

aluminum roof mirrors the surrounding trees, and at night the reflective curving light resembles the geographic feature for which the building is named: the River.

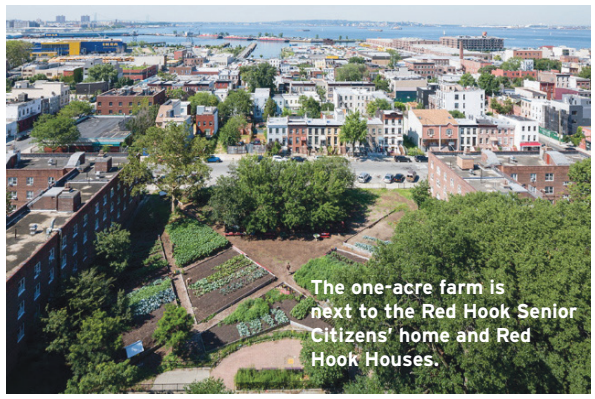
Walking through the building, there are moments where the structure curves back on itself, so much so that one can not only see views of the surrounding trees and meadows, but of the people inside as well. This is a signature SANAA move: Redirecting sight lines to the people who use the building to the extent that they become part of the architecture themselves.

From end to end, the River undergoes a 43-foot elevation change. Although the building is approximately 1,400 feet long, the switchbacks throughout make the overall footprint only 700 feet long. Mostly local red oak ceilings and floors add warmth to the steel, glass, and concrete elements.

Keeping a minimal footprint was paramount, as Grace Farms wanted little disturbance to the surrounding land. To that end, SANAA worked closely with landscape architecture firm OLIN to integrate community gardens, athletic fields, and trails within the natural and architectural spaces. A one-mile ADA-regulation walking path connects from one end of the building and leads back to the other end, creating a seamless loop from indoors to out. Most of the previously mowed green spaces will be rehabilitated into meadows. In 2016 a SANAA-designed playground will be built on the site. Aiming for LEED certification, the Foundation had 55 500-feet-deep geothermal wells installed. The 203 panes of glass composing the exterior walls are double-glazed with a specially engineered spacer. Several black locust trees that had to be removed for the building were kiln-dried on site and reused as 18-foot-long community tables.

"We wanted a building that would blend in with the natural surroundings and draw people into the landscape, which is exactly what Sejima and Nishizawa have given us," Prince said. "For example, the covered walkways shield you from the weather but also allow a more direct interaction with the landscape all throughout the year." **OLIVIA MARTIN**

Grace Farms opened on October 9, 2015 and is open to the public 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and on Sunday from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m.



The one-acre farm is next to the Red Hook Senior Citizens' home and Red Hook Houses.

COURTESY NYC DOT

PILOT URBAN FARM SPROUTS ON NYCHA LAND.

GREEN RED HOOK

Award-winning Brooklyn-based architecture and landscape design firm Thread Collective, in collaboration with New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and Green City Force (GCF), have created Red Hook West Urban Farm, a one-acre agriculture installation in South Brooklyn.

The farm's primary function is food production with healthy produce being sold at farmers markets by nonprofit group Added Value or donated to residents in need.

Of course there are many more positive externalities that have come from the initiative. Elliott Maltby, principal of Thread Collective, spoke to *AN* commenting that adding one acre of permeable land to the vicinity of the farm contributes to the resiliency of infrastructure in the area, which is prone to flooding issues.

Additionally, Maltby spoke about how the space serves as a communal hub with locals who often just use the area as a place to relax. This is reflected by the farm being totally open to the public, with no fence to segregate it off. "Establishing a collective ownership of the land," Maltby said, "creates cohesion among the community. The project really acts as a vehicle to bring the neighborhood together."

GCF runs the farm and also trains people to work the plot, keeping it in use as much as possible. Trainees, who tend to be younger residents, end up striking a dialogue with those who use the farm as a social space, bridging societal gaps and bringing the community together.

Growing your own produce and showing it off to the public (who can get tours of the farm) instills a great deal of civic pride. The visual accessibility of the farm plays a key role for residents, who according to Maltby have been seen checking up on their vegetables from their window ledges and even shouting down to people who are misusing it.

"Of course, the farm won't look great all year round, it is a farm after all!" Maltby said, explaining that the farm, despite not being picturesque in the winter, adds a great deal of vibrancy during the spring and summer.

In terms of expanding the initiative, Thread Collective say they are working with GCF for potentially five more farms, though when and where these will be installed is not yet known. **JS**

GLASS EN MASSE continued from front page

Foundation has a distinctive contribution: A novel preservation project of the home of Francis Lightfoot Lee, a member of the Second Continental Congress and a Declaration of Independence signer. Lee's house, a spectacularly decayed structure built in 1769, is "not a ruin in the classic sense," Sarah Dillard Pope, the foundation's executive director, said. It does, however, require extensive care: Around 2006, key structural posts and beams fell into the basement. In 2000, the foundation erected a metal shed, akin to a carport, to protect the structure from overhead precipitation. The interior remained exposed to the elements.

Luckily, the house may be getting life support as early as next spring. The Menokin Foundation selected Boston-based firm Machado Silvetti to spearhead the preservation of the structure and its conversion into a museum. In its parts and pieces, Pope maintains, the house complements, not competes, with other Virginia historic sites.

A primary goal of the project is to create a historical narrative that integrates the site and its surroundings. The Menokin House sits on a 500-acre property with hiking trails and waterways for recreational boating. Project manager and architect Ned Goodell said that the overarching goal is to "keep the project free of nostalgia" while maintaining "a healthy respect for the history of the place." The team "didn't want to overpower the site's aura with our architectural intervention."

Interventions will open up the space and re-create interior volumes that were lost when the structure collapsed in 2006. Goodell detailed the functionality of the project's four elements: the ruin, the steel armature, the liner, and the glass enclosure. The ruin is resurrected and stabilized with a steel armature. This allows the ruin to be displayed and experienced in three dimensions, "without losing the quality of the ruin." Goodell cited the Cathedral Ruins in Hamar, Norway, as an inspiration for what the design team and the foundation envision for Menokin.

The structure's original millwork was removed and preserved in the 1960s. Today, the advanced state of decay leaves no remaining surface to display the millwork. A liner will allow that millwork to be remounted and viewed. The liner lends programmatic opportunities, as well.

Architecture firm Machado Silvetti of Boston will preserve the decaying Menokin house with a creative laminated glass "envelope" that will protect the original structure while allowing vistors to explore the home.

A fabric scrim will be mounted onto the liner to create a projection surface for images and video. This could be incorporated into the museum's educational programming, or used for special events onsite.

Protecting the house from Virginia's four seasons with a glass enclosure presented a challenge. Hanging off of the armature, the glass enclosure must safeguard the ruins from dramatic temperature and humidity changes while providing adequate durability and transparency. Using the climate control systems of art museums as a guide, the team initially considered a three-layer system with four glass panes to provide tight climate control. The system proved too costly, so the team created a sparer design of laminated glass that reconciles a greater interior temperature and moisture range with maximum transparency. "You don't want the glass to be prominent, but the glass should be elegantly detailed when you get close," Goodell explained. The glass envelope limits the type of artifacts that may be displayed in the structure, but allows the historic millwork to take center stage.

Currently, the project is in the design and development phase. If the foundation's board approves, construction will begin spring 2016. **AW**

COURTESY MACHADO SILVETTI

Architect: **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill**
Structural Engineer: **WSP Cantor Seinuk**
Photograph: **Tex Jernigan**

World View

While the world watched, **One World Trade Center** grew in both height and symbolism, its 1,776-foot crystalline form bringing unmatched views back to Lower Manhattan. A redundant structural steel frame, the result of creative collaboration between **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill** and **WSP Cantor Seinuk**, ensures that its safety is as substantial as its stature. Read more about it in **Metals in Construction** online.

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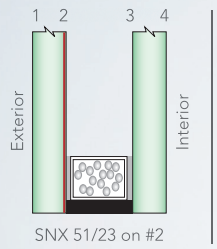

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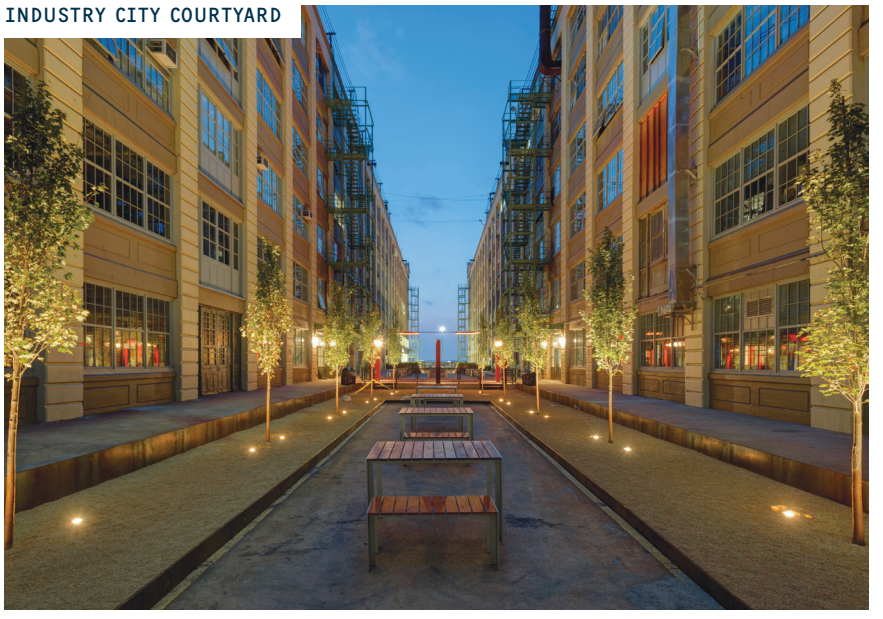
FOOD CENTER DRIVE

INDUSTRY CITY COURTYARD



PIER 55

RANDALL'S ISLAND CONNECTOR

COURTESY HEATHERWICK STUDIO

The history of landscape architecture in America goes back to the writings and activism of Andrew Jackson Downing and, of course, Frederick Law Olmsted. While there has always been a segment of the profession that focuses on estate gardening and horticulture, there are other firms who have a more socially engaged and expansive view of the profession. One thinks, for example, of Thomas Church, Dan Kiley, Lawrence Halprin, and Garret Eckbo, who all brought new ways of thinking and transforming the built landscape but primarily focused on the public nature of their practice and commissions.

Perhaps the most famous of these figures was Ian McHarg, a Scotsman who founded the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, but who more importantly brought a renewed emphasis on urban planning and what he called "natural systems" (with his 1969 book *Design with Nature*) into the profession. Today, landscape architecture combines McHarg-influenced environmental awareness, city planning, storm water management, and aesthetic concerns of the in-between spaces we inhabit in the city. This public nature of the profession is the focus of many firms today—no more than at the New York office of Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, who work almost exclusively on public, state, and institutional projects. More than nearly any other firm, they have transformed the postindustrial landscape of New York. It is very important, Signe Nielsen said, "that our work is publicly accessible and as a result we don't generally do private residential projects or we don't do green field sites, i.e. commissions to transform farmland into housing or forests to shopping centers." Improving the life of everyone in the city is important, and if there is a social justice component, then all the better.

The 30-member firm (approximately 60 percent are licensed landscape architects) believes that "designers are public intellectuals" and as such they teach, are engaged in professional societies, and lecture around the country on their profession—one that Kim Mathews writes, "embodies hope and requires a longer, larger vision."

Signe Nielsen has also served as president of the New York Public Design Commission for four years and claims that "we don't just work in challenged neighborhoods, but our work has to be publicly accessible and leave the city better than before we were engaged." **WM**

FOOD CENTER DRIVE
SOUTH BRONX, NY

This transformation of Food Center Drive takes one of the least pedestrian-friendly and polluted boulevards in the South Bronx and makes it a public amenity. This mile-long route serves as an entry into the city's Food Distribution Center for its 16,000 employees and those who live around the center. The design evolved out of Mathews Nielsen's earlier South Bronx Greenway Master Plan and creates a shared pedestrian vehicle path by reconfiguring the traffic pattern to a one-way loop, thereby reducing the road from six to five lanes. But even more it incorporates innovative storm-water capture and biofiltration strategies to contribute a significant new biomass. Within the median and new greenway buffer, there are over 700 trees in addition to understory grasses and shrubs. The project is scheduled for completion in October.

INDUSTRY CITY COURTYARD
BROOKLYN, NY

The redesign of Brooklyn's long-derelict Industry City courtyard is a model of how to take an impressive, but slightly oppressive interior open area and make it desirable. The space divides two 600-foot-long buildings (and a shorter third side connecting structure) with 33,000-square-feet of courtyard space open toward Gowanus Bay, the sunset, and a glimpse of the Statue of Liberty. To complement the large mass and immensity of the overall space, they used a plant palette of ferns and various monotone greens laid out in large directional swaths. Further, the form of the columnar maple trees plays off of the repetition of the building columns as well as the industrial smoke stacks and ventilation pipe remnants. Trees were chosen for the beautiful red fall color that will inevitably complement the weathering steel forms in the courtyard. The schedule of the project from concept to construction was condensed into just ten months.

PIER 55
NEW YORK CITY

In 1993, the firm began designing what would become the most complete (and badly maintained) contemporary park and infrastructure in Manhattan—Hudson River Park. Now, they have been chosen to add to the park with the creation of a new freestanding Pier 55 that sits off the shoreline just north of the new Whitney Museum. The Pier, which they are designing with the English Heatherwick Studio, is meant to be a 2.4-acre public park and performance space on the Hudson River. The form is conceived as a "leaf floating in the water," and contains "an unexpected topography" of four lifted corners, each manifesting a landscape typology derived from their solar aspect, slope, and relationship to paths and performance venues. A variety of paths and stairs create circuits throughout the pier to maximize engagement and convenience for event-goers. The project is largely funded through a private donation of the Diller–von Furstenberg Foundation and is scheduled to begin construction in May 2016.

RANDALL'S ISLAND CONNECTOR
SOUTH BRONX, NY

Mathews Nielsen seems to be single-handedly transforming the South Bronx into a borough of green boulevards, parks, and pathways. Taking off from their South Bronx Greenway Master Plan, they have created a brilliant connecter from the area to the recreational facilities on Randall's Island. It not only creates access to badly needed recreational facilities, but also increases the area's green infrastructure by treating all storm water on site and using native, drought-tolerant plants to avoid irrigation.

The quarter-mile connector runs from 132nd Street in the Bronx, underneath the Hell Gate Bridge viaduct piers, through a historic railway facility still in use, and over the Bronx Kill waterway to Randall's Island. It includes a sustainable landscape, an at-grade rail crossing, pedestrian-bicycle improvements, and a pedestrian-bicycle bridge. Pedestrians and cyclists have a powerful landscape experience as they pass through the massive Hell Gate Bridge viaduct piers. The project will be open to the public fall 2015.

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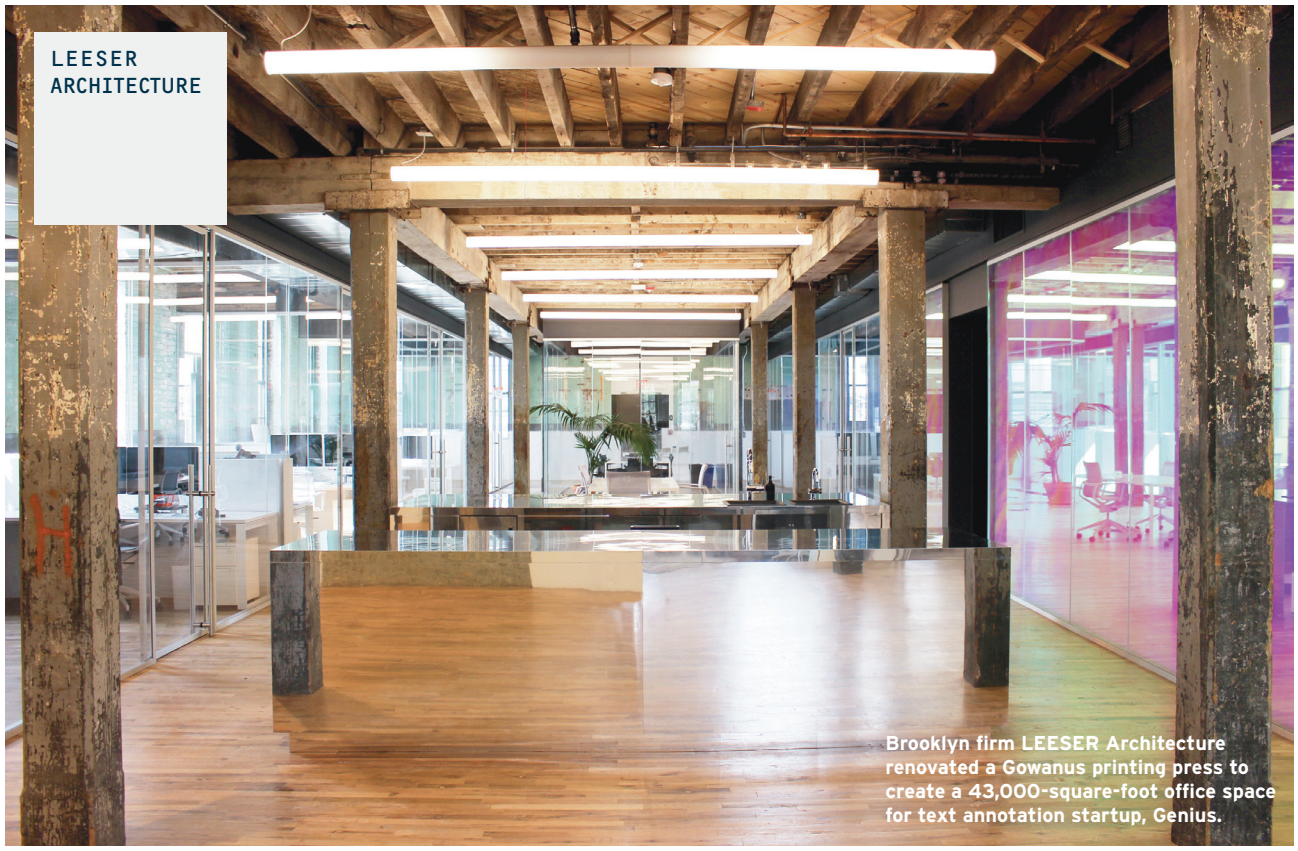

Brooklyn firm LEESER Architecture renovated a Gowanus printing press to create a 43,000-square-foot office space for text annotation startup, Genius.

Tech startups, like birds of a feather, tend to flock to specific areas—migrating to such hubs as Silicon Valley, Silicon Beach, and the Brooklyn Tech Triangle. But, when the founders of Genius—an online platform that allows users to annotate lyrics texts—realized the company was outgrowing its warren of small offices in Williamsburg, they took a different route to find a more cohesive home for their expanding team of developers and editors. They did so by informally plotting the home location of their employees, and found that most of them were clustered around or near the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn, explained Russell Farhang, Genius' director of operations. As they narrowed their search, they stumbled upon a fitting place for their own modern-day textual endeavor: an abandoned factory that was a printing press in a former life.

"We wanted to establish ourselves as an anchor in a community that isn't known for anything such as tech. We chose our location more analytically than that," explained Farhang. "It filled out the requirements we were looking for: great location, burgeoning in a good way, and the space itself is a lovely former industrial loft. And there is something very appropriate to our company—we are fascinated with texts so it is interesting to be in a former printing press."

The company then tapped local firm LEESER Architecture to design the interiors of the new headquarters. Eschewing the popular open-office plan adopted by most startups, the founders asked for a mix of two- to three-person private offices and open workspace peppered with breakout areas and conference rooms. After experiencing the isolation and fragmentation of their prior offices, they wanted a more transparent and collaborative work environment, especially to facilitate dialogue between departments, while also providing "some privacy, and peace and quiet," said Farhang. "We didn't want an open plan office specifically for our developers, who need collaboration but also silence for creativity."

The build-out not only had to include both private and shared workspace, it also needed to accommodate the projected growth of the company, which is expected to reach over 100 employees in the next few years.

"They needed flexibility and didn't want everything set in stone," added Thomas Leeser, principal of his eponymous firm. "As the company grows, the space will also be defined and grow with whatever the demands will be."

Genius occupies four floors, totaling 43,000 square feet of the building. At the lower level (one beneath ground level), the company has a cafeteria and a large double-height performance space with a mezzanine—intended for hosting private and public events, exhibits, and concerts. "We also wanted a way to connect to the community. A place where we could actually build an assembly place for us and for the community," said Farhang.

The L-shaped third and fourth floors contain private workstations on the periphery as well as several breakout areas outfitted with couches and coffee tables. Bookending one end of each floor is a large conference room, providing a more private place for board meetings or chatting with visiting artists. Fishbowl conference rooms and kitchen islands, made of polished chrome laminate, anchor the space and add a sleek counterpart to the lovely rough-hewn features of the building.

The renovation was an exercise in restraint: the ceiling, bricks, and wooden columns and beams were left exposed. "We want to keep the space as raw as possible. We didn't want to lose that sort of rough old factory feeling," said Leeser. "The idea was to change it as little as possible."

Leeser and his team employed minimal yet strategic design elements to enhance the overall space and maintain the interior's industrial aesthetic. One such standout component is a special dichroic glass used for the outside of the bathrooms and conference rooms, which produces an enticing, rainbow-like mirage effect. Depending on the angle and time of day, the glass changes color, reflecting different light and movement. (The glass has been popular among employees for taking selfies.) The firm placed this glass in "spaces that needed to be kind of discreetly made invisible. That is what is great about this film, it doesn't look like a wall," said Leeser. "There is a mysterious beauty to it."

Oversized LED tube lighting is suspended from the ceiling and serves, Leeser explained, as a "tongue-in-cheek play" on the florescent tubes that were originally found in warehouse buildings and a "reference to the stark factory environment."

It has only been a few months since the employees at Genius settled into their new digs, but already they've noticed some changes in the office culture and workflow.

"Now it is really interesting to walk around and see developers coding and building new things. It makes people more cognizant of what every teams' priorities are," said Nat Guevara, senior communications officer at Genius. "At a startup, things change everyday and so now we don't have to wait until the company lunch on Friday [to find out what is happening]. We are able to see things in real time." **NICOLE ANDERSON**

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REBUILD RESET continued from front page

September 2015, each proposal was scaled (and renamed) to suit available funding. *AN* checked in on the six winning teams to learn where they are in the process of community engagement, design, and development.

The Hunts Point Resiliency Implementation Project (PennDesign/OLIN) builds off of the *Hunts Point Lifelines* proposal for a mostly industrial area in the South Bronx. The iterative process led to a pilot project that will include economic development around green jobs; an off-the-grid power station; levees; and a waterfront park. In case all roads flood completely, the pilot also calls for an emergency energy supply station that can be accessed by sea. *Hunts Point Lifelines* received $20 million from HUD and $25 million from the city. RFPs for design and planning work will be out before the end of 2015.

BIG's initial proposal, *BIG U*, called for ten miles of continuous waterfront flood protection, from Manhattan's East 42nd Street, to the Battery, and looping up the west side to 57th Street. The project was scaled down and renamed *The East Side Coastal Resiliency Project* (ESCR). The $335 million project calls for floodwalls, berms, and retractable flood barriers in the East River from East 23rd Street to Montgomery Street. The financial backing ESCR will receive underscores the project's importance: the city is putting an additional $100 million in capital funding towards the ESCR. Pending approval from stakeholders, construction will begin in 2017.

On Staten Island's southeastern shore, the New York State Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) received $60 million from HUD to mitigate flood risk by protecting coastal habitats and preserving coastal ecosystems. *Living Breakwaters* (SCAPE/Landscape Architecture) calls for offshore breakwaters and vegetated dunes to soften large waves and prevent shoreline erosion. The design's expected completion date is 2017, with a subsequent 30-month construction period.

Living with the Bay (Interboro) addresses the Mill River, a north-south tributary in Nassau County, Long Island. An existing dam on Hempstead Lake will be restored, while an improved drainage system and valves that keep water flowing in one direction will prevent natural tidal flow from mixing with the mostly man-made stormwater system. Currently, applications are open for a Citizen's Advisory Committee that will gather feedback on, and promote awareness of, the project. GOSR was allocated $125 million from HUD for the project, but no RFPs are out at this time.

Hudson River: Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge (OMA) addresses flooding in the New Jersey river towns on the mouth of the Hudson. Hoboken, Weehawken, and Jersey City are vulnerable to flooding with high tides, heavy rainfall, and storm surges. Hard landscaping (seawalls) as well as soft (berms styled into parks) will provide protection during high tides and storm surges. To capture runoff and improve discharge, the plan suggests swales, green roofs, bio-retention basins, and upgrades to current storm water management systems. An overarching umbrella of green policy recommendations will guide the physical improvements. HUD awarded $230 million to the State of New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs to carry out Phase One of the project. As of June 2015, the team is engineers are collecting data on water and ground conditions for a feasibility study.

New Meadowlands: Productive City + Regional Park (MIT CAU + ZUS + URBANISTEN) has an initial award of $150 million to secure and reintegrate 14 mostly low-density communities in and around New Jersey's Meadowlands. The eastern edge of the Meadowlands, as well as the southern and northern tips, will be the first pilot areas within the larger site. The plan has two main programmatic components: the meadow park and the meadow band. The meadow park is a system of marshes and berms that opens up the marsh to recreation while shielding the coastline from floods. The meadow band is the meadow park's edge condition, creating growth infrastructure for surrounding towns, a Bus Rapid Transit lane, and public recreation facilities while allowing access to the meadow park. Anticipating storm surges up to ten feet, the project calls for a network of primary berms rising seven to 23 feet, with some secondary, seven-foot berms for additional protection.

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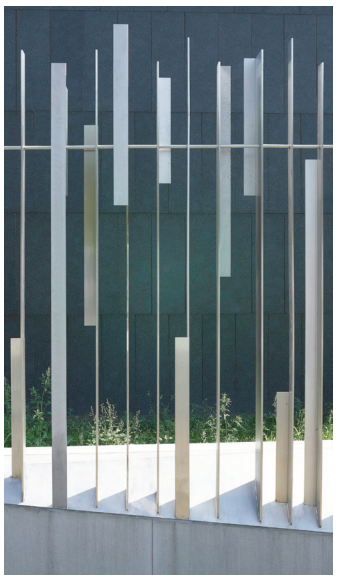

When tasked with creating a fence for the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, Behnisch Architekten and Patrick Stremler didn't want security and fear to inform the design. Instead, they opted for a shimmering, geometric stainless-steel enclosure.

When Behnisch Architekten project partner Patrick Stremler reflects upon why his firm's design for a security fence around the World Trade Organization (WTO) building in Geneva, Switzerland, beat out other proposals in a 2009 competition, he turns first to the site itself. "The feedback that we got from both the client and the city was that our concept was very well integrated into the context," said Stremler. "When you think about a security barrier, you think about huge things that protect. We wanted to avoid this fear aspect. We wanted to work with elements we found in the context, to reinforce their qualities to let our intervention disappear."

Behnisch Architekten found plenty of site-specific cues to work with, from three adjacent public parks to the Geneva lakefront. On the lakeside, they found "a strange zone that was very close to the building, but was part of the public space of the city," said Stremler. "We built a terrace that includes a security measure, but doesn't look like it. It looks like a terrace that's always been there." A direct comparison to Versailles would be overblown, he admitted, but is an effective analogy for the solution the architects created to demarcate the private and public spaces facing the water. "[At Versailles] they have this huge terrace in front, to invite guests to look at the landscape," said Stremler. Since the terrace and fence were installed, he observed, the WTO has made regular use of it for open-air receptions; on the garden side, local residents play football against the wall. "Everyone's sharing the space together."

Much of the security perimeter sits atop a neutral stone wall. "In Geneva, it's common to see this small wall and a fence above," said Stremler. "We wanted to keep this kind of tool, but try to make the impact as low as possible." The fence itself, comprising steel sections with different surfaces and varied distances between verticals, "should disappear a little in the leaves of the trees," said Stremler.

Working with both analog and digital design tools, the architects crafted a system that combined cost-cutting repetition with the appearance of randomness. A security perimeter—especially one built in stainless steel—is bound to be expensive, explained Stremler. "We tried to be efficient. We built modules that are repeated in different directions, so you don't find the regularity." They introduced additional variation by intermingling polished, sandblasted, and brushed elements. Together, the textures produce a shimmering effect. "When you're there on site, you don't really know what it is," said Stremler.

Through their careful study of the site's principal characteristics—which they amplified with a streamlined landscape design—Behnisch Architekten succeeded in their quest to prove that high security does not necessarily imply a fortress aesthetic. "The other architects that participated [in the competition] built a fence in the middle of a garden," he observed. "Our concept was to build something as normal as possible for the site—to create something that looks nice rather than working with fear."

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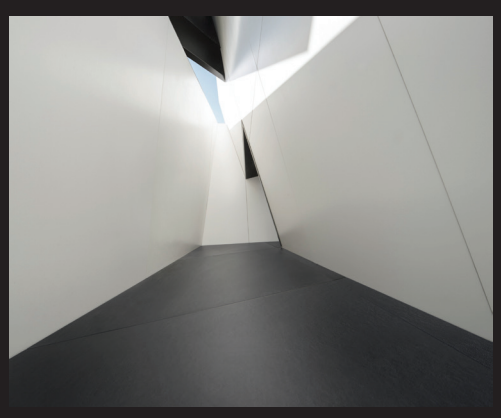

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3 Cirque Collection
Kornegay Design

These cast concrete landscape containers take their design cues from nature: Composed of 24 facets placed at 15-degree intervals, the tapered-cylindrical forms interpret the earth's rotation. Designed by Larry Kornegay.

kornegaydesign.com

4 Palissade Collection
HAY

The bench's slatted design prevents water and debris from collecting on the seat. Part of a 13-piece collection of tables and seating, the powder-coated steel pieces are offered in three colors. Designed by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec.

hay.dk

5 BuzziShed
BuzziSpace

This modular, outdoor-ready workspace is framed in metal and sheathed in Sunbrella fabric. A weather-resistant table-bench combo, BuzziBreeze, is also offered. Designed in collaboration with Atelier Tradewinds.

buzzi.space

6 77 754 LED
Bega

This robust bollard provides glare-free widespread symmetrical illumination while doubling as a piece of urban furniture for schools, parks, and other public areas. Fabricated of die-cast aluminum, the fixture is rated for wet locations. Offered in four standard colors with custom hues available.

bega-us.com

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COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS

A notable, nascent trend in site furnishings: pieces that are specifically designed to accommodate working outdoors. By Leslie Clagett

7 Comfony 600
Benkert Bänke

A sinuous, contoured stainless steel frame is fitted with aluminum slats to create a minimalist lounger. Components are offered in a limited palette of colors and finishes.

benkert.info

8 Twist Bike Rack
Forms + Surfaces

Tweaking a double helix form, this bike rack offers two-point support and multiple locking options. Made of solid cast aluminum, it is available in 15 standard and custom powder-coat finishes.

forms-surfaces.com

9 Grove Furniture and Lily Shade
Sixinch

A 90-watt solar panel topping the Lily Shade powers an integral charging station, allowing users at the modular Grove tables and seats to plug in.

grovebysixinch.us

10 Basket Planters
Fermob

A steel frame and convenient handle make these aluminum planters easily portable. The Long model measures 47 by 10 by 21 inches; the High model measures 28 by 13 by 33 inches. Available with anti-UV powder coating in 24 colors. Designed by Fabio Meliota.

fermob.com

11 Big Blok with Lights
Tectura Designs

Combining seating with lighting, this massive cast-concrete form measures 52 by 52 by 18 inches. A coordinating bench-style model is also available. Designed by Damon Farber Associates.

tecturadesigns.com

12 Stay Bench
Landscape Forms

Part of the 35 Collection, this curvaceous cantilevered bench comes in backless and backed models; skateboard-discouraging seat dividers are optional. Surface- or embedded- installations are offered. Twenty-two standard colors and custom finishes are available. Designed by frog.

landscapeforms.com

A PAIR OF SKYSCRAPERS BY ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS ARE PLANNED FOR THE CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY, WATERFRONT

COURTESY ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS

TWO OF A KIND

You wait all day for one and then two come along at once. No, not buses—skyscrapers, of course.

Two new skyscrapers by Robert A.M. Stern Architects (RAMSA) have been proposed to sit along the Camden waterfront in New Jersey.

Liberty Property Trust, the developer firm behind other Philadelphia projects such as RAMSA's Comcast Center and the Navy Yard complex, is backing the project with a $1 billion investment, the largest Camden has ever seen.

Located just south of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, this project might be the long-awaited catalyst for economic growth that the neighborhood has yearned for after schemes such as the Adventure Aquarium and the $30 million Campbell's Field baseball stadium failed to reinvigorate the area.

Included in the scheme is a coterie of smaller buildings that will offer retail, office, and residential spaces as well as a hotel and park area.

In a departure from their more traditional style, RAMSA has opted for a contemporary approach, an outlook that is perhaps reflective of Camden's holistic progressive ambitions. Meghan McDermott, a partner at RAMSA who is leading the current design effort, said that the firm intends to "create a new urban neighborhood," and that the key goals of the project are to "fill in the gaps along the waterfront" and link to other attractions such as the aquarium.

McDermott also said that the new structures will boost Camden's image among locals, since the towers will be clearly visible to residents on the other side of the Delaware.

The buildings don't just accommodate views for Philadelphians, though. The smaller of the two buildings is sculptural, with a river-facing facade that appears to have been carved away, facilitating sight lines at street level and along the rivers banks to allow clear views of river; strongly underscoring RAMSA's goal to "connect the city to the waterfront."

The taller structure is noticeably different. Further from the water's edge than its counterpart, the adjacent building, which is markedly smaller at its base, is part of RAMSA's attempt to create a distinct semiotic form along the river and give Camden a visual iconography. The very size of the structure ensures it will be easily spotted from anywhere in its vicinity, which helps to integrate it with residents' perspective of the community. The large floor plan at the top is not only a revenue booster, but more occupants of the building can enjoy the sweeping views over New Jersey and over the river. **JS**

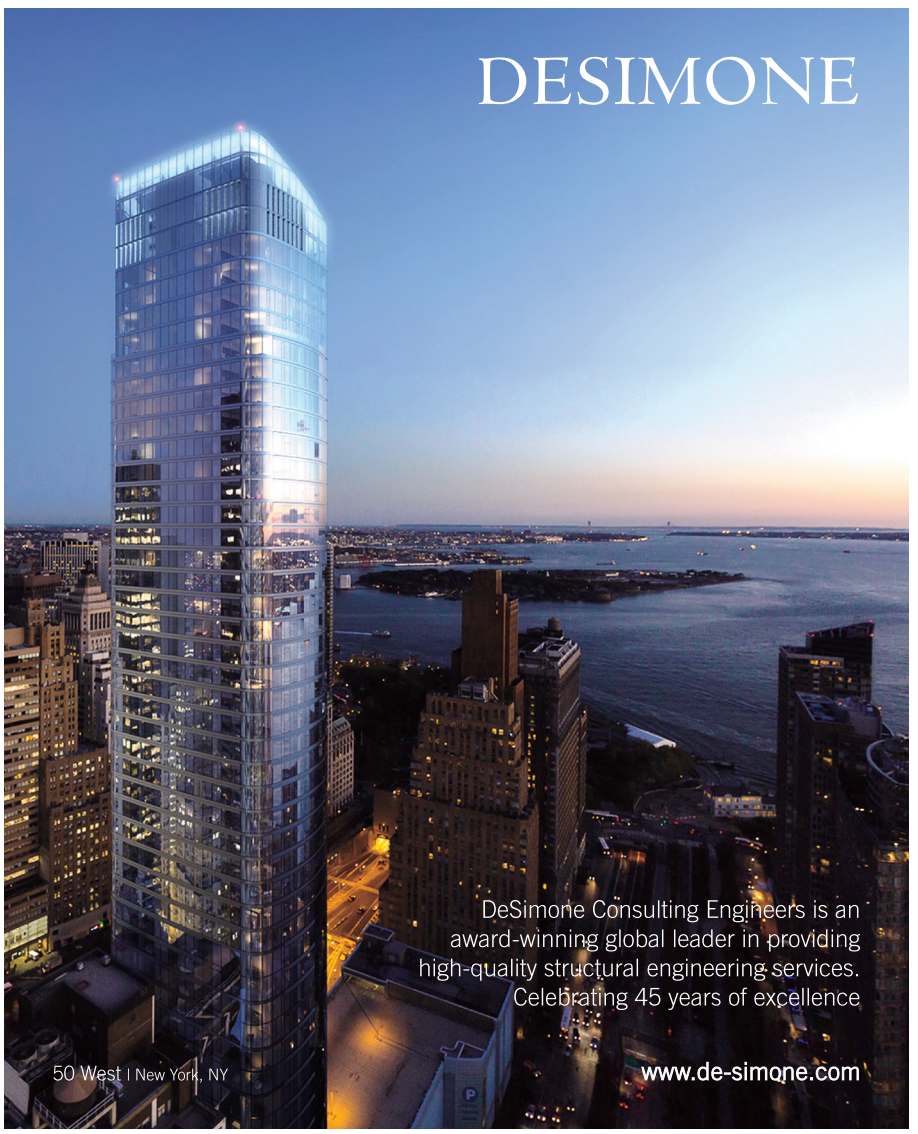

Photo Champ de Mars - Paris : Stéphane Rambaud

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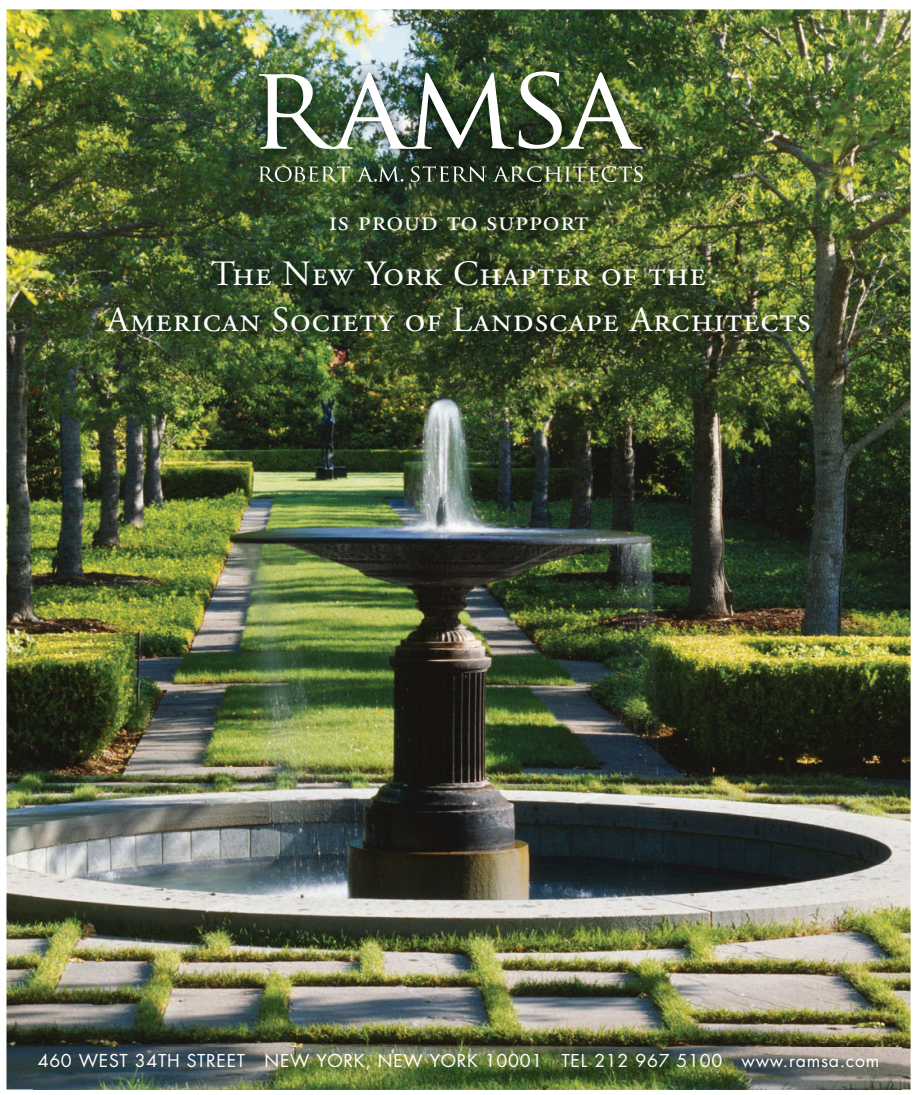
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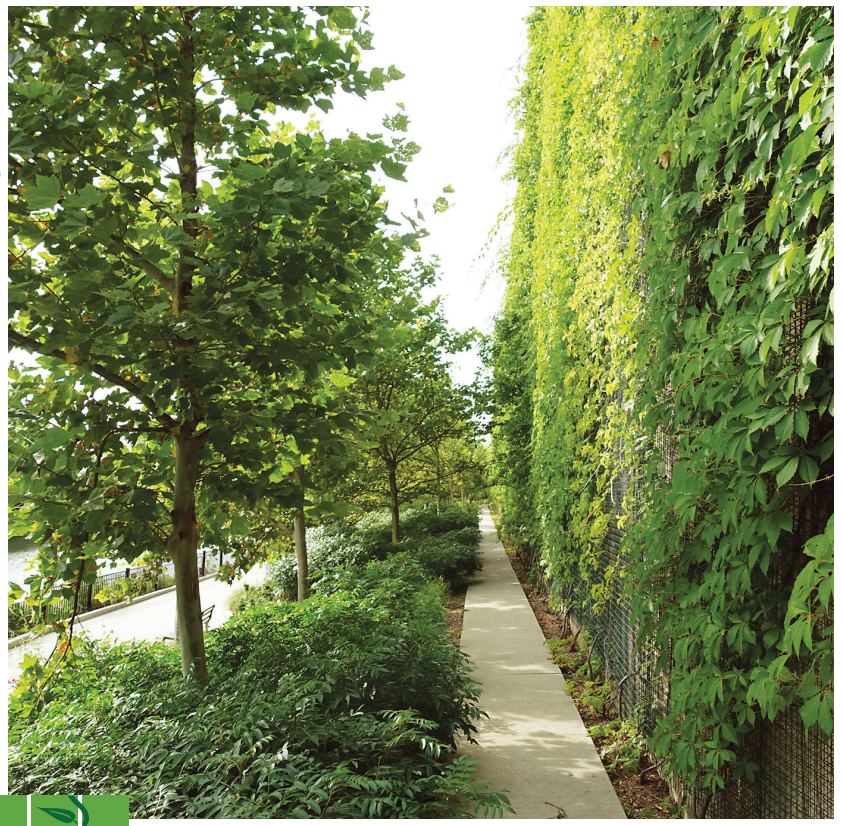

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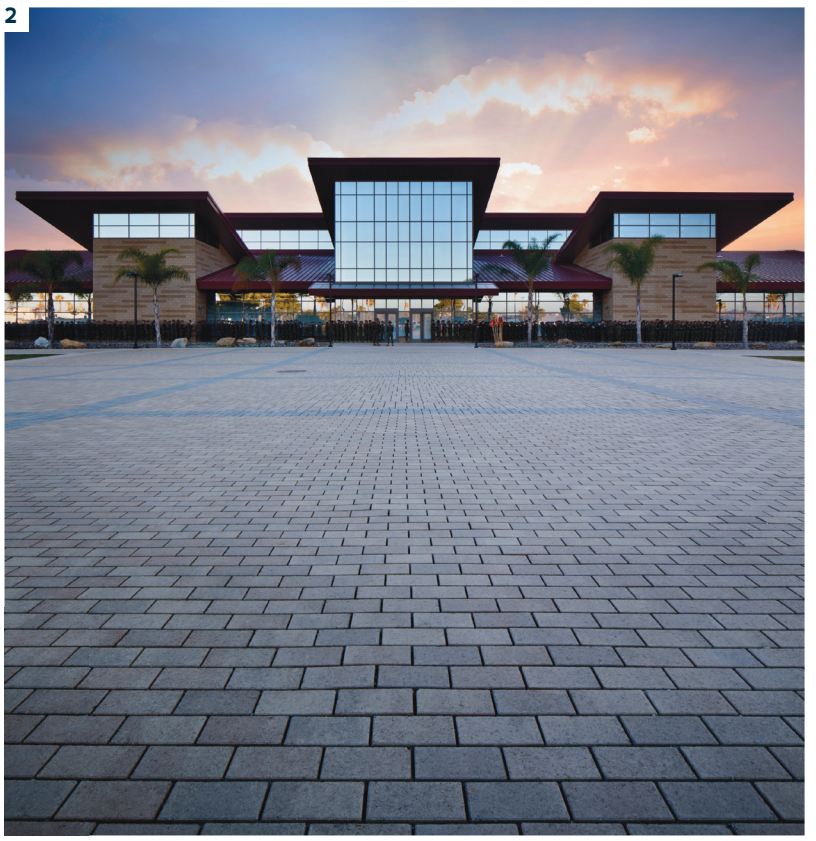

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On Solid Ground

Decking and pavers can enhance the look of a site while improving its environmental functionality. By Leslie Clagett

5

COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS

1 Treo
Unilock

These pavers feature EnduraColor, two performance layers that are compressed and cured together to increase the strength and durability of the surfacing and amplify the intensity of the color. Available in three formats and five colorways.

commercial.unilock.com

2 Aqua Roc
Belgard

Aqua Roc permeable pavers boast an attractive residential look that stands up to the heaviest vehicular traffic. The sustainable pavers reduce water runoff, are comfortable underfoot, and ADA-compliant.

belgard.com

3 Sand
Tectura Designs

These pressed-concrete pavers are colored by tinting the cement matrix with standard-sized aggregate. Economically priced, the units have a uniform slip-resistant surface and are strong enough to be pedestal-set. In five standard hues; custom shades available.

tecturadesigns.com

4 Wood Decking Tiles and Versadjust Supports
Bison Innovative Products

These adjustable deck supports are height-adjustable, have a 1,250-pound weight bearing capacity, and feature built-in slope compensation from zero to half-inch-foot slope. Suitable for residential and commercial projects, the pedestals accommodate a variety of surface materials, including wooden deck tiles and concrete pavers.

bisonip.com

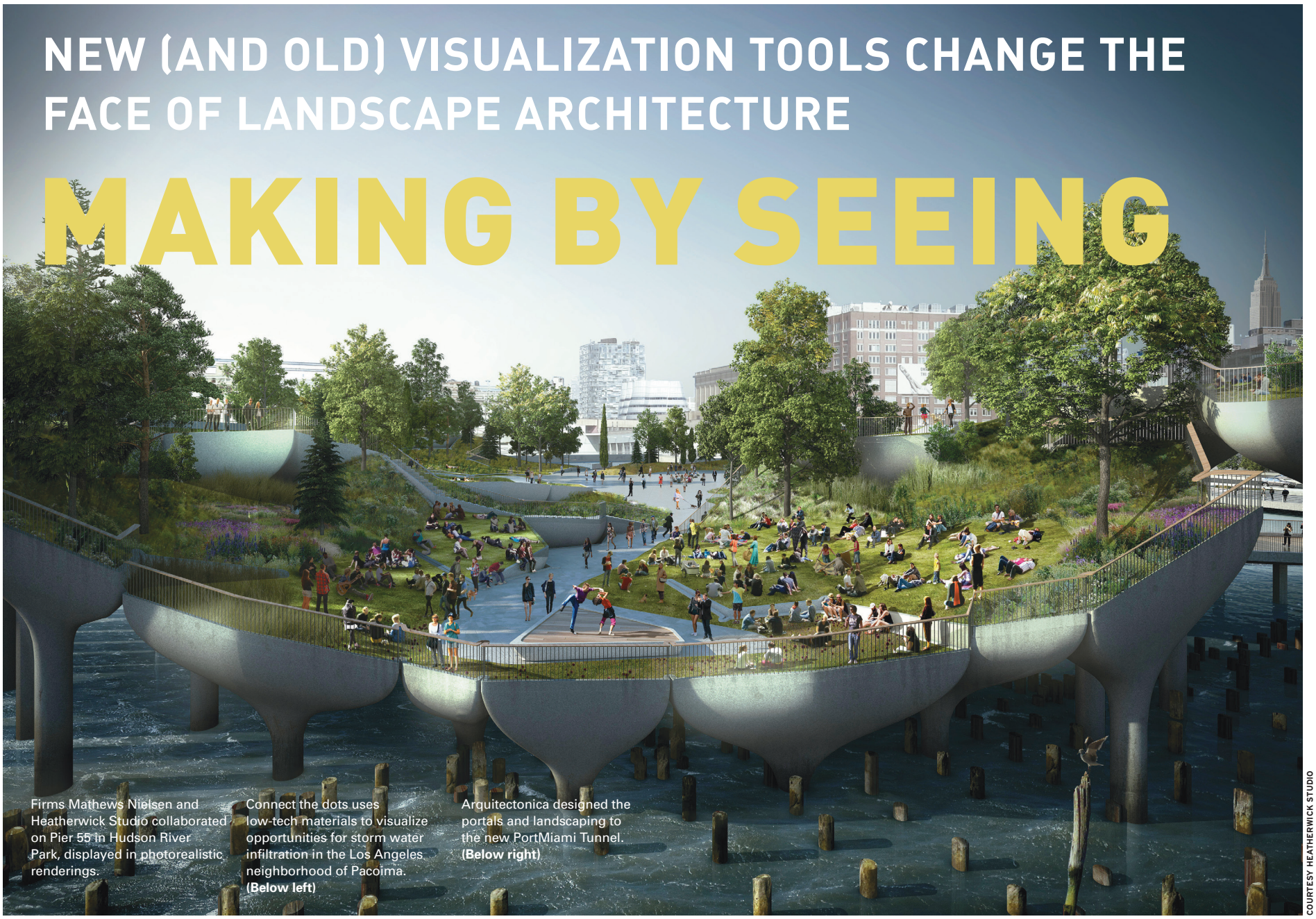
5 Morvan
Rocersa

The buff tones of this porcelain paver give it wide aesthetic compatibility. Field tiles are offered in two sizes, with numerous trim pieces available.

rocersa.es

NEW (AND OLD) VISUALIZATION TOOLS CHANGE THE FACE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

MAKING BY SEEING



Firms Mathews Nielsen and Heatherwick Studio collaborated on Pier 55 in Hudson River Park, displayed in photorealistic renderings.

Connect the dots uses low-tech materials to visualize opportunities for storm water infiltration in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Pacoima. **(Below left)**

Arquitectonica designed the portals and landscaping to the new PortMiami Tunnel. **(Below right)**

COURTESY HEATHERWICK STUDIO

One would assume that virtual reality technologies that can create fantastical battlefields and solar systems for gamers would be a boon for architects, who can create nearly complete structures without turning a single shovelful of earth. For landscape architects, though, earth poses unique challenges. So do air, light, and water.

With the advance of computer drafting and simulation technologies, such as architectural visualization and 3-D modeling software Twinmotion and Rhino—in addition to relatively old-fashioned tools like Illustrator and Pencil—designers are discovering new, better ways to create landscapes. They enable designers to represent detail at microscopic proportions. They can place viewers in virtual environments that seek to mimic the experience of seeing the proposed landscape.

"Every image, every piece of that visualization is a design decision," said Signe Nielsen, principal at Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, which recently collaborated with Heatherwick Studio on Pier 55, a proposed park-pier on the west side of Manhattan.

Visioning exercises, in which designer-activists seek to change the public's thinking about a landscape, if not to change the place itself, are blurring the lines between technology and earth and between designer and public.

The Uses of Representation

As inherently public creations, many landscape projects lend themselves to stakeholder and public-sector input more so than private developments. They must serve the people who look at them as much as they do the people who own and use them. They also must fulfill multiple goals. A park may also be a habitat for native species. A highway median may also absorb storm water. A golf course can offset a heat island. A landscape can extend up to the stratosphere and down to the water table. Every piece of land is influenced by temperature, geology, precipitation, and countless other invisible factors.

As a result, "These visualizations are shown to a huge range of people, from zoning approval boards, historic preservation boards, open public meetings related to zoning approval," said Robert Lloyd, senior associate at Arquitectonica who recently designed the landscaping around the portals to the PortMiami Tunnel. "The largest and most public audiences are the various

LEFT: COURTESY: AJA RICHARDSON RIGHT: COURTESY: ARQUITECTONICA

regulatory boards. Those tend to be folks who are in the industry and who look with a critical eye at what we're representing."

The revolution in computer technologies has given architects and landscape architects a dazzling array of new tools. Those tools, though, may not necessarily be as useful as they appear—especially for landscape architects—and they must be used with discretion.

"I think it's more difficult...than architecture," Lloyd said. "You're dealing with much more loosely defined spaces with much more complex geography. In the simplest way, there's just more information in a landscape rendering."

Static renderings, drawn by hand or with Illustrator, might capture the appearance of a landscape—at a certain moment, from a certain angle—but they cannot express the entirety of its purposes nor the ways that they serve flora, fauna, and people. A landscape may not fit into a neat box for the eye to behold, even with the most advanced visualization software.

"You're trying to render something that's inherently unpredictable," said Lloyd. "The form of one tree is and should be different from the form of the next tree. The way they interact over time in nature is super-complex."

To Visualize or Not Visualize

More so than many other public projects, Pier 55 sprang fully formed into the public consciousness. Funded in part by media titan Barry Diller, the park has been fashioned as more of a gift than a public amenity. The firms used Twinmotion to create renderings of the whimsical space that promises to be the waterfront equivalent of the High Line. It's the distinctive sort of project that might literally be unimaginable, and unsalable, without visual aids.

"The ability to actually do a [digital] visualization at whatever level of detail and finished product that we want to convey is extraordinary," said Nielsen. "I feel that everybody wins. The public knows what it's really going to get. The client knows what it's really paying for. And I know what I've designed."

What Nielsen would use to present a finished work of starchitecture, though, might not have gone over so well with a more nascent project.

"The first and most important thing is to calibrate the type of visualization with the stage in the process, particularly for outreach," said Nielsen.

The trouble is twofold: Programs' capacity for detail can often outstrip designers' own imaginative capacities, especially when a project consists largely of vegetation. And a project that appears complete and polished on screen can, intentionally or not, be an affront to stakeholders who wish to contribute their own ideas or public officials who are given to scrutiny. These situations may call for old-fashioned representations.

"I'd never want to walk into an early-on meeting with a group of stakeholders and show a design that looks finished," said Nielsen. "I think it really shuts down communication."

Therefore, designers must use technology judiciously, being careful to impress but not to overwhelm the public. With the likes of Diller and other big clients, though, they might take the opposite tack: creating dazzling renderings to land a commission or sell units in a residential development.

Appropriation by Visualization

For all its anonymity, California's Owens Lake is one of the most adulterated, and long-contested, landscapes in the United States. The 1913 opening of the Los Angeles Aqueduct appropriated the lake's tributary streams and left a toxic dust-bowl. For generations, engineers have tried to restore the lake and cut down on dust pollution.

The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Alexander Robinson, thinks they might be doing it wrong.

Robinson came up with his own method of imagining what Owens Lake can become. Resembling a 1980s arcade game console, the Rapid Landscape Prototyping Machine for the Owens Lake Dust Control Project (or Owens Lake Machine), invites participants to create their own versions of Owens Lake—ideally, versions that are functional, aesthetically pleasing, and respectful of the place itself.

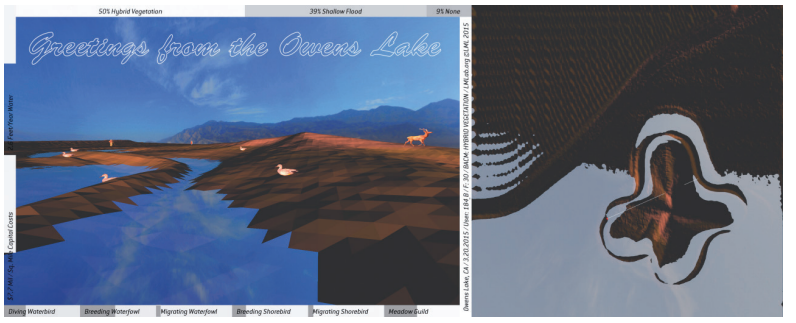
"We took place-making experience and aesthetics, and inserted those values into a design paradigm of operations, habitat design, and resource management, so it's a response to the idea that maybe we could make an interface for designers that creates a dialectic," said Robinson.

Users can decide how much water the lake should contain, what sort of dust-reducing berms it should employ, what angle of sunlight is most pleasing, and how many birds should be bobbing on the lake surface. A rendering program takes user input to generate two images of the lake: a human-scale view from the surface and an abstract map-like view from above.

"It has two different views of planning," said Robinson. "There's a first-person view, the human experience, and the planner's view of someone who's having control."

The machine then prints out postcards depicting these not-quite-imagined but not-quite-real versions of the lake, thus making it seem like an actual destination from which to write home. Robinson hopes that the keepsakes will encourage the public to think about ways that the lake can be restored and the concerns that public agencies, in a democratic society, should consider.

"The social imagination is a very powerful political force and guides these projects kind of in a subliminal way," said Robinson.



COURTESY ALEXANDER ROBINSON

The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Alexander Robinson, created the "Owens Valley Machine" to help stakeholders envision the restoration of Owens Lake. Using the machine **(above)**, they can manipulate the habitat's elements and then print out a post card of their creation **(above left)**.

Another group is leaving its virtual mark not in topography but rather in bathymetry. The Dredge Research Collaborative (DRC) is dedicated to inquiry into underwater landscapes, specifically those that are manipulated, restored, and adulterated by the process of dredging. Their research sites include New York Harbor, the Great Lakes, and Louisiana. Researchers use data-enhanced maps to represent that which is otherwise unknown precisely because it is invisible.

"The public is very used to looking at things like watershed maps and water flow diagrams," said Gena Wirth, a member of the DRC and the design principal at SCAPE landscape architects. "We try to make a lot of comparable imagery… looking at (things like) sediment sheds."

Wirth is also conducting a project in Lexington, Kentucky. There, the firm developed a smartphone app to trace and illustrate streams flowing through the karst landscape underneath the city's downtown. The app is accompanied by a plywood model that displays both city blocks and stream channels. The project is intended to make residents aware of these hidden waterways and to consider the natural cycles that persist even amid urbanization.

"It's difficult to get people excited about what is essential culvert underground," said Wirth. The app is "definitely an alternative way of interpreting landscape architecture. It's about visualizing something that is invisible. It's more narrative-based."

The Image of Nature

Other types of visualization convey not what the land looks like—with or without deliberate design—but rather how it functions.

Throughout Los Angeles' current four-year drought, many critics have wondered why the city does not capture its rainwater or at least use it to replenish its natural aquifers. Aja Bulla-Richards, of the Arid Lands Institute at The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Woodbury University, has developed a low-tech way of explaining why it's not so easy.

Richards illustrated the mysteries of permeability in a pilot project called Connect the Dots. She enlisted residents in a working class community in Los Angeles' Pacoima neighborhood to place manhole-sized multicolored dots throughout their community. Richardson identified areas of low, medium, and high permeability, correlated with dot colors. By interpreting Richards' data, residents placed dots in appropriate places, thus turning the landscape itself into its own data set.

"I think having this one to one coding notation of the street lets people interact with it in a more visceral, direct way," said Richards. "It's different from having a map."

Richardson said that this low-tech version of augmented reality can apply to almost any set of spatially oriented information in an urban landscape.

"It's a quick, cheap transformation that allows people to think about the street differently without concerns over major investments in change," said Richards.

And ultimately seeing differently so a public can think differently about landscape and the built environment is what these visualization tools are all about. Digital software and participatory interactions have the ability to go beyond video game fantasy and engage a larger stakeholder discussion on the design and impact of real world landscapes now that there are more tools to complement, restore, and even improve what nature has given us.

JOSH STEPHENS

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER OCTOBER 14, 2015

STEPHEN ZACKS

DIGGING INTO DETROIT'S FUTURE

ECOLOGICAL DESIGNERS USE AGRICULTURE AND LANDSCAPES TO RECLAIM THEIR CITY. BY STEPHEN ZACKS

All summer, a lively cavalcade of events and performances testified to a reawakened cosmopolitanism in Detroit and proclaimed a community that is growing in size and complexity. Detroit's 139 square miles are suddenly teeming with contemporary art, design, and development activity. The projects are no longer isolated but connect larger tracts: the Jam Handy industrial film production building-turned-performance space hosts a temporary Sunday market, around the corner from the ONE Mile funk revivalist project by Anya Sirota and Jean Louis Farges, with Catie Newell's studio halfway between. A land rush has begun in the area.

Enter Culture Lab Detroit. The three-year-old brainchild of Birmingham-based designer and creative director Jane Schulak, Culture Lab Detroit orchestrates dialogues between the Detroit community and internationally renowned designers and urbanists, instigating potentially paradigm-shifting collaborations that evangelize green interventions in the landscape.

"My platform is about connectivity," Schulak said. "I pose a design question each year and try to identify people who will respond to that question in all very different ways."

In early September, urban ecology-themed panels in packed auditoriums at the College for Creative Studies and the Detroit Institute of Arts brought together San Francisco chef Alice Waters, industrial-scale urban farmer Will Allen, French vertical gardener Patrick Blanc, Oakland landscape architect Walter Hood, and Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto to discuss strategies for greening the city and evolving architecture with nature.

"I've always thought that agriculture could be the lead piece to bringing these cities back," Allen, who grew up in a sharecropping family in Maryland, said. "This city is really primed for local production because all of the vacant land where you could grow food. There's a lot of opportunity."

At Acre Farm in North Corktown, several blocks adjacent to the highway form a patchwork of fertile fields that skip over paved streets, the only sign of a once-populous neighborhood. Acre Farm is in an in-demand but mostly demolished area between the MotorCity Casino Hotel and a retail strip on Michigan Avenue (pioneered by restaurateur Phil Cooley). The farm is marked with large plywood "CITY DO NOT CUT" signs to prevent public agencies from mistaking it for overgrown lots.

Urban agriculture is not new, yet the diversity of greening tactics and players spreads benefits far from the heavily invested downtown, the Woodward strip, and Midtown areas. The number of farming and gardening initiatives has multiplied: Keep Growing Detroit has supported 4,000 gardens in the last decade with seed packs, transplants, educational, and technical assistance. Nonprofits like the Greening of

Detroit have planted about 4,000 trees in the past year, while Hantz Woodlands installed 15,000 trees in a square mile of East Detroit. In 2013, the City Council adopted a zoning ordinance that legalized existing urban farms and set standards for agricultural land use.

"For some of the more grassroots or ground-up entrepreneurs, it's all based on returning to true connections between people, relying on businesses that can help support your businesses that are within the city itself, and producing real food that you know who grows it," said D MET studio's Liz Skrisson. D MET designed offices and a Great Lakes Coffee shop for Midtown Inc., a major player in cultural developments and a tech innovation district near the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The Ye-Olde-Brooklyn style pioneered by John McCormick in Williamsburg—repurposed wood, distressed paint, thematically culled antiques, industrial objects, and Edison light bulbs—is as pervasive here as elsewhere. Culture Lab Detroit, however, is cognizant of a need to move beyond adaptive reuse to pioneer innovative buildings: nothing of any architectural significance has happened here in decades. Schulak's advisory board is packed with a savvy group of local and international cultural leaders, among them Reed Kroloff, David Adjaye, collector Marc Schwartz, and Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit founder Marsha Miro.

Miro selected Hood and Fujimoto for a panel that emphasized ecological design to create landscapes and structures that connect people and evoke delight. Fujimoto incorporated vegetation into high-rises that mimic both repetitive and idiosyncratic patterns in plant life. Like inversions of vacant houses overgrown with wilderness, the design rationalizes natural forms into building technologies.

"I do think fresh voices are good for a place," Hood said. "Places that become so insular keep repeating the same patterns over and over again: bringing people in might help others get excited."

The dialogues double as provocations for speakers to explore Detroit: local facilitators tour designers around sites and schedule meetings with project organizers and entrepreneurs, offering a platform to present proposals. For the past year, Patrick Blanc has speculated on ways to grow vegetation on the concrete embankments along the Dequindre Cut. Blanc seeks to irrigate the plants without access to running water.

Hood is working on a concept for a square-mile area near the northeastern edge, incorporating blue-green infrastructure concepts from the 2012 Detroit Future City strategic plan to deploy large depopulated spaces for the benefit of those still living there. "One of the things that I'm interested in is how you can change people's sociology through the pattern on the landscape," he said.

The Flower House, a project by Lisa Waud, will create floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck. Inspired by the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, twenty or so florists will descend on the house during the weekend of October 16, filling its

STEPHEN ZACKS

Facing Page: The Chene-Ferry Market is a closed-down farmer's market in Poletown. It is part of an urban design plan at the University of Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) led by Dan Pitera.

Top: Acre Farm's "CITY DO NOT CUT" signs are meant to prevent public agencies from mistaking crop fields for overgrown lots. This tension between the small scale farm and the urban scale network of municipal government is one of many interesting conditions raised by the urban agriculture in Detroit.

Above: A circular path is planted with flowers and grass, while a fish sculpture combines art with landscape. A small building sits in the background, drawing an illusion to the wild west.

rooms with flower arrangements. Afterward, the house will be deconstructed and the lot will become a flower farm.

Further north, near the Squash House, the Play House, the Power House, the Sound House, and the Ride It Sculpture Park—a well-known collection of repurposed homes and lots by Gina Reichart and Mitch Cope of Design 99 and Powerhouse Productions—ceramicist Abigail Murray and architect Steven Mankouche (Archolab) are building a passive greenhouse in the burned out foundation of a 1920s bungalow. The team erected a slanted south-facing polycarbonate roof within the existing foundation, cladding the exterior with dark charcoal slats (cutoffs from a lumber mill) charred using the ancient Japanese *shou-sugi-ban* method. Inside, they plan to grow almond, olive, and pomegranate trees, as well as other non-native plants.

"The project is in dialogue with blight in a lot of ways, and how we can deal with blight other than just ripping everything out of the ground and carting it to a landfill," said Mankouche, a professor at the University of Michigan's College of Architecture. After the project is completed, Archolab plans to donate it to a local gardener and evaluate its reproducibility in other places.

Elsewhere in Hamtramck, sculptors Andrew Mehall and Ben Hall, co-owners of the Eastern Market's Russell Street Deli, are using a large warehouse as a gallery to stabilize a block overgrown with weeds and grass, its double-height space presenting a fair likeness of industrial Bushwick. However, these reclamation projects demand fortitude. The day we visit, Hall struggled to open the gallery door after a break-in the night before—scrapping metal is a full-time occupation for pickup-driving bandits in southeast Michigan. Inside, the gallery exhibits colorful truck-sized inflatable pieces by Chicago-based Scottish artist Claire Ashley.

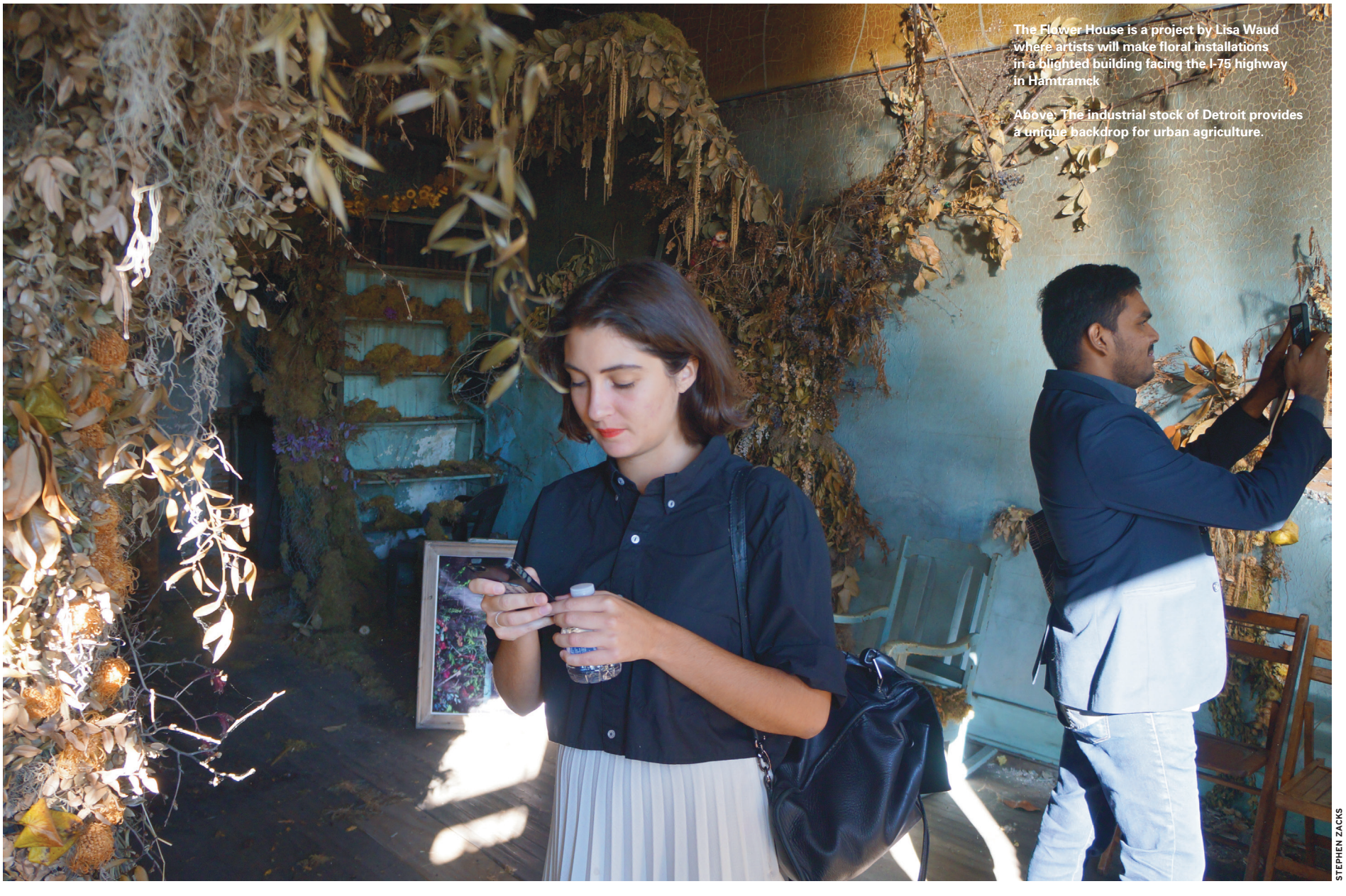
"In a lot of ways the gallery is just a basic stopgap to keep the neighborhood solid," Hall wrote in an email. "In one way we're pretty anti any kind of Richard Florida narrative...As the businesses in the neighborhood that were hanging on by a thread gave up, or let go, or demurred, or decided to forfeit, it became a matter of introducing some solidity, or reintroducing occupants for the sake of the building not being vacant."

Within this ambivalence lies much of the trepidation about the city's fast-moving developments. Dan Gilbert's Quicken Loan-led renovations—all paid for with the ill-gotten gains of payday lending—gobble up dozens of downtown buildings to restore long-lost landmarks. Among these is a planned SHoP-designed replacement for the symbolically important Hudson's building.

Another example is Chene-Ferry Market, a voluminous closed-down farmer's market in Poletown that is part of large-scale urban design initiative led by Dan Pitera's University of Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC). Situated in a spottily inhabited area on the East Side, RecoveryPark uses urban farming, fisheries, value-added foods, and a farmer's market to provide job skills training to substance abusers, the formerly incarcerated, and others struggling to land on-the-books employment. Working with the mayor's office and the new planning director Maurice Cox, DCDC is designing RecoveryPark and other mile-wide areas far from the central business district with a mixture of ecological and commercial functions.

"We wanted to show that every area that looks like this is right adjacent to a dense area," said Pitera. "Can they be seen more as a unit? Then you design them in a way that this could become blue-green infrastructure, more interesting design opportunities, like retail, that become assets for the denser area. How do we think about design in ways that can keep people in place, think about more off-grid ideas for people who live in neighborhoods like this?"

STEPHEN ZACKS IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM REPORTER, THEORIST, AND CULTURAL PRODUCER BASED IN GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN AND A NATIVE OF FLINT, MICHIGAN.



The Flower House is a project by Lisa Waud where artists will make floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck

Above: The industrial stock of Detroit provides a unique backdrop for urban agriculture.

STEPHEN ZACKS

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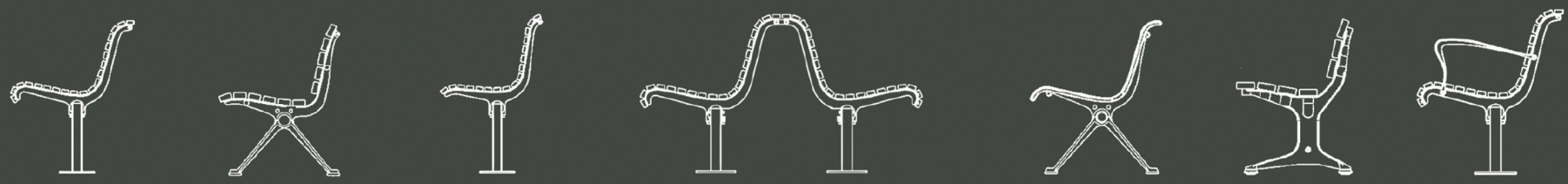

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OCTOBER 2015

OCTOBER

SATURDAY 17
EVENTS
The New American Garden: The Landscape Architecture of Oehme, van Sweden
10:00 a.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW
Washington, D.C.
nbm.org

Urban Nature Symposium
11:00 a.m.
Finnish Cultural Institute
799 Broadway, Suite 520
fciny.org

TOUR
AIANY Industrial Waterway Tour to Freshkills Park
1:45 p.m.
Freshkills Park
Staten Island
freshkillspark.org

MONDAY 19
EVENTS
Eric Höweler and Meejin Yoon
6:30 p.m.
Columbia University GSAPP
1172 Amsterdam Ave.
arch.columbia.edu

Architectural Photography Network
6:00 p.m.
Boston Society of Architects
BSA Space
290 Congress St.
Boston
architects.org

TUESDAY 20
EVENTS
Inside the Four Seasons and other New York Landmark Interiors
6:30 p.m.
Museum of City of New York
1220 Fifth Ave.
mcny.org

Design for Aging Committee
5:15 p.m.
Boston Society of Architects
290 Congress St., Boston
architects.org

WEDNESDAY 21
EVENT
Restoration Tour of 101 Spring Street
5:30 p.m.
Judd Foundation
101 Spring St.
juddfoundation.org

THURSDAY 22
EVENT
A Past to Build Upon - NYC's Housing Legacy
6:30 p.m.
Museum of City of New York
1220 Fifth Ave.
mcny.org

SATURDAY 24
EVENTS
Kids Workshop Experience In Architecture Design at the Queens Museum
1:00 p.m.
Queens Museum
New York City Building
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Perimeter Rd., Queens
aiaqueensny.org

King Manor Museum Tour
4:00 p.m.
King Park
150-03 Jamaica Ave.
Jamaica, NY
kingmanor.org

SUNDAY 25
EVENTS
In Clay Lancaster's Footsteps: A Walking Tour of NYC's First Historic District
2:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont St.
Brooklyn
brooklynhistory.org

Mapping Me
11:00 a.m.
Museum of City of New York
1220 Fifth Ave.
mcny.org

LECTURE
The Unexpected Environmentalist: Robert Moses, the Belt Parkway, and the Wildlife Refuge
2:00 p.m.
Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Marine Pkwy.
nps.gov

TUESDAY 27
EVENT
Mid-Century Modern Architecture: Optimism and Relevance for the Future
6:30 p.m.
At the Seaport Culture District
181 Front St.
cfa.aiany.org

WEDNESDAY 28
EVENT
Look Inside: Hudson Yards
6:00 p.m.
New York School of Interior Design
170 East 70th St.
nysid.edu

THURSDAY 29
LECTURES
Urban Parks and the National Park Service of the Future
6:00 p.m.
102 Meyerson Hall, Penn School of Design
210 South 34th St.
Philadelphia
design.upenn.edu

Design Talks: Walter Hood on Cooper Hewitt's Garden
6:30 p.m.
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
cooperhewitt.org

FRIDAY 30
EVENT
Instagram Design Hunt
11:00 a.m.
Soho Design District with WantedDesign
sohodesigndistrict.org

SATURDAY 31
EVENT
Light & Silence in Nordic Architecture with Louis Becker, Henning Larsen Architects
2:00 p.m.
Scandinavia House
58 Park Ave.
scandinaviahouse.org

COURTESY LUHRING AUGUSTINE

LOOKING OUT
Luhring Augustine Bushwick
25 Knickerbocker Avenue, Brooklyn, NY
September 19–December 20, 2015

Rachel Whiteread is a thoroughly architectural artist. Her sculpture exposes the spatial relationships between common objects, or whole buildings, and their environments. *Detached III*, a concrete and steel cast of a garden shed, transforms the humble structure into a monument. Her works on paper respond to specific sculptures but are considered a body of work on their own. Whiteread uses unconventional media—graph paper, correction fluid, varnish—to mark present and absent spaces between forms. To complement the Bushwick show, there will be a parallel exhibition of Whiteread's work at Luhring Augustine Chelsea from November 7–December 19.

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Corviale, Mario Fiorentino's massive concrete apartment building outside Rome equally inspires admiration and disgust.

PHOTO BY OTTO HAINZL

CHE COSA CORVIALE?

Otto Hainzl, Corviale
With essays by Angelika Fitz, Gabriele Kaiser, Martin Hochleitner.
Published by: Kehrer, Heidelberg, € 39,90

Corviale is a district in the south-western periphery of Rome. It takes its name and reputation from an iconic building that is 960 meters long and located at district's edge. This majestic slab of concrete was designed by architect Mario Fiorentino as the ultimate representation of the architectural experimentations in social housing since the 1960s. Even though it was unfinished, the building was handed over to the municipal authorities seven years into its construction in 1982.

Corviale was originally conceived as an autarchic whole, where residential spaces would coexist with commercial units and areas dedicated to socialization. The now-infamous fourth floor was left "open" so that it could host shops and services. However, that didn't work out and squatters started occupying it even before the building was completed.

The scale and the intricacy of its story are such that Corviale has been the receptacle of all sorts of myths and stereotypes. Certainly, whatever the feeling, the place doesn't leave anyone indifferent.

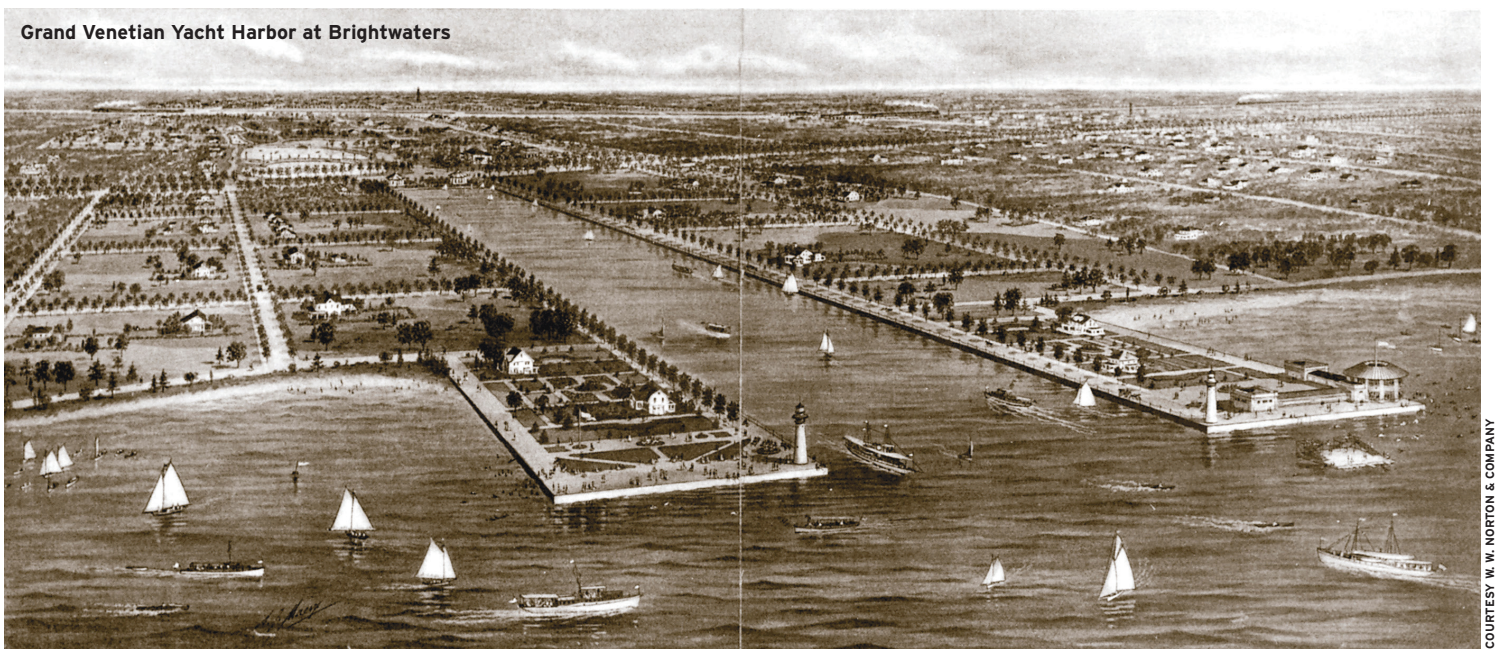
Some call it monster, some call it monument, some call it *il serpentone*, the big snake, even though it is perfectly straight. Some say it is a failed utopia, some say it blocks the *ponentino*, the western wind that once used to reach Rome from the sea. Some think it is beautiful, some find it so ugly as to be offensive and has to be demolished.

Artists, filmmakers, theater directors and photographers have turned Corviale into a necessary stop in the contemporary Grand Tour of suburbia and informality—all fascinated by its dimensions, its contradictions, the conflicts, and the endless negotiations between the initial design and the following spontaneous adaptations. Among this lot, there is Otto Hainzl and his newly released photography book, *Corviale*. This is a collection of about fifty photos—both in color and black and white—that gather an architectural documentation of the building and of the residents' interaction with it.

Angelika Fitz, who wrote the first essay in the section of the book called "Et in Arcadia Ego" ("Even in Arcadia, there am I"), has never visited Corviale. She states that her imagination of the place is shaped by Hainzl's photos and keeps referring to its monumental nature with frightening certainty. In her text, she writes that Hainzl "foregoes the distance, which would have left a door open for sentimentality, and puts himself at the very heart of the situation. He becomes a temporary resident of Corviale and provides us with images produced by an 'embedded artist.' In place of the great myth, there are stories that leave us puzzled."

When looking through the book, what actually left me puzzled was the discovery that the photographer spent a significant amount of time in Corviale, that he experienced the place as an "inhabitant." The images as well as the essays contained in the book—except for that of Gabriele Kaiser, which is remarkably lucid and knowledgeable—in fact seem to indulge in the tropes that have nurtured years of stereotypes. Sadly this happens without any irony, as it does not seem to be the provocative intention of the book. What emerges is an album of beautifully framed, melancholy postcards of what appears to be a soulless place. The "monumental" nature of the

continued on page 34



Grand Venetian Yacht Harbor at Brightwaters

COURTESY W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

GARDEN STATES

Gardens of Eden: Long Island's Early Twentieth-Century Planned Communities
Edited by Robert B. MacKay, $39.69

The Long Island of today is characterized by many landscapes—from the urban communities of the west, to the coastal and farming region of the eastern end. The vast majority of the island consists of suburban communities of tract housing, built in the postwar era of the 1940s and '50s, and matured over decades of population growth and redevelopment. But the intense building efforts of the mid-20th century, meant to accommodate the huge influx of returning war veterans and their young families, was certainly not the beginning of planned community living east of New York City.

During the Progressive Era of the 1890s to the 1920s, a time when societal modernization was being pursued with great effort and enthusiasm, the notion that mankind could vastly improve the conditions of life had a direct influence on residential development. The appeal of the countryside and the desire for recreation factored into a family's decision to move out of the city, where "residential parks," or "garden cities," were cropping up. The East River Tunnels opened in 1910, and the 59th Street (Queensboro) Bridge was completed in 1909, providing easy access to the area. Although most could not afford the Gatsby-esque mansions of the North Shore, built by the barons of industry and finance, urban professionals with families could acquire a beautiful two-and-a-half story gambrel-roofed Dutch Colonial in Great Neck, or an Arts and Crafts-influenced home in Brightwaters. The sentiment of the day was nicely summed up by songwriters P.G. Wodehouse and Jerome Kern in the popular 1917 melody, "Bungalow in Quogue":

Oh, let us fly without delay
Into the country far away
Where, free from all this care and strife,
We'll go and live the simple life
Let's build a little bungalow in Quogue
In Yaphank or in Hicksville or in Patchogue.

The new book, *Gardens of Eden: Long Island's Early Twentieth-Century Planned Communities* (W.W. Norton & Company), explores the history of communities such as Garden City, Long Beach, Great Neck, and Forest Hills. It is a collection of 21 detailed essays by noted architectural historians as well as fascinating archival images carefully edited by the former director of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA), Robert B. MacKay. While MacKay acknowledges early in the book that the work is not meant to be a comprehensive study of all development activity during that period, the 304 pages do not disappoint. History comes alive, though the text is dense and the reader must be committed. It is not a casual coffee table book.

That being said, *Gardens of Eden* is the definitive work on Long Island's Progressive Era community development. It explains with great clarity how the Long Island of today would not exist without the creative and industrious efforts of real estate developers such as Thomas Benton Ackerson, Frank and Ward Melville, and Carl Fisher. It also helps define the role that

continued on page 34

PHOTO BY OTTO HAINZL

CHE COSA CORVIALE ? continued from page 33

building is immortalized alongside details that disclose traces of people's lives: from graffiti to living rooms, from architectural details to clothes hanging to dry. There are traces, but there is no life. This approach is not new and has a long history in architectural photography. And so it is that the people who live in Corviale are intentionally and remarkably absent from Hainzl's work—in fact the only living beings are sheep on the cover of the book and a pony in the last photo of the series. The absence is so prominent that Angelika Fitz feels that the only evidence of the residents' existence is a "handful of antennas and satellite dishes."

This is an unfortunate mystification of the reality on the ground, which, on the contrary, is loud and dynamic, rough and humorous, full of human tensions and social and political conflicts. Such a point of view places the book in the 2000s tradition of the "travel diary" of artists visiting dejected urban peripheries across the world.

Corviale, the book, belongs to a kind of visual and textual narrative that says more about the exotic curiosity of the author than about the place itself.

FRANCESCA RECCHIA IS AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER, WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE 4TH AFGHANISTAN CONTEMPORARY ART PRIZE, AND IS THE AUTHOR OF THREE BOOKS: *THE LITTLE BOOK OF KABUL, PICNIC IN A MINEFIELD* AND *DEVICES FOR POLITICAL ACTION*.

COURTESY W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

GARDEN STATES continued from page 33

Long Island played as a significant influence in the national vision of American idealism.

Though the Progressive Era reached into the 1920s, the wind was taken out of the sails with the start of WWI in 1914. That particular era of optimism stalled, and was later revisited following WWII—although residential expectations were considerably more humble. But the Cold War era, with its fears of communism and nuclear destruction, robbed the American population of the paradisiacal optimism of earlier generations. Times changed.

Today, remnants of various garden communities exist. In 2007, for example, the Village of Brightwaters celebrated its centennial. Richard F. Welch, a contributing writer to the book, said that the commemoration featured many festivities and events, "but the real star was the village itself." While being surrounded by a patchwork of post WWII development, Brightwaters "remains a virtual time capsule." As Welch says, it is a "community that takes pride in its distinctive identity and remains committed to its preservation."

We can be thankful that such communities still exist and are well maintained. After reading *Gardens of Eden,* jump in the car, and go on an architectural treasure hunt.

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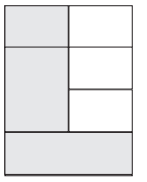

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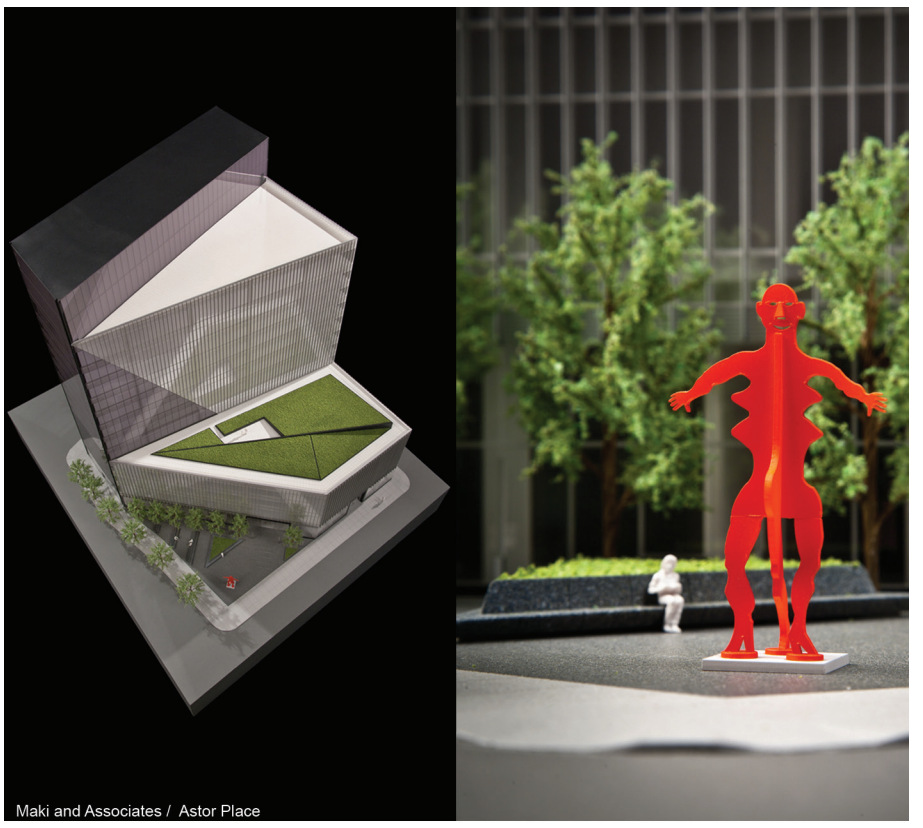

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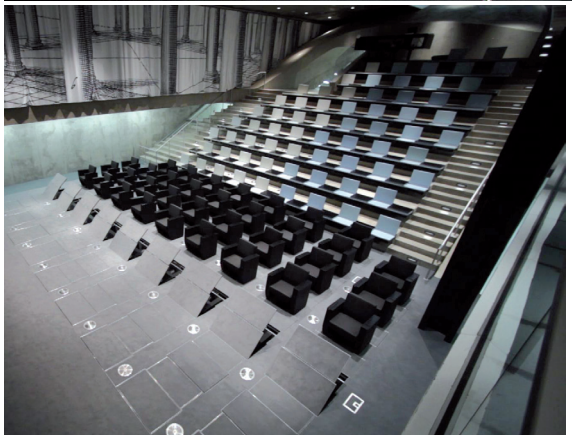

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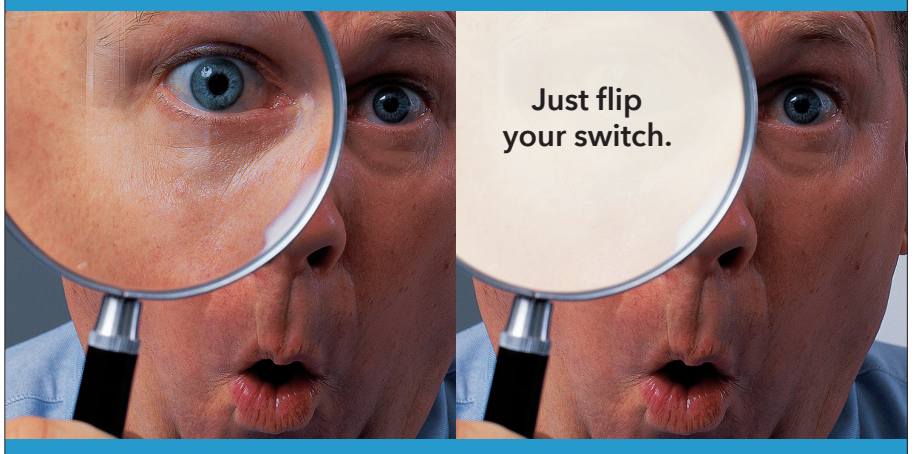

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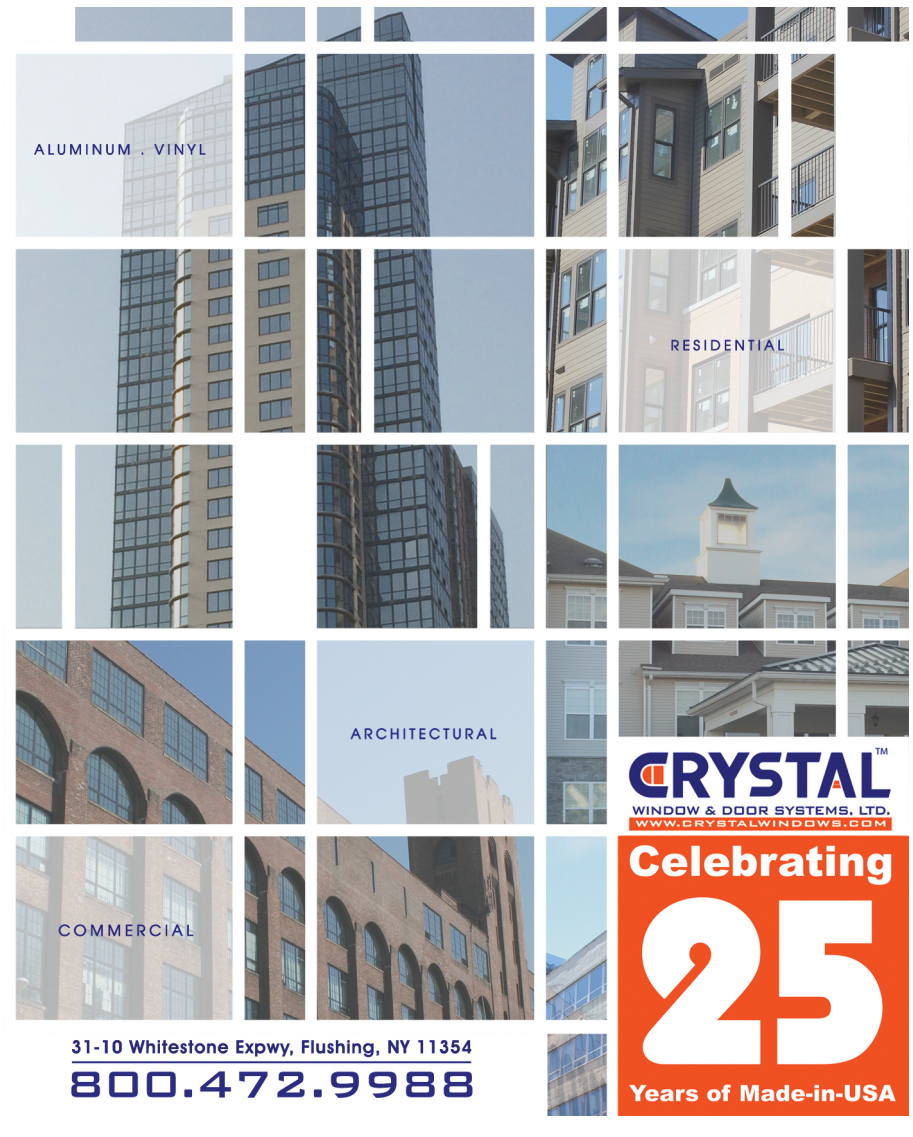

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KEN SMITH

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT KEN SMITH SHARES WHY HE THINKS A TREE'S BOTTOM HALF IS ITS BETTER HALF.

A TRUNK-ATED IMAGE

I have been photographing tree stumps for a number of years. I am fascinated by these ghost remnants in our landscape. Often overlooked or ignored, stumps are beautiful and evocative of continuity within the changing environment.

Urban trees have challenged life spans with many threats to their existence and longevity: lack of soil, indifference of care, and arboricide. The average city tree has a limited lifespan, often measured in a few decades. While trees contribute so much to human health, environmental sustainability, and quality of life, they often face a perilous existence in our contemporary urban culture.

Some cultures, however, revere trees. I'm blown away by the ancient plane trees at Villa Lante outside Rome. These hollowed out trees would have been cut down in the "risk averse" United States, but there they are a protected garden legacy. I'm also stunned by the ancient trees at the Imperial Palace in Beijing. These revered trees are in some cases centuries old and their Qi is considered a source of life and energy for humans.

Composer John Cage once said (in paraphrase) that decay is fundamental to life. Stumps and snags provide critical habitats and ecological benefits in the urban forest.

KEN SMITH

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LANDSCAPE OPERATIONS

An ongoing debate resurfaced at the Chicago Architecture Biennial. One critic in particular, Patrik Schumacher of Zaha Hadid Architects, criticized the curators, saying that it seems that "contemporary architecture [has] ceased to exist, the discipline's guilt and bad conscience has sapped its vitality, and driven it to self-annihilation. Architects have now en masse dedicated themselves to doing good via basic social work."

His complaint is part of an ongoing crisis in architecture that has divided the discipline. In one camp is a group of architects who work to build new forms, many of whom are divorced from a particular social or political agenda. Often, advanced technology is involved, though it is not mandatory. In the other camp, a group far less concerned with form-making, and more with attempting to make the world better through design and architecture-related thinking and practice.

What has emerged, perhaps as a result of the fallout of the 2007 economic crisis, is a more expanded field of architectural thought, propelled by progressive urban politics and a hope that architecture can still make an impact in the world. These projects often eschew traditional notions of building altogether, looking to activism and conceptual art as fertile productive territory.

Of course, architecture is at its best when it encompasses both lines of thought—beautiful, inspiring solutions to relevant, urgent problems. But recently, architects seem to struggle to reconcile these differences.

In the realm of landscape architecture, however, these ambitions seem to be in harmony more than ever.

Landscapes are no longer simply beautiful complements to buildings or vague public social spaces. Designers and clients are activating landscape design to operate environmentally as flood barriers and water remediation zones, among other goals. Rebuild by Design (front cover) harnessed this potential after Hurricane Sandy, and hopefully the proposals will come to fruition, as they are currently being moved forward by their respective governments now that HUD has stepped aside.

Landscape architects are also tasked with operating socially to create new public spaces, connect of previously separated neighborhoods, and reclaim underused land in and around infrastructure, often in synch with other rebuilding and recovery efforts, such as waterfront development or neighborhood revitalization.

In our landscape feature (p. 26), we profile some of the ways landscape plays out as a political agent in Detroit, where artists, activists, and farmers are using ecological planning and landscape design to create a new kind of urbanism—one that provides green space and fresh food while promising a better city for future generations.

While landscapes are growing in size and scale, technology is being implemented successfully to plan and execute bold new landscape forms, such as the green swoops and concrete curves of Brooklyn Bridge Park and the High Line. Landscape architecture incorporates Rhino, Grasshopper, and even Arduino and advanced robotics, to give new life to green social spaces across the country. Invivia, a team from Cambridge, MA, was recently selected to build *99 White Balloons* at Circle Acres Nature Preserve in Austin, Texas. The project utilizes movement sensors to activate the installation when people are nearby and a series of weather sensors to illuminate the installation according to temperature changes.

Technology is implemented on the front end of design, too. The Trust for Public Land's Climate Smart Cities initiative, for example, aggregates layers of GIS data to make it easier for cities and designers to use in a graphic interface. The data allows users pinpoint the sites that will best match their ambitions for the city.

In the other half of our landscape feature (p. 28), we look at socially activated projects that marry design and urban politics by engaging the public through visual software and presentation. As landscape design becomes more relevant and powerful in the urban sphere, perhaps architecture could learn a thing or two about how to get along? **MATT SHAW**

UNVEILED

ARTES AMANA

SO-IL have released their design for a new art gallery, called Artes Amana, in Brooklyn. The seemingly tensile structure has a 22,000-square-foot floor plan that will also house studio, private exhibition, and multimedia project spaces for artists.

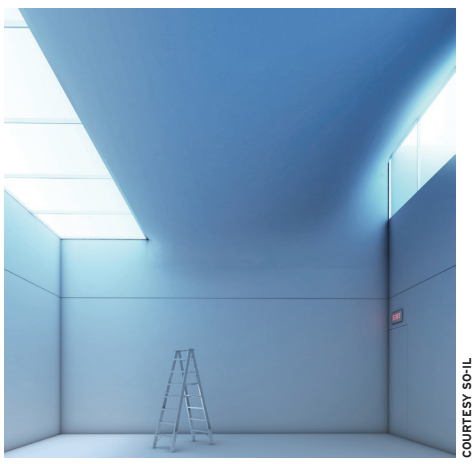
Using an all-concrete form, the subtractive design offers an inviting aesthetic that will provide soft lighting for the interior layout via subtle curvature and vacuous spaces.

Lighting and circulation according to SO-IL are "collaborative constraints" that define the contours, resulting in a "nearly edgeless interior" intended to challenge the perception of defined space, reminiscent of Willy Wonka's "Wonka Vision" studio.

Located in an industrial neighborhood, the gallery is due to start construction next year, with the difficult task of forming the concrete headed by Reginald Hough Associates. Florian Idenburg and Jing Liu, who formed SO-IL in 2008, are working with a number of collaborators including Andrew Reyniak as the architect of record for the gallery.

The building is set to be completed in 2017. **JASON SAYER**

Architect: SO-IL
Client: Artes Amana
Location: Brooklyn, NY
Completion Date: 2017



COURTESY SO-IL

COURTESY STEVEN HOLL ARCHITECTS

CORRECTIONS

In "5 Experiments" (*AN*_10_09.02.15) we incorrectly called Steven Holl a "Pritzker Prize-winner." While Holl should have won a Pritzker, he, alas, has not.

In "Bohlin in Baltimore" (*AN*_10_09.02.15) we incorrectly listed Philadelphia architects Bohlin Cywnski Jackson as the architects of the garage-to-maker space conversion on the south Baltimore waterfront. They are not working on that project, but are the master planners of the urban waterfront campus of Under Armour. Ayers Saint Gross has worked for UA in the past, but is not working on the new project.

We regret the errors.

UPDATE

In "Act II for House VI" (*AN*_10_09.02.15) at the time of press, Peter Eisenman's iconic house was in the process of being sold to the new owner, architect Thomas Schmitt of Brooklyn. The sale fell through, however, and has since been scrapped.

EAVESDROP> THE EDITORS

BLOWN OVER IN THE WINDY CITY

The number of projects in the Chicago Cultural Center right now is a bit dizzying, but we can only imagine what the place was like during the installation. It is a small miracle that it all fit, let alone got assembled correctly. The process was not without snafus, however. Multiple sources reported to *AN* that in the final hours before the preview opening on October 1, the large circular construction by Spanish architects **Selgascano** (of Serpentine fame) and **helloeverything** actually collapsed. Fortunately, it was sturdily put back together for the opening. The team recovered with an elegant tension cable design that worked quite well, and is to be commended under such a last-minute timeframe.

BACK TO THE BENCH

The city's newest subway station, 34th St-Hudson Yards, opened in early September, extending the 7 line over to the Far West Side. The station is squeaky clean, with stainless steel and glass that looks like it cost $2.42 billion. (It did.) While it looks like a contemporary version of a subway station, the typical benches you will find in most stops have not changed. Apparently, there was no redesign for the trusty old wooden benches, which now contrast more than ever with their surroundings.

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The St. Patrick's Cathedral altar was previously renovated in the 1930s and 40s.

PHOTO BY AUDREY WACHS

GOD IS IN THE DETAILS continued from front page stalled due to the 2007 economic recession, but began again in earnest in 2012. Pope Francis' New York visit on September 24th advanced the project time line.

The Archdiocese of New York commissioned New York architects Murphy Burnham & Buttrick (MBB) to spearhead the renovation. Opened in 1879, the original structure was designed by James Renwick, Jr., one of 19th century America's preeminent architects. MBB's Jeffrey Murphy, the renovation's lead architect, stresses that the St. Patrick's Cathedral project is about "conservation, not restoration." While restoration brings a building back to a specific style or time, conservation incorporates features from multiple time periods to display a full history of the space. St. Patrick's Cathedral is beloved locally and protected nationally: the Cathedral, as well as the Rectory, Lady Chapel, and Cardinal's Residence on the same block, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Commenting on the renovations, Reverend Monsignor Robert T. Ritchie referenced Cardinal Timothy Dolan's opinion that "the conservation of St. Patrick's Cathedral is about spiritual renewal." During renovations, the church continued to welcome tourists and worshippers. Priests held their usual seven masses per day, calibrating their voices to be heard over the construction noise. The project is also a financial commitment for the Archdiocese, which estimates that interior and exterior renovations have cost $175 million so far.

Over nine years, approximately 140 designers and consultants, along with a team of 20 engineers, oversaw more than 30,000 interior and exterior repairs and modifications to the structure. Sustainability plays a major, and visible, role in the conservation process—the Archdiocese of New York invested in green energy, with ten geothermal wells planned for the site. The wells extend 2,200 feet underground and will provide 30 percent of energy for cathedral.

Raymond Pepi, founder and president of Building Conservation Associates, led the forensic analysis of the Cathedral. That analysis enabled the design team to make restoration and conservation decisions on the basis of the strength and integrity of the building's woodwork, plaster, stone, and glass. So far, around 150 masons, painters, carpenters, and other builders have labored on the project.

At times, there were over 100 people working at once on the Cathedral. To coordinate the activity, MBB partner Mary Burnham said the team used Autodesk's BIM 360 Field, an app that allows each team member to identify problems, flag repairs, suggest conservation methods, and also allows the design team to follow up on the work as it's completed.

Transparency, inside and out, is a salient feature of the new design. Monsignor Ritchie is emphatic that the Cathedral keep its doors open to all. New programmatic elements include sliding glass doors at the main entrance on Fifth Avenue so that, even in winter, the 9,000-pound double bronze doors flanking the entrance may remain open without letting in the cold.

Pollution, particularly candle soot, turned the ceiling and parts of the walls army green (low smoke candles are the norm going forward). The renovations reveal the original tri-colored, plaster cast ceiling that Renwick cleverly designed to look like stone. The interiors were curated to increase the space's comfort and reduce visual clutter. The design team worked with the clergy to reposition signs and statuary to harmonize with the space. Preservationists restored the glass and glazing on 3,200–3,300 stained glass panels *in situ*. MBB vented the bottom of the windows to improve air circulation, and maintain a more even temperature around the delicate glass. While most of the glass would have been severely damaged by removal, approximately five to six percent of panels in need of intensive repair were removed and shipped to master glass restorer Ettore Christopher Botti of Botti Studio.

The exterior received the same level of scrutiny and care. The renovation team blasted the facade with a mixture of glass and water to reveal any damage to the building. The original structure, said Murphy, was supposed to look as if it was "poured into a mold and deposited on the sidewalk." Uneven aging of the stone and grout caused the exterior to appear more variegated than intended. The current, cleaned facade recaptures the mid-19th century look of the building.

AUDREY WACHS

OPEN> RETAIL

COURTESY SNARKITECTURE

> KITH BROOKLYN

233 Flatbush Ave
Brooklyn
Tel: 347-889-6114
Designer: Snarkitecture

750 all-white Air Jordan 1s hang from the ceiling at apparel retailer Kith's new store in Brooklyn. Actually, they are 1:1 plaster-cast replicas, senior associate for Snarkitecture Ben Porto said, claiming that real shoes would strain the ceiling.

Complete with a cereal bar, per the request of owner Ronnie Fieg, the firm has created alternative sensory experience with cereals being served in Mylar bags that fit into small shoeboxes.

Working with Kith for a second time, Snarkitecture has installed a linear monochromatic, reductive interior emulating the original New York City store, solidifying Kith's visual identity and reinforcing the Snarkitecture aesthetic. The white canvas supplied by lead designer Daniel Arsham allows the colors from Kith's product range to do the selling while a clever use of mirrors and metal supports blend into the background.

When asked if Snarkitecture's style would limit them in terms of the amount of different retailers they could design for, potentially compromising brand identities, Porto argued that each approach was different. With Kith they worked with Fieg to produce a unique aesthetic—something they aim to do in the future.

For now, Snarkitecture are happy to continue working with Kith and have said to expect more cereal bars. **JS**

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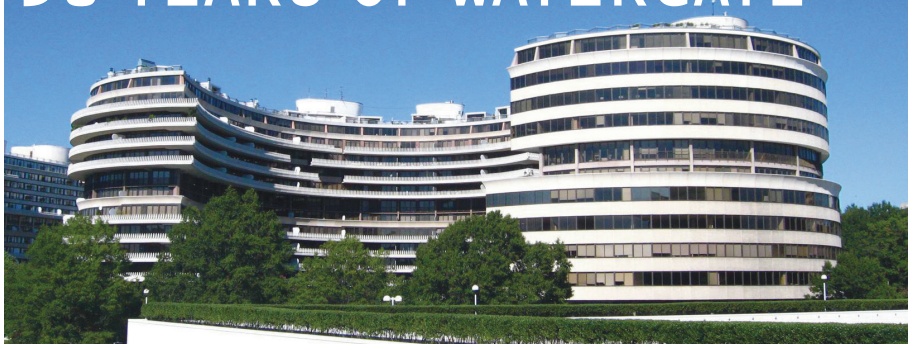

It's hard to hear the word "Watergate" and not think about Richard Nixon's tricksters breaking into the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in 1972. But in fact the five-building Watergate complex is a truly remarkable architectural set piece. Their stylish massing, design details, and modernist gardens have a striking presence on the Potomac River in Washington, D.C.

The complex, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary, was designed by the Italian architect Luigi Moretti (Corning, Moore, Elmore & Fischer were associate architects). The project began in 1967 and cost $75 million to construct. It was Moretti's single American project.

Perhaps as a response to the problematic urban conditions and their attendant racial segregation of postwar Washington, D.C., it was conceived as a "city within a city" and was designed with all the amenities its residents would need without leaving the complex: a hotel with 24-hour room service, health club, restaurants, shopping mall, medical and dental offices, grocery, pharmacy, and a post office.

It consists of six 16-story buildings comprised of 1,400 apartment units, a 350-room hotel, offices (where the National Trust for Historic Preservation is now headquartered), 19 townhouses, and three levels of underground parking. It is not simply its size that stands out but also the architectural qualities of its mass and its small details that are unique for a project of its size in the United States.

The Watergate's website claims that it was "The first major construction project in the United States in which computers played a significant role in the design work."

I am not skeptical about this claim, but it is true that in a large complex where the designers are working on massing and scale, details are often lost. In this project, however, the small design details are extraordinary. For example, beautiful black and white patterned terrazzo on the lobby floors are unique in the United States and channel Italian architecture to bring a design flare to a city not known for its flamboyance.

It is worth noting that the three-acre landscape of interlocking private and public spaces in the complex (which have been altered and updated numerous times) were designed by Boris V. Timchenko, a noted D.C.-based landscape architect and included more than 150 planters, tiers of fountains designed to enliven its public spaces, landscaped rooftop terraces, privacy planters between apartments, and swimming pools.

WILLIAM MENKING

KERRY H. STOWELL; ALL OTHER IMAGES COURTESY WATERGATE

This rendering of Atlantic Avenue illustrates the proposed diverse uses of space.

COURTESY NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

THE ONGOING AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEBATE SURROUNDS BIG ZONING CHANGES IN EAST NEW YORK FOR EAST NEW YORK

IN THE RE-ZONE

Right now, zoning and land use are being hotly debated in Brooklyn's East New York neighborhood. On September 21, the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) announced two changes to the city's zoning regulations that will have major long term impact on land use and affordable housing. That same day, the DCP released the highly anticipated East New York Community Plan (ENYCP), a comprehensive rezoning of residential areas in East New York, Ocean Hill, and Cypress Hills, as well as the commercial corridors that run through the neighborhood. Chosen for its proximity to rail, subway, and bus lines, East New York is one of the first places where these new zoning changes will be put into action.

The first change, Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, would affect large-scale residential development in medium- to high-density areas. New zoning would require 25 or 30 percent of floor space in buildings with ten or more units developed in these areas to remain permanently affordable, as defined by the Area Median Income (AMI). In New York City, the AMI is $86,300 for a family of four. The second change, Zoning for Quality and Affordability, is intended to encourage high-quality construction and promote affordable housing in these same neighborhoods.

Residents of East New York are concerned that despite the stricter affordable housing requirements, the ENYCP will precipitate gentrification and residential displacement in the mostly low- to moderate-income area.

Though the ENYCP does not offer an exact breakdown of housing distribution by income, *Housing New York*, the city's housing policy framework released in 2014, gives insight into potential numbers. That document outlines the city's intention to preserve or create 20 percent of 200,000 units of affordable housing for very low to extremely low-income households (households earning 50 to 30 percent of AMI, respectively).

Policy analysts at Real Affordability for All (RAFA), a division of ALIGN, and an umbrella group of 50 organizations that advocate for low-income New Yorkers, claim that the new provisions will not provide enough affordable options for East New York residents or the city at large. Using Census data, RAFA contends that, citywide, there's a lack of affordable housing for households making less than 50 percent of the AMI ($43,150 for a household of four in 2015). Excluding households that receive housing vouchers, there's a shortage of 403,932 units for the 710,649 households in this income range.

The city's percentages of affordable housing under Mandatory Inclusionary Housing are derived from averages. To attract a range of incomes, for example, apartments could be available at the 30, 80, 40, and 90 percent affordability thresholds for an average of 60 percent affordability. In East New York, there is more overall demand for apartments in the 40 percent or lower range. Incentives like the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, however, incentivize the creation of units in the 60 percent range.

Maritza Silva-Farrell, campaign director at ALIGN, stated that the plan is not addressing the needs of low-income individuals, and will lead to "more displacement [of residents] and gentrification of East New York."

Finding affordable housing in New York is a struggle for many. *Housing New York* cites an "affordability crisis": almost 55 percent of households spend more than one third of their income on rent.

Rachaele Raynoff, press secretary for the DCP, emphasized that the East New York Community Plan goes beyond the proposed requirements, requiring 50 percent of new units in the rezoning area to be affordable to area residents. Raynoff stressed that "to get affordable housing as a zoning regulation, the rates [we] have proposed are the best ones." Moreover, the ENYCP, according to Raynoff, is part of a "jigsaw" of legislation and policy between the NYC Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development, and state and federal entities to promote sustainable growth in select neighborhoods.

If the ENYCP is adopted, 1,200 units will be built by both nonprofit and for-profit developers over the next two years, though there are no developers selected as of yet. First, the plan must undergo a Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (which includes a public comment period) and gain approval from all 59 Community Boards, five borough presidents, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council.

AW

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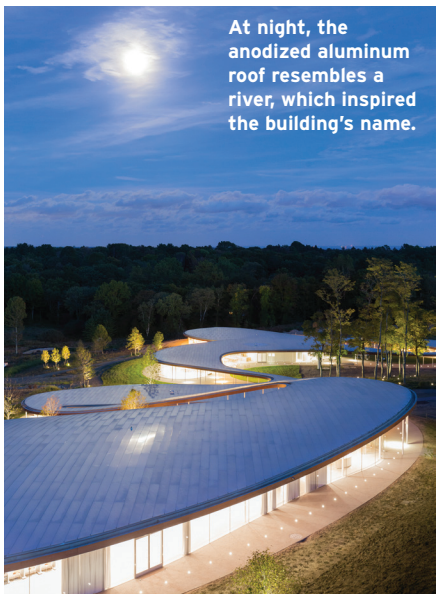


At night, the anodized aluminum roof resembles a river, which inspired the building's name.

STATE OF GRACE continued from front page

aluminum roof mirrors the surrounding trees, and at night the reflective curving light resembles the geographic feature for which the building is named: the River.

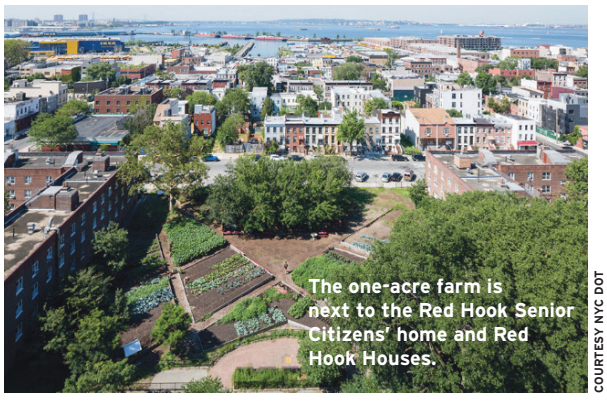
Walking through the building, there are moments where the structure curves back on itself, so much so that one can not only see views of the surrounding trees and meadows, but of the people inside as well. This is a signature SANAA move: Redirecting sight lines to the people who use the building to the extent that they become part of the architecture themselves.

From end to end, the River undergoes a 43-foot elevation change. Although the building is approximately 1,400 feet long, the switchbacks throughout make the overall footprint only 700 feet long. Mostly local red oak ceilings and floors add warmth to the steel, glass, and concrete elements.

Keeping a minimal footprint was paramount, as Grace Farms wanted little disturbance to the surrounding land. To that end, SANAA worked closely with landscape architecture firm OLIN to integrate community gardens, athletic fields, and trails within the natural and architectural spaces. A one-mile ADA-regulation walking path connects from one end of the building and leads back to the other end, creating a seamless loop from indoors to out. Most of the previously mowed green spaces will be rehabilitated into meadows. In 2016 a SANAA-designed playground will be built on the site.
Aiming for LEED certification, the Foundation had 55 500-feet-deep geothermal wells installed. The 203 panes of glass composing the exterior walls are double-glazed with a specially engineered spacer. Several black locust trees that had to be removed for the building were kiln-dried on site and reused as 18-foot-long community tables.

"We wanted a building that would blend in with the natural surroundings and draw people into the landscape, which is exactly what Sejima and Nishizawa have given us," Prince said. "For example, the covered walkways shield you from the weather but also allow a more direct interaction with the landscape all throughout the year." **OLIVIA MARTIN**

Grace Farms opened on October 9, 2015 and is open to the public 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and on Sunday from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m.



The one-acre farm is next to the Red Hook Senior Citizens' home and Red Hook Houses.

COURTESY NYC DOT

PILOT URBAN FARM SPROUTS ON NYCHA LAND.

GREEN RED HOOK

Award-winning Brooklyn-based architecture and landscape design firm Thread Collective, in collaboration with New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and Green City Force (GCF), have created Red Hook West Urban Farm, a one-acre agriculture installation in South Brooklyn.

The farm's primary function is food production with healthy produce being sold at farmers markets by nonprofit group Added Value or donated to residents in need.

Of course there are many more positive externalities that have come from the initiative. Elliott Maltby, principal of Thread Collective, spoke to *AN* commenting that adding one acre of permeable land to the vicinity of the farm contributes to the resiliency of infrastructure in the area, which is prone to flooding issues.

Additionally, Maltby spoke about how the space serves as a communal hub with locals who often just use the area as a place to relax. This is reflected by the farm being totally open to the public, with no fence to segregate it off. "Establishing a collective ownership of the land," Maltby said, "creates cohesion among the community. The project really acts as a vehicle to bring the neighborhood together."

GCF runs the farm and also trains people to work the plot, keeping it in use as much as possible. Trainees, who tend to be younger residents, end up striking a dialogue with those who use the farm as a social space, bridging societal gaps and bringing the community together.

Growing your own produce and showing it off to the public (who can get tours of the farm) instills a great deal of civic pride. The visual accessibility of the farm plays a key role for residents, who according to Maltby have been seen checking up on their vegetables from their window ledges and even shouting down to people who are misusing it.

"Of course, the farm won't look great all year round, it is a farm after all!" Maltby said, explaining that the farm, despite not being picturesque in the winter, adds a great deal of vibrancy during the spring and summer.

In terms of expanding the initiative, Thread Collective say they are working with GCF for potentially five more farms, though when and where these will be installed is not yet known.
JS

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GLASS EN MASSE continued from front page

Foundation has a distinctive contribution: A novel preservation project of the home of Francis Lightfoot Lee, a member of the Second Continental Congress and a Declaration of Independence signer. Lee's house, a spectacularly decayed structure built in 1769, is "not a ruin in the classic sense," Sarah Dillard Pope, the foundation's executive director, said. It does, however, require extensive care: Around 2006, key structural posts and beams fell into the basement. In 2000, the foundation erected a metal shed, akin to a carport, to protect the structure from overhead precipitation. The interior remained exposed to the elements.

Luckily, the house may be getting life support as early as next spring. The Menokin Foundation selected Boston-based firm Machado Silvetti to spearhead the preservation of the structure and its conversion into a museum. In its parts and pieces, Pope maintains, the house complements, not competes, with other Virginia historic sites.

A primary goal of the project is to create a historical narrative that integrates the site and its surroundings. The Menokin House sits on a 500-acre property with hiking trails and waterways for recreational boating. Project manager and architect Ned Goodell said that the overarching goal is to "keep the project free of nostalgia" while maintaining "a healthy respect for the history of the place." The team "didn't want to overpower the site's aura with our architectural intervention."

Interventions will open up the space and re-create interior volumes that were lost when the structure collapsed in 2006. Goodell detailed the functionality of the project's four elements: the ruin, the steel armature, the liner, and the glass enclosure. The ruin is resurrected and stabilized with a steel armature. This allows the ruin to be displayed and experienced in three dimensions, "without losing the quality of the ruin." Goodell cited the Cathedral Ruins in Hamar, Norway, as an inspiration for what the design team and the foundation envision for Menokin.

The structure's original millwork was removed and preserved in the 1960s. Today, the advanced state of decay leaves no remaining surface to display the millwork. A liner will allow that millwork to be remounted and viewed. The liner lends programmatic opportunities, as well.

Architecture firm Machado Silvetti of Boston will preserve the decaying Menokin house with a creative laminated glass "envelope" that will protect the original structure while allowing vistors to explore the home.

A fabric scrim will be mounted onto the liner to create a projection surface for images and video. This could be incorporated into the museum's educational programming, or used for special events onsite.

Protecting the house from Virginia's four seasons with a glass enclosure presented a challenge. Hanging off of the armature, the glass enclosure must safeguard the ruins from dramatic temperature and humidity changes while providing adequate durability and transparency. Using the climate control systems of art museums as a guide, the team initially considered a three-layer system with four glass panes to provide tight climate control. The system proved too costly, so the team created a sparer design of laminated glass that reconciles a greater interior temperature and moisture range with maximum transparency. "You don't want the glass to be prominent, but the glass should be elegantly detailed when you get close," Goodell explained. The glass envelope limits the type of artifacts that may be displayed in the structure, but allows the historic millwork to take center stage.

Currently, the project is in the design and development phase. If the foundation's board approves, construction will begin spring 2016. **AW**

COURTESY MACHADO SILVETTI

World View

While the world watched, **One World Trade Center** grew in both height and symbolism, its 1,776-foot crystalline form bringing unmatched views back to Lower Manhattan. A redundant structural steel frame, the result of creative collaboration between **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill** and **WSP Cantor Seinuk**, ensures that its safety is as substantial as its stature. Read more about it in **Metals in Construction** online.

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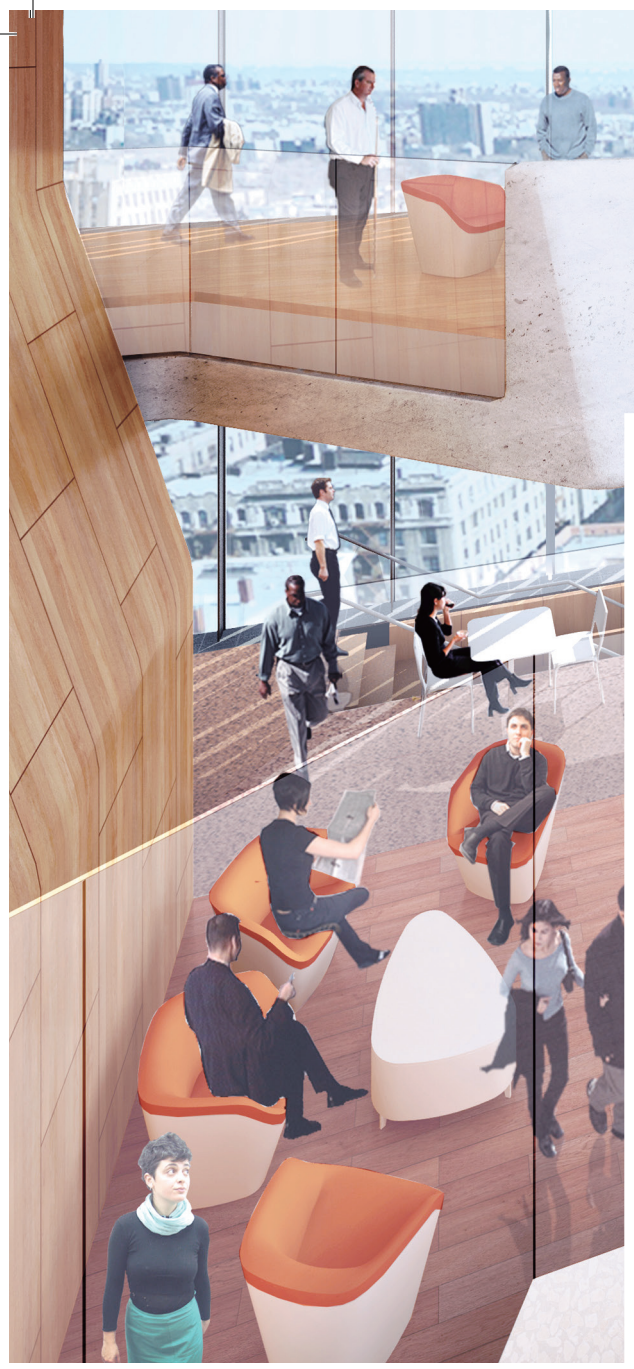

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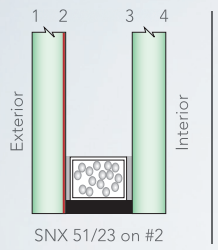

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FOOD CENTER DRIVE

INDUSTRY CITY COURTYARD

PIER 55

RANDALL'S ISLAND CONNECTOR

COURTESY HEATHERWICK STUDIO

The history of landscape architecture in America goes back to the writings and activism of Andrew Jackson Downing and, of course, Frederick Law Olmsted. While there has always been a segment of the profession that focuses on estate gardening and horticulture, there are other firms who have a more socially engaged and expansive view of the profession. One thinks, for example, of Thomas Church, Dan Kiley, Lawrence Halprin, and Garret Eckbo, who all brought new ways of thinking and transforming the built landscape but primarily focused on the public nature of their practice and commissions.

Perhaps the most famous of these figures was Ian McHarg, a Scotsman who founded the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, but who more importantly brought a renewed emphasis on urban planning and what he called "natural systems" (with his 1969 book *Design with Nature*) into the profession. Today, landscape architecture combines McHarg-influenced environmental awareness, city planning, storm water management, and aesthetic concerns of the in-between spaces we inhabit in the city. This public nature of the profession is the focus of many firms today—no more than at the New York office of Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, who work almost exclusively on public, state, and institutional projects. More than nearly any other firm, they have transformed the postindustrial landscape of New York. It is very important, Signe Nielsen said, "that our work is publicly accessible and as a result we don't generally do private residential projects or we don't do green field sites, i.e. commissions to transform farmland into housing or forests to shopping centers." Improving the life of everyone in the city is important, and if there is a social justice component, then all the better.

The 30-member firm (approximately 60 percent are licensed landscape architects) believes that "designers are public intellectuals" and as such they teach, are engaged in professional societies, and lecture around the country on their profession—one that Kim Mathews writes, "embodies hope and requires a longer, larger vision."

Signe Nielsen has also served as president of the New York Public Design Commission for four years and claims that "we don't just work in challenged neighborhoods, but our work has to be publicly accessible and leave the city better than before we were engaged." **WM**

FOOD CENTER DRIVE
SOUTH BRONX, NY

This transformation of Food Center Drive takes one of the least pedestrian-friendly and polluted boulevards in the South Bronx and makes it a public amenity. This mile-long route serves as an entry into the city's Food Distribution Center for its 16,000 employees and those who live around the center. The design evolved out of Mathews Nielsen's earlier South Bronx Greenway Master Plan and creates a shared pedestrian vehicle path by reconfiguring the traffic pattern to a one-way loop, thereby reducing the road from six to five lanes. But even more it incorporates innovative storm-water capture and biofiltration strategies to contribute a significant new biomass. Within the median and new greenway buffer, there are over 700 trees in addition to understory grasses and shrubs. The project is scheduled for completion in October.

INDUSTRY CITY COURTYARD
BROOKLYN, NY

The redesign of Brooklyn's long-derelict Industry City courtyard is a model of how to take an impressive, but slightly oppressive interior open area and make it desirable. The space divides two 600-foot-long buildings (and a shorter third side connecting structure) with 33,000-square-feet of courtyard space open toward Gowanus Bay, the sunset, and a glimpse of the Statue of Liberty. To complement the large mass and immensity of the overall space, they used a plant palette of ferns and various monotone greens laid out in large directional swaths. Further, the form of the columnar maple trees plays off of the repetition of the building columns as well as the industrial smoke stacks and ventilation pipe remnants. Trees were chosen for the beautiful red fall color that will inevitably complement the weathering steel forms in the courtyard. The schedule of the project from concept to construction was condensed into just ten months.

PIER 55
NEW YORK CITY

In 1993, the firm began designing what would become the most complete (and badly maintained) contemporary park and infrastructure in Manhattan—Hudson River Park. Now, they have been chosen to add to the park with the creation of a new freestanding Pier 55 that sits off the shoreline just north of the new Whitney Museum. The Pier, which they are designing with the English Heatherwick Studio, is meant to be a 2.4-acre public park and performance space on the Hudson River. The form is conceived as a "leaf floating in the water," and contains "an unexpected topography" of four lifted corners, each manifesting a landscape typology derived from their solar aspect, slope, and relationship to paths and performance venues. A variety of paths and stairs create circuits throughout the pier to maximize engagement and convenience for event-goers. The project is largely funded through a private donation of the Diller–von Furstenberg Foundation and is scheduled to begin construction in May 2016.

RANDALL'S ISLAND CONNECTOR
SOUTH BRONX, NY

Mathews Nielsen seems to be single-handedly transforming the South Bronx into a borough of green boulevards, parks, and pathways. Taking off from their South Bronx Greenway Master Plan, they have created a brilliant connecter from the area to the recreational facilities on Randall's Island. It not only creates access to badly needed recreational facilities, but also increases the area's green infrastructure by treating all storm water on site and using native, drought-tolerant plants to avoid irrigation.

The quarter-mile connector runs from 132nd Street in the Bronx, underneath the Hell Gate Bridge viaduct piers, through a historic railway facility still in use, and over the Bronx Kill waterway to Randall's Island. It includes a sustainable landscape, an at-grade rail crossing, pedestrian-bicycle improvements, and a pedestrian-bicycle bridge. Pedestrians and cyclists have a powerful landscape experience as they pass through the massive Hell Gate Bridge viaduct piers. The project will be open to the public fall 2015.

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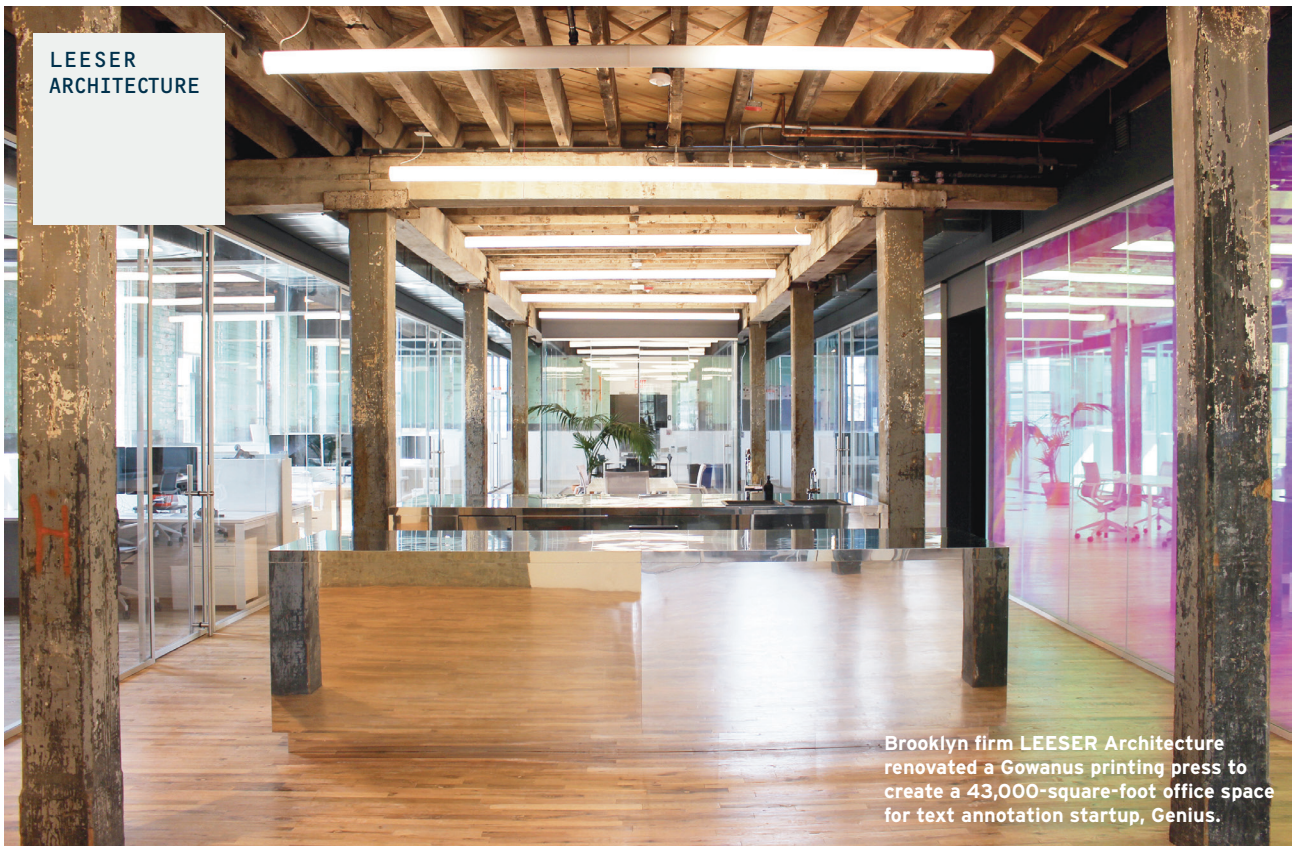

Brooklyn firm LEESER Architecture renovated a Gowanus printing press to create a 43,000-square-foot office space for text annotation startup, Genius.

Tech startups, like birds of a feather, tend to flock to specific areas—migrating to such hubs as Silicon Valley, Silicon Beach, and the Brooklyn Tech Triangle. But, when the founders of Genius—an online platform that allows users to annotate lyrics texts—realized the company was outgrowing its warren of small offices in Williamsburg, they took a different route to find a more cohesive home for their expanding team of developers and editors. They did so by informally plotting the home location of their employees, and found that most of them were clustered around or near the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn, explained Russell Farhang, Genius' director of operations. As they narrowed their search, they stumbled upon a fitting place for their own modern-day textual endeavor: an abandoned factory that was a printing press in a former life.

"We wanted to establish ourselves as an anchor in a community that isn't known for anything such as tech. We chose our location more analytically than that," explained Farhang. "It filled out the requirements we were looking for: great location, burgeoning in a good way, and the space itself is a lovely former industrial loft. And there is something very appropriate to our company—we are fascinated with texts so it is interesting to be in a former printing press."

The company then tapped local firm LEESER Architecture to design the interiors of the new headquarters. Eschewing the popular open-office plan adopted by most startups, the founders asked for a mix of two- to three-person private offices and open workspace peppered with breakout areas and conference rooms. After experiencing the isolation and fragmentation of their prior offices, they wanted a more transparent and collaborative work environment, especially to facilitate dialogue between departments, while also providing "some privacy, and peace and quiet," said Farhang. "We didn't want an open plan office specifically for our developers, who need collaboration but also silence for creativity."

The build-out not only had to include both private and shared workspace, it also needed to accommodate the projected growth of the company, which is expected to reach over 100 employees in the next few years.

"They needed flexibility and didn't want everything set in stone," added Thomas Leeser, principal of his eponymous firm. "As the company grows, the space will also be defined and grow with whatever the demands will be."

Genius occupies four floors, totaling 43,000 square feet of the building. At the lower level (one beneath ground level), the company has a cafeteria and a large double-height performance space with a mezzanine—intended for hosting private and public events, exhibits, and concerts. "We also wanted a way to connect to the community. A place where we could actually build an assembly place for us and for the community," said Farhang.

The L-shaped third and fourth floors contain private workstations on the periphery as well as several breakout areas outfitted with couches and coffee tables. Bookending one end of each floor is a large conference room, providing a more private place for board meetings or chatting with visiting artists. Fishbowl conference rooms and kitchen islands, made of polished chrome laminate, anchor the space and add a sleek counterpart to the lovely rough-hewn features of the building.

The renovation was an exercise in restraint: the ceiling, bricks, and wooden columns and beams were left exposed. "We want to keep the space as raw as possible. We didn't want to lose that sort of rough old factory feeling," said Leeser. "The idea was to change it as little as possible."

Leeser and his team employed minimal yet strategic design elements to enhance the overall space and maintain the interior's industrial aesthetic. One such standout component is a special dichroic glass used for the outside of the bathrooms and conference rooms, which produces an enticing, rainbow-like mirage effect. Depending on the angle and time of day, the glass changes color, reflecting different light and movement. (The glass has been popular among employees for taking selfies.) The firm placed this glass in "spaces that needed to be kind of discreetly made invisible. That is what is great about this film, it doesn't look like a wall," said Leeser. "There is a mysterious beauty to it."

Oversized LED tube lighting is suspended from the ceiling and serves, Leeser explained, as a "tongue-in-cheek play" on the florescent tubes that were originally found in warehouse buildings and a "reference to the stark factory environment."

It has only been a few months since the employees at Genius settled into their new digs, but already they've noticed some changes in the office culture and workflow.

"Now it is really interesting to walk around and see developers coding and building new things. It makes people more cognizant of what every teams' priorities are," said Nat Guevara, senior communications officer at Genius. "At a startup, things change everyday and so now we don't have to wait until the company lunch on Friday [to find out what is happening]. We are able to see things in real time." **NICOLE ANDERSON**

RESOURCES:

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Chemetal
chemetal.com
Glass Finish:
3M Dichroic Glass Finishes
3m.com
Event Space Wall:
Acoustic Design Board
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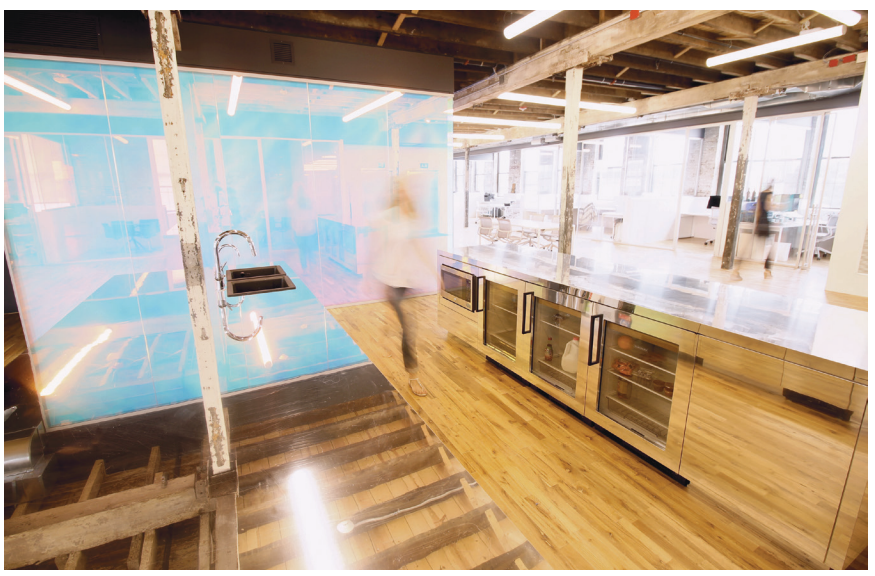

COURTESY LEESER ARCHITECTURE

COURTESY ZUS

COURTESY BIG

REBUILD RESET continued from front page

September 2015, each proposal was scaled (and renamed) to suit available funding. *AN* checked in on the six winning teams to learn where they are in the process of community engagement, design, and development.

The Hunts Point Resiliency Implementation Project (PennDesign/OLIN) builds off of the *Hunts Point Lifelines* proposal for a mostly industrial area in the South Bronx. The iterative process led to a pilot project that will include economic development around green jobs; an off-the-grid power station; levees; and a waterfront park. In case all roads flood completely, the pilot also calls for an emergency energy supply station that can be accessed by sea. *Hunts Point Lifelines* received $20 million from HUD and $25 million from the city. RFPs for design and planning work will be out before the end of 2015.

BIG's initial proposal, *BIG U*, called for ten miles of continuous waterfront flood protection, from Manhattan's East 42nd Street, to the Battery, and looping up the west side to 57th Street. The project was scaled down and renamed *The East Side Coastal Resiliency Project* (ESCR). The $335 million project calls for floodwalls, berms, and retractable flood barriers in the East River from East 23rd Street to Montgomery Street. The financial backing ESCR will receive underscores the project's importance: the city is putting an additional $100 million in capital funding towards the ESCR. Pending approval from stakeholders, construction will begin in 2017.

On Staten Island's southeastern shore, the New York State Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) received $60 million from HUD to mitigate flood risk by protecting coastal habitats and preserving coastal ecosystems. *Living Breakwaters* (SCAPE/Landscape Architecture) calls for offshore breakwaters and vegetated dunes to soften large waves and prevent shoreline erosion. The design's expected completion date is 2017, with a subsequent 30-month construction period.

Living with the Bay (Interboro) addresses the Mill River, a north-south tributary in Nassau County, Long Island. An existing dam on Hempstead Lake will be restored, while an improved drainage system and valves that keep water flowing in one direction will prevent natural tidal flow from mixing with the mostly man-made stormwater system. Currently, applications are open for a Citizen's Advisory Committee that will gather feedback on, and promote awareness of, the project. GOSR was allocated $125 million from HUD for the project, but no RFPs are out at this time.

Hudson River: Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge (OMA) addresses flooding in the New Jersey river towns on the mouth of the Hudson. Hoboken, Weehawken, and Jersey City are vulnerable to flooding with high tides, heavy rainfall, and storm surges. Hard landscaping (seawalls) as well as soft (berms styled into parks) will provide protection during high tides and storm surges. To capture runoff and improve discharge, the plan suggests swales, green roofs, bio-retention basins, and upgrades to current storm water management systems. An overarching umbrella of green policy recommendations will guide the physical improvements. HUD awarded $230 million to the State of New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs to carry out Phase One of the project. As of June 2015, the team is engineers are collecting data on water and ground conditions for a feasibility study.

New Meadowlands: Productive City + Regional Park (MIT CAU + ZUS + URBANISTEN) has an initial award of $150 million to secure and reintegrate 14 mostly low-density communities in and around New Jersey's Meadowlands. The eastern edge of the Meadowlands, as well as the southern and northern tips, will be the first pilot areas within the larger site. The plan has two main programmatic components: the meadow park and the meadow band. The meadow park is a system of marshes and berms that opens up the marsh to recreation while shielding the coastline from floods. The meadow band is the meadow park's edge condition, creating growth infrastructure for surrounding towns, a Bus Rapid Transit lane, and public recreation facilities while allowing access to the meadow park. Anticipating storm surges up to ten feet, the project calls for a network of primary berms rising seven to 23 feet, with some secondary, seven-foot berms for additional protection.

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COURTESY BEHNISCH ARCHITEKTEN

When tasked with creating a fence for the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, Behnisch Architekten and Patrick Stremler didn't want security and fear to inform the design. Instead, they opted for a shimmering, geometric stainless-steel enclosure.

When Behnisch Architekten project partner Patrick Stremler reflects upon why his firm's design for a security fence around the World Trade Organization (WTO) building in Geneva, Switzerland, beat out other proposals in a 2009 competition, he turns first to the site itself. "The feedback that we got from both the client and the city was that our concept was very well integrated into the context," said Stremler. "When you think about a security barrier, you think about huge things that protect. We wanted to avoid this fear aspect. We wanted to work with elements we found in the context, to reinforce their qualities to let our intervention disappear."

Behnisch Architekten found plenty of site-specific cues to work with, from three adjacent public parks to the Geneva lakefront. On the lakeside, they found "a strange zone that was very close to the building, but was part of the public space of the city," said Stremler. "We built a terrace that includes a security measure, but doesn't look like it. It looks like a terrace that's always been there." A direct comparison to Versailles would be overblown, he admitted, but is an effective analogy for the solution the architects created to demarcate the private and public spaces facing the water. "[At Versailles] they have this huge terrace in front, to invite guests to look at the landscape," said Stremler. Since the terrace and fence were installed, he observed, the WTO has made regular use of it for open-air receptions; on the garden side, local residents play football against the wall. "Everyone's sharing the space together."

Much of the security perimeter sits atop a neutral stone wall. "In Geneva, it's common to see this small wall and a fence above," said Stremler. "We wanted to keep this kind of tool, but try to make the impact as low as possible." The fence itself, comprising steel sections with different surfaces and varied distances between verticals, "should disappear a little in the leaves of the trees," said Stremler.

Working with both analog and digital design tools, the architects crafted a system that combined cost-cutting repetition with the appearance of randomness. A security perimeter—especially one built in stainless steel—is bound to be expensive, explained Stremler. "We tried to be efficient. We built modules that are repeated in different directions, so you don't find the regularity." They introduced additional variation by intermingling polished, sandblasted, and brushed elements. Together, the textures produce a shimmering effect. "When you're there on site, you don't really know what it is," said Stremler.

Through their careful study of the site's principal characteristics—which they amplified with a streamlined landscape design—Behnisch Architekten succeeded in their quest to prove that high security does not necessarily imply a fortress aesthetic. "The other architects that participated [in the competition] built a fence in the middle of a garden," he observed. "Our concept was to build something as normal as possible for the site—to create something that looks nice rather than working with fear."

ANNA BERGREN MILLER

RESOURCES

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1 Algarve
Renson

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renson.us

2 K Series
Atelier Vierkant

Set in a hardscape or landscape, these ceramic boulders provide visual interest as well as seating. Custom engraving is offered. Available in rounded and elongated profiles and several colorways.

ateliervierkant.com

3 Cirque Collection
Kornegay Design

These cast concrete landscape containers take their design cues from nature: Composed of 24 facets placed at 15-degree intervals, the tapered-cylindrical forms interpret the earth's rotation. Designed by Larry Kornegay.

kornegaydesign.com

4 Palissade Collection
HAY

The bench's slatted design prevents water and debris from collecting on the seat. Part of a 13-piece collection of tables and seating, the powder-coated steel pieces are offered in three colors. Designed by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec.

hay.dk

5 BuzziShed
BuzziSpace

This modular, outdoor-ready workspace is framed in metal and sheathed in Sunbrella fabric. A weather-resistant table-bench combo, BuzziBreeze, is also offered. Designed in collaboration with Atelier Tradewinds.

buzzi.space

6 77 754 LED
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This robust bollard provides glare-free widespread symmetrical illumination while doubling as a piece of urban furniture for schools, parks, and other public areas. Fabricated of die-cast aluminum, the fixture is rated for wet locations. Offered in four standard colors with custom hues available.

bega-us.com

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COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS

A notable, nascent trend in site furnishings: pieces that are specifically designed to accommodate working outdoors. By Leslie Clagett

7 Comfony 600
Benkert Bänke

A sinuous, contoured stainless steel frame is fitted with aluminum slats to create a minimalist lounger. Components are offered in a limited palette of colors and finishes.

benkert.info

8 Twist Bike Rack
Forms + Surfaces

Tweaking a double helix form, this bike rack offers two-point support and multiple locking options. Made of solid cast aluminum, it is available in 15 standard and custom powder-coat finishes.

forms-surfaces.com

9 Grove Furniture and Lily Shade
Sixinch

A 90-watt solar panel topping the Lily Shade powers an integral charging station, allowing users at the modular Grove tables and seats to plug in.

grovebysixinch.us

10 Basket Planters
Fermob

A steel frame and convenient handle make these aluminum planters easily portable. The Long model measures 47 by 10 by 21 inches; the High model measures 28 by 13 by 33 inches. Available with anti-UV powder coating in 24 colors. Designed by Fabio Meliota.

fermob.com

11 Big Blok with Lights
Tectura Designs

Combining seating with lighting, this massive cast-concrete form measures 52 by 52 by 18 inches. A coordinating bench-style model is also available. Designed by Damon Farber Associates.

tecturadesigns.com

12 Stay Bench
Landscape Forms

Part of the 35 Collection, this curvaceous cantilevered bench comes in backless and backed models; skateboard-discouraging seat dividers are optional. Surface- or embedded- installations are offered. Twenty-two standard colors and custom finishes are available. Designed by frog.

landscapeforms.com

A PAIR OF SKYSCRAPERS BY ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS ARE PLANNED FOR THE CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY, WATERFRONT

COURTESY ROBERT A.M. STERN ARCHITECTS

TWO OF A KIND

You wait all day for one and then two come along at once. No, not buses—skyscrapers, of course.

Two new skyscrapers by Robert A.M. Stern Architects (RAMSA) have been proposed to sit along the Camden waterfront in New Jersey.

Liberty Property Trust, the developer firm behind other Philadelphia projects such as RAMSA's Comcast Center and the Navy Yard complex, is backing the project with a $1 billion investment, the largest Camden has ever seen.

Located just south of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, this project might be the long-awaited catalyst for economic growth that the neighborhood has yearned for after schemes such as the Adventure Aquarium and the $30 million Campbell's Field baseball stadium failed to reinvigorate the area.

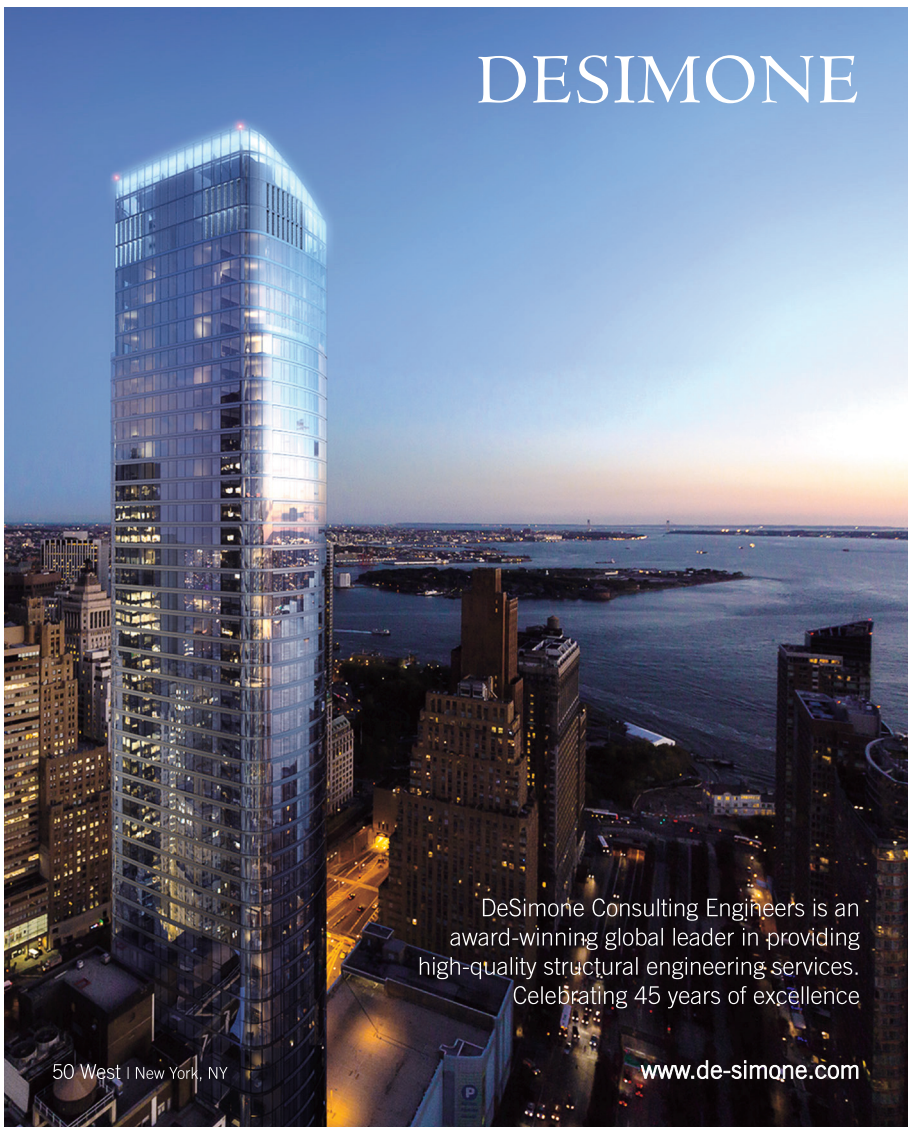
Included in the scheme is a coterie of smaller buildings that will offer retail, office, and residential spaces as well as a hotel and park area.

In a departure from their more traditional style, RAMSA has opted for a contemporary approach, an outlook that is perhaps reflective of Camden's holistic progressive ambitions. Meghan McDermott, a partner at RAMSA who is leading the current design effort, said that the firm intends to "create a new urban neighborhood," and that the key goals of the project are to "fill in the gaps along the waterfront" and link to other attractions such as the aquarium.

McDermott also said that the new structures will boost Camden's image among locals, since the towers will be clearly visible to residents on the other side of the Delaware.

The buildings don't just accommodate views for Philadelphians, though. The smaller of the two buildings is sculptural, with a river-facing facade that appears to have been carved away, facilitating sight lines at street level and along the rivers banks to allow clear views of river; strongly underscoring RAMSA's goal to "connect the city to the waterfront."

The taller structure is noticeably different. Further from the water's edge than its counterpart, the adjacent building, which is markedly smaller at its base, is part of RAMSA's attempt to create a distinct semiotic form along the river and give Camden a visual iconography. The very size of the structure ensures it will be easily spotted from anywhere in its vicinity, which helps to integrate it with residents' perspective of the community. The large floor plan at the top is not only a revenue booster, but more occupants of the building can enjoy the sweeping views over New Jersey and over the river. **JS**



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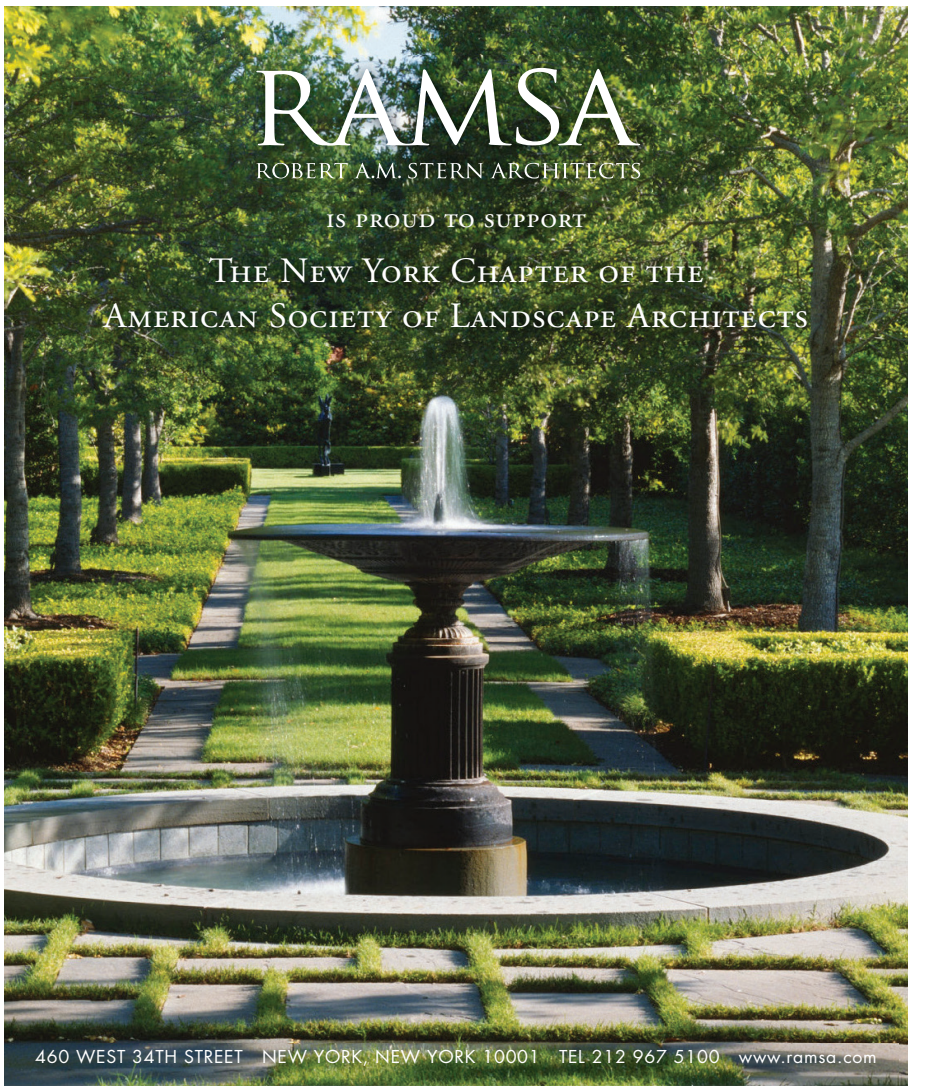
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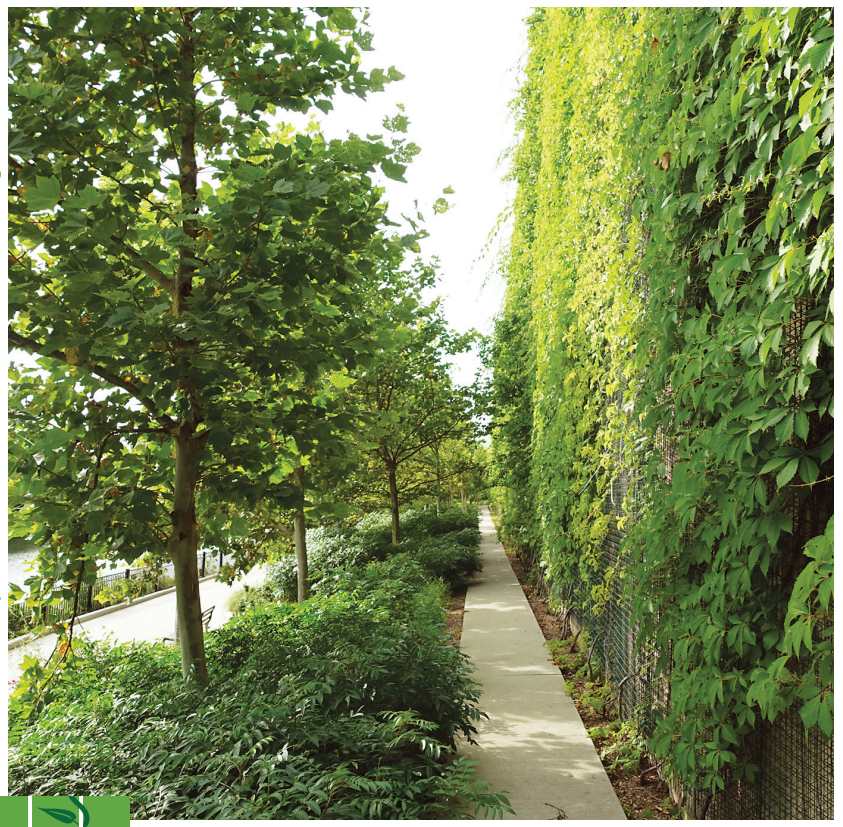

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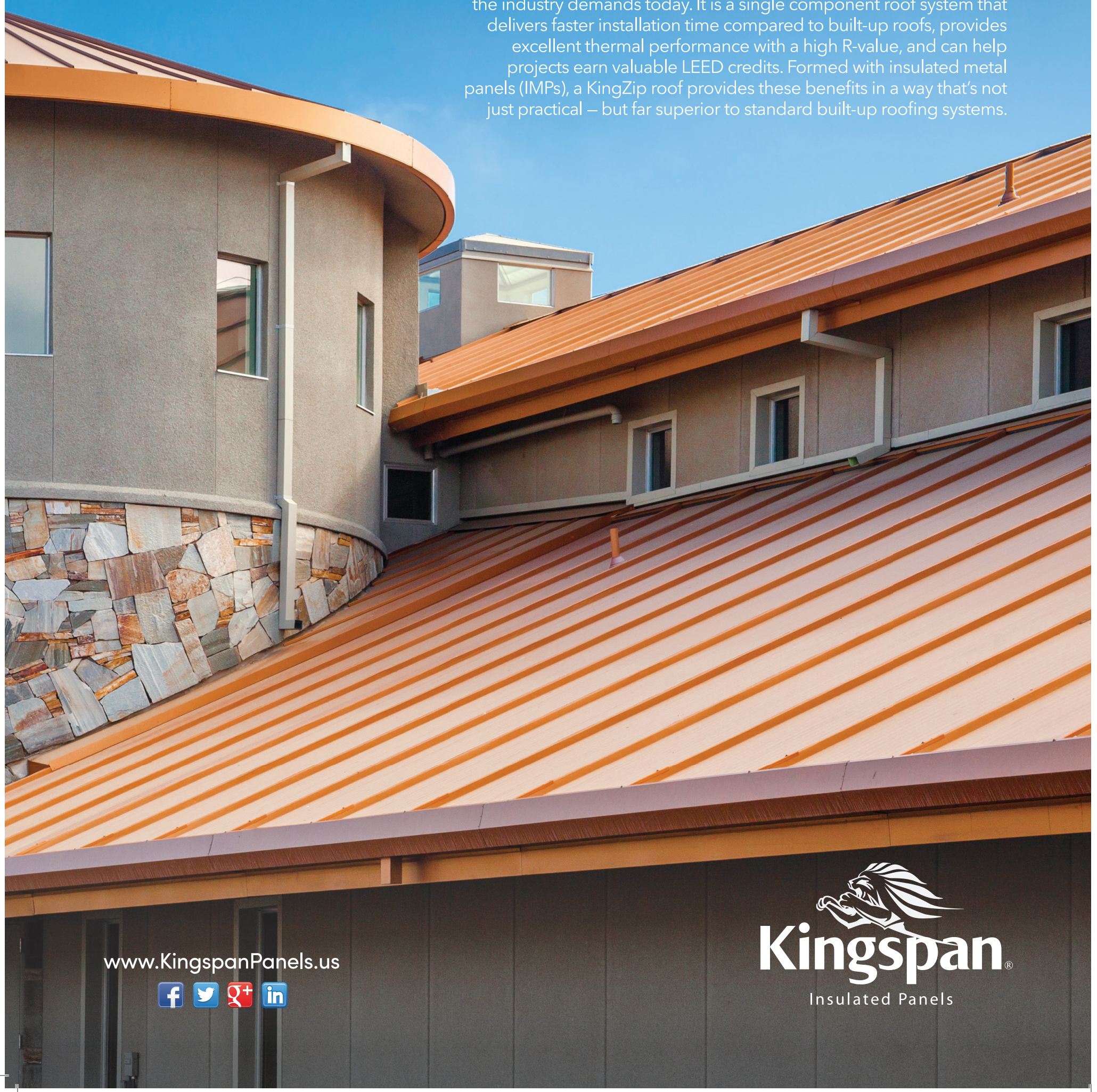

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On Solid Ground

Decking and pavers can enhance the look of a site while improving its environmental functionality. By Leslie Clagett

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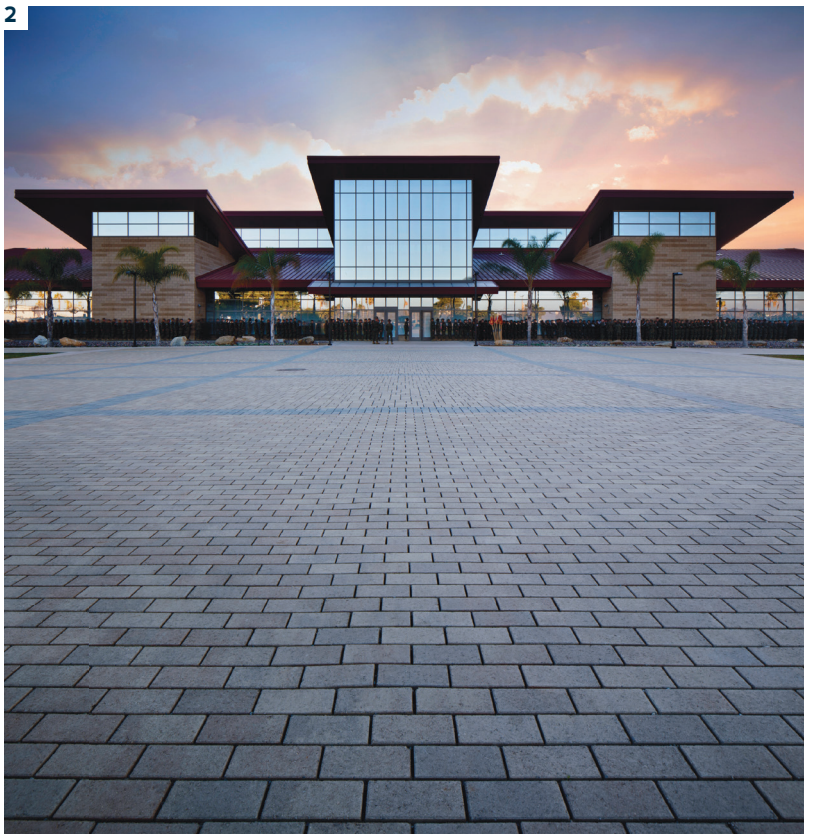

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COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS

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2 Aqua Roc
Belgard

Aqua Roc permeable pavers boast an attractive residential look that stands up to the heaviest vehicular traffic. The sustainable pavers reduce water runoff, are comfortable underfoot, and ADA-compliant.

belgard.com

3 Sand
Tectura Designs

These pressed-concrete pavers are colored by tinting the cement matrix with standard-sized aggregate. Economically priced, the units have a uniform slip-resistant surface and are strong enough to be pedestal-set. In five standard hues; custom shades available.

tecturadesigns.com

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These adjustable deck supports are height-adjustable, have a 1,250-pound weight bearing capacity, and feature built-in slope compensation from zero to half-inch-foot slope. Suitable for residential and commercial projects, the pedestals accommodate a variety of surface materials, including wooden deck tiles and concrete pavers.

bisonip.com

5 Morvan
Rocersa

The buff tones of this porcelain paver give it wide aesthetic compatibility. Field tiles are offered in two sizes, with numerous trim pieces available.

rocersa.es

NEW (AND OLD) VISUALIZATION TOOLS CHANGE THE FACE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

MAKING BY SEEING

Firms Mathews Nielsen and Heatherwick Studio collaborated on Pier 55 in Hudson River Park, displayed in photorealistic renderings.

Connect the dots uses low-tech materials to visualize opportunities for storm water infiltration in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Pacoima. **(Below left)**

Arquitectonica designed the portals and landscaping to the new PortMiami Tunnel. **(Below right)**

COURTESY HEATHERWICK STUDIO

One would assume that virtual reality technologies that can create fantastical battlefields and solar systems for gamers would be a boon for architects, who can create nearly complete structures without turning a single shovelful of earth. For landscape architects, though, earth poses unique challenges. So do air, light, and water.

With the advance of computer drafting and simulation technologies, such as architectural visualization and 3-D modeling software Twinmotion and Rhino—in addition to relatively old-fashioned tools like Illustrator and Pencil—designers are discovering new, better ways to create landscapes. They enable designers to represent detail at microscopic proportions. They can place viewers in virtual environments that seek to mimic the experience of seeing the proposed landscape.

"Every image, every piece of that visualization is a design decision," said Signe Nielsen, principal at Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, which recently collaborated with Heatherwick Studio on Pier 55, a proposed park-pier on the west side of Manhattan.

Visioning exercises, in which designer-activists seek to change the public's thinking about a landscape, if not to change the place itself, are blurring the lines between technology and earth and between designer and public.

The Uses of Representation

As inherently public creations, many landscape projects lend themselves to stakeholder and public-sector input more so than private developments. They must serve the people who look at them as much as they do the people who own and use them. They also must fulfill multiple goals. A park may also be a habitat for native species. A highway median may also absorb storm water. A golf course can offset a heat island. A landscape can extend up to the stratosphere and down to the water table. Every piece of land is influenced by temperature, geology, precipitation, and countless other invisible factors.

As a result, "These visualizations are shown to a huge range of people, from zoning approval boards, historic preservation boards, open public meetings related to zoning approval," said Robert Lloyd, senior associate at Arquitectonica who recently designed the landscaping around the portals to the PortMiami Tunnel. "The largest and most public audiences are the various

LEFT: COURTESY: A.JA RICHARDSON RIGHT: COURTESY: ARQUITECTONICA

regulatory boards. Those tend to be folks who are in the industry and who look with a critical eye at what we're representing."

The revolution in computer technologies has given architects and landscape architects a dazzling array of new tools. Those tools, though, may not necessarily be as useful as they appear—especially for landscape architects—and they must be used with discretion.

"I think it's more difficult...than architecture," Lloyd said. "You're dealing with much more loosely defined spaces with much more complex geography. In the simplest way, there's just more information in a landscape rendering."

Static renderings, drawn by hand or with Illustrator, might capture the appearance of a landscape—at a certain moment, from a certain angle—but they cannot express the entirety of its purposes nor the ways that they serve flora, fauna, and people. A landscape may not fit into a neat box for the eye to behold, even with the most advanced visualization software.

"You're trying to render something that's inherently unpredictable," said Lloyd. "The form of one tree is and should be different from the form of the next tree. The way they interact over time in nature is super-complex."

To Visualize or Not Visualize

More so than many other public projects, Pier 55 sprang fully formed into the public consciousness. Funded in part by media titan Barry Diller, the park has been fashioned as more of a gift than a public amenity. The firms used Twinmotion to create renderings of the whimsical space that promises to be the waterfront equivalent of the High Line. It's the distinctive sort of project that might literally be unimaginable, and unsalable, without visual aids.

"The ability to actually do a [digital] visualization at whatever level of detail and finished product that we want to convey is extraordinary," said Nielsen. "I feel that everybody wins. The public knows what it's really going to get. The client knows what it's really paying for. And I know what I've designed."

What Nielsen would use to present a finished work of starchitecture, though, might not have gone over so well with a more nascent project.

"The first and most important thing is to calibrate the type of visualization with the stage in the process, particularly for outreach," said Nielsen.

The trouble is twofold: Programs' capacity for detail can often outstrip designers' own imaginative capacities, especially when a project consists largely of vegetation. And a project that appears complete and polished on screen can, intentionally or not, be an affront to stakeholders who wish to contribute their own ideas or public officials who are given to scrutiny. These situations may call for old-fashioned representations.

"I'd never want to walk into an early-on meeting with a group of stakeholders and show a design that looks finished," said Nielsen. "I think it really shuts down communication."

Therefore, designers must use technology judiciously, being careful to impress but not to overwhelm the public. With the likes of Diller and other big clients, though, they might take the opposite tack: creating dazzling renderings to land a commission or sell units in a residential development.

Appropriation by Visualization

For all its anonymity, California's Owens Lake is one of the most adulterated, and long-contested, landscapes in the United States. The 1913 opening of the Los Angeles Aqueduct appropriated the lake's tributary streams and left a toxic dust-bowl. For generations, engineers have tried to restore the lake and cut down on dust pollution.

The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Alexander Robinson, thinks they might be doing it wrong.

Robinson came up with his own method of imagining what Owens Lake can become. Resembling a 1980s arcade game console, the Rapid Landscape Prototyping Machine for the Owens Lake Dust Control Project (or Owens Lake Machine), invites participants to create their own versions of Owens Lake—ideally, versions that are functional, aesthetically pleasing, and respectful of the place itself.

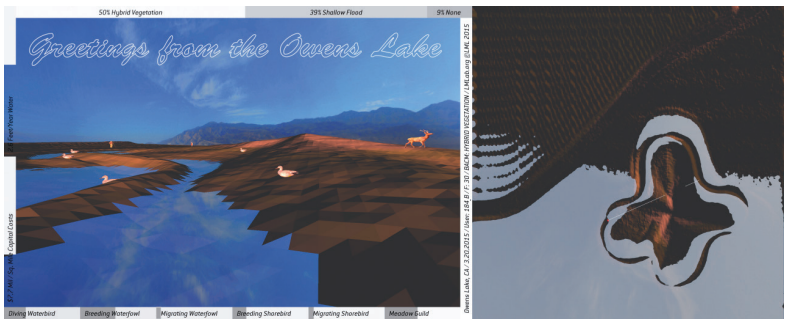
"We took place-making experience and aesthetics, and inserted those values into a design paradigm of operations, habitat design, and resource management, so it's a response to the idea that maybe we could make an interface for designers that creates a dialectic," said Robinson.

Users can decide how much water the lake should contain, what sort of dust-reducing berms it should employ, what angle of sunlight is most pleasing, and how many birds should be bobbing on the lake surface. A rendering program takes user input to generate two images of the lake: a human-scale view from the surface and an abstract map-like view from above.

"It has two different views of planning," said Robinson. "There's a first-person view, the human experience, and the planner's view of someone who's having control."

The machine then prints out postcards depicting these not-quite-imagined but not-quite-real versions of the lake, thus making it seem like an actual destination from which to write home. Robinson hopes that the keepsakes will encourage the public to think about ways that the lake can be restored and the concerns that public agencies, in a democratic society, should consider.

"The social imagination is a very powerful political force and guides these projects kind of in a subliminal way," said Robinson.



COURTESY ALEXANDER ROBINSON

The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Alexander Robinson, created the "Owens Valley Machine" to help stakeholders envision the restoration of Owens Lake. Using the machine **(above)**, they can manipulate the habitat's elements and then print out a post card of their creation **(above left)**.

Another group is leaving its virtual mark not in topography but rather in bathymetry. The Dredge Research Collaborative (DRC) is dedicated to inquiry into underwater landscapes, specifically those that are manipulated, restored, and adulterated by the process of dredging. Their research sites include New York Harbor, the Great Lakes, and Louisiana. Researchers use data-enhanced maps to represent that which is otherwise unknown precisely because it is invisible.

"The public is very used to looking at things like watershed maps and water flow diagrams," said Gena Wirth, a member of the DRC and the design principal at SCAPE landscape architects. "We try to make a lot of comparable imagery… looking at (things like) sediment sheds."

Wirth is also conducting a project in Lexington, Kentucky. There, the firm developed a smartphone app to trace and illustrate streams flowing through the karst landscape underneath the city's downtown. The app is accompanied by a plywood model that displays both city blocks and stream channels. The project is intended to make residents aware of these hidden waterways and to consider the natural cycles that persist even amid urbanization.

"It's difficult to get people excited about what is essential culvert underground," said Wirth. The app is "definitely an alternative way of interpreting landscape architecture. It's about visualizing something that is invisible. It's more narrative-based."

The Image of Nature

Other types of visualization convey not what the land looks like—with or without deliberate design—but rather how it functions.

Throughout Los Angeles' current four-year drought, many critics have wondered why the city does not capture its rainwater or at least use it to replenish its natural aquifers. Aja Bulla-Richards, of the Arid Lands Institute at The director of the Landscape Morphologies Lab at the University of Southern California, Woodbury University, has developed a low-tech way of explaining why it's not so easy.

Richards illustrated the mysteries of permeability in a pilot project called Connect the Dots. She enlisted residents in a working class community in Los Angeles' Pacoima neighborhood to place manhole-sized multicolored dots throughout their community. Richardson identified areas of low, medium, and high permeability, correlated with dot colors. By interpreting Richards' data, residents placed dots in appropriate places, thus turning the landscape itself into its own data set.

"I think having this one to one coding notation of the street lets people interact with it in a more visceral, direct way," said Richards. "It's different from having a map."

Richardson said that this low-tech version of augmented reality can apply to almost any set of spatially oriented information in an urban landscape.

"It's a quick, cheap transformation that allows people to think about the street differently without concerns over major investments in change," said Richards.

And ultimately seeing differently so a public can think differently about landscape and the built environment is what these visualization tools are all about. Digital software and participatory interactions have the ability to go beyond video game fantasy and engage a larger stakeholder discussion on the design and impact of real world landscapes now that there are more tools to complement, restore, and even improve what nature has given us.

JOSH STEPHENS

STEPHEN ZACKS

DIGGING INTO DETROIT'S FUTURE

ECOLOGICAL DESIGNERS USE AGRICULTURE AND LANDSCAPES TO RECLAIM THEIR CITY. BY STEPHEN ZACKS

All summer, a lively cavalcade of events and performances testified to a reawakened cosmopolitanism in Detroit and proclaimed a community that is growing in size and complexity. Detroit's 139 square miles are suddenly teeming with contemporary art, design, and development activity. The projects are no longer isolated but connect larger tracts: the Jam Handy industrial film production building-turned-performance space hosts a temporary Sunday market, around the corner from the ONE Mile funk revivalist project by Anya Sirota and Jean Louis Farges, with Catie Newell's studio halfway between. A land rush has begun in the area.

Enter Culture Lab Detroit. The three-year-old brainchild of Birmingham-based designer and creative director Jane Schulak, Culture Lab Detroit orchestrates dialogues between the Detroit community and internationally renowned designers and urbanists, instigating potentially paradigm-shifting collaborations that evangelize green interventions in the landscape.

"My platform is about connectivity," Schulak said. "I pose a design question each year and try to identify people who will respond to that question in all very different ways."

In early September, urban ecology-themed panels in packed auditoriums at the College for Creative Studies and the Detroit Institute of Arts brought together San Francisco chef Alice Waters, industrial-scale urban farmer Will Allen, French vertical gardener Patrick Blanc, Oakland landscape architect Walter Hood, and Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto to discuss strategies for greening the city and evolving architecture with nature.

"I've always thought that agriculture could be the lead piece to bringing these cities back," Allen, who grew up in a sharecropping family in Maryland, said. "This city is really primed for local production because all of the vacant land where you could grow food. There's a lot of opportunity."

At Acre Farm in North Corktown, several blocks adjacent to the highway form a patchwork of fertile fields that skip over paved streets, the only sign of a once-populous neighborhood. Acre Farm is in an in-demand but mostly demolished area between the MotorCity Casino Hotel and a retail strip on Michigan Avenue (pioneered by restaurateur Phil Cooley). The farm is marked with large plywood "CITY DO NOT CUT" signs to prevent public agencies from mistaking it for overgrown lots.

Urban agriculture is not new, yet the diversity of greening tactics and players spreads benefits far from the heavily invested downtown, the Woodward strip, and Midtown areas. The number of farming and gardening initiatives has multiplied: Keep Growing Detroit has supported 4,000 gardens in the last decade with seed packs, transplants, educational, and technical assistance. Nonprofits like the Greening of

Detroit have planted about 4,000 trees in the past year, while Hantz Woodlands installed 15,000 trees in a square mile of East Detroit. In 2013, the City Council adopted a zoning ordinance that legalized existing urban farms and set standards for agricultural land use.

"For some of the more grassroots or ground-up entrepreneurs, it's all based on returning to true connections between people, relying on businesses that can help support your businesses that are within the city itself, and producing real food that you know who grows it," said D MET studio's Liz Skrisson. D MET designed offices and a Great Lakes Coffee shop for Midtown Inc., a major player in cultural developments and a tech innovation district near the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The Ye-Olde-Brooklyn style pioneered by John McCormick in Williamsburg—repurposed wood, distressed paint, thematically culled antiques, industrial objects, and Edison light bulbs—is as pervasive here as elsewhere. Culture Lab Detroit, however, is cognizant of a need to move beyond adaptive reuse to pioneer innovative buildings: nothing of any architectural significance has happened here in decades. Schulak's advisory board is packed with a savvy group of local and international cultural leaders, among them Reed Kroloff, David Adjaye, collector Marc Schwartz, and Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit founder Marsha Miro.

Miro selected Hood and Fujimoto for a panel that emphasized ecological design to create landscapes and structures that connect people and evoke delight. Fujimoto incorporated vegetation into high-rises that mimic both repetitive and idiosyncratic patterns in plant life. Like inversions of vacant houses overgrown with wilderness, the design rationalizes natural forms into building technologies.

"I do think fresh voices are good for a place," Hood said. "Places that become so insular keep repeating the same patterns over and over again: bringing people in might help others get excited."

The dialogues double as provocations for speakers to explore Detroit: local facilitators tour designers around sites and schedule meetings with project organizers and entrepreneurs, offering a platform to present proposals. For the past year, Patrick Blanc has speculated on ways to grow vegetation on the concrete embankments along the Dequindre Cut. Blanc seeks to irrigate the plants without access to running water.

Hood is working on a concept for a square-mile area near the northeastern edge, incorporating blue-green infrastructure concepts from the 2012 Detroit Future City strategic plan to deploy large depopulated spaces for the benefit of those still living there. "One of the things that I'm interested in is how you can change people's sociology through the pattern on the landscape," he said.

The Flower House, a project by Lisa Waud, will create floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck. Inspired by the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, twenty or so florists will descend on the house during the weekend of October 16, filling its

STEPHEN ZACKS

Facing Page: The Chene-Ferry Market is a closed-down farmer's market in Poletown. It is part of an urban design plan at the University of Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) led by Dan Pitera.

Top: Acre Farm's "CITY DO NOT CUT" signs are meant to prevent public agencies from mistaking crop fields for overgrown lots. This tension between the small scale farm and the urban scale network of municipal government is one of many interesting conditions raised by the urban agriculture in Detroit.

Above: A circular path is planted with flowers and grass, while a fish sculpture combines art with landscape. A small building sits in the background, drawing an illusion to the wild west.

rooms with flower arrangements. Afterward, the house will be deconstructed and the lot will become a flower farm.

Further north, near the Squash House, the Play House, the Power House, the Sound House, and the Ride It Sculpture Park—a well-known collection of repurposed homes and lots by Gina Reichart and Mitch Cope of Design 99 and Powerhouse Productions—ceramicist Abigail Murray and architect Steven Mankouche (Archolab) are building a passive greenhouse in the burned out foundation of a 1920s bungalow. The team erected a slanted south-facing polycarbonate roof within the existing foundation, cladding the exterior with dark charcoal slats (cutoffs from a lumber mill) charred using the ancient Japanese *shou-sugi-ban* method. Inside, they plan to grow almond, olive, and pomegranate trees, as well as other non-native plants.

"The project is in dialogue with blight in a lot of ways, and how we can deal with blight other than just ripping everything out of the ground and carting it to a landfill," said Mankouche, a professor at the University of Michigan's College of Architecture. After the project is completed, Archolab plans to donate it to a local gardener and evaluate its reproducibility in other places.

Elsewhere in Hamtramck, sculptors Andrew Mehall and Ben Hall, co-owners of the Eastern Market's Russell Street Deli, are using a large warehouse as a gallery to stabilize a block overgrown with weeds and grass, its double-height space presenting a fair likeness of industrial Bushwick. However, these reclamation projects demand fortitude. The day we visit, Hall struggled to open the gallery door after a break-in the night before—scrapping metal is a full-time occupation for pickup-driving bandits in southeast Michigan. Inside, the gallery exhibits colorful truck-sized inflatable pieces by Chicago-based Scottish artist Claire Ashley.

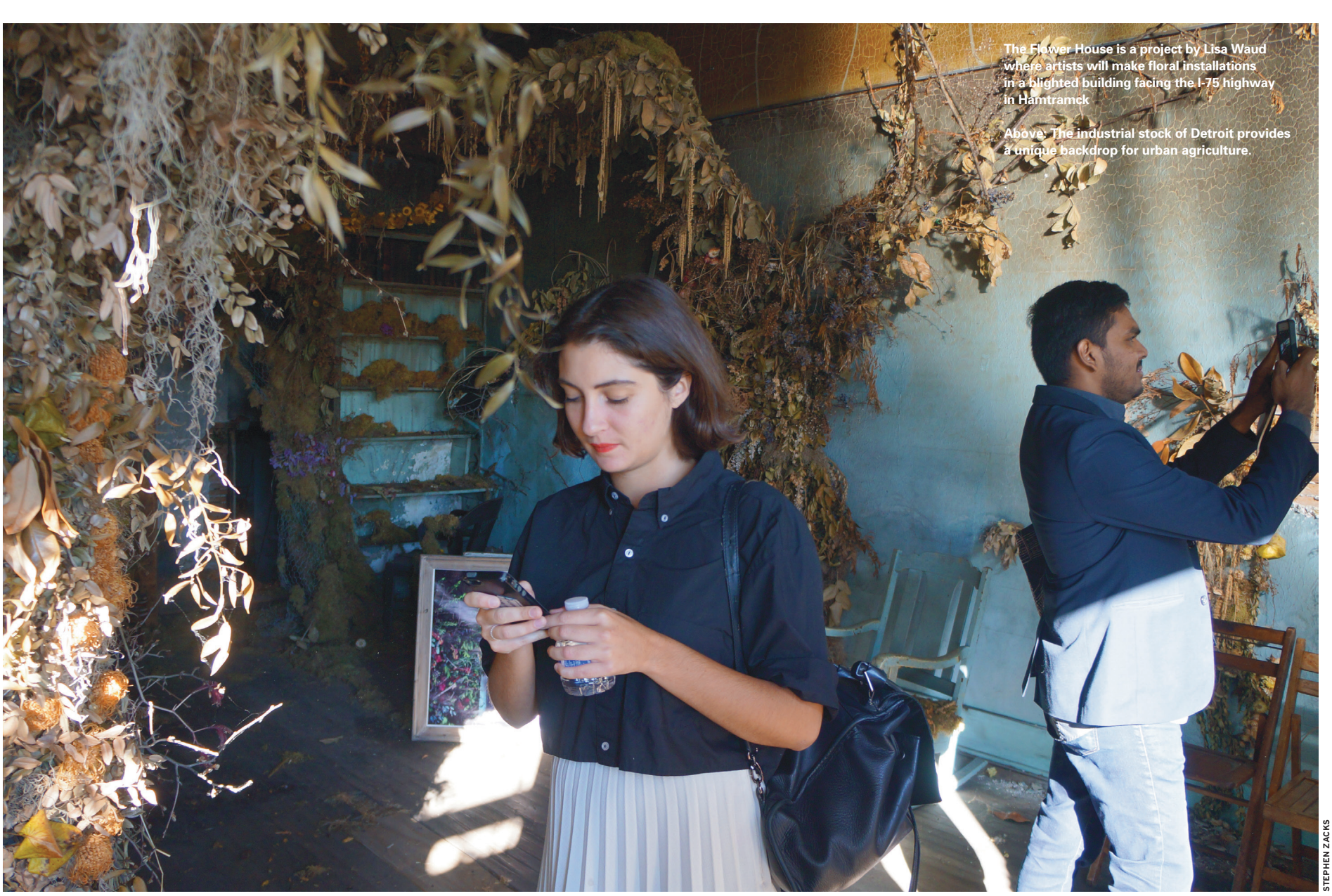
"In a lot of ways the gallery is just a basic stopgap to keep the neighborhood solid," Hall wrote in an email. "In one way we're pretty anti any kind of Richard Florida narrative...As the businesses in the neighborhood that were hanging on by a thread gave up, or let go, or demurred, or decided to forfeit, it became a matter of introducing some solidity, or reintroducing occupants for the sake of the building not being vacant."

Within this ambivalence lies much of the trepidation about the city's fast-moving developments. Dan Gilbert's Quicken Loan-led renovations—all paid for with the ill-gotten gains of payday lending—gobble up dozens of downtown buildings to restore long-lost landmarks. Among these is a planned SHoP-designed replacement for the symbolically important Hudson's building.

Another example is Chene-Ferry Market, a voluminous closed-down farmer's market in Poletown that is part of large-scale urban design initiative led by Dan Pitera's University of Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC). Situated in a spottily inhabited area on the East Side, RecoveryPark uses urban farming, fisheries, value-added foods, and a farmer's market to provide job skills training to substance abusers, the formerly incarcerated, and others struggling to land on-the-books employment. Working with the mayor's office and the new planning director Maurice Cox, DCDC is designing RecoveryPark and other mile-wide areas far from the central business district with a mixture of ecological and commercial functions.

"We wanted to show that every area that looks like this is right adjacent to a dense area," said Pitera. "Can they be seen more as a unit? Then you design them in a way that this could become blue-green infrastructure, more interesting design opportunities, like retail, that become assets for the denser area. How do we think about design in ways that can keep people in place, think about more off-grid ideas for people who live in neighborhoods like this?"

STEPHEN ZACKS IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM REPORTER, THEORIST, AND CULTURAL PRODUCER BASED IN GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN AND A NATIVE OF FLINT, MICHIGAN.



The Flower House is a project by Lisa Waud where artists will make floral installations in a blighted building facing the I-75 highway in Hamtramck

Above: The industrial stock of Detroit provides a unique backdrop for urban agriculture.

STEPHEN ZACKS

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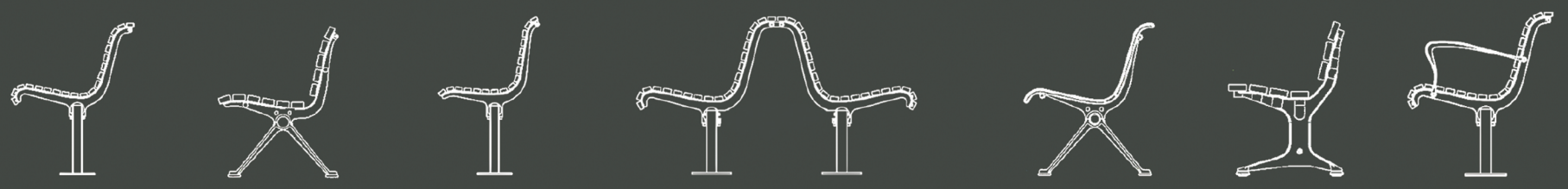

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OCTOBER 2015

OCTOBER

SATURDAY 17

EVENTS

The New American Garden: The Landscape Architecture of Oehme, van Sweden
10:00 a.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW
Washington, D.C.
nbm.org

Urban Nature Symposium
11:00 a.m.
Finnish Cultural Institute
799 Broadway, Suite 520
fciny.org

TOUR

AIANY Industrial Waterway Tour to Freshkills Park
1:45 p.m.
Freshkills Park
Staten Island
freshkillspark.org

MONDAY 19

EVENTS

Eric Höweler and Meejin Yoon
6:30 p.m.
Columbia University GSAPP
1172 Amsterdam Ave.
arch.columbia.edu

Architectural Photography Network
6:00 p.m.
Boston Society of Architects
BSA Space
290 Congress St.
Boston
architects.org

TUESDAY 20

EVENTS

Inside the Four Seasons and other New York Landmark Interiors
6:30 p.m.
Museum of City of New York
1220 Fifth Ave.
mcny.org

Design for Aging Committee
5:15 p.m.
Boston Society of Architects
290 Congress St., Boston
architects.org

WEDNESDAY 21

EVENT

Restoration Tour of 101 Spring Street
5:30 p.m.
Judd Foundation
101 Spring St.
juddfoundation.org

THURSDAY 22

EVENT

A Past to Build Upon - NYC's Housing Legacy
6:30 p.m.
Museum of City of New York
1220 Fifth Ave.
mcny.org

SATURDAY 24

EVENTS

Kids Workshop Experience In Architecture Design at the Queens Museum
1:00 p.m.
Queens Museum
New York City Building
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Perimeter Rd., Queens
aiaqueensny.org

King Manor Museum Tour
4:00 p.m.
King Park
150-03 Jamaica Ave.
Jamaica, NY
kingmanor.org

SUNDAY 25

EVENTS

In Clay Lancaster's Footsteps: A Walking Tour of NYC's First Historic District
2:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont St.
Brooklyn
brooklynhistory.org

Mapping Me
11:00 a.m.
Museum of City of New York
1220 Fifth Ave.
mcny.org

LECTURE

The Unexpected Environmentalist: Robert Moses, the Belt Parkway, and the Wildlife Refuge
2:00 p.m.
Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Marine Pkwy.
nps.gov

TUESDAY 27

EVENT

Mid-Century Modern Architecture: Optimism and Relevance for the Future
6:30 p.m.
At the Seaport Culture District
181 Front St.
cfa.aiany.org

WEDNESDAY 28

EVENT

Look Inside: Hudson Yards
6:00 p.m.
New York School of Interior Design
170 East 70th St.
nysid.edu

THURSDAY 29

LECTURES

Urban Parks and the National Park Service of the Future
6:00 p.m.
102 Meyerson Hall, Penn School of Design
210 South 34th St.
Philadelphia
design.upenn.edu

Design Talks: Walter Hood on Cooper Hewitt's Garden
6:30 p.m.
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum
2 East 91st St.
cooperhewitt.org

FRIDAY 30

EVENT

Instagram Design Hunt
11:00 a.m.
Soho Design District with WantedDesign
sohodesigndistrict.org

SATURDAY 31

EVENT

Light & Silence in Nordic Architecture with Louis Becker, Henning Larsen Architects
2:00 p.m.
Scandinavia House
58 Park Ave.
scandinaviahouse.org

COURTESY LUHRING AUGUSTINE

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25 Knickerbocker Avenue, Brooklyn, NY
September 19–December 20, 2015

Rachel Whiteread is a thoroughly architectural artist. Her sculpture exposes the spatial relationships between common objects, or whole buildings, and their environments. *Detached III*, a concrete and steel cast of a garden shed, transforms the humble structure into a monument. Her works on paper respond to specific sculptures but are considered a body of work on their own. Whiteread uses unconventional media—graph paper, correction fluid, varnish—to mark present and absent spaces between forms. To complement the Bushwick show, there will be a parallel exhibition of Whiteread's work at Luhring Augustine Chelsea from November 7–December 19.

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Corviale, Mario Fiorentino's massive concrete apartment building outside Rome equally inspires admiration and disgust.

PHOTO BY OTTO HAINZL

CHE COSA CORVIALE?

Otto Hainzl, Corviale
With essays by Angelika Fitz, Gabriele Kaiser, Martin Hochleitner.
Published by: Kehrer, Heidelberg, € 39,90

Corviale is a district in the south-western periphery of Rome. It takes its name and reputation from an iconic building that is 960 meters long and located at district's edge. This majestic slab of concrete was designed by architect Mario Fiorentino as the ultimate representation of the architectural experimentations in social housing since the 1960s. Even though it was unfinished, the building was handed over to the municipal authorities seven years into its construction in 1982.

Corviale was originally conceived as an autarchic whole, where residential spaces would coexist with commercial units and areas dedicated to socialization. The now-infamous fourth floor was left "open" so that it could host shops and services. However, that didn't work out and squatters started occupying it even before the building was completed.

The scale and the intricacy of its story are such that Corviale has been the receptacle of all sorts of myths and stereotypes. Certainly, whatever the feeling, the place doesn't leave anyone indifferent.

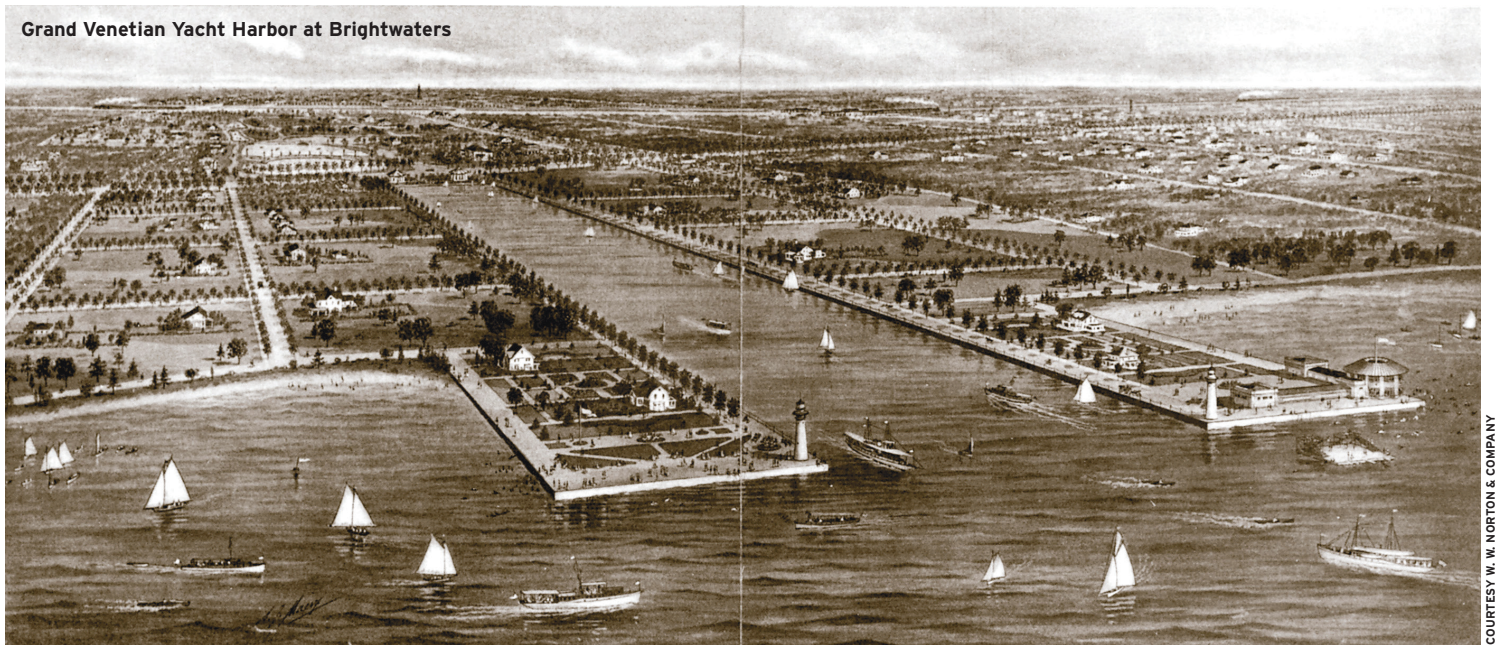
Some call it monster, some call it *il serpentone*, the big snake, even though it is perfectly straight. Some say it is a failed utopia, some say it blocks the *ponentino*, the western wind that once used to reach Rome from the sea. Some think it is beautiful, some find it so ugly as to be offensive and has to be demolished.

Artists, filmmakers, theater directors and photographers have turned Corviale into a necessary stop in the contemporary Grand Tour of suburbia and informality—all fascinated by its dimensions, its contradictions, the conflicts, and the endless negotiations between the initial design and the following spontaneous adaptations. Among this lot, there is Otto Hainzl and his newly released photography book, *Corviale*. This is a collection of about fifty photos—both in color and black and white—that gather an architectural documentation of the building and of the residents' interaction with it.

Angelika Fitz, who wrote the first essay in the section of the book called "Et in Arcadia Ego" ("Even in Arcadia, there am I"), has never visited Corviale. She states that her imagination of the place is shaped by Hainzl's photos and keeps referring to its monumental nature with frightening certainty. In her text, she writes that Hainzl "foregoes the distance, which would have left a door open for sentimentality, and puts himself at the very heart of the situation. He becomes a temporary resident of Corviale and provides us with images produced by an 'embedded artist.' In place of the great myth, there are stories that leave us puzzled."

When looking through the book, what actually left me puzzled was the discovery that the photographer spent a significant amount of time in Corviale, that he experienced the place as an "inhabitant." The images as well as the essays contained in the book—except for that of Gabriele Kaiser, which is remarkably lucid and knowledgeable—in fact seem to indulge in the tropes that have nurtured years of stereotypes. Sadly this happens without any irony, as it does not seem to be the provocative intention of the book. What emerges is an album of beautifully framed, melancholy postcards of what appears to be a soulless place. The "monumental" nature of the

continued on page 34



Grand Venetian Yacht Harbor at Brightwaters

COURTESY W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

GARDEN STATES

Gardens of Eden: Long Island's Early Twentieth-Century Planned Communities
Edited by Robert B. MacKay, $39.69

The Long Island of today is characterized by many landscapes—from the urban communities of the west, to the coastal and farming region of the eastern end. The vast majority of the island consists of suburban communities of tract housing, built in the postwar era of the 1940s and '50s, and matured over decades of population growth and redevelopment. But the intense building efforts of the mid-20th century, meant to accommodate the huge influx of returning war veterans and their young families, was certainly not the beginning of planned community living east of New York City.

During the Progressive Era of the 1890s to the 1920s, a time when societal modernization was being pursued with great effort and enthusiasm, the notion that mankind could vastly improve the conditions of life had a direct influence on residential development. The appeal of the countryside and the desire for recreation factored into a family's decision to move out of the city, where "residential parks," or "garden cities," were cropping up. The East River Tunnels opened in 1910, and the 59th Street (Queensboro) Bridge was completed in 1909, providing easy access to the area. Although most could not afford the Gatsby-esque mansions of the North Shore, built by the barons of industry and finance, urban professionals with families could acquire a beautiful two-and-a-half story gambrel-roofed Dutch Colonial in Great Neck, or an Arts and Crafts-influenced home in Brightwaters. The sentiment of the day was nicely summed up by songwriters P.G. Wodehouse and Jerome Kern in the popular 1917 melody, "Bungalow in Quogue":

Oh, let us fly without delay
Into the country far away
Where, free from all this care and strife,
We'll go and live the simple life
Let's build a little bungalow in Quogue
In Yaphank or in Hicksville or in Patchogue.

The new book, *Gardens of Eden: Long Island's Early Twentieth-Century Planned Communities* (W.W. Norton & Company), explores the history of communities such as Garden City, Long Beach, Great Neck, and Forest Hills. It is a collection of 21 detailed essays by noted architectural historians as well as fascinating archival images carefully edited by the former director of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA), Robert B. MacKay. While MacKay acknowledges early in the book that the work is not meant to be a comprehensive study of all development activity during that period, the 304 pages do not disappoint. History comes alive, though the text is dense and the reader must be committed. It is not a casual coffee table book.

That being said, *Gardens of Eden* is the definitive work on Long Island's Progressive Era community development. It explains with great clarity how the Long Island of today would not exist without the creative and industrious efforts of real estate developers such as Thomas Benton Ackerson, Frank and Ward Melville, and Carl Fisher. It also helps define the role that

continued on page 34

At over a half-mile long, there are some who say Corviale blocks the western wind from reaching Rome.

PHOTO BY OTTO HAINZL

CHE COSA CORVIALE ? continued from page 33

building is immortalized alongside details that disclose traces of people's lives: from graffiti to living rooms, from architectural details to clothes hanging to dry. There are traces, but there is no life. This approach is not new and has a long history in architectural photography. And so it is that the people who live in Corviale are intentionally and remarkably absent from Hainzl's work—in fact the only living beings are sheep on the cover of the book and a pony in the last photo of the series. The absence is so prominent that Angelika Fitz feels that the only evidence of the residents' existence is a "handful of antennas and satellite dishes."

This is an unfortunate mystification of the reality on the ground, which, on the contrary, is loud and dynamic, rough and humorous, full of human tensions and social and political conflicts. Such a point of view places the book in the 2000s tradition of the "travel diary" of artists visiting dejected urban peripheries across the world.

Corviale, the book, belongs to a kind of visual and textual narrative that says more about the exotic curiosity of the author than about the place itself.

FRANCESCA RECCHIA IS AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER, WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE 4TH AFGHANISTAN CONTEMPORARY ART PRIZE, AND IS THE AUTHOR OF THREE BOOKS: *THE LITTLE BOOK OF KABUL*, *PICNIC IN A MINEFIELD* AND *DEVICES FOR POLITICAL ACTION*.

Boat Basin at Brightwaters circa 1910

COURTESY W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

GARDEN STATES continued from page 33

Long Island played as a significant influence in the national vision of American idealism.

Though the Progressive Era reached into the 1920s, the wind was taken out of the sails with the start of WWI in 1914. That particular era of optimism stalled, and was later revisited following WWII—although residential expectations were considerably more humble. But the Cold War era, with its fears of communism and nuclear destruction, robbed the American population of the paradisiacal optimism of earlier generations. Times changed.

Today, remnants of various garden communities exist. In 2007, for example, the Village of Brightwaters celebrated its centennial. Richard F. Welch, a contributing writer to the book, said that the commemoration featured many festivities and events, "but the real star was the village itself." While being surrounded by a patchwork of post WWII development, Brightwaters "remains a virtual time capsule." As Welch says, it is a "community that takes pride in its distinctive identity and remains committed to its preservation."

We can be thankful that such communities still exist and are well maintained. After reading *Gardens of Eden,* jump in the car, and go on an architectural treasure hunt.

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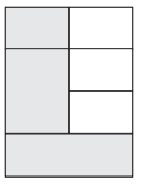

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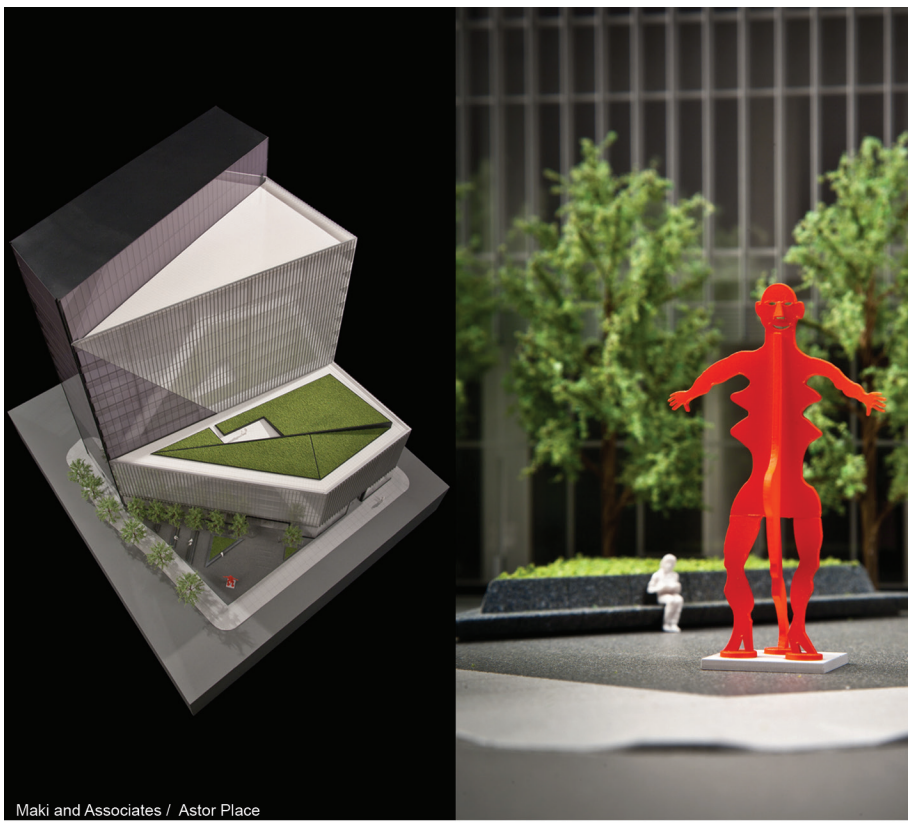

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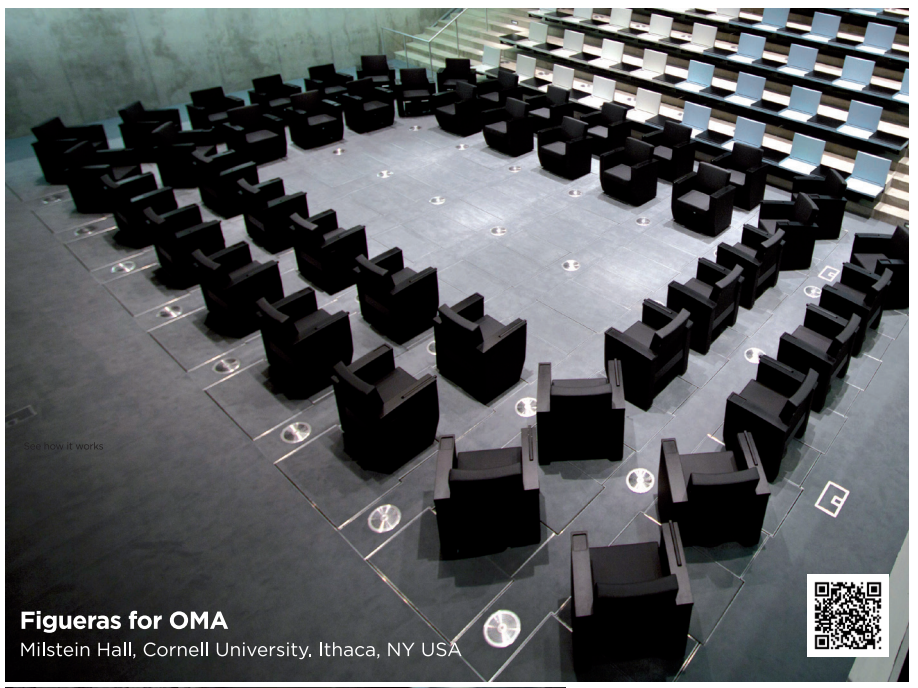

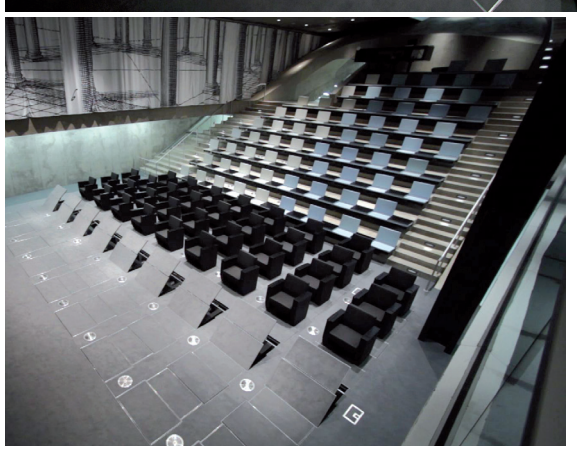

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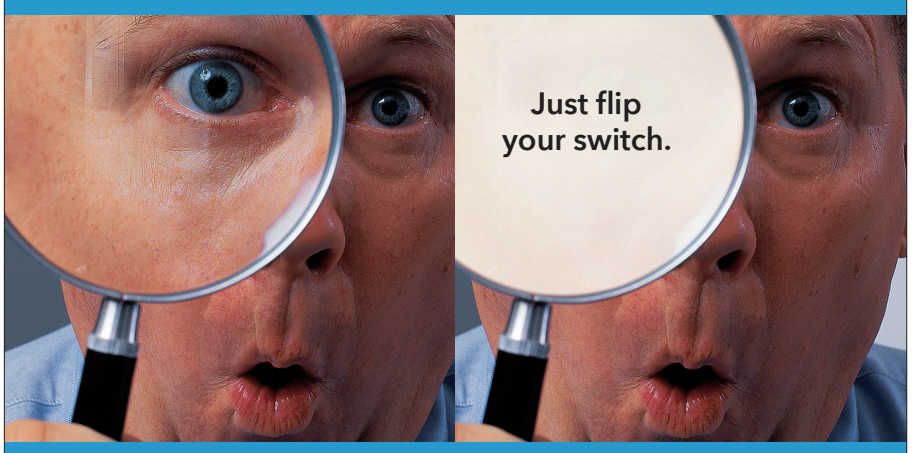

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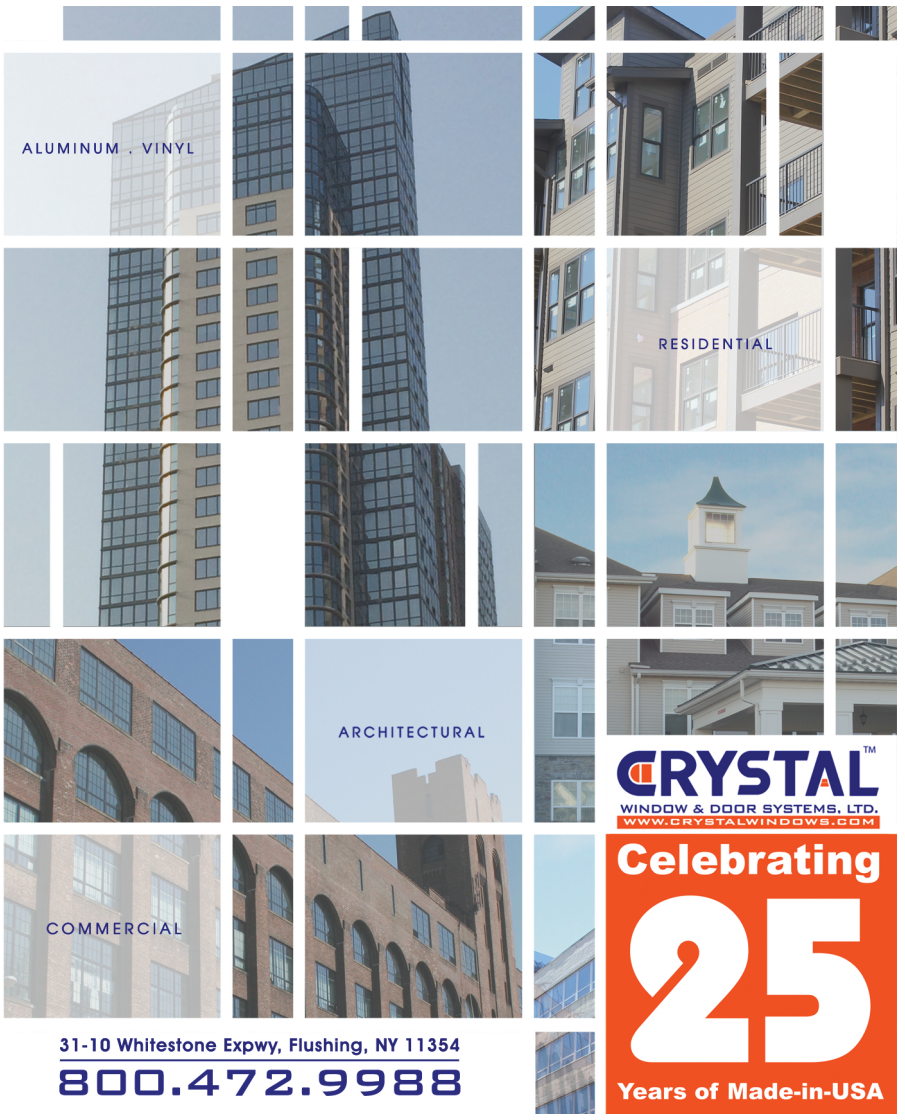

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KEN SMITH

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT KEN SMITH SHARES WHY HE THINKS A TREE'S BOTTOM HALF IS ITS BETTER HALF.

A TRUNK-ATED IMAGE

I have been photographing tree stumps for a number of years. I am fascinated by these ghost remnants in our landscape. Often overlooked or ignored, stumps are beautiful and evocative of continuity within the changing environment.

Urban trees have challenged life spans with many threats to their existence and longevity: lack of soil, indifference of care, and arboricide. The average city tree has a limited lifespan, often measured in a few decades. While trees contribute so much to human health, environmental sustainability, and quality of life, they often face a perilous existence in our contemporary urban culture.

Some cultures, however, revere trees. I'm blown away by the ancient plane trees at Villa Lante outside Rome. These hollowed out trees would have been cut down in the "risk averse" United States, but there they are a protected garden legacy. I'm also stunned by the ancient trees at the Imperial Palace in Beijing. These revered trees are in some cases centuries old and their Qi is considered a source of life and energy for humans.

Composer John Cage once said (in paraphrase) that decay is fundamental to life. Stumps and snags provide critical habitats and ecological benefits in the urban forest.

KEN SMITH

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