

# The Architect's Newspaper

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## Hiding in Plain Sight

Cryptocurrency mining operations in the Lone Star State are illuminating the inextricable link between crypto and fossil fuels.

In 2018, Bitmain, a Chinese company that makes specialized computers for mining cryptocurrency, took an interest in the small town of Rockdale, Texas. Within a shuttered aluminum plant, the firm envisioned the world's largest Bitcoin mining operation. Bitmain planned to invest half a billion dollars in the venture, promising 325,000 mining rigs consuming 500 megawatts of power and creating up to 600 new jobs for the Central Texas area. But in the winter of that year, Bitcoin tumbled in price to just above \$3,000 per share (it had been \$6,300 that fall, after peaking around \$20,000 late the prior year), and the company was forced to lay off thousands of staff globally and dramatically scale back its Rockdale operation. It was a blow to the town of 5,800, which had lost a long-shot bid to be the home for Amazon's HQ2 project and was desperate for business to save its languishing postindustrial economy. Amid a renewed Bitcoin boom, things are starting to look up again for Lone Star State cities like Rockdale.

Texan weather might not seem conducive to stacking thousands of electricity-hungry computers, but in many ways Texas provides an ideal landscape for cryptomining: a deregulated and decentralized power market, a low-regulation and low-tax environment, an active crypto lobby, abundant power from fossil and renewable sources, open land, disused factories. While other places, such as upstate New York, have had greater incredulity when it comes to setting up mining operations in outmoded power stations or factories (often requesting subsidies and tax abatements for vague promises of renewed employment), Texas has gone in the opposite direction, betting big on Bitcoin and other blockchain currencies. Now a proposed law, written with help from the Texas Blockchain Council, would enshrine virtual currencies in the state's commercial code. If successful, Texas would join Wyoming, which enacted a similar law in 2019.

Since the Bitmain fiasco, cryptomining companies have been flocking to the arid locale in droves. **continued on page 14**

## In Houston, a highway expansion project is the site of a battle over environmental justice. **Read on page 18**



## Houston Visions 2020

An exhibition at the Architecture Center Houston augurs a more resilient future for the city.



It is a cruel joke that a handful of so-called 500-year floods have befallen Houston in the past five years alone. Hurricanes Harvey in 2017, Imelda in 2019, and Laura in 2020 pummeled the Bayou City, and a catastrophic February 2021 winter storm left it waterless and powerless for days. Experts had been sounding the alarm regarding Houston's insufficient preparedness well ahead of these weather events. (A 2016 report from ProPublica and The Texas Tribune outlining how damaging a potential hurricane would be was damningly prescient.) When calamities occur on an annual basis, Houston can no longer carry on with the status quo.

Enter Houston Visions 2020, an initiative and exhibition organized by the City

of Houston and the AIA, marking the first collaboration of this sort between the two. After launching in the aftermath of Harvey with a design competition for sustainable housing, the program put out a call for "visions" of Houston's resilient future, to be evaluated over the subsequent year by a jury of five architects and city officials. The result is a total of 28 projects spanning a range of scales and programs, loosely organized into five "clusters" highlighting different development types that the city could begin implementing tomorrow. With enough city officials seeing these projects, a few of the architectural solutions just might influence planning policies and perhaps even be realized. **continued on page 44**

# Windows & Walls

**Read on page 22**



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# Modes of Vision



Gensler’s High Hackers project is one of 28 future-forward designs in Houston Visions 2020.

The highway—that symbol of American expanse and individual freedom, but also of urban rupture and plight—is under attack. In cities across the country, community and activist organizations, alongside business coalitions, have mounted steely campaigns to demolish over- and underpasses. Increasingly, high-ranking politicians are signaling their support too.

Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg has repeatedly framed the Biden administration’s \$2.25 trillion infrastructure bill in terms of equity and connectivity. Perhaps the most publicized aspect of the bill, aside from its price tag (to the right, it’s far too high; to the left, far too low), was a line item to devote tens of billions of dollars to redress the legacy of urban renewal—in some cases, through the dismantlement of city highways. The government bears responsibility for the violence enacted on mostly Black and Brown, poor and working-class people a half century ago, Buttigieg suggested to The Verge in May. “[W]e know it’s often been with federal dollars in federal policies that a lot of communities were destroyed or divided by transportation infrastructure like highways,” he said, adding that “we have a chance to put this right, and when we do, we think everybody benefits.”

Buttigieg went on to clarify that demolition wouldn’t be the sole response; “bridging over and under” an obstructive structure to create more acreage for public space could prove a more appealing or feasible solution, depending on the context. Something, say, like a cap or deck park. In recent years, planners and developers have glommed onto this girthier riff on New York’s High Line, where public and green space is superimposed over a multilane downtown roadway. Many point to the example of Klyde Warren Park in Texas as a repeatable case study; there are talks for duplicates to be built in El Paso and elsewhere. But such projects can be stealthily destructive and are often for the benefit of downtown residents and property values. So argues Sito Negron, a steward of the city’s Sunset Heights neighborhood, in an editorial (page 12) criticizing the deck park proposal offered by the Texas

Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Boosters, he writes, have the temerity to couch a potentially disruptive and harmful project in the language of equity.

Meanwhile, Jack Murphy’s feature story (page 18) observes how well-established community groups in Houston have been recently joined by career politicians in their fight to stop TxDOT’s I-45 expansion project. Murphy, an editor of Rice University’s *Cite* journal for urban studies, takes an aerial perspective of the conflict; this is complemented by Iwan Baan’s excellent helicopter shots of concrete curlicues, sun-baked flyovers, and the thousands of cars—looking like ants from this vantage—that whiz through them. Here is an alienating, yet oddly captivating vision, one made possible by cheap fuel.

Energy and ecology figure prevalently in the architect and researcher Kiel Moe’s new book, *Unless: The Seagram Building Construction Ecology*. Sixty-five years after its opening, Mies’s canonical Park Avenue tower still seduces with its tacit appeals to solemnity, elegance, and order—that is, until one peers behind its whiskey-hued curtain glass and brass filigree and begins tabulating the expenditures in raw materials and human labor its construction necessitated. This is exactly what Moe does and does clearly. Readers of his fine volume will never be able to look at buildings the same way again, whether well-appointed types like Seagram or the hundreds of ungainly knockoffs it inspired.

Buildings play a secondary role in the initiative and exhibition Houston Visions 2020, which Harish Krishnamoorthy reviews in this issue (page 44). Many of the more than two dozen projects in the show, now open at Architecture Center Houston, operate at the scale of the region; they, too, take from the “ecology” well. (Indeed, some of the “proposals” seem drunk on the stuff.) The overarching rubric is one of resiliency—a mixed bag of a concept, to be sure—expressed in the tell-tale parlance of equity and connectivity. We might be glad about this, but we should also remember that words are not enough. **Samuel Medina**

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# 4 In Case You Missed It...

We corralled the top architecture and design stories buzzing about the internet.

## SO-IL's arts campus for the Amant Foundation will open in Williamsburg this month

SO-IL has revealed a new art campus for the nonprofit Amant Foundation in Williamsburg and a June 5 opening date. The four-building "art campus" will house not only the foundation's headquarters, but also space for free exhibitions, residencies, events, performances, and archives.

## Snøhetta unveils Central Campus Building for Ford's sprawling Dearborn complex

Snøhetta has shared details and updated renderings of a new innovation hub that will anchor the Ford Motor Company's over 700-acre Research & Engineering campus in Dearborn, Michigan. The 2-million-square-foot Central Campus Building will house 6,400 Ford employees from across a range of disciplines.

## The Architecture Billings Index continued to rise in April

The Architecture Billings Index rose for the third month in a row in April, portending a broader recovery. In the figures released by the American Institute of Architects, the ABI hit 57.9, up from 55.6 the month before (any figure over 50 is growth, under 50, decline), indicating that previous growth in February and March wasn't just a fluke.

## Maya Lin's ethereal Ghost Forest finally rises in Madison Square Park

Artist Maya Lin's stark commentary on climate change finally opened in Manhattan's Madison Square Park. *Ghost Forest* "resurrects" 49 Atlantic white cedar trees killed by saltwater infiltration in New Jersey's Pine Barrens. The 40-to-50-foot-tall trees will remain in the park through November 14.

## Biden cancels Trump administration's "American Hero"-stuffed statue park

Those wanting to experience the incongruous spectacle of a statuary park populated by Whitney Houston, Antonin Scalia, and Davey Crockett firsthand are out of luck. The Trump administration's proposed National Garden of American Heroes was, as anticipated, nixed via executive order by President Joe Biden.

## SOM's shorter 250 Water Street tower approved for the South Street Seaport

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's considerably scaled-back mixed-use tower proposed for 250 Water Street—a surface parking lot at present within Lower Manhattan's Seaport Historic District—wins the approval of New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission.

## Daniel Libeskind will redesign Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue

Polish-American architect Daniel Libeskind and his eponymous studio have been selected by Pittsburgh's Tree of Life/Or L'Simcha Congregation to lead an expansive redesign of its synagogue as part of the REMEMBER. REBUILD. RENEW campaign. On October 27, 2018, the synagogue was the site of a mass shooting that claimed 11 lives.

## Tokyo's Nakagin Capsule Tower faces renewed threats of demolition

The management association for Kisho Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Tower in Tokyo has voted to sell the iconic building to the landowner. This move could potentially lead to its demolition in the face of efforts to save and preserve the nearly 50-year-old landmark, which has seen better days.



## Artist Theaster Gates will design the 2022 Serpentine Pavilion

American artist and urbanist Theaster Gates will design the next iteration of the Serpentine Pavilion, the first nonarchitect to win the commission in the program's 21-year history. Gates is an urban planner by training but frequently integrates sound, motion, and architectural features into his work.

## Art Gensler passes away at 85

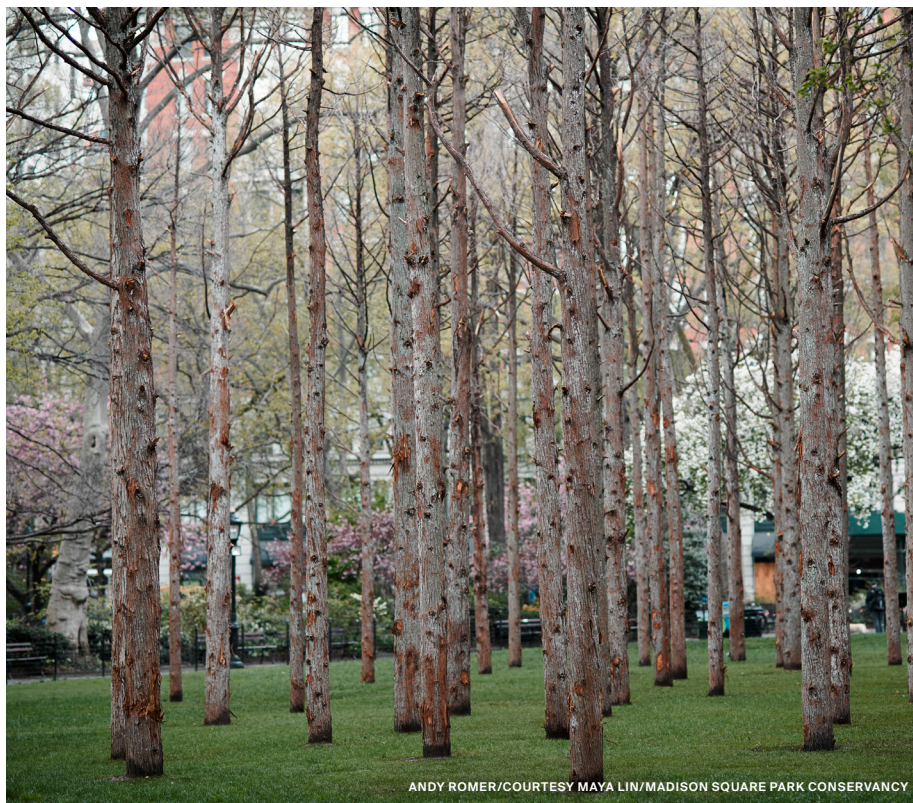
Millard Arthur Gensler Jr., or Art Gensler, passed away at his home in Mill Valley, California, on May 10. Gensler had been battling a lung disease for the last 18 months. He was 85. A businessman and architect, Gensler founded the company that bears his name in 1965 and eventually grew it into the world's largest architecture firm.

## Amale Andraos is stepping down as dean of Columbia GSAPP

Amale Andraos announced that she would be stepping down as dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. Her term will end on December 31, 2021. Andraos will focus her attention on the newly formed Climate School, which brings all of Columbia's climate initiatives and majors under one umbrella.

## AIA chief executive Robert Ivy to retire at the end of this year

The American Institute of Architects has announced that its executive vice president and chief executive officer, Robert Ivy, FAIA, will retire at the end of 2021 after nearly a decade in the association's top leadership role.



## Terence Riley, former Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at the MoMA, is dead

Terence Riley, who made an outsized impact in the architectural worlds of New York City and Miami, has passed away. Riley, born in 1954, served as the Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at The Museum of Modern Art from 1992 to 2005.

## Igor Marjanović named dean of Rice School of Architecture

Serbia-born architect and educator Igor Marjanović has been appointed William Ward Watkin Dean of Rice University’s School of Architecture, filling a vacancy that’s been open since June 2019, when former Dean Sarah Whiting departed for the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

## Canadian landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander dies at 99

German-born Canadian landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, who revolutionized mid-20th century urban play spaces and cleared the path for women in the profession, died just weeks shy of her centenary. She was the first woman to graduate with a degree in landscape architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

## SWA Group tapped for memorial and LGBTQ+ space at Harvey Milk Plaza

SWA Group was selected by Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza (FHMP) to lead the design of an inclusive new memorial-anchored LGBTQ+ space at the Muni Metro subway station plaza in San Francisco’s Castro District. The firm shared its conceptual design plans ahead of Harvey Milk Day, May 22.

## Germane Barnes wins the 2021 Wheelwright Prize

Germane Barnes, a Miami-based architect, urban designer, educator, and founding member of the Black Reconstruction Collective is on a winning streak. In May, he was named the recipient of 2021 Harvard Graduate School of Design Wheelwright Prize for his proposal Anatomical Transformations in Classical Architecture.

## Will SHoP’s 111 West 57th Street supertall house the world’s largest NFT museum?

Todd Morley, co-founder of the global block-buster financial services company Guggenheim Partners, announced that he was all-in on cryptocurrencies and was looking to build a “blockchain tower” in Midtown Manhattan. All signs, however, point to 111 West 57th Street.

## Pritzker prize winner Paulo Mendes da Rocha passes away at 92

With the passing of Brazilian architect and 2006 Pritzker winner Paulo Mendes da Rocha, the architecture world has lost another luminary in a month already marked by high-profile deaths. He passed away on May 23 in São Paulo after a battle with lung cancer.

## Chipperfield Architects completes careful renovation of Mies’s Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin

The top-to-bottom refurbishment of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s Neue Nationalgalerie, a boxy bi-level landmark erected from granite, glass, concrete, and steel in the heart of Berlin’s Kulturforum cultural complex, wrapped up in April. Construction was headed up by the Berlin office of David Chipperfield Architects.

## Memphis’s Hernando de Soto Bridge shuttered after major fracture discovered

A logistical nightmare is unfolding along the lower Mississippi River following the discovery of a major (and terrifying-looking) structural crack in the steel beam of the Hernando de Soto Bridge. The nearly 50-year-old through-truss bridge carries Interstate 40 across the Mississippi between Memphis, Tennessee, and West Memphis, Arkansas.

## Diamond Schmitt unveils shared home of Ottawa Public Library and Library and Archives Canada

A new landmark is officially set to rise near Parliament Hill in the Canadian capital, Ottawa: the Ottawa Public Library and Library and Archives Canada Joint Facility. Designed by Toronto’s Diamond Schmitt Architects with local firm KWC Architects, the 216,000-square-foot complex will hold the fourth-largest collection in the world.

## Out with the classical...

Justin Shubow, chair of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), along with three other members of the seven-member committee—landscape architect Perry Guillot, architect Steven Spandle, and artist Chas Fagan—have been asked to resign by the Biden administration. Each was appointed by former President Trump. The news was first reported on May 24 by The Federalist and NPR.

Earlier that day, Catherine M. Russell, director of the White House Office of Presidential Personnel, wrote a letter to each of the four commissioners, asking them to resign that evening or be terminated. Shubow, who also serves as president of the National Civic Art Society, declined the request to resign.

Shubow shared his reaction with *AN*: “In the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts’ 110-year history, no commissioner—let alone elected chairman—has been removed by a president. Were Biden to remove commissioners, it would set a dangerous precedent for the politicization of a nonpartisan body. Each of the commissioners in question is a proponent of classical public art and architecture; this is a clear attack on that style, even though the vast majority of Americans prefer it. Ironically, President Biden is a great admirer of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a staunch proponent of classical architecture for Washington, D.C.”

The CFA, which functions as an independent agency of the U.S. government, was established in 1910, with Daniel Burnham as its first chair. Formed to protect the McMillan Plan—the 1902 project that created the National Mall and other D.C. landmarks within the monumental core—the CFA is tasked with reviewing the “design and aesthetics” of all new government-funded construction in the capital. (It does not have authority to outright approve or reject construction projects.)

“I was lawfully appointed by the president

in 2018 and have served on the commission honorably, being elected chairman by my fellow commissioners.... I have not received a single complaint about my performance,” Shubow continued.

An outspoken proponent of classical architecture and ardent critic of Brutalism, Shubow was an author of Trump’s controversial, now-revoked Beautiful Architecture executive order.

Southampton, New York-based Guillot designed the revamped Rose Garden, and Spandle, based in Hoboken, New Jersey, was the lead architect for Melania Trump’s classically inspired tennis pavilion at the White House. North Carolina-based Fagan is known for his sculptural works—including a notable facsimile of Ronald Reagan that sits in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol—and his large oil paintings of American presidents.

On May 25, NPR reported that the White House intends to appoint the following artists, architects, and educators to replace the four commissioners: Peter D. Cook, a design principal with HGA Architects who has worked on a number of high-profile projects, including the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture; Hazel Ruth Edwards, a professor at and chair of Howard University’s Department of Architecture; Justin Garrett Moore, a designer, educator, and former executive director of the New York City Public Design Commission who currently serves as inaugural program officer of the Humanities in Place program at the Andrew Mellon Foundation; and Billie Tsien, partner at Todd Williams Billie Tsien Architects.

While this group of appointees represents a far more diverse set of backgrounds for the CFA, the removal of Guillot leaves the commission with no landscape architects. As the Cultural Landscape Foundation pointed out to *AN*, there were three during the Obama administration.

## In the Big House

In late May, Swiss architect Valerio Olgiati posted a highly stylized and hyper realistic rendering of two cubic, rust-colored structures on his Instagram account. The designs are typical Olgiati, exhibiting his flair for making stone look light and airy and featuring large, crisp square windows. Billowing white curtains, whimsically drawn, hang loose from each aperture’s frame. What appears to be a luxury residential project is in fact a design

for a prison in Lausanne, according to the photo caption. This caused some confusion and mixed feelings on Instagram and Twitter; British architect and author Douglas Murphy tweeted the image, expressing disbelief at the buildings’ purported function. While one tweeter noted the “strong Adjaye vibes,” others condemned it, with one user writing, “if I were them I would not do this.” Whether or not Olgiati’s design will be realized remains to be seen.

Read more at [archpaper.com](https://www.archpaper.com)

West

Oakland Museum of California



On June 18, the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) will reopen its campus to the public after a protracted closure due to a combination of planned construction work and the COVID-19 crisis. San Francisco-based Mark Cavagnero Associates and the MacArthur Fellowship-winning landscape architect, artist, and urban designer Walter Hood of Oakland’s Hood Design Studio worked together to oversee several major enhancements including the removal of a border wall along the museum’s northern side, the creation of a new entrance that opens up the campus along 12th Street, and improved pedestrian accessibility

along 10th Street. Famed for its lush gardens, expansive lawn, koi pond and reflecting pool, and terrace-topped tri-level museum building constructed from concrete and glass, OMCA’s seven-acre lakefront campus was originally designed by Kevin Roche in collaboration with landscape architects Dan Kiley and Geraldine Knight Scott. **Matt Hickman**

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East

Polar Park



The Worcester Red Sox, the Boston Red Sox’s Triple-A minor league affiliate, christened their new home last month: Polar Park, a years-in-the-making \$157 million facility that ranks as the most expensive MiLB ballpark ever constructed. A groundbreaking ceremony for the new stadium, which anchors a two-phase, \$240 million planned redevelopment of the city’s “resurgent” Canal District master-planned by Beyer Blinder Belle, was held in July 2019, but construction was halted owing to the pandemic. While the completion of Polar Park—designed by Tommy Quirk, a Worces-

ter native and president of the Somerville, Massachusetts-based D’Agostino Izzo Quirk Architects (DAIQ)—has generated excitement among Worcester residents and baseball fans across New England, one local critic found it to be “underwhelming” and evidence of “not so much an architectural shortcoming as a failure of city planning and a lack of vision.” **MH**

122 Madison St  
Worcester, MA

East

Philadelphia Museum of Art



In early May, the Philadelphia Museum of Art pulled back the curtain on a series of major renovations led by Frank Gehry of the institution’s historic 1928 Beaux Arts building. The \$233 million overhaul, completed as part of the museum’s Core Project, adds 90,000 square feet of programmed space including a restored western reception room, a new auditorium, and the completed Vaulted Walkway—a 640-foot-long corridor now accessible after decades of being off-limits to the public. Additionally, areas previously

dedicated to administrative purposes, along with an old restaurant and retail spaces, have been transformed into two new gallery suites, together totaling more than 20,000 square feet. Of the redesign, Gehry said that he and his team “let the museum guide our hand.” **MH**

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Midwest

TQL Stadium



Professional soccer club FC Cincinnati has moved into its new home, a 26,000-seat MLS stadium with a programmable LED facade that serves as a new and very hard-to-miss point of connection between the historic West End and Over-the-Rhine districts just north of downtown Cincinnati. The \$250 million Populous-designed stadium, formerly known as West End Stadium before hometown freight brokerage firm Total Quality Logistics (TQL) secured the naming rights in late April, ranks as one of the largest-capacity MLS stadiums in the United

States and features the widest video board of any soccer-specific sports venue in North America. Situated along Central Parkway, the 12.4-acre complex is externally wrapped with over 500 vertical aluminum fins, which are individually programmed to come alive for nighttime events as part of an integrated LED video display system. **MH**

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# It's a Small World after All

Historian and *AN* contributor Peter Lang reports from Venice on the latest architectural biennale.

At last month's opening of Venice's 17th International Architecture Biennale, a palpable sense of relief was in the air. After successive lockdown orders and travel restrictions, attendees were happy to explore the Arsenale and Giardini, the program's primary venues; not even the curtailment of openings, limitations on gatherings, or the introduction of a significant number of safety measures could dampen the mood. COVID-19 postponed director Hashim Sarkis's Biennale for a year, and though the global pandemic has certainly sharpened his curatorial prompt, *How Will We Live Together?*, the resulting projects and displays betray a wistful attitude.

Sarkis set up a simple scalar structure for the exhibition, beginning with the body and continuing through a succession of ever-expanding scales: the house, the community, the city, the globe. To my surprise, many of the participating architects and designers held to these parameters; indeed, the show is short on the kind of trendsetting, wildly speculative proposals typical of Biennales past. This holds true even for the projects tackling the planetary scale, the theme that most fully captures the spirit of the central question. But rather than presentations weaving together climate change, societal polarization, and airborne viruses, there are isolated fragments and curios that never quite coalesce. When I asked Jean-Louis Cohen, the noted architectural historian, what he thought of this year's effort as he toured the exhibition grounds, he observed that the collection of moon rocks, water projects, geographical maps, and astronomical models was organized "like a 19th-century museum of natural history, with a similar level of naïveté."

While it is no doubt true that the vast assortment of disparate architectural responses on display at the Central Pavilion in the Giardini and in the Arsenale's Corderie were conceived mostly before the pandemic hit, the extra year granted to Sarkis and participants cannot be discounted. They might have spent that time trying to tease out the complications wrought by COVID-19 and the catalyzing, or distorting, effects they will have on the discipline. The uninitiated and casual visitors curious as to what architecture might look like in a postpandemic world will likely leave disappointed.

If the most salient issue of the current moment went largely unexplored, those projects that engaged in empirical research fared better. The most effective pieces in this register came from the Global South. A film by Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal's group DAAR told of their attempts to landmark the Dheisheh refugee camp in the West Bank, and Forensic Oceanography and Malkit Shoshan's Foundation for Achieving Seamless Territory investigated the spaces of militarized borders (in Gaza and North Africa, respectively). They drive home the point that for architecture to become transformative in today's world it needs to address and make visible the unbalanced distribution of global resources and the extreme social privileges that keep it all going.

Among the national pavilions there were some delays in openings and incomplete projects, owing to lack of personnel and to basic logistical problems. The overwhelming presence of QR codes—little else constituted the German pavilion—aimed to blur the



**Top:** *American Framing* at The American pavilion

**Middle:** *Con-nect-ed-ness* at The Danish pavilion

**Bottom:** *The Garden of Privatised Delights* at The British pavilion

lines between the physical and the virtual, but was largely superfluous, like those iPad restaurant menus one finds in airports. The Russian and Austrian pavilions, meanwhile, had more success translating their exhibits into virtual online portals, beginning already in 2020. (For the record, I was one of the invited bloggers at the Austrian pavilion during the vernissage.) But these were few and far between; most plowed ahead with their originally scheduled programming.

There were fewer "stunt" installations than in previous iterations, but the Danes went so far as to flood their pavilion in a bid to illustrate the "connectedness" that water fosters among people, animals, and plants. Working with curator Marianne Krogh, Lundgaard & Tranberg Arkitekter devised a system of cisterns and piping that circulated water throughout. Visitors navigated the damp interiors on floating wood platforms and were even invited to drink tea made from lemon verbena cultivated on-site. An immediate hit with the vernissage crowds, the project is foremost a poetic statement on ecology and on water's life-nourishing properties (never mind wetlands that act as breeding grounds for malaria and other diseases).

The Japanese pavilion proved another popular draw. The pavilion was lined with wooden building parts, all belonging to an old wooden house that curator Kadowaki Kozo and his team had dismantled and shipped to Venice. Paired with images of the family that once resided there, this architectural dissection was one of the most touching moments of the Biennale.

But it was perhaps the U.S. pavilion that stirred up the most conversation, if only because of its immense size. Curated by architects and University of Illinois at Chicago instructors Paul Andersen and Paul Preissner, the installation comprised a freestanding multistoried open wood frame that completely masked the Palladian pavilion behind it. Visitors who ascended to its upper levels were rewarded with some great views of the park grounds. According to Preissner, the project reflects the omnipresence of wood platform construction in American society. "We wanted to produce something weird out of something normal, instead of trying to domesticate the exotic," he told me. Ironically, the dimensional lumber originated not from the United States but from nearby Austria: a pandemic-induced lumber shortage in the U.S. forced Preissner and Andersen to search for more-local suppliers.

Despite the great advances in Zoom meetings and virtual tours in the past year, nothing matches the experience of getting one's feet on the ground and exploring the Biennale on one's own. This 17th edition doesn't shy away from nostalgia and comfort; it is chock-full of miniature building models, dressed-up mannequins, and handcrafted furniture, as well as soothing environments (such as the British pavilion's *Garden of Privatised Delights*). They bring to mind the ways architects and artists responded, around the turn of the 20th century, to the Industrial Revolution and the dreary factory buildings and overcrowded, polluted cities it brought about. If John Ruskin woke up in Venice today, he would like what he could see here.

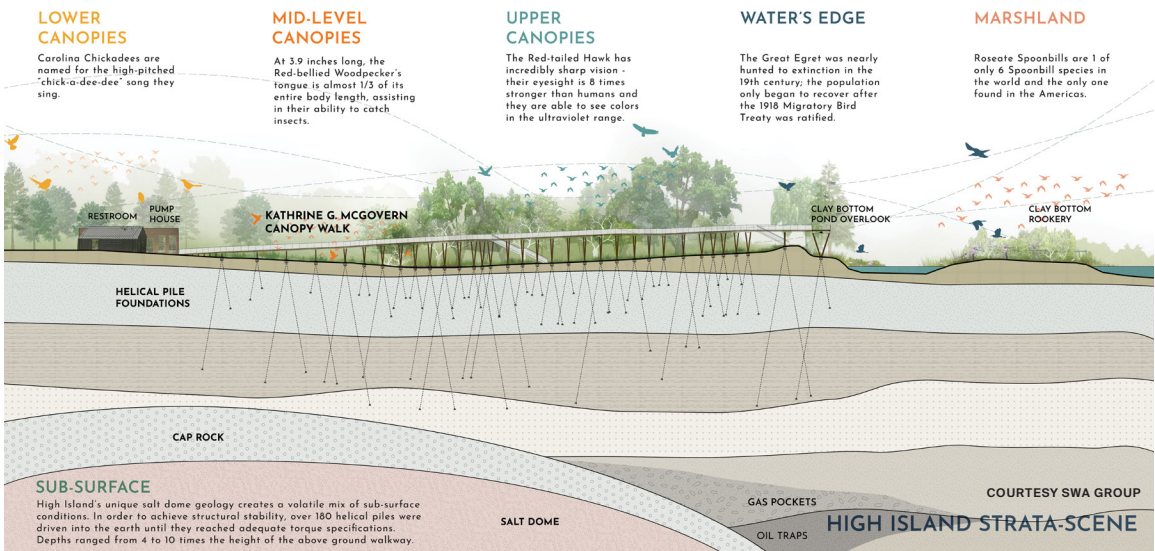
**Peter Lang**

## Top Flight

A project in a Texan postindustrial landscape welcomes migratory birds—and their onlookers.



JONNU SINGLETON/COURTESY SWA GROUP



COURTESY SWA GROUP

At first blush, High Island, Texas, sounds downright dystopian. A site of 20th-century oil extraction, the landscape has as its defining feature a massive salt dome—a pimple-like swell rising 38 feet above sea level. Located on the eastern side of Galveston Bay, just inland from the Gulf of Mexico, High Island is prone to destructive hurricanes and also has the dubious distinction of being a burial ground for the serial killer Dean Corll.

But for some, High Island is a haven: each spring, the site welcomes thousands of migratory birds on their northward journey from Mexico that are drawn to the freshwater reservoirs and local flora. Ten thousand birders flock to High Island's bird sanctuaries annually, including Smith Oaks, a 177-acre site operated by the Houston Audubon Society. Now that site is better equipped to welcome them, thanks to the introduction of a 700-foot-long canopy walkway and support facilities from architects SWA Group and SCHAUM/SHIEH.

SWA, which Houston Audubon has engaged in a larger master-planning initiative

for the High Island site, sees the interventions as a means of making the landscape and fauna accessible to a larger population. The Kathrine G. McGovern Canopy Walkway opened in the late spring of 2020, providing an outdoor escape for Houstonians an hour and a half up the road. Matt Baumgarten, an associate principal in SWA's Houston office and design lead on the project, pointed out that the new elevated path immerses visitors in the landscape in a new way, "getting people up in the trees" and carving out "visual and educational accessibility that wasn't here before." (He and his children have frequented the site since the project's opening last year.)

Building in a bird sanctuary is a sensitive endeavor. Nesting seasons had to be factored into construction time lines, and the walkway needed to seamlessly integrate into the surroundings so as not to disturb bird populations. To accomplish that, the designers embraced visual and acoustic forms of camouflage and a V-shaped base that was minimally invasive. The design-

ers eschewed noisy metal decking in favor of kiln-dried southern yellow pine, a readily available material, so that the decking could be repaired easily as needed. "You can't necessarily make something that's going to last 500 years, but we did need the walkway to take high wind loads and copious rainfall," said Baumgarten. Natalia Beard, principal in charge of the project at SWA, said that Smith Oaks' industrial remnants were also taken as cues for the detailing of the underside. "It looks like this structure has always been here," she said.

Elsewhere at Smith Oaks, the Houston and New York City-based firm SCHAUM/SHIEH has completed two structures to support bird-peeping visitors. A 1920s brick pump house left over from the site's oil-extracting years has been renewed and transformed into a flexible open-air pavilion. Adjacent to it, the designers have built a new concrete structure containing restrooms, water fountains, and an information kiosk. Whereas SWA's walkway was intended to blend into the landscape,



JONNU SINGLETON

**Above:** Thousands of migratory birds—and nature-loving tourists—flock to the freshwater reservoirs of Smith Oaks bird sanctuary in High Island, Texas each year.

**Left, top:** There, a new, elevated 700-square-foot long canopy walkway, designed by SWA Group and SCHAUM/SHIEH, weaves through the 177-acre site, allowing visitors birds-eye views of the surrounding flora and fauna.

**Left, bottom:** The structure's minimally invasive design visually integrates it with the natural environment while protecting the homes of the park's avian residents.

however, this structure needed to suggest arrival, explained Troy Schaum, co-principal at the studio: "Even if you're one person down there—which often you might be—you would feel welcome, and it would be a marker that this is it, visually." Accordingly, Schaum and his studio have appointed the structure with a steep gabled metal roof and a flat graphic facade painted Audubon green. The building's asymmetrical composition was inspired by the wind-bent local trees, said Schaum.

In all areas, the avian populations came before anything else: if there was any evidence of disruption to a habitat during build-out, for example, construction had to cease. (Schaum said that there was even concern about the noise of the door closers on the bathroom potentially startling birds.) In activity and form, the goal was to intervene as little as possible: "It's easier in architecture to imagine a solution that's built, or that's an action," said Schaum. "It's very hard to imagine a solution born out of restraint." **Lila Allen**

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## These Walls Can Talk

At Tuskegee University, an architecture professor leverages historic preservation goals to meet community ones.



Architecture students at Tuskegee University participate in a window restoration workshop.

Traces of the past at Tuskegee University remind attentive students and visitors of the unique social conditions that produced the historic campus. Founded in 1881, the institution was built up by its first group of students and instructors. Their hands made the bricks and mixed the mortar, and if you look closely, you can find their fingerprints preserved in the building facades.

“Our campus is a living, organic entity because it was born out of the dirt and shaped by students and faculty,” said Kwesi Daniels, assistant professor of architecture at Tuskegee. “It’s alive, but it has been sitting dormant.” For four years, Daniels has worked to activate the school and community’s history, leading project-based learning and public workshops intended to stir up local investment in their preservation.

In Tuskegee, Alabama, where more than a quarter of the residents live in poverty and few employment opportunities exist outside of the university, Daniels sees an opportunity to get the local population involved in the region’s unique history. “As a National Historic Landmark, we have historic fabric [and] a community that’s in need of repair,” said Daniels. Given the resources accorded to landmarks, and their high visibility, he believes that historic preservation is uniquely equipped to give residents agency over their city.

Daniels is currently working in Macon County, Alabama, to preserve the Armstrong School, the last remaining church school for African Americans in the area. He structured his design courses so as to capture the full arc of the process—from measurement to future planning. Students learned about construction documents to investigate and measure the building and produce a set of drawings. Subsequent coursework also had them write a landmarks nomination, create a stabilization plan, and furnish guidelines for how that building can be used after it’s been restored. Daniels also focused the students’ attention on the importance of outreach and gained the support of the University of Pennsylvania and community organizations around the county to help restore the Armstrong School.

Macon County has several other historic schools—called Rosenwald Schools—that are also in great need of repair. Built by Tuskegee University founder Booker T. Washington and Sears, Roebuck & Co. president Julius Rosenwald, the schools served rural Black communities and relied on community investment—often in the form of construction labor—for their success. Similarly, Daniels is helping to train community members to do preservation work

themselves.

Early on in his Tuskegee tenure (he joined the architecture school in 2017), Daniels began assembling a preservation workshop for students and volunteers. He focused specifically on the Shiloh Rosenwald School in Macon County, which required extensive window rehabilitation. Daniels also wanted students to learn brickmaking, citing its centrality to Tuskegee’s founding. “Washington learned how to make bricks, then taught students how to make bricks. And then at one point, the school was exporting over a million bricks a year, in addition to using bricks to build our campus,” he said. The resulting three-day workshop brought brick masons, students, and community members together with what Daniels calls “an all-star team” of preservation professionals.

“I’m watching them take lime and charcoal and mixing it with lime to create lime mortar. The brick masons gave a master class in how to ‘read’ bricks for the brick markings that tell you how it was made, and how you can even find the fingerprints in the brick,” recalled Daniels. “We saw our campus come alive.”

The 2018 workshop also brought to life the region’s history through an entire slew of programs, facilitated by how-tos on drone photography, hand measuring, and laser scanning. “Everything we’ve done since then, from documenting civil rights sites in Tuskegee and Montgomery to developing preservation plans for buildings on campus and around the community—and now a virtual tour of the campus and historic sites around our community—all of that is all in an outgrowth from snippets of that initial workshop,” said Daniels.

For him, and the growing movement of Black practitioners of historic preservation of which he is a part, the prevailing discourse must move from preserving buildings to preserving communities. Daniels goes further, however, with his “social sustainability” approach. “I see the work that we’re doing now as the integration of sustainability and preservation, because there’s nothing more sustainable than preserving a community and reusing old buildings,” he explained.

“A socially sustainable environment,” he added, “is one where the people who are living in that environment can continue to live in the place that they grew up, a stake of claim to that space.” By turning local residents’ attention to historic sites, Daniels’s work enables them to stake their claim to the community’s past and future. **Anjolie Rao**

## Just the Ticket

A new railside public park designed by Ross Barney Architects rouses once-sleepy downtown Rogers, Arkansas.



A view of the Play Yard at the newly opened Railyard Park in Rogers, Arkansas

Many designers would find an active railway an impediment to the creation of a new five-acre public park. For Carol Ross Barney, founder and design principal of Chicago-based Ross Barney Architects, the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad train tracks that run through downtown Rogers, Arkansas, were a local trademark worth venerating, not obscuring. The firm’s design for the new track-straddling Railyard Park embraces its industrial heritage while transforming it into a vibrant outdoor destination for the community.

Of course, designing an activated park space around a railway, which in this case involves freight trains passing through at a snail’s pace a couple of times per day, depending on demand, was not without initial vexations. “We were really challenged by the idea that, no matter what we did, we were still going to have a train running through the middle,” Ross Barney said. “But [the movement of the trains] actually makes the park somewhat kinetic. And in a way, the tracks really call attention to Rogers’s beginnings.”

Rogers, which is currently home to roughly 66,000 residents in the rapidly growing pocket of Northwest Arkansas, was once a prosperous railway water stop and cider production hub. The design of the newly opened Railyard Park references this history throughout. Along with play structures largely designed by Ross Barney Architects, the Play Yard, a children’s recreational area, is populated by old freight containers repurposed as public washrooms and a retired gantry crane that serves as both a “gateway and a piece of play equipment,” as Ross Barney explained. A trio of modernized water towers evoke a past time but also showcase contemporary art: murals by the Mexico City-born, Fayetteville-based Octavio

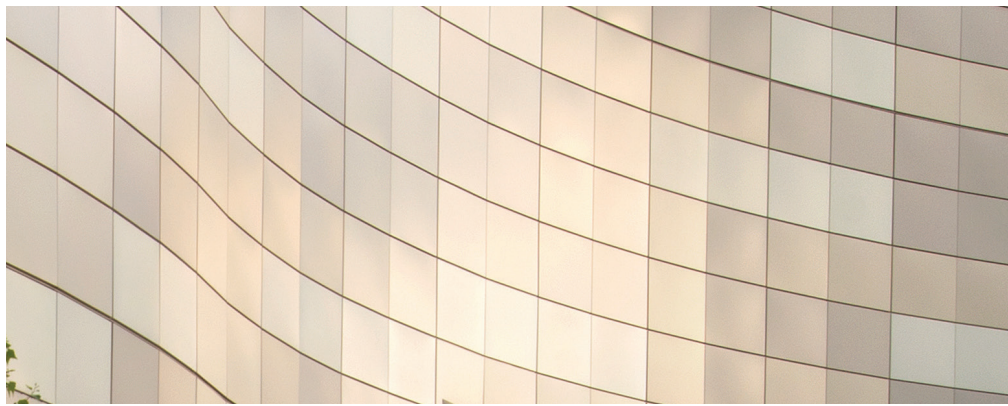
Logo, French street artist Mantra, and London-based Lakwena wrap the exteriors of each reservoir. The Butterfield Stage—a spacious pavilion for gatherings and live events named after the 19th-century stagecoach line that once rolled through town—incorporates an old trackside industrial building. (Most recently home to a farmers’ market, the structure will serve as a backstage and concession area.)

Across the tracks on the western fringes of the park, the tree-lined Frisco Plaza features wheeled picnic tables and benches that can be moved around the site; soaring, sail-like shading structures provide respite during the sweltering Ozarkian summers. Frisco Plaza, previously the site of a parking lot and a smaller, underutilized park, fuses Railyard Park with the historic storefronts of 1st Street and now serves as the backdrop of a seasonal farmers’ market.

The connection between Railyard Park and downtown Rogers is an important one, as the park—a project of the City of Rogers Department of Community Development, funded through a grant by the Walton Family Foundation’s Northwest Arkansas Design Excellence Program—is the fulcrum of a larger effort to draw people back to the historic downtown core of a city where “commerce is delegated to big boxes along the interstates on the edges of the town,” Ross Barney explained. “It’s an old town with a historic downtown that, until recently, has had virtually nothing in it anymore.”

Just steps from Frisco Plaza, another forthcoming downtown revitalization effort initiated by the Northwest Arkansas Design Excellence Program—this one headed by WXY Architecture + Urban Design—plans to reactivate a series of drab, Dumpster-dominated alleyways into dynamic pedestrian zones. “I’m really looking forward to seeing how that turns out,” Ross Barney said. **MH**

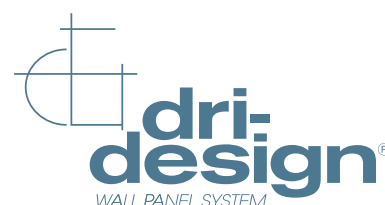
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# Cover-Up Job

Deck park concepts are increasingly in vogue in the Southwest's downtown cores, but they aren't a good fit for El Paso.

About two years ago, a spokesperson for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) was making the rounds of El Paso civic groups with a presentation touting the benefits of widening Interstate 10 through downtown, and adding frontage roads alongside a four-mile stretch of highway. TxDOT, driven in part by an anticipated increase in truck freight, is focused on widening freeways in core urban areas.

Part of the pitch was the typical traffic modeling that pushes most of these capacity-building exercises. The other, more novel part promised to deliver the city an urban amenity growing in popularity around the country—a cap creating verdant public space over the highway. This El Paso iteration would overlie the Trench, a 6-block-long depressed portion of I-10 edging the downtown core. Immediately north of the Trench are mostly commercial buildings.

The pitch continued: the El Paso deck park would be modeled after Dallas's 5.2-acre Klyde Warren Park, which has spurred development in its immediate vicinity. It turned out that the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, which created a group to promote transportation projects, had coordinated a visit to Klyde Warren for select elected officials and business leaders. This was done in some capacity with TxDOT, whose representative had shopped the concept around town.

The problem with all this—even now, two years on—was that the scheme hinged on widening the freeway and creating new frontage roads, which would take away the strip of mostly commercial properties just

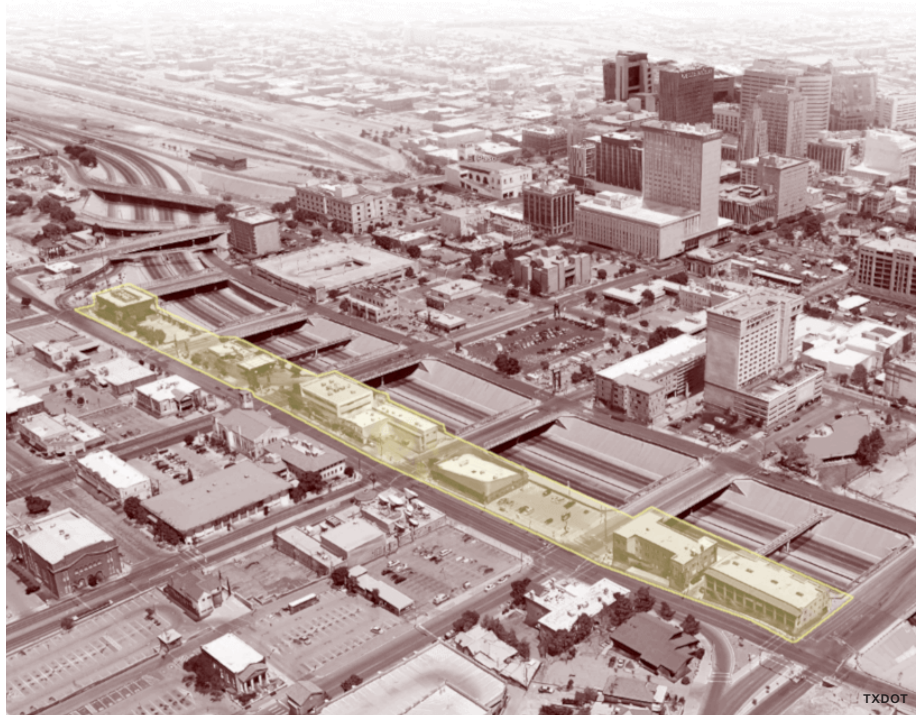
north of downtown, as well as properties adjacent to the freeway east of downtown. Those properties include two apartment buildings, one of them historic.

In addition to erasing property, the highway project would eliminate at least three existing crossings that are used by cars, bikes, and pedestrians and that help maintain a classic grid system that spreads out traffic. The deck park would not restore those connections. Finally, while there are intact neighborhoods to the northeast and northwest of downtown, what is directly north of downtown is mostly vacant lots and commercial buildings.

Troublingly, the language being used by deck park supporters is that of “equity,” “environmental justice,” and “connectivity.” The first two are flatly incorrect. This is an economic development project promoted by downtown developers. It may indeed be an amenity, perhaps one capable of attracting new private investments, as happened in Dallas, but it fails to live up to its stated aims.

In fact, if you look up Klyde Warren Park, you won't find articles on equity, the environment, or connectivity. You will find articles with titles like “How Klyde Warren Park Has Changed Dallas Real Estate” (*D Magazine*, September 2015).

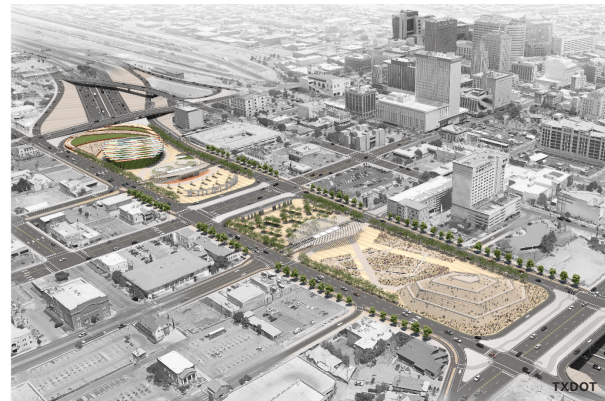
It undermines the very concepts of equity and connectivity when those terms are co-opted for economic development projects, and it undermines the purpose of federal funding when programs aimed at correcting years of highway destruction are instead used to cover up or deflect attention from further destruction.



**Above:** The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has proposed widening a segment of Interstate 10 bordering downtown El Paso called the Trench.

**Bottom, far left:** The Trench, so named because the freeway is depressed there, would eliminate a commercial strip to make room for frontage roads.

**Bottom, middle and right:** In addition, TxDOT has released concepts to cover an expanded Trench with a partial or full deck park. The idea is based on Klyde Warren Park in Dallas.



## Change at the top

“Now is the time to finally address major inequities—including those caused by highways that were built through Black and Brown communities, decades of disinvestment that left small towns and rural main streets stranded, and the disproportionate pollution burden from trucks, ports, and other facilities,” Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, testifying before the House Transportation Committee on March 25, said. The national conversation on this topic has been growing for decades, but the secretary's words were stronger stuff from the top than advocates are used to.

The scenario he described is exactly what happened in El Paso, which once had one of the best city cores in the Southwest, if not the nation. As set down by the 1925 City Plan, a well-designed grid, crisscrossed by streetcars, produced a beautiful city of neighborhoods. The urban fabric was the very definition of what cities now

seek to reproduce, with neighborhood-scale retail, parks, and schools all in walking distance, and with clusters for larger retail, with downtown being the centerpiece.

Nevertheless, El Paso political leaders and developers squandered this strong urban legacy and elected to follow the example of Southern California postwar sprawl. And when the freeway came calling, it's not surprising where it went and what it took with it.

One of the victims was Lincoln Park, home to a Black and Brown community in northeast El Paso. The freeway devastated the community and created a dividing line between north and south, in the form of I-10, that remains to this day. Further, there is the Chamizal port of entry just to the south of Lincoln Park, creating a tangle of overpasses, ramps, and roadways, interspersed with industrial and warehouse facilities woven throughout the community.

## The El Paso example

El Paso is a port city, where trucking and transportation logistics are big business, but it is also a green valley in the desert. It is increasingly gray, encased in concrete, with temperatures rising. There has been very little thought given by the political leaders and developers who control the built environment about the equity of driving national and international trade through the heart of the city and low-income and minority neighborhoods.

TxDOT proposes to make the situation worse, and the city and downtown developers are not pushing back. Instead, they are prepared to support the highway widening and frontage roads to gain a sought-after downtown amenity. It may be a very nice amenity and should stand or fall on that merit, but when it comes to equity and mitigation, urban improvements should be made east of downtown instead, in Lincoln Park, Five Points West, and the Chamizal, among other

locations, and west of downtown in the Sunset Heights and San Francisco Districts.

Deck park concepts are increasingly in vogue, and in many cases, maybe even most, they can aid equity or connectivity. But that's not the case in El Paso, where the language of justice is being used to cover up, or justify, a bad proposal.

That is something that should concern policy makers, if they really mean what they say.

**Sito Negron has been a reporter, editor, and writer, covering politics, policy, and culture. Currently, he serves as a communications director and policy aide for elected officials at the state and local level. He lives in Sunset Heights, El Paso, and is president of the Sunset Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association.**



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## Hiding in Plain Sight



Cryptocurrencies have found a haven in Texas.

**continued from front page** This past winter, the London-based Argo Blockchain announced plans to purchase a 320-acre plot in West Texas for a 200-megawatt mining facility. (Argo acquired a New York-based corporation that will give it access to up to 800 megawatts of electrical power in March.) HODL Ranch, a purportedly wind-powered computational center for Bitcoin mining and other GPU-driven applications, such as machine learning, is another West Texas operation. Run by the Lone Star State-based data-center company Skybox, the website promises customers an “UNMATCHED WEST TEXAS EXPERIENCE.” The Peter Thiel-backed Layer1 start-up launched its Texas enterprise last year. And just this spring, the U.S.-based Riot Blockchain acquired a 100-acre facility for \$80 million cash plus \$571 million in shares. (Riot has also been developing immersion cooling technology to fight the sweltering summer temperatures.) As of this writing, Bitcoin clocks in at just under \$32,000, a number that has dropped more than \$10,000 from yesterday and more than \$20,000 since I began researching this article, before Elon Musk turned on crypto. One might laugh if it weren’t so apocalyptic.

It’s hard to overstate the climactic impact of cryptocurrency. Bitmain’s Rockdale facility alone would have demanded as much power as roughly 400,000 homes. Globally, Bitcoin mining uses more electricity than medium-size countries like Argentina and the Netherlands. And the specialized computers used by miners can’t be put to work for much else and rapidly become outmoded. In a sector that prioritizes computational speed and scale above all, e-waste is a ballooning issue.

Crypto’s comparability to Texas’s rapacious oil economy is so obvious that it exceeds analogy—companies have been connecting mining machines to oil wells, using the natural gas flares that go otherwise wasted to power them. According to Matt Lohstroh, the cofounder of one such East Texas-based firm, Giga Energy Solutions, flared natural gas is “some of the cheapest energy around.” Giga gets it for free or pays a “nominal” fee.

While the viral images of wired crypto mines feeding off fossil fuels from oil wells represent to many the absurd reality of the 2020s, Lohstroh sees it differently, telling me via email that “natural gas will continue to be flared whether we are in the picture or not,” although “it is by no means economical to start drilling for natural gas as the cost for drilling a well is ginormous.” But for data scientist and tech columnist Alex de Vries, using this wasted “excess” from oil drilling isn’t merely making the best of a bad situation. “I don’t see it as a good thing to make a byproduct of fossil fuel extraction more profitable or profitable at all,” de Vries has said

of these projects. “It’s still producing emissions.”

Texan cryptomining has also laid bare vulnerabilities in Texas’s energy infrastructure. During the historic storm in February that forced nearly 70 percent of state residents and businesses into darkness, and cost more than 100 lives, some cryptomines had to go off-line as the power grid buckled. Others, though, sold electricity back at a profit.

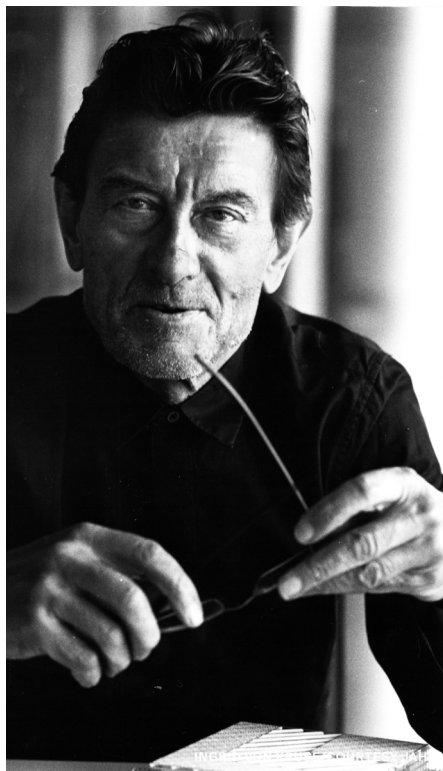
As architectural theorist Keller Easterling argued in her 2014 book *Extrastatecraft*, infrastructure is not just hidden mediums between physical modes of transportation, utilities, or communication but also overlapping signals, systems, standards, laws, and management styles. “Far from hidden,” she writes, “infrastructure is now the overt point of contact and access between us all—the rules governing the space of everyday life.” For instance, when HODL advertises its proximity to a highway, an airport, and a wind farm alongside an image of its private substation, it is entangling prototypical infrastructure—transit and power lines—with that of the economic and legal systems.

The crypto landscape emerges not only from technological conditions but also from a specific regulatory regime; cryptomining exists within a context of capitalist globalization and asymmetrical labor rights and costs that has emptied some of the world’s factories—like those of Rockdale—to fill others. Its infrastructure is much larger, much more encompassing, than “mere” hundred-acre data centers and wind farms and oil wells.

Data’s manifestation as physical systems undermines the common conception of crypto—or the cloud or the internet—as intangible ideas. But these ideas exist through globe-snaring, ocean-crossing, world-warming, land-using, mineral-extracting material substrates. Cryptomining exposes an infrastructure of data, power, and exchange that reveals what money—crypto or conventional—really is: an abstraction. Cryptocurrency makes literal the fact that most glittery tech is merely the mystification and monetization of relatively unnovel modes of energy control. As Vicky Osterweil put it in “Money for Nothing,” a recent essay on NFT art for *Real Life*, “Without the extractivists, there is no way that the innovations of Silicon Valley, which amount to little more than privatization by way of electrification, would produce any profit.” When it comes to crypto, “mining” represents less an anachronistic metaphor than actuality. The digital is never in the end dematerialized, and these new currencies represent not a paradigm shift but a predictable next step in the capitalist race to the bottom. Down we keep digging.

**Drew Zeiba**

## Helmut Jahn, Architect Consistently Ahead of His Time, Dies at 81



Architect Helmut Jahn

Known for the design of high-tech airports, skyscrapers, and public spaces worldwide, architect Helmut Jahn died May 8 in a bicycle accident near his home in St. Charles, Illinois, outside Chicago. Jahn, who was 81, had remained active in his office; his death came as a shock to a city currently grappling with the future of one of his signature works, the leviathan glass-and-tile James R. Thompson Center (1985), which was recently listed for sale by the State of Illinois. Jahn had an early career defined by fashionable flourishes and a celebrity persona that earned him both popular attention and the unwavering trust of his clients. His work, sometimes so prophetic as to appear awkward in the moment, was consistently ahead of its time.

Helmut Jahn was born in Nuremberg, Germany, on January 4, 1940. He attended school in Munich and later relocated to Chicago to study at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. In 1967, he was hired at C.F. Murphy Associates to work on the International Style convention center McCormick Place (1972), now called Lakeside Center, but quickly established his own voice with a series of postmodern skyscrapers for corporate clients, including the Xerox Center and the deco-inspired One South Wacker building. In 1979 Jahn won the commission to design the State of Illinois Center, later renamed for Governor James R. Thompson, who personally selected Jahn for the job.

The Thompson Center would be Chicago’s first major public building since Mies’s starkly minimalist Federal Center, which was posthumously completed in 1974. Jahn’s design integrated over one million square feet of office space with an urban shopping mall and a critical transportation hub—all organized around a 16-story glass atrium. At the time it opened,

*Chicago Tribune* critic Paul Gapp called it ugly, predicting that it would soon be out of fashion. But the building endured as a beloved space. With its muted red-white-and-blue palette and postmodern references to other civic infrastructure, the Thompson Center definitively closed the door on the second Chicago School. In 2015, critic Lee Bey called it “one of the finest—and most used—indoor public spaces in the state.”

As Jahn’s practice work grew through the 1990s, “the emphasis on aesthetics gave way to an increasing focus on buildings’ performance,” he later lamented. Jahn coined the term “archi-neering” to describe “the intense collaboration between architects and engineers in a push to integrate the formal, functional, technical, and environmental issues” in architectural design. With buildings including the Messeturm Frankfurt (1991), Munich Airport Center (1999), and Berlin’s Sony Center (2000) he established an international reputation for design that was both stylish and substantive, with a focus on technology, materials, and environment. His State Street Village student housing at IIT (2003) densified and humanized the scale of the historic Mies campus, and his design for Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok, Thailand (2006), used new materials and systems to increase environmental comfort and improve energy efficiency. In 2012 he changed the name of Murphy/Jahn, the firm he inherited from Charles Murphy, to JAHN.

As his practice expanded, Jahn remained committed to experimentation and to exploring ideas in projects that were speculative or unbuilt. His contribution to a series of “late entries” in the 1980 *Chicago Tribune* Tower design competition was the only one to propose that the existing 1920s Gothic building remain. In the 1990s, his unbuilt proposals for Chicago’s Harold Washington Library Center and the McCormick Tribune Campus Center at IIT envisioned an architecture of loose frameworks for integrating changing technology, culture, and knowledge with urban life.

Over the past year, Jahn worked on proposals for the Thompson Center, including one plan to preserve it by building a tower atop it and opening the atrium to the street and another to demolish it and replace it with a cylindrical tower. Jahn had a taste for hosting lunch meetings in his office or at the cupola of the Jewelers Building, where he’d converse with clients, collaborators, and critics alike over poached salmon, steamed vegetables, and German wine. In recent meetings he was engaged and reflective, convinced that the right group of people could come up with a solution. Throughout, he retained a palpable excitement about the 35-year-old building and what it meant for him and the city that he never abandoned.

Jahn cared for his legacy, but he did not treat the past, even his own, as precious or frozen. A lifelong athlete, automobile enthusiast, and competitive sailor, he embraced technology for its ability to continually improve human capacity. Helmut Jahn’s architecture was unabashedly futurist—and he always embraced the thrill of experience.

**Jonathan Solomon**



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## Tatiana Bilbao Estudio

The Mexican architect applies an urban sensibility to projects ranging from private homes to research centers.

Architect Tatiana Bilbao grew up in the center of Mexico City, in the Colonia Cuauhtémoc, not far from her current office. The city's vast diversity has been a constant inspiration for Bilbao, who places human connection and our relation to the environment at the core of her practice. "I've lived a very urban life—I'm always very conscious of how social spaces develop," she said.

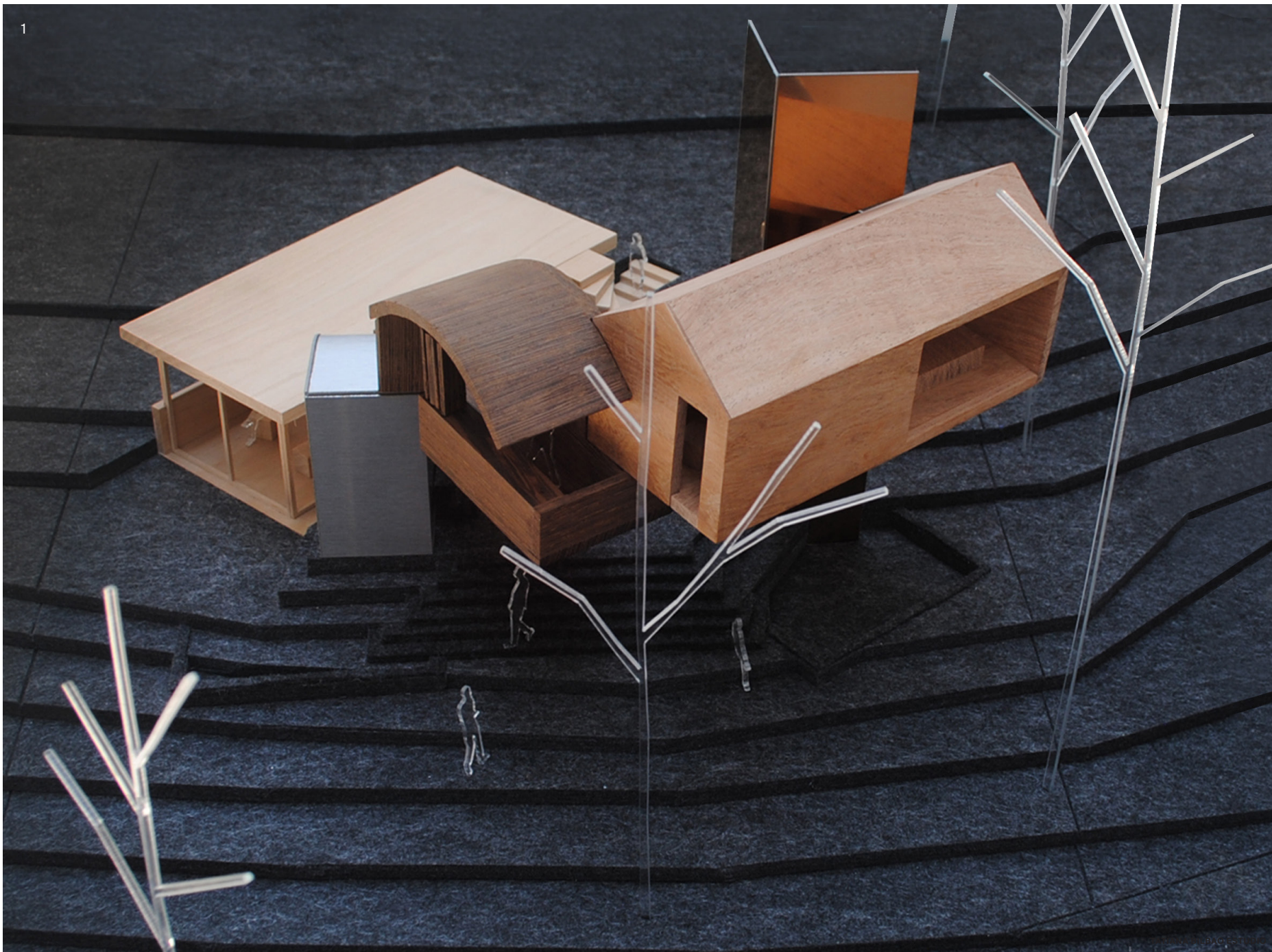
Yet Bilbao, who comes from a family of architects, recalls not wanting to follow in their footsteps

when she was younger. "I studied marine biology, industrial engineering, and then industrial design," she said. "But then I thought to myself, 'I don't want to be a carpenter—I want to design houses!'" In 2004, she established her eponymous architecture studio.

Since 2015, Bilbao has also taught spring courses at the Yale School of Architecture. This past year the architect ran an Advanced Design Studio called Lost Commons, with a curriculum that included the works of feminist

writers such as Hannah Arendt, Silvia Federici, and Dolores Hayden. Bilbao instructed students to design domestic spaces after "analyzing the parts of a house according to each space's social and cultural implications, and to the relationship with the body." She applied this thinking herself for the 2015 Chicago Architecture Biennial, where she presented a modular prototype for an affordable housing unit that, according to her, exemplified the "adaptation and acceptance of each user's living needs."

When discussing her home country's current housing crisis, the architect says that the only way out is to question the deeply ingrained cultural systems that produced it. "In order to move forward and generate better opportunities to improve quality of life, we must be open to accept diversity in housing models," said Bilbao. "What is being done with social housing is a crime. The government is boxing people in instead of giving them sufficient places to live." Natalia Torija Nieto



## 1 Ways of Life, Edersee Lake, Germany

In 2017, curators Christoph Hesse and Neeraj Bhatia asked Bilbao to design an experimental house where they could live as well as work. “Historically humans have lived and worked in the same space,” Bilbao noted, explaining that “it’s only in cities within the last 150 years that the two have become separated.” The resulting house has six informal flexible spaces that enable the clients to shift seamlessly between leisure and professional life.

## 2 Research Center, Mazatlán, Mexico

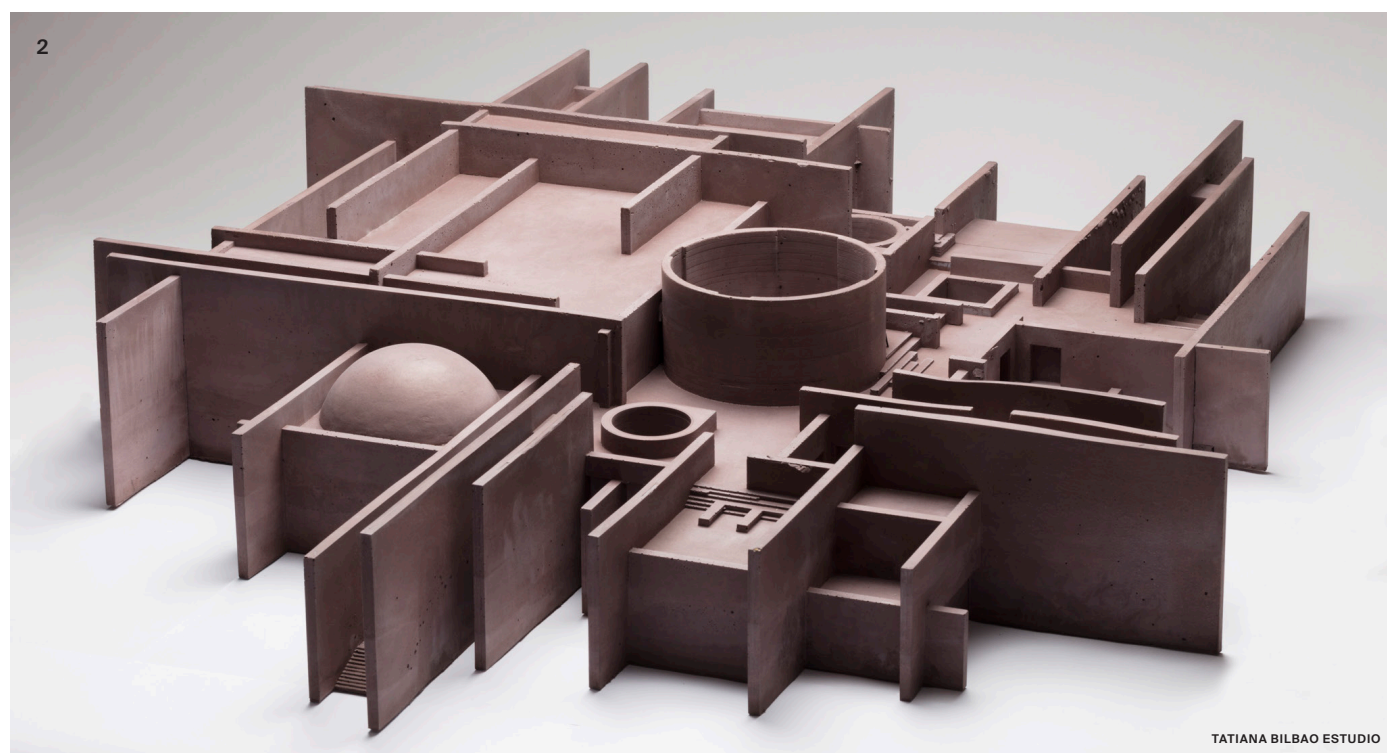
The concept of the aquarium has become “a fantasy—a spectacle that does not allow for connection to the ocean or an understanding of its importance in our life,” Bilbao explained. This new aquarium on the Mexican coastline has a concrete structure that appears to have been there since the beginning of time, swallowed by an endemic garden. The architect worked with a team of marine life specialists to design the center, which is dedicated to the research, protection, and display of the flora and fauna of the Sea of Cortés.

## 3 Hunters Point, San Francisco

The site, a power plant at the edge of San Francisco, has a rich sociocultural history. “It’s been home to a marginalized community that for many years fought to remove the very same power plant we are working on today,” Bilbao explained. A group of activists won a lawsuit to close the plant, and in 2007 it shuttered its doors. One substation remained, and in 2016 the Pacific Gas & Electric Company asked Bilbao to develop a master plan that would integrate it with the community, “before the housing market drives them out,” she said. The project is showcased in the upcoming exhibition *Architecture from Outside In* at SFMOMA. The goal, said the architect, is to get the community “to question the processes of city building.”

## 4 Estoa UDEM, Monterrey, Mexico

The University of Monterrey commissioned the studio to create a mixed-use academic and commercial building as part of an over-one-million-square-foot expansion. Constructed atop a massive pit, the building has underground levels for private use, while the ground and upper levels are for public functions. Like her other projects, Estoa UDEM was designed with deep consideration for personal, social, and cultural activity. “The scale is very much focused on the relationship of the body with the space,” she said.



TATIANA BILBAO ESTUDIO



TATIANA BILBAO ESTUDIO



IWAN BAAN

# END OF THE ROAD?

A HIGHWAY EXPANSION PROJECT IS NOW THE SITE  
OF A BATTLE OVER ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.

On a Monday evening in May, members of Stop TxDOT I-45 gathered socially at the Saint Arnold brewery in Houston. After months of coordinated online efforts, the grassroots group met in person to visit and bond. They plan to continue their opposition to the controversial North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP), which aims to reshape and expand Interstate 45 around downtown and along the city’s northern corridor.

The coalition’s mood was rightfully celebratory. After years of study, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) issued its record of decision in February, paving the way for NHHIP’s implementation. The following month, however, the Federal Highway Administration directed TxDOT to halt further development of the NHHIP, citing possible violations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Soon after, Harris County, which includes most of the city, announced it was suing TxDOT under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, arguing that TxDOT had “failed to properly consider and address impacts to the environment and quality of life for nearby neighborhoods.” This summarizes the main complaint against the expansion: that TxDOT ignored the concerns of residents—largely BIPOC Houstonians—who would be the ones most affected by highway improvement. Back at the brewery, Stop TxDOT I-45’s members recounted speaking out against the project before the state legislature in April, and then packed in for a group photo.

Estimated to cost \$7.5 billion and under study since 2002, the NHHIP would be broken out into three phases. Segments 1 and 2 would widen I-45 between Houston’s second beltway (there are three) and downtown, while Segment 3 would sink I-45 and I-69 around downtown, straighten two portions, and decommission an elevated highway that has been in place since 1967. The structure might not come down, as some have argued that it should be retained as a 1.3-mile-long elevated park. Portions of the buried highway could be also capped and beautified, but TxDOT cannot allocate money for such improvements, making them dependent on philanthropy.

The goal of the NHHIP is to reduce congestion and travel times for commuters. But while the proposal could substantially reconnect estranged parts of the city, the expanded rights-of-way and rerouted highways would also wreak havoc on communities. The effort would displace an estimated 1,079 residential units, 344 businesses, five places of worship, and two schools, according to the official response to TxDOT’s Final Environmental Impact Statement from the City of Houston and Harris County. (The response was prepared by Huitt-Zollars and the Community Design Resource Center at the University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design.) The report also determined that the selected design doesn’t properly account for additional flood risks, increased air pollution, and traffic impacts on local streets. Critics of the project also argue that it doesn’t act on opportunities for increased mass transit, such as coordinating with local or regional transit plans to maintain or expand bus service. (Separately, METRO, the local transit authority, is studying how I-45 construction could undermine its own expansion efforts.) Alternatives were proposed, but none made it into TxDOT’s plans.

The opposition to the NHHIP is “one of the more successful infrastructure advocacy pushes in Texas that I’ve seen,” said Kyle Shelton, deputy director at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University and author of *Power Moves*, a history of transportation politics in Houston. According to Shelton, NHHIP detractors are succeeding because they have gathered a broad coalition of advocates.

Houston’s history, both recent and distant, is full of cautionary tales about high-



**Facing page:** The intersection between I-69/US-59 and the I-610 beltway, looking south  
**Above:** The intersection of I-45 and I-69/US-59 at the south corner of downtown, looking north. This stretch falls within the NHHIP.

ways. For instance, when TxDOT spent \$3 billion to widen the Katy Freeway to 26 lanes, upon completion in 2008 the ameliorating effects on congestion were negligible, lending dramatic proof to the principle of induced demand. Going back further, since the 1950s the city’s frenzy of highway construction has proceeded at the expense of its Black communities: historic Freedmen’s Town in the Fourth Ward was sliced in half by I-45; the Fifth Ward was a thriving district before I-69 and I-10 came along; and the Third Ward was carved up by I-45, I-69, and Highway 288. And as in other cities, the rise of individual car ownership doomed rail-based transit. From 1911 to 1936, there was even a Houston-Galveston interurban railway linking the two cities; the route took about 75 minutes, which is shorter than the same car trip in heavy traffic today.

The current campaign against the NHHIP is already historic, as it marks the first time that elected officials have resisted roadway improvements: Houston mayor Sylvester Turner and Harris County judge Lina Hidalgo are active critics of the project. (In Harris County the role of judge is political, not judicial—the highest elected office in the county.) Neither official rejects the NHHIP outright, but rather, both are questioning the current proposal, which they say doesn’t do enough to support equity and mass transit. “We’ve been stuck in the ’50s with this idea that the best way to fight traffic is to build more highways and wider highways,” Hidalgo said in a recent interview with *The Houston Chronicle*. She went on: “We know that I-45 needs to change: It needs to carry more people. There’s an opportunity to have a highway that could have transit within it, perhaps bus rapid transit. There’s also an opportunity to have a highway that’s cognizant of the impacts it could have on the communities it passes through—a design that would keep a narrow footprint.” (If Hidalgo’s tone is critical, it’s not entirely out of character: local leaders often clash with state lawmakers, most powerfully on SB 7, a proposed bill that would further tighten voting regulations. Lately the Republican-led state government has been hard at work undermining the actions of Democratic county and city officials.)

This struggle is just one of many in Texas. In Dallas, TxDOT is planning to sink a portion of I-30 along the south side of downtown; a cap park similar to Klyde Warren Park to the north is being planned, though without funding. And in Austin, a \$4.9 billion plan to sink I-35 through downtown is under study, but local entities already say the design doesn’t meet Austin’s Strategic Mobility Plan. As in Houston, a showdown between local jurisdictions and TxDOT seems likely. The agency is a massive bureaucracy and needs to do a better job with early engagement, as that feedback is one of the “lots of little levers that can change things,” Shelton said.

Nationally, calls to recognize the racial bias that has shaped America’s transit networks gained support from Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg’s remark that highways were “racist.” President Biden’s American Jobs Plan has earmarked \$20 billion for a program that it says will “reconnect neighborhoods cut off by historic investments and ensure new projects increase opportunity, advance racial equity and environmental justice, and promote affordable access.” The plan awaits congressional approval.

Meanwhile, TxDOT appears unwilling to address transit holistically—and even if it did, the agency remains constitutionally prohibited from using Texas’s State Highway Fund, which is restricted to roads and highways, for public transportation or rail projects. Additional state funding for public transit is abysmally low: of the \$1.89 billion spent on public transit in the state in 2019, only about \$37 million (or 2 percent) came from the state government, and of that, nearly 60 percent went to rural transit dis-



This section of the highway stands to be straightened out in the NHHIP and would fully demolish Clayton Homes, visible at the left.

tricts, even though most Texans live in cities.

A highway design that incorporates mass transit and contextual sensitivity would set the standard for how Texas might improve its freeways going forward. This could be achieved by deliberate updates while retaining worthwhile components of the NHHIP, such as its sinking of roadways near downtown. A more ambitious highway movement proposal would stand to have a major impact on many lives: with a population of 4.7 million, Harris County is the third most populous county in the country, larger than half of U.S. states.

Instead, the direction set by TxDOT and state lawmakers continues to validate a model of sprawl made possible through cheap energy. The reality that TxDOT failed to deliver a more creative, responsive solution—even at the urging of Houstonians—is a failure of Texan imagination. Paradoxically, the dream of endless growth preferred by the oil industry is ultimately constraining, as it selfishly locks Texas cities into one urban model while ignoring the benefits of past and future ones.

TxDOT has spent nearly two decades on the NHHIP, only to emerge with a plan

that falls short. Houston cannot afford to waste the coming decades accommodating a highway that doesn’t pave the way toward a better future for all. Local leaders and groups will continue to fight for a better solution, even as other residents voice their support. Despite this struggle, life in Houston goes on in the shadow of past urban cruelties: the brewery where Stop TxDOT I-45 met is next to I-10, so the night’s conversation took place above the background roar of the freeway.

**Jack Murphy is editor of *Cite*. He lives in Houston.**

# BRING 'EM DOWN

## CITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY EXPLORE REMOVING ELEVATED HIGHWAYS WITH FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS. By Edward Gunts

In cities around the country, residents are in various stages of working to remove elevated or sunken highways that seemed promising in the 1950s and 1960s but are now considered by many to be planning blunders.

These highways were built with federal funds to make it easy for commuters to get in and out of cities quickly by bypassing an older grid of narrow streets and stoplights. Many cut off one part of town from another and take potential customers away from stores and restaurants below. Others literally wiped out livable communities by displacing homes and businesses in their path.

As long as the elevated highways didn't need more than routine maintenance, cities and states didn't have a strong financial in-

centive to take them down. But these mid-century structures are now approaching the end of their expected life spans, requiring costly repairs or replacement, so communities are questioning whether it's a wise use of public funds to perpetuate the status quo by keeping them in place and whether it makes more sense to take a different approach.

That's where the Biden administration's infrastructure plan, which still needs congressional approval, comes in. The White House in March unveiled a \$2.25 trillion proposal, calling it a "once in a generation" investment that would produce the country's largest jobs program since World War II and the interstate highway construction program that began in the 1950s. It also expands the

previously accepted definition of infrastructure by going beyond merely upgrading highways and bridges to rethinking them.

One key goal, according to a White House fact sheet, is to "redress historic inequities" created in part by the way the federal government invested in roads and highways in the past, with "transformative investments" for the next generation. Another is to provide money that can bridge a funding gap and turn "shovel-worthy" projects into "shovel-ready" projects.

"Too often, transportation investments divided communities—like the Claiborne Expressway in New Orleans or I-81 in Syracuse—or it left out the people most in need of affordable transportation options," the

White House said. "The President's plan includes \$20 billion for a new program that will reconnect historic neighborhoods cut off by historic investments and ensure new projects increase opportunity, advance racial equity and environmental justice, and promote affordable access."

In most cases, the push to take down elevated highways is coming from community groups rather than state or city planners. Lack of funding is a recurring issue, but that's what Biden's infrastructure plan would help address.

According to the Congress for the New Urbanism and others, at least a dozen more communities are in various stages of exploring plans to take down elevated highways:

### BUFFALO, NEW YORK (KENSINGTON AND SCAJAQUADA EXPRESSWAYS)

Fans of Frederick Law Olmsted and others are leading an effort to remove the Kensington (Route 33) and Scajaquada (Route 198) Expressways, which cut through two city parks that are part of an Olmsted-designed park system. The Restore Our Community Coalition, the Scajaquada Corridor Coalition, GObike, and the Olmsted Parks Conservancy are among the groups working to restore the parks in keeping with Olmsted's designs.

### PORTLAND, OREGON (I-5)

I-5 is an elevated highway that cuts Portland's mixed-use Central Eastside neighborhood, a once-industrial area that is now popular for its breweries and new housing options, off from the Willamette River. Several groups, including Riverfront for People and the No More Freeway Expansions Coalition, have proposed removing I-5 to enable the Central Eastside neighborhood to expand toward the river, just as the Harbor Drive freeway on the west side of the river was replaced with Waterfront Park. Harbor Drive was eliminated in 1974, making it one of the earliest freeway removal projects in the country and providing a model for the east side of the river. What makes it not so easy is that Harbor Drive was removed in part because the construction of I-5 made it redundant, but nothing is making I-5 redundant.

### SYRACUSE, NEW YORK (I-81)

An elevated section of I-81 known as The Viaduct needs to be replaced because of its age and condition. A group called ReThink81 proposed that it be replaced with a "community grid" of pedestrian-friendly streets that would help repair and reconnect the road network that was interrupted when The Viaduct was built, rather than rebuilding the passageway or creating a wider boulevard. The idea has gained widespread support, and a group called the Moving People Transportation Coalition has formed to increase awareness of the merits of the "community grid" proposal. New York governor Andrew Cuomo said in his State of the State address in January and again in April that he expects removal of The Viaduct to begin in 2022.

### NEW ORLEANS (CLAIBORNE EXPRESSWAY, I-10)

Perhaps the poster child of the highway teardown movement, this elevated expressway looms over Claiborne Avenue, the main commercial boulevard and gathering place for the Tremé neighborhood. Proponents say they'd like to see the expressway removed and Claiborne Avenue restored, including its wide median and the traffic circle where it intersects with St. Bernard Avenue, and they're glad the project was singled out in the infrastructure plan.

### AUSTIN, TEXAS (I-35)

The Texas Department of Transportation has been taking public comments on plans to rebuild an eight-mile stretch of I-35 that separates the east side of the city from the west side. A group called Reconnect Austin has proposed a multifaceted plan that includes demolishing part of I-35, depressing part of it and covering the depressed lanes with a boulevard. Others that have weighed in include the City of Austin, Travis County, the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Urban Land Institute, and a group called Rethink35.

### DENVER (I-70)

Although Colorado's transportation department has been working to replace and expand portions of the elevated I-70 highway, in part by condemning land and building a sunken freeway, portions of I-70 were closed May 21 so the state could shift traffic to a new lowered section of the Central 70 project, called The Mile High Shift. Demolition of a structurally deficient 57-year-old viaduct began the following day, making Denver the latest city to see at least part of an elevated highway taken down.

### TAMPA, FLORIDA (I-275)

An 11-mile section of I-275 constructed over Central Avenue in downtown Tampa disrupts Ybor City and other neighborhoods. A local group, #blvdtampa, has proposed replacing it with a landscaped boulevard featuring bike and pedestrian paths plus a light rail, bus, or streetcar line.

### OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA (I-980)

The group ConnectOAKLAND has called for I-980 to be removed and replaced by a narrower boulevard that would be healthier for the neighborhoods in West Oakland, which have high asthma rates, and support the economic growth of Uptown Oakland. City officials have been exploring the idea of removing I-980 as part of their Downtown Oakland Plan.

### DALLAS (I-345)

This 1.4-mile elevated highway separates Dallas's Deep Ellum neighborhood, a mostly African-American community, from downtown. A new study by the Toole Design Group and others, called the Framework Plan, updates an earlier Texas Department of Transportation study called CityMAP and presents two highway removal options for public consideration—replacing I-345 with either a surface boulevard or a sunken highway.

### LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY (I-64)

Running along the Ohio River, I-64 is one of five interstate highways or beltways that barrel through Louisville and one of the worst offenders when it comes to cutting a city off from its waterfront. A local group called 8664 has proposed replacing a 2-mile stretch of I-64 with an at-grade parkway and expanded waterfront park as a way to decrease the number of elevated highways in the city and increase access to the riverfront.

# Go with the Flow



ERIC LAIGNEL

Operable window and wall products are the stars of this month's special section. Opening up facades, large or small, these solutions solidify aesthetic visions and help create healthier environments. Highly engineered materials, streamlined fittings, and concealed hardware ensure that we can construct buildings capable of adapting to changing weather patterns, filtering in fresh airflow, and providing efficient thermal barriers when necessary. Inside, new partition and acoustic products render shared spaces more comfortable and hygienic. By Adrian Madlener

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# The Lantern House



**Design architect:** Heatherwick Studio  
**Architect of record:** SLCE

**General contractor:** Related Construction  
**Facade engineer:** Gilsanz Murray Steficek  
**Structural engineer:** DeSimone Consulting Engineers  
**Facade fabricator:** New Hudson Facades  
**Lobby structure and facade fabricator:** Cimolai  
**Custom brick manufacturer:** Taylor Clay Products  
**Glazing manufacturer:** AGC Interpane  
**Powder coating manufacturer:** AkzoNobel  
**Operable window frames:** Metra

New York City's High Line is no stranger to development. Since first opening in 2009, the elevated railway-turned-public park has spurred a building frenzy on Manhattan's Far West Side, much of it architecturally meager. Straddling the High Line today—several years after its third and final stretch was inaugurated—are gleaming glass stalactites, anonymous in their bearing and lacking in contextual motifs and textures. A newcomer aims to buck the trend, riffing on turn-of-the-century imagery and materials to interesting, if slightly goofy, effect.

Designed by Heatherwick Studio and architect of record SLCE for developer Related Companies, the Lantern House feels heftier than its glass-and-steel neighbors. That's due to its piers and spandrels of light-gray brick, manufactured by Taylor Clay in an artisanal process. Surface area is afforded by the volley of bulbous two-story bay windows, whose resemblance to chintzy maritime luminaires gives the 277,000-square-foot project its name.

The residence actually comprises two towers of different heights, bisected by the High Line: the west tower on 10th Avenue reaches ten stories, whereas its counterpart to the east, located midblock, climbs to 21. They are connected at street level by a glass-and-steel pavilion that swoops under the viaduct, its interior pierced by bolt-studded railway columns. "Much like a hammock, the hanging





lobby structure is subject to substantial movement,” said Heatherwick Studio associate and site architect Carlos Parraga-Botero—movement that could have threatened the integrity of the glazing below. Steel manufacturer Cimolai developed an innovative “pinned” glazing head detail that allows for large movements in multiple directions.

Poured concrete and pretensioned concrete floor plates do the heavy lifting in the towers, whose relatively straightforward structural grid is picked up by a variegated brick rainscreen. But the principal stylistic element of the Lantern House’s facade is the projecting bay windows, which, in their three-dimensional form and coppery trim, also recall glazed transoms found at the stern of an erstwhile barque or schooner. And perhaps that is the better point of reference: the substantial radius of the bay windows provides sweeping vistas of both the city and the formerly commercial waterfront.

New Hudson Facades, a custom architectural facade maker owned by Related Companies, fabricated the bespoke curtain wall components at its 180,000-square-foot facility in Linwood, Pennsylvania. “There are four window types based on their width—6 feet 1 inch, 8 feet 10 inches, and 14 feet, 15 inches—and six categories based on their height and location,” said Parraga-Botero. AGC Interpane, the European glass manufacturer, produced and assembled the low-iron glazing at its facility just outside Munich, Germany. All the glazing for the bays is heat strengthened, argon-filled, and treated with a triple-silver ipasol coating. The central canted windowpanes of the bays are awning operable elements produced by Metra, and those located at the spandrels consist of shadow box glazing to conceal the floor plate.

Sumptuous recessed bronze surrounds frame each glazed bay. Aggregated vertically, they seem to chafe at the brick piers that hem them in. They threaten to burst out of the grid, and in that sense they bring to mind yet another, more explosive visual metaphor: a grenade.

**Matthew Marani**



**Facing page, top:** The Lantern House is bisected by the High Line, and is composed of two separate towers connected at ground level.

**Facing page, bottom:** The bay windows are mostly double-height and protrude from the structural grid. Panels at the floor plate deploy shadow glass to conceal the spandrel.

**Above:** Bronze-colored powder coating provide luster to the recessed window surrounds and frames.

**Right:** The variegated bricks act as a rainscreen and outline the structural form of the towers.

# Brooklyn Brownstone Renovation

**Architect:** Bo Lee Architects  
**Location:** Brooklyn, New York

**General contractor:** DiMattia Design & Construction  
**Folding glass wall system:** NanaWall WA67 Kitchen Transition

For Brooklyn homeowner Dan DiClerico, an initial bout of uncertainty regarding the fate of the family kitchen as part of a larger renovation project played out as a not-so-small miracle during the pandemic, alleviating much of the cooped-up-ness of life during lockdown.

As detailed by DiClerico, the renovation of the Bedford-Stuyvesant brownstone that he

shares with his wife and children hit a considerable snag when the project contractor was forced to take down the entire back wall to remedy structural issues. This effectively put an end to plans for a spacious L-shaped kitchen with french doors that would lead to the 200-square-foot terrace. Wall-to-wall glass proved an attractive replacement but with one

major caveat: the planned kitchen would have to go, and a smaller, galley-style kitchen would take its place.

Hand-wringing and heated conversations followed, along with experimentation with virtual reality headsets. Then a compromise emerged: a folding glass window and door system that would allow DiClerico, the chef of



YUZHU ZHENG PHOTOGRAPHY



YUZHU ZHENG PHOTOGRAPHY

**Above:** When open, the NanaWall system allows for a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor living spaces.

**Left:** The particular system is composed of a single pass-through window and three folding glass doors.

the family, to keep his L-shaped dream kitchen without sacrificing the abundance of natural light provided by wall-to-wall glass, which was crucial for his wife. “It allowed us to have the best of both worlds,” he said. “It’s the master-piece of the whole renovation.”

The NanaWall system, which features a single pass-through window and a trio of folding

doors with brass hardware and interior wood frames that complement the historic character of the brownstone, didn’t just satisfy the need for a large light-drenched kitchen. By providing a seamless (not to mention well-insulated) transition between indoors and out-, the NanaWall also allowed the terrace to shine as a popular place for multitasking during quarantine.

Clad in 20-inch ipe tiles from DeckWise, the outdoor terrace acted as the family’s alfresco living room, dining area, yoga zone, and, of course, Zoom backdrop throughout the warmer months of the pandemic. It also serves as a safe open-air venue for the kids’ playdates. “For them to be able to sit outside and have friends over—it’s been a lifesaver,”

said DiClerico. “I don’t know what we would have done without it.”

“It’s been an absolute savior through the pandemic,” he added. “I sometimes joke, ‘We don’t have a country house, but we have a NanaWall.’ It’s the next best thing.”

**Matt Hickman**



YUZHU ZHENG PHOTOGRAPHY



YUZHU ZHENG PHOTOGRAPHY

**Above:** The spacious remodeled kitchen looks out to the 200-square-foot back terrace.

**Left:** A view of the NanaWall system in its closed configuration.

# Windows

Blending materials to harness the best attributes of each allows manufacturers to create dynamic products. Precision-engineered composite cladding provides the AEC design community with flexibility and room for customization. The following selections demonstrate how the qualities of natural stone and cement can be combined with synthetic elements to achieve new levels of durability and aesthetic cohesion. By Adrian Madlener



## MODULAR Goldbrecht

With one of the slimmest profiles on the market today, the new Goldbrecht MODULAR outswing system was engineered to complement the brand’s signature Invisible Wall. The product is available in casement and awning variants, which allow architects to create even more connected indoor and outdoor spaces.

[goldbrecht-systems.com](http://goldbrecht-systems.com)



## Skycove Marvin

Designed to be a cozy place for small gatherings, the Marvin Skycove is an immersive glass alcove that extends from any dormer window or roof. Its steel structure and integrated bench can safely and comfortably seat one or more people. The glass enclosure extends functional living space by up to 20 square feet and offers homeowners an intimate connection to the outdoors.

[marvin.com](http://marvin.com)



## 100 Series Andersen Windows & Doors

The easy-to-install 100 Series window range is manufactured by Andersen Windows & Doors using durable Fibrex reclaimed-wood composite material. Offered in a variety of rich, dark colors, this new line is environmentally friendly and energy efficient. Three ¼-inch insert frame sizes allow fast and easy replacement.

[andersenwindows.com](http://andersenwindows.com)



## Manchester Quaker Residential

A perfect option for residential projects, the Manchester range is energy-efficient and affordable, requiring zero upkeep. The product is manufactured using fusion-welded corners and a thicker vinyl material than most competitors utilize. Manchester is available in several double-hung, casement, picture, awning, and slider variants.

[quakerwindows.com](http://quakerwindows.com)



## KOVA Windows KOVA

Informed by Kattera’s building-science prowess, KOVA Windows meet superior structural, thermal, and acoustic performance ratings. Supported by an optimized end-to-end supply chain, the picture, casement, and horizontal slider range is produced using advanced QA-driven technologies, yet remains one of the more affordable options on the market.

[kovaproducts.com](http://kovaproducts.com)



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# Movable Walls

Developed as either interior partitions or exterior doors, movable walls can transform a space in a matter of minutes. Seamlessly connecting the indoors and outdoors, large wall-to-ceiling sliding openings offer flexibility and top-of-the-line performance. Interior wall applications can help break up expansive open-plan concepts and establish intimate environments. *By Adrian Madlener*



## Palisades S100 Sliding Door CRL

Featuring CRL’s updated ultra-slim rails and large-scale panels, the new Palisades S100 Sliding Door provides a grand scale with incredible simplicity. Perfect for residential or commercial projects, the system allows expansive views but still delivers on structural and thermal performance. Compatible with CRL’s Palisades S90 bifold door, the new product has a maximum frame height of 13 feet and accommodates panels up to 7 feet wide.

[crl-arch.com](http://crl-arch.com)



## NW Aluminum 840 NanaWall

As one of the slimmest and most energy-efficient bifold doors on the market, the reimagined NW Aluminum 840 solution by NanaWall features a Gothic-arch roller system that ensures smooth, high-speed operations. The patented TwinX feature can withstand high winds and conceals the product’s profile to achieve a clean-lined aesthetic.

[nanawall.com](http://nanawall.com)



## Series 7600 Western Window Systems

Characterized by its highly engineered thin profile, Western Window Systems’ flagship Series 7600 multislide door design seamlessly slides or stacks into concealed pockets. The sizable unobstructed low-E and argon-filled dual-pane glass panels achieve energy efficiency in a variety of weather conditions. Series 7600 has one of the greatest ranges of sizes available on the movable wall market.

[westernwindowssystems.com](http://westernwindowssystems.com)



## Vitrocса Invisible Wall System Goldbrecht

Installed in a number of high-profile luxury residential and commercial projects, the signature Vitrocса Invisible Wall System is one of the world’s slimmest. Meeting Florida’s rigorous Dade County Hurricane Impact rating, this product achieves optimal thermal performance while facilitating a flawless indoor-outdoor transition.

[goldbrecht-systems.com](http://goldbrecht-systems.com)



## Folding Walls PK-30 System

Set apart by its low parking-area space requirements and superior quality, the Folding Walls solution by PK-30 System can accommodate panels up to 40 inches wide and 12 inches high. This operable partition wall offers trouble-free and flexible solutions to closing room openings of up to 19 inches or 39 inches with opposed installations.

[pk30system.com](http://pk30system.com)



## Metal Door Raydoor

The new Metal Door product by Raydoor is lightweight and durable. Perfect for any interior setting, this new opening solution comes in a wide array of powder-coated finishes and turnkey variations. Incorporating the company’s trademark attributes of no floor tracking and adaptability, the Metal Door can be fitted in several ways, including a central pivot.

[raydoor.com](http://raydoor.com)



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# Hardware

Operable windows and walls would be nothing if it weren’t for the handles, pulls, knobs, and hinges that ensure their functionality. The latest hardware products not only champion a heightened ease of use and achieve new levels of performance but also provide aesthetic continuity. Some elements are even disguised, seamlessly integrated within fitting systems. **By Adrian Madlener**



## Easy-Slide Operator Pella

A game changer in how casement and awning windows are opened, the new Easy-Slide Operator by Pella replaces the need for traditional cranks and instead incorporates a more streamlined and intuitive up-and-down function to operate. This new product, fitted into a wide range of Pella openings, was designed to people of any age or physical ability.

[pella.com](http://pella.com)



## AvanTec SimplySmart Schüco

Engineered to be fully concealed within a range of Schüco window products, the new AvanTec SimplySmart hinge achieves a 180-degree opening and a 90-degree design. The small but effective product requires almost no tools for installation and can carry up to 250 kilograms in vent weight for side-hung windows and 200 kilograms for turn/tilt windows.

[schueco.com](http://schueco.com)



## Multipoint Window Set with L-54 Lever 3 Sun Valley Bronze

Designed with Sun Valley Bronze's signature precision machining and superior quality, the new Multipoint Window Set with L-54 Lever 3 is a streamlined product that allows users to effortlessly open and close awning windows with a secure locking mechanism. Cast using the finest-grade bronze, this set was designed for longevity.

[sunvalleybronze.com](http://sunvalleybronze.com)



## 20" Minneapolis Handleset Baldwin

Responding to the increased desire for oversize doors and floor-to-ceiling movable walls, the new 20-inch Minneapolis handleset by Baldwin is a statement piece. The integrated handle and the lock's elongated 20-inch escutcheon provide a slim, graceful fit. The product comes in a wide range of colors and finishes such as Polished Brass and Oil Rubbed Bronze.

[baldwinhardware.com](http://baldwinhardware.com)



## Z078 Flush Pull Schwinn

Newly available in satin nickel, Z078 Flush Pull by Schwinn seamlessly integrates into any sliding door or movable wall while still maneuvering smoothly. The Z078 Flush Pull's semirectilinear zamak profile ensures its durability.

[schwinn-group.com](http://schwinn-group.com)



## Casement Adjuster CA12 Rocky Mountain Hardware

The decorative Casement Adjuster CA12 by Rocky Mountain Hardware is meticulously crafted in a Silicon Bronze Medium finish and allows users to manually adjust window apertures. This product comes in various sizes including 10 13/16-inches, 8 7/8-inches, 12 13/16-inches, and 20 7/8-inches, allowing for maximum range and flexibility.

[rockymountainhardware.com](http://rockymountainhardware.com)



NYC - HARIRI & HARIRI ARCHITECTURE D.P.C. Zephyr™ BLOCK ©2012 modularArts, Inc. U.S. Patent 8,375,665

Crush™ PANEL ©2011modularArts, Inc.  
Photo by Steve Hall, Hall + Merrick Photography.  
Designer: Eastlake Studio.

Spectra™ PANEL ©2020 modularArts, Inc.

Dune™ PANEL ©2003 modularArts, Inc. | Photo credit: Jessica Delaney

Tucker™ PANEL ©2010 modularArts, Inc.

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AMPERSAND ARCHITECTURE, PHOTO: MIKIKO KIKUYAMA

# Case Studies in Brief

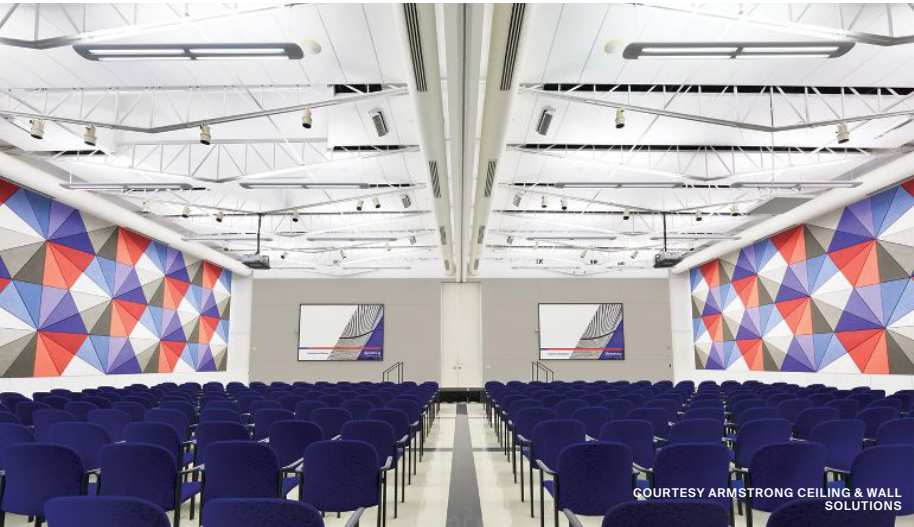
## Armstrong World Industries Campus Auditorium

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

**Designer and manufacturer:** Armstrong World Industries  
**Product:** Tectum® Panel Art Walls

The Armstrong World Industries Campus Auditorium, located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, is a 9,000-square-foot conference space used for company board meetings and lectures. Following countless noise complaints from presenters and audience members, Armstrong installed massive, 50-foot-long acoustic wall treatments on opposite sides of the space using Tectum Panels. Tectum Panel Art Walls, a product designed and manufactured by

Armstrong, have a noise reduction coefficient of up to 1.0, resulting in less echoing and rumbling in the auditorium. Each wall treatment comprises 196 triangular panels in 12 different colors that pinwheel around a central point. The eye-catching hues are inspired by Armstrong's brand colors, and the panels' beveled edges, black furring, and acoustic backing give each installation an expressive 3D look. Once the Tectum Panels were installed, visitors noticed a dramatic improvement in the sound quality of the space and found the colors uplifting and inspiring.



## Book Tower

Detroit, Michigan

**Architects:** Kraemer Design Group and ODA  
**AV and acoustics:** Arup  
**Civil engineer:** Giffels Webster  
**Construction manager:** Brinker/Christman Joint Venture  
**MEP:** Buro Happold  
**Owner:** Bedrock Real Estate  
**Window manufacturer:** Quaker Windows & Doors  
**Window supplier:** BlackBerry Systems  
**Product:** Quaker H503 Single Hung Window

Designed in 1916 by Louis Kamper, Book Tower is one of the most renowned buildings in downtown Detroit. The 500,000-square-foot structure, once an Italian Renaissance-style office complex, is transforming into a massive

civic center along the city's bustling Washington Boulevard, complete with galleries, retail spaces, restaurants, and cafes. The extensive exterior restoration, led by Kraemer Design Group, includes the historically accurate replacement of 2,483 windows. The newly installed H503 Single Hung Windows, manufactured by Quaker Windows of Philadelphia, were designed to meet the demanding specifications of the historical replication market. They have an impressive AW-50 structural rating, with strength and resistance to water and wind, as well as a thermally enhanced frame design. The H503 is one of Quaker's most popular products and has been used in dozens of historic projects across the country over the past five years.



## Knoll Chicago Showroom

Chicago

**Architect and designer:** Gensler  
**Custom signage:** Landmark Sign Group  
**General contractor:** Clune Construction  
**Lighting consultant:** Focus Lighting  
**MEP:** WMA Consulting Engineers  
**Millwork:** Parenti & Raffaelli  
**Project management:** Conopco  
**Structural engineer:** C.E. Anderson & Associates  
**Wall manufacturer:** PK-30 System  
**Products:** PK-30 System, PK-30 Fixed Panels, PK-30 Swing Doors

The Knoll Chicago Showroom is a 24,000-square-foot furniture store located in Fulton Market, one of Chicago's most thriving and energetic commercial areas. The space,

designed by Gensler and occupying the top three floors of an industrial brick building, is inspired by the raw yet refined character of Fulton. Large iron windows manufactured by PK-30 System frame 360-degree views of the city, bring in natural light, and connect visitors to the surrounding neighborhood. The PK-30 Fixed Panels and Swing Doors within the flagship store are also highly functional. For example, low-iron glass delivers the optimum interior daylighting, while 10-inch-high kickplates on the swing doors are ADA compliant. The wall system further encloses communal spaces adjacent to exterior views, drawing in clients and transforming Knoll into a public lounge for architects and designers.



## Sterling Lofts

Attleboro, Massachusetts

**Architect:** The Architectural Team  
**Civil engineer:** Vanasse Hangen Brustlin  
**Contractor:** Keith Construction  
**Developer:** WinnDevelopment  
**Electrical engineer:** Engineered Building Systems  
**Energy consultant:** CLEAResult  
**Glass manufacturer:** Guardian Glass  
**Historic preservation:** Epsilon Associates and Public Archaeology Laboratory  
**Landscape designer:** RBLA Design  
**MEP:** Petersen Engineering  
**Roofing consultant:** Advanced Roof Management Associates  
**Structural engineer:** Odeh Engineers  
**Telecommunications and security engineer:** Cosentini Associates  
**Product:** Guardian Glass

Initially built as a silversmithing factory in the 1890s, the Sterling Lofts complex in Attleboro, Massachusetts, has been preserved and reintroduced to the town as a site for modern and affordable apartment living. The renovation was completed by The Architectural Team, a design firm native to Massachusetts. The project posed several challenges, including the complex restoration of the building's exterior envelope and the replacement of more than 350 original window openings. The use of Guardian Glass allowed the design team to replicate the look and feel of the complex's historical arched and divided-lite windows, while integrating modern levels of performance and efficiency. The advanced glazing technology of Guardian Glass not only

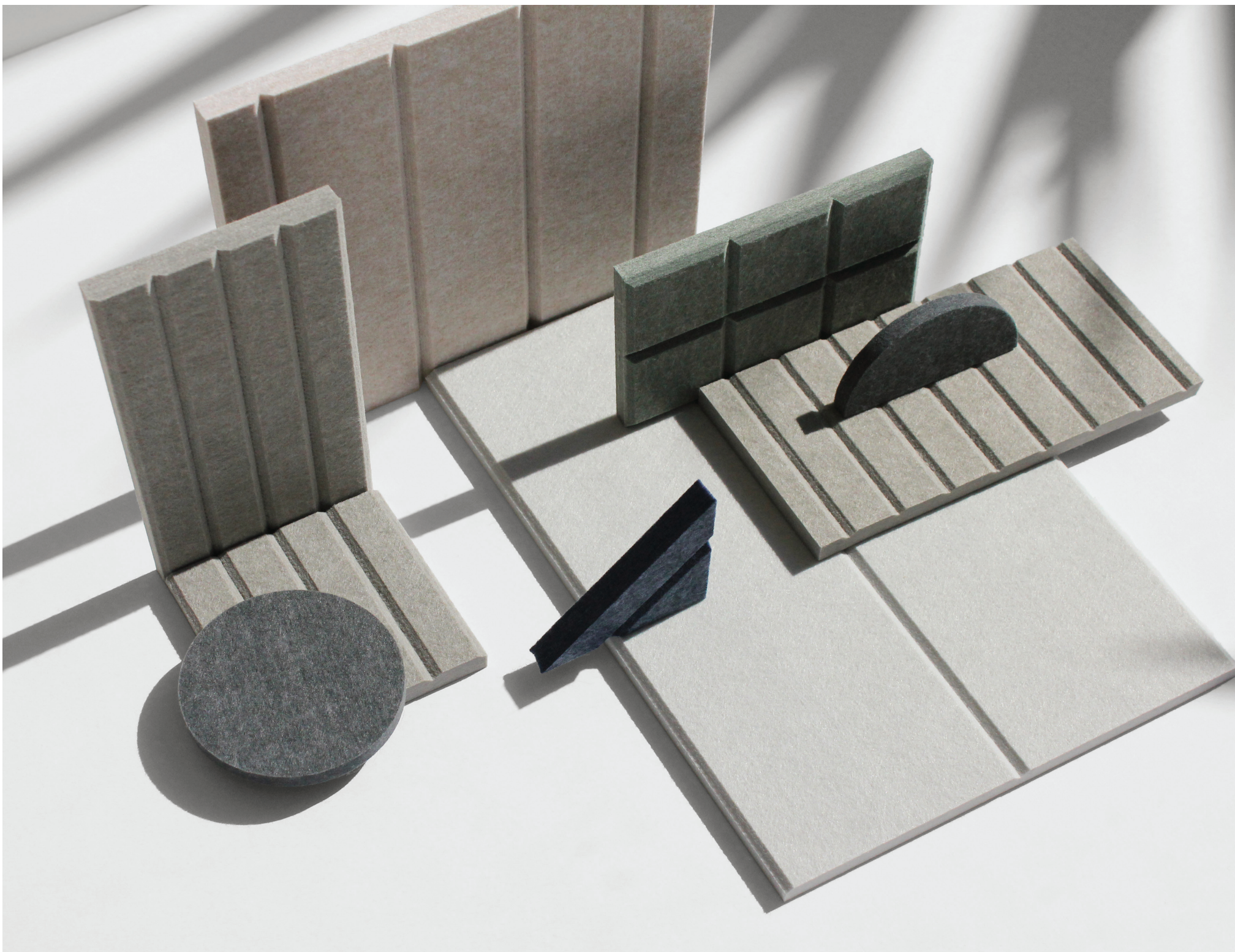
improves the visual and thermal comfort of the residents of Sterling Lofts but also mitigates the energy consumption of the landmark building.



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[unikavaev.com](http://unikavaev.com)

# The Carter Project



**Top:** The Carter Project functions as a living space for artist Christopher Carter as well as an art gallery.

**Above:** Huge glass-and-steel garage doors by Broten expand the main hangarlike exhibition space to the outside.

**Right:** Carter has plans to invite artists and creatives to display their work onsite.



**Designer:** Christopher Carter  
**Location:** Miami

**Architect of record:** Gary Williams  
**Structural engineer:** Azita Behmardi  
**Civil engineer:** Keith Rosen  
**Roll-up steel-and-glass doors:** Broten

It's not easy to neatly summarize all of what's going on in the Carter residence, a sprawling 8,755-square-foot art compound in Miami's North Wynwood neighborhood. The subject of a new exhibition at the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, the house is billed as "an architectural assemblage," reflecting the art practice of owner/sculptor Christopher Carter. It brings together a piquant mix of living arrangements, exhibition spaces, and a fabrication hall amid a thicket of mango and oak trees. Shipping containers are stacked like Jenga blocks, and a forever-idle Airstream trailer adds to the escapist vibe.

The structure, designed by Carter with the Fort Lauderdale architect Gary Williams, incorporates recycled wood, metal, glass, resins, and other sundry industrial materials. The duo converted six shipping containers for work and recreational purposes. Carter has likened the project to an "adult tree house or fort," evoking the ramshackle whimsy of the Lost Boys in *Peter Pan* as well as the zen acceptance of imperfection affiliated with wabi-sabi aesthetics. Afrofuturism, a touchstone for Carter's more gallery-friendly works, is a key reference.

Familiar with Carter and smitten by the home he was building for his family, NSU Art Museum curator Bonnie Clearwater had the idea of building an exhibit around it. *The Carter Project*, open through January 2022, tells the story of this unlikely retreat through multimedia displays. Visitors can don AR goggles to explore the grounds and interiors; Clearwater hopes they will come away with the inspiration to "question conventions and imagine new solutions to living in today's environment."

In addition to the domestic living spaces, there is a commercial kitchen, an artist workshop complete with an intaglio printing press and lathe, and an exhibition hangar. The fluidity between inside and outside is perhaps the most striking aspect of the project: retractable glass doors by NanaWall expand the area of the kitchen into the garden, while oversize garage doors by Broten in the 26-foot-tall hangar give visiting creatives flexibility in how they choose to display their artwork. More operable walls than doors, these roll-up elements, when opened, lend the space a Californian airiness. It brings to mind the Eameses' famed Santa Monica, California, loft house, which, like this minikunsthalle, employs nimble open-web steel joists for structure. New opportunities for display await. **Keren Dillard**

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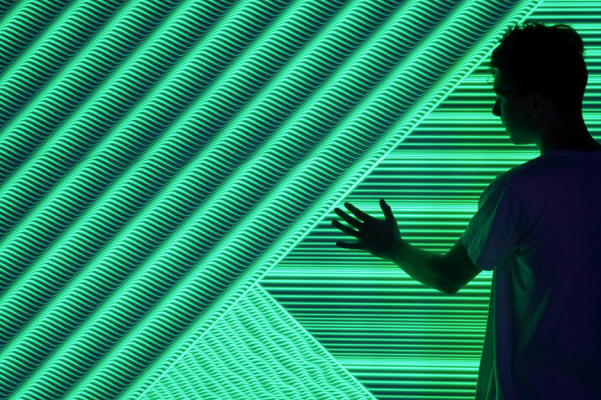
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# Wall Paneling

Whether installed to revive an interior or to create an acoustic buffer, wall paneling is a simple and inexpensive solution that can have a significant impact. Three-dimensional textures and geometric patterns can help break up the aesthetic monotony of a space while adding depth and warmth. The latest offerings of modular and custom applications reflect new trends and technological advancements and, most importantly, are flexible. **By Adrian Madlener**



## M.R. Walls Corian

Developed with designer Mario Romano, Corian’s signature M.R. Walls collection of multidimensional panels demonstrates the full dynamism of the manufacturer’s proprietary material. Inspired by the patterns and rhythms of nature, these carved elements are custom-fitted without any visible seams. Bound together, they protect against mold, viruses, and bacteria.

[corian.com/m-r-walls](http://corian.com/m-r-walls)



## AuralScapes ModularArts

The new AuralScapes acoustic wall panels come in four undulating 3D configurations that reflect natural topographies. The lattice structural system incorporates rigid PET felt baffles and parabolic ridged gypsum boards to achieve maximum sound absorption. These modular elements can be easily installed and customized for accurate alignment.

[modulararts.com](http://modulararts.com)



## WoodWorks Grille Armstrong Ceiling and Wall Solutions

Armstrong Ceiling and Wall Ceilings custom WoodWorks Grille wall solutions draw from the best qualities of the lattice and slat structure ceiling product. The deeply textured panelized system can be cut and shaped in endless ways to depict a specific pattern or even a company logo. Available in white, maple, light, dark, and walnut variants, WoodWorks Grille adds depth and texture to any environment.

[armstrongceilings.com](http://armstrongceilings.com)



## Blendz Patina Collection Móz Designs

Available in 11 new earth-toned colorways, the Blendz Patina Collection by Móz Designs brings a natural timeworn aesthetic to any interior. The sleek, lightweight metal panels are crafted from recycled solid-core aluminum and made to withstand disinfectants. The new copper-hued, deep forest-green, and moody gray variants pair well with wood, steel, and concrete.

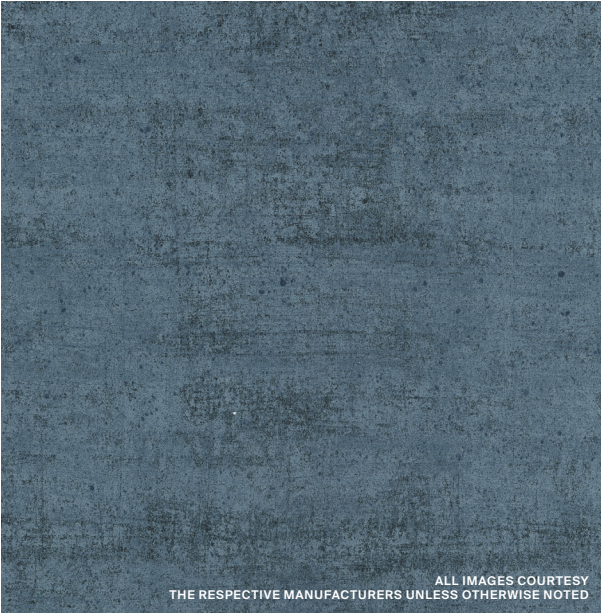
[mozdesigns.com](http://mozdesigns.com)



## PalmTheory Smith & Fong Durapalm

The new PalmTheory wall panel collection by Smith & Fong is characterized by a pattern of isosceles triangles organized around four grain directions. Available in eight configurable geometric designs, the warm and refined range is perfect for commercial or hospitality spaces.

[durapalm.com](http://durapalm.com)



## VETRITE Pulp Studio

Developed in partnership with the legendary Italian SICIS Factory, the new VETRITE collection by Pulp Studio imbues any interior surface, including walls, with richly textured and adorned glass. These large-format panels incorporate an artful combination of color, metal, and texture. Scratch-resistant and durable, VETRITE requires no waterproofing.

[pulpstudio.com](http://pulpstudio.com)

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# Office Partition Solutions

Workspaces are coming back, but they won't look the way they used to. A demand for spaces that are more flexible, safe, and hygienic is inspiring architects to completely rethink the typology. Manufacturers are following suit with a slew of new movable and stationary partition solutions that can make open-plan offices more comfortable, soundproof, and productive. By Adrian Madlener



## SoftScreen Arktura

Made from Arktura's proprietary high-performance Soft Sound material, SoftScreen is a new easy-to-install panel system that comes in a wide range of materials and relief patterns. These acoustic barriers can be installed in several applications, including direct mount, cable suspension, and track sliding systems. They can also be used to define different spaces and provide privacy where needed.

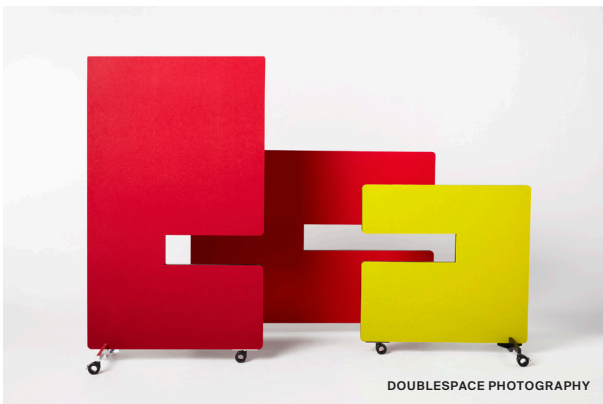
[arktura.com](http://arktura.com)



## OE1 Herman Miller

With OE1 by Herman Miller, designers Sam Hecht and Kim Colin sought to deconstruct traditional office furniture systems and create a suite of products that could adapt more easily to fit the changing work environment. Elements like the OE1 Agile Wall and Mobile Easel allow office workers to move around and experiment with space.

[hermanmiller.com](http://hermanmiller.com)



## Nomad Nienkämper

Nomad is a new geometric mobile screen that responds to the office's changing needs. Created by Charles Godbout and Luc Plante, the colorful design can accommodate haphazardly rezoned workplaces, and complements a whole host of other modular Nienkämper products, including storage cabinets, tabletops, and whiteboards. Available in acoustic or upholstered variants, Nomad also features flexible power, data, and video connectivity.

[nienkamper.com](http://nienkamper.com)



## Framery One Framery

Framery One is a connected soundproof pod that provides workers in open-plan offices with privacy. This easily installable room-within-a-room eliminates outside noises and features echo-free internal acoustics. It is fully equipped with power, Wi-Fi, and seamless automation.

[frameryacoustics.com](http://frameryacoustics.com)



## POD Teknion

Teknion developed POD (Privacy on Demand) for occasional, short-duration privacy. Installed in open-plan workspaces, Tek Room and Tek Booth create small-scale private environments for individuals or groups. These tech-integrated work pods can incorporate a wide range of freestanding furniture and allow for easy reconfiguration.

[teknion.com](http://teknion.com)

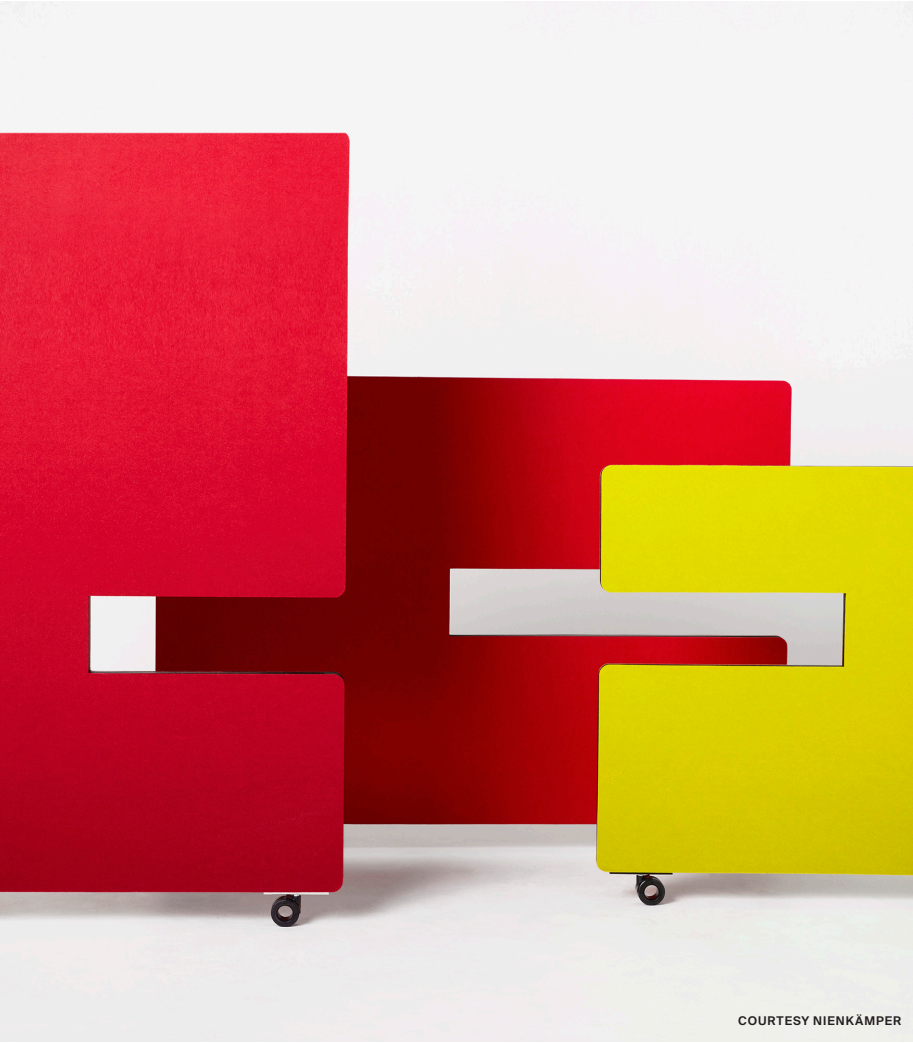


## Varia Textiles 3-form

Incorporating three new leno woven textile variants, 3form Varia translucent panels imbue workspaces with texture and color. These space dividers and acoustic barriers create privacy without compromising the sense of community. The new patterns offer a more calming and subdued look and feel.

[3-form.com](http://3-form.com)

# Resources



## Acoustics and Walls

3form  
3-form.com

Agrob Buchtal  
agrob-buchtal.de

Allsteel  
allsteeloffice.com

Alpolic  
alpolic-americas.com

Arktura  
arktura.com

Armstrong Ceiling & Wall Solutions  
armstrongceilings.com

Artemide  
artemide.com

Cardinal  
hmicardinal.com

CARVART  
carvart.com

Ceco Door  
cecodoor.com

Clarus  
clarus.com

DIRTT  
dirtt.net

Fabcon  
fabconprecast.com

Framery  
frameryacoustics.com

Haworth  
haworth.com

Herman Miller  
hermanmiller.com

Hufcor  
hufcor.com

Loftwall  
loftwall.com

Nienkämper  
nienkamper.com

Poppin  
poppin.com

Teknion  
teknion.com

Uhuru Design  
uhurudesign.com

Unika Vaev  
unikavaev.com

## Hardware

Accurate Lock and Hardware  
accuratelockandhardware.com

ASSA ABLOY  
assaabloy.com

Autoslide Automatic Doors by EVO  
autoslidebyevo.com

Baldwin Hardware  
baldwinhardware.com

Bronze Craft Corporation  
bronzecraft.com

FritsJurgens  
fritsjurgens.com

Häfele  
hafele.com

Halliday + Baillie  
hallidaybaillie.com

Kwikset  
kwikset.com

Lowe Hardware  
lowe-hardware.com

Mitsubishi Electric  
mitsubishielectric.com

Norton Door Controls  
nortondoorcontrols.com

OMNIA Industries  
omniindustries.com

Rocky Mountain Hardware  
rockymountainhardware.com

SARGENT  
sargentlock.com

Schüco  
schueco.com

Schwinn  
schwinn-group.com

Standard Bent Glass  
standardbent.com

Sugatsune  
sugatsune.com

Sun Valley Bronze  
sunvalleybronze.com

Unison Hardware  
unisonhardware.com

Yale  
yalecommercial.com

## Sliding Systems and Doors

Anyway Doors  
anywaydoors.be

Boon Edam United States  
boonedam.us

Boral North America  
boralamerica.com

Brombal  
discoverbrombal.com

Broten  
broten.com

C.H.I. Overhead Doors  
chiohd.com

CRL  
crlaurence.com

Crown Doors  
crowndoors.com

dormakaba  
dormakaba.com

Dri-Design  
dri-design.com

Euro-Wall Systems  
euro-wall.com

Goldbrecht  
goldbrecht-systems.com

Hawa Sliding Solutions  
hawa.com

JELD-WEN  
jeld-wen.com

Krownlab  
krownlab.com

LaCantina Doors  
lacantinadoors.com

Lualdi  
lualdiporte.com

Modernfold  
modernfold.com

Modular Arts  
modulararts.com

NanaWall  
nanawall.com

Orangebox  
orangebox.com

panoramah!  
panoramah.com

Pirnar Doors  
pirnardoors.com

PK-30 System  
pk30system.com

Plexi-Craft  
plexi-craft.com

Ply Gem Residential Solutions  
plygem.com

Raydoor  
raydoor.com

Reveal Windows & Doors  
revealwd.com

Reynaers Aluminum  
reynaers.com

Rimadesio  
rimadesio.it

Sapa  
sapabuildingsystem.com

Schüco  
schueco.com

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westernwindowssystems.com

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ykkap.com

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zolawindows.com

East

## The GREEN at Lincoln Center

Lincoln Center Plaza  
New York, NY 10023

Open through September 2021



SACHYN MITAL/COURTESY LINCOLN CENTER

Set designer Mimi Lien's expansive summer overhaul of Lincoln Center's Josie Robertson Plaza touched down in May. The installation blanketed the 14,000-square-foot public space in fake grass and forms reminiscent of half-pipes. Open through September, the GREEN entices New Yorkers to congregate (at an appropriate distance) on what was previously a hard and empty landscape anchored at the center by Diller Scofidio + Renfro's otherworldly Revson Fountain. Inclusivity was a

key factor for Lien, who received a MacArthur "genius" grant in 2015, and her landscape allows mobility-impaired visitors to navigate and interact with all of the installation's features unimpeded. That includes chairs sculpted from biosynthetic SYNlawn (soy-based fake grass with U.S. sourcing), tables, a reading room (shaded under a semicircular "bridge"), and upturned round slabs for sitting or sunning on. **Jonathan Hilburg**

Southwest

## Dream Monuments: Drawing in the 1960s and 1970s

Menil Drawing Institute  
1412 West Main Street, Houston, TX 77006

Open through September 19



ARTURO SANCHEZ/COURTESY OF HENRIQUE FARIA, NEW YORK; MARTA MINUJIN

Last month, the Menil Drawing Institute unveiled *Dream Monuments: Drawing in the 1960s and 1970s*, which challenges the idea that monuments must be permanent, larger-than-life objects in space. Instead, the show advocates the importance of paper monuments, which, despite their comparatively small stature, can be monumental in their own right. Organized into thematic sections that trace the ways in which artists develop works conceived for the page alone, the display focuses on the power of drawings to evoke the unimaginable (and indeed the unbildable). The collection is inspired by an unrealized

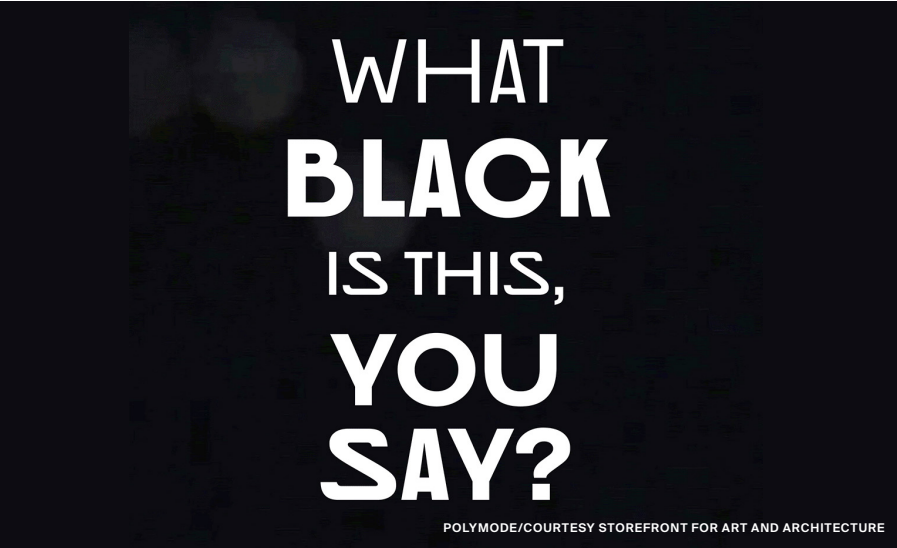
exhibit of the same name thought up by the Menil's founders Dominique and John de Menil in the 1960s. Plans for that exhibition included juxtaposing drawings and models by contemporary artists, such as Claes Oldenburg and Christo, with those from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The current iteration preserves this format but expands upon the original selection of works in an effort to "constitute a new foundation for interpreting this era of art history," as stated by assistant curator Kelly Montana, who assembled the show with guest curator Erica DiBenedetto. **Alex Klimoski**

Southwest

## What Black Is This, You Say?

Storefront for Art and Architecture  
97 Kenmare Street, New York, NY 10012

June 1 to May 2022



POLYMODE/COURTESY STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE

A yearlong public art initiative has arrived at New York's Storefront for Art and Architecture in the form of *What Black Is This, You Say?* The multifaceted exploration of color, race, and identity, which graces Storefront's dynamic, Steven Holl-designed Kenmare Street facade, was first launched by Chicago-based visual artist Amanda Williams in June 2020, following the #BlackoutTuesday social media protest campaign. That campaign, a global act of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement after George Floyd's killing at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, found upwards of 28 million

Instagram users posting black squares on the social media platform. Over a five-month span following #BlackoutTuesday, Williams herself posted more than 120 shades and textures of black on Instagram, each with a corresponding caption. In the course of a year, 12 of those hues will be painted onto the 12 moving panels of the gallery's facade. The work is not an ephemeral one but, according to the institution, "constitutes a permanent transformation of Storefront's facade, which all subsequent exhibitions will navigate and build upon in various ways." **Matt Hickman**

West

## One Object at a Time

A+D Museum  
Virtual

Opens June 18



A/P Practice  
ANONYMOUS  
BairBalliet (Kelly Bair + Kristy Balliet)  
Erdem Architecture  
Ferda Kolatan, SUH Architecture + Design  
Folly Feast Lab  
Gabriel Esquivel  
Greg Lynn FORM  
hX (Brendan Ho)  
Hume Architecture  
Ibañez Kim  
iheartblob  
Ivan Bernal  
James F. Kereskes  
Jason Vigneri-Boane  
Jean Janinet  
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Nick Saffley  
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Sandhya Kochhar & Austin Lightle  
Tatiana Koko  
The Bittertang Farm  
ybaynes studio  
Young & Ayata

a+d  
museum

Friday  
June 18, 2021  
4pm PST

One Object at a Time  
Ebrahim Poustinchy  
Curator | Exhibition Designer

COURTESY A+D MUSEUM

The latest virtual exhibition from Los Angeles's A+D Museum is set to launch exactly one year after the institution announced that it was forsaking its Arts District home—and would not be seeking a physical replacement. Since then, the museum has gone to great pains in developing its digital footprint. Every one of its online-only productions incorporates multimedia works, as easily viewable on Instagram as on a browser. *One Object at a Time* promises to be no different. Curated by artist-architect Ebrahim Poustin-

chi, the exhibition will feature objects from Greg Lynn FORM, BairBalliet, Ivan Bernal, and other form-oriented practitioners. Poustinchy, who is also director of the Robotically Augmented Design Lab at Kent State University and has recruited several colleagues for the project, has developed an online VR portal with which to stage the multitudinous works. But, in a dialectical fashion, the exhibition space and the exhibited fold into one another. **Samuel Medina**



# KRob

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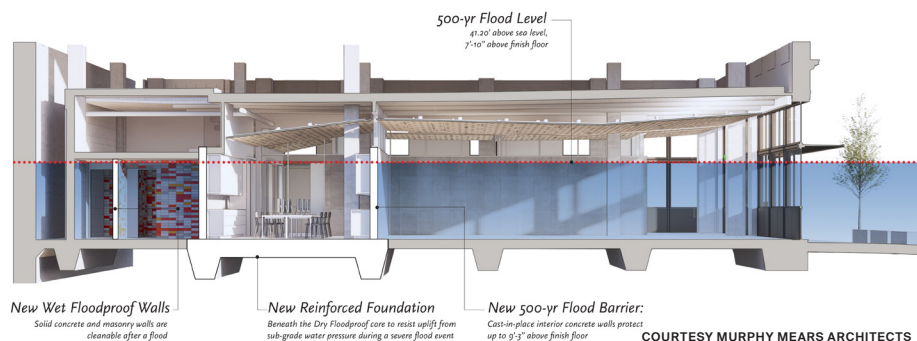
Image: TRENT LOOMIS, 2020 WINNER - Student Digital/Mixed

# Houston Visions 2020

Architecture Center Houston | Houston | March 31 to August 27



JAIME GONZALEZ



**Top:** The Katy Prairie Conservancy argues the prairie's restoration would aid in flood protection.  
**Bottom:** A section of Murphy Mears Architects' design for the Architecture Center Houston

**continued from the front page** Such is the aim anyway. In a city that has often resisted long-term and sustainable thinking, one might expect the exhibition to have fallen on deaf ears. But for the most part, *Houston Visions* succeeds when it suggests that desperately needed changes to land and building uses are slowly happening already. Indeed, the home of the exhibition itself, the recently opened Architecture Center Houston, is an example of resilience in action. Flooded by Harvey while still under construction (the downtown site is very close to Buffalo Bayou), the center was completely redesigned by Murphy Mears Architects in anticipation of future inundation, with cast-in-place concrete walls surrounding the space and a thick, solidly protected concrete bunker in the center shielding the smaller office spaces. Increasingly, adjacent businesses are following suit and flood-proofing their ground floors. Preparation for the future has become the norm.

There is room for such meliorative steps in *Houston Visions*, just as there is for bold schemes to, say, reengineer the local ecology or produce entirely new infrastructures of care. The projects sit on a spectrum between radical and entirely plausible: for every futuristic fantasia on display, there is a tangible building or planning propos-

al to counterbalance it. They are presented as coextensive, even as their respective aims and programs operate at different scales and with different impacts. The approach ensures that even the most radical projects proceed on sound premises. High Hackers by Gensler, for instance, repurposes Houston's vacant vertical building stock (which has steadily increased due to oil price drops and job losses) for use by the hacker class—i.e., makers, artists, academics. Rogers Partners' Galveston Bay Park redevelopment, perhaps the most urgent work of the bunch, advocates fairly expansive storm surge protection. Smaller projects, such as a prefab housing scheme designed by Brett Zamore Design, and the Neighborhood Greenways project by Jay Blazek Crossley and Farm&City, which advances suburban-scale green zones and transit belts, are indications of how tactical operations can punch above their weight. Other projects do not offer buildable solutions but, rather, act as fodder for future research and development. Illustrative of this batch is Waggonner & Ball's *Living with Water*, which builds on the experience of post-Katrina New Orleans to identify Houston neighborhoods with the most potential for flood mitigation. Though the scope and specificities of the visions vary



COURTESY STANTEC

Stantec's Lily Pad Networks imagines a fleet of resiliency hubs rising above floodwaters in the event of a cataclysmic storm.

greatly, presented side by side they complement one another incredibly well, jelling as a collective operation on Houston, wide-eyed in moments but never foolishly utopian.

A satellite image floor decal at the entrance depicts Hurricane Harvey's path, a nod to the conditions surrounding the exhibition's inception. Yet many of the projects are not explicitly about "natural" disasters or climate change (both are a result of human action), but instead foreground novel social arrangements that stand to transform Houston as we know it. The "Hubs" cluster of projects in particular strives to enhance the city's existing public spaces through partnerships with community groups, as is the case with a redesign of the Theater District Square by the Houston First Corporation, and *The Brutus* also by Gensler (the firm has four projects in the show), which outlines an incubator for pop-up shops and small businesses near Allen's Landing. Perhaps most compelling is Stantec's *Lily Pad* network, which situates resilience in an interlace of public resources (shelters foremost among them) and communally owned and maintained assets.

Other projects stumble in their bid to "visioneer" futures for Houston. Specifically, the "Future of Energy/Economy" clus-

ter seems loosely cobbled together, with a sweeping statement calling for Texas to shift toward total renewable-energy dependency that comes off as naive. Similarly, Kirksey Architecture's *Texas Coastal Exchange* emphasizes offsetting carbon emissions while downplaying the processes that give rise to them. SHoP Architects et al.'s 270,000-square-foot *Ion* center in Midtown is presented as a shining nucleus for economic innovation with nary a mention of the controversial project's role in gentrifying the Third Ward. However, these duds are few and far between and mostly speak to the strength of everything else on offer.

Make no mistake: *Houston Visions* strikes an urgent tone. As city council member David W. Robinson writes in his introductory text, "One wonders how much longer we can survive before implementing meaningful change." Houston has no excuse for shortsightedness, for here are numerous feasible and inspiring ideas to put into action. All the city has to do is get to work.

**Harish Krishnamoorthy is an undergraduate student at Rice Architecture, cautiously hopeful for a better-designed future.**



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# Unless: The Seagram Building Construction Ecology

Kiel Moe | Actar Publishers | \$35



It is September 1609, and Henry Hudson is at the entrance to Upper New York Bay. Although he is familiar with maps and can instruct his crew on how to read them, his most important reference is a book called the *Sailing Directions*. A cross between an almanac and a geographical treatise, the *Directions* was written in the 14th century by Ívar Bárðarson, a Norwegian priest who built one of the earliest settlements in Greenland. The *Sailing Directions* covers a variety of topics, all related to navigating and mapping the northern latitudes, all concerned with the day-to-day business of exploration and discovery. Parts of the book even give a detailed account of what to do should one encounter a new land. Indeed, Bárðarson's instructions are almost comically specific: Captains are to "send those on land that will show themselves diligent writers, and that they carry themselves so, that they may learn the State of the Country. They shall take with them two Boats and Eight Oars, and take Tinder-Boxes for fire if there be no Habitation. Also set up Crosses of Wood or Stone, if need be."

Hudson complies. Aboard his ship are none of the cuirassed soldiers bearing harquebuses or lances, broadswords or flintlocks, whom we have come to expect as the shock troops of settler colonialism. Instead, there are writers and builders. These are the first people to claim the Lenape land in this part of the world as "New Amsterdam," and they are here to assess and take stock of the natural inventory, so to speak.

A latter-day concern with environmental stocktaking is at the heart of Kiel Moe's

latest book, *Unless: The Seagram Building Construction Ecology*. Moe, a designer and educator who has written several books about environmental systems in architecture, considers the issues of material and energy exchanges implicit in the design and construction of Mies van der Rohe, Philip Johnson, and Phyllis Lambert's indisputably iconic Seagram Building (1956–1958). A key concept here is "construction ecology," which Moe describes as "the web of corporeal and incorporeal relations that presuppose building." *Unless* identifies and maps out this web, revealing to readers how a singular modernist building was not simply the result of singular design talents but rather physical, economic, and environmental processes spanning different times and multiple geographies. This is no ordinary account of the Seagram Building.

Be that as it may, *Unless* expands on previous Seagram literature, from Lambert's searching and analytical *Building Seagram* (2013) and her sweeping edited volume *Mies in America* (2001) to the eclectic and interpretive *The Presence of Mies* (1994), edited by the late Detlef Mertins—an impressive body of work, to be sure, one signaling allegiances to art and architectural history with ease and panache. Moe's account operates within a different register, however. This is evident in his careful and decisive use of terms like "construction ecology." Another is "terrestrial activity," which Moe uses to characterize how the material and energy exchanges outside and away from the Seagram Building's site at 375 Park Avenue all operate within a prescribed, shallow depth

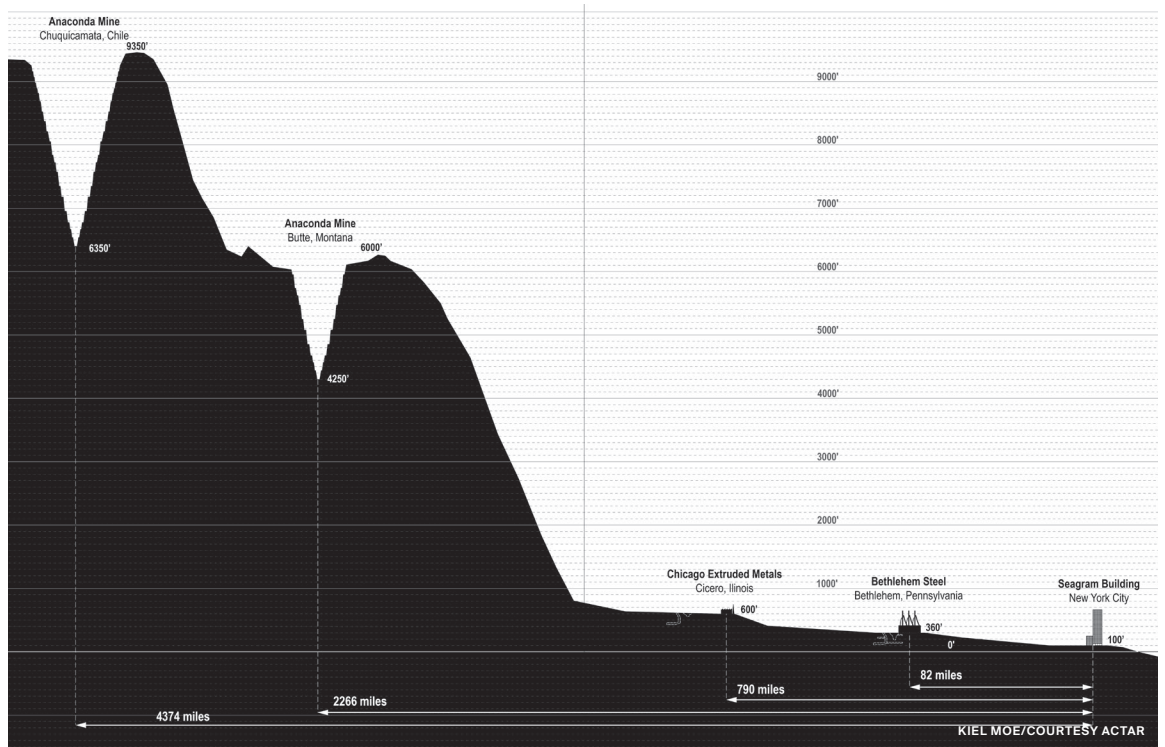
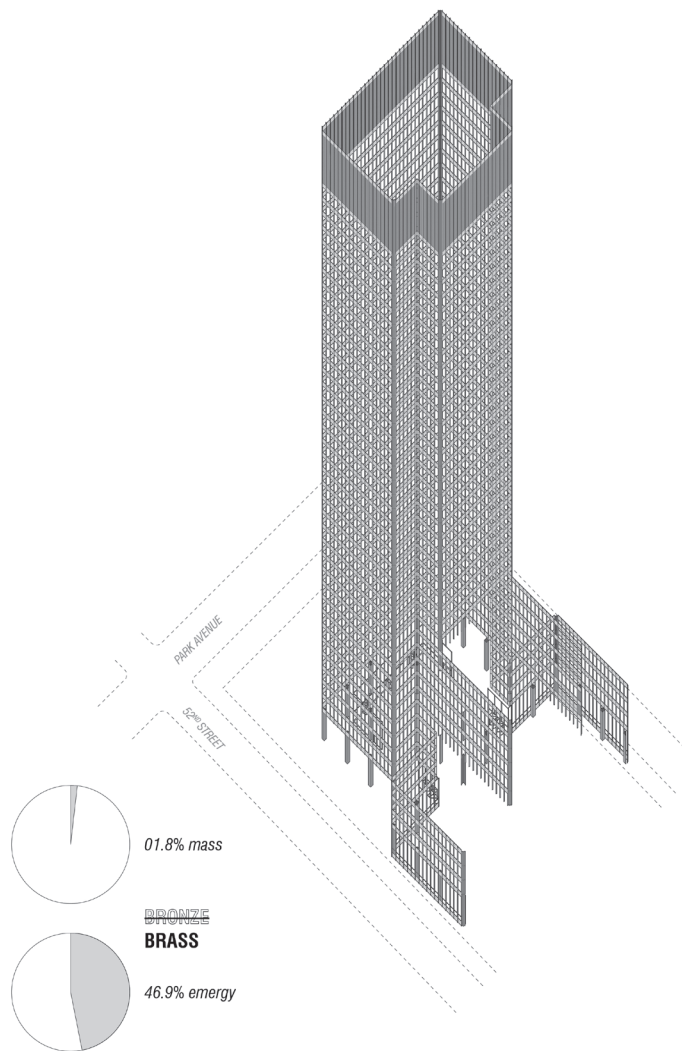
along the earth's crust. Put another way, design is terraforming, an "Act of Earth" (to quote Thomas Pynchon's 1997 novel, *Mason & Dixon*) marked by the extraction, consumption, and alteration of natural resources to make architecture.

Such "terrestrial activity" does not happen only at the moment of a building's conception, however. For Moe, it is a process that occurs over many, many years. He illustrates this point through a technique he explored previously in *Empire, State & Building* (2017), which in turn owed a debt to Eric Sanderson's *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* (2009). (Sanderson, it should be mentioned, also begins his book with an account of Hudson's arrival at Mannahatta, the "Island of Many Hills.") Superimposing photographs, fire insurance maps, and other ephemera, Moe creates a dense tableau depicting the different kinds of terrestrial activity that occurred on, and preceded the existence of, Seagram's midtown Manhattan block. His analysis begins with maps that describe the original plats that eventually became 375 Park Avenue, a rich site that was home to the Steinway Piano Forte factory from 1857 to 1910 and the Montana Hotel from 1913 to 1955 and razed in 1956 to allow construction of Mies and company's great tower. Supplemented by measured drawings and diagrams, Moe's site analysis provides important data about the materials and energy consumed in the creation of this building. One of the most spectacular is a scale diagram showing the Seagram Building's height in relation to the sizable mounds of resources required for its

construction. It is an image that places Seagram in an urgent new context. And in the end, readers will discover that this landmark building is more than just one of the most expensive architectural projects of its era—it is a building whose expenses were underwritten at a massive geographical and temporal scale.

Yet there are instances where Moe's approach seems overly familiar. His investigation of land use patterns and site histories is reminiscent of ecological historian William Cronon's groundbreaking *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991), a study that relies on central place theory and regional planning approaches to investigate how resource allocation, infrastructural developments, and the movement of capital in the 19th century led to the creation of the Midwest metropolis. Those more attuned to art criticism will recognize in Moe's analysis some of artist Robert Irwin's site taxonomies that contemplate the relationship between a work of art and its surrounding environment. But with *Unless*, Moe aims for something more expansive. This is clear from the onset, when he claims that, "given the paucity of modern and contemporary theoretical engagement with architecture's contingencies, architects today need novel theoretical frameworks from outside architecture to properly frame and describe terrestrial activity." Here, as in *Empire, State & Building*, Moe draws heavily from the work of sociologists such as Bruno Latour and Albena Yaneva, as well as a host of critical geographers, ecologists, and political economists. And yet the most enterprising

# 47 Review



**Facing page, left:** One of many diagrams featured in Moe's book, the "Metabolic Facts" label riffs on the familiar "Nutrition Facts" found on food packaging in order to convey the ecological toll of the Seagram Building's construction.

**Facing page, right:** *Unless* illustrates how the Seagram Building was in actuality a hemispherical project, comprising human and material resources drawn from Chicago, Chile, and all over.

**Left:** Though accounting for just two percent of the tower's mass, the brass facade constitutes 47 percent of its "emergy," meaning the bio-geophysical resources involved in construction.

**Above:** In the book's most effective diagram, the Seagram Building appears puny next to the mountains of resources required for its realization.

readers may notice that he does not mention other contemporary scholars like Paul Edwards, Timothy Morton, or Jane Bennett, whose important work on the very issues of scale and ecology that drive *Unless* could comprise their own "novel theoretical framework." These omissions appear strategic, however, especially when one considers how Moe intends to introduce architects and designers to a less familiar constellation of theorists and writers.

And yet, *Unless* is at its best when it is entirely and unapologetically conventional. This is evident particularly in the book's organization. The last chapters are arranged roughly according to those materials (concrete, steel, marble, travertine, brass, bronze, and glass) that gave the Seagram Building its singular form. Moe demonstrates how each of these materials came at great environmental and social costs. Concrete poured by the Connecticut contractor Pavarini Construction; glass manufactured at the Franklin Glass Company kilns in Pennsylvania; marble quarried in Vermont; and metals mined in Chile and milled in Chicago: all suggest that the Seagram Building is more than a terrestrial building—it is a hemispheric project.

*Unless* certainly makes for a unique reading experience. From the manifesto-like introductory sequence of images to the compact and satisfying conclusion, the canonical Seagram Building feels revived, injected with some newfound significance. There is nary a mention of the various singular figures associated with the building's design and construction, a decision that

gives free rein to Moe's material and ecological methods. One of these, perhaps already familiar to readers, diagrams the building's "Metabolic Facts" with a label that riffs on the familiar "Nutrition Facts" found on food packaging. It is certainly a gimmicky image, one that may inspire an eye roll or two. However, it does capture an essential point of Moe's book: that new techniques and conventions are needed to communicate the amount of energy consumed during a building's construction. Moe introduces the reader to the concept of "emergy," a term used by the late ecologist Howard T. Odum in measuring the amount of energy depleted in ecosystems. And yet this is a book that is unmistakably and decisively about a singular building. This is evident in its graphic design. The cover sports the Seagram Building's familiar and iconic vertical bronze mullions and horizontal Muntz metal spandrels, giving the book a recognizable form. The endpapers are even "bronzed" in the same shade as the curtain wall. Holding *Unless*, the synecdochic relationship between book and building becomes clear.

Moe's writing is pithy and clear for the most part, albeit occasionally bogged down by his overciting secondary sources—like the ghost in Shakespeare's Hamlet, Bruno Latour appears and reappears, announcing himself as if begging to be remembered. Nevertheless, this is only evidence of Moe's diligence. Taking into account his desire to introduce architects to new, otherwise unfamiliar books and authors, some analytical and narrative drift is to be expected, and there is no doubt that *Unless* will resonate

with architectural audiences wanting to know about the larger social, material, and analytical contexts for the Seagram Building.

On the subject of diligence, we might look to the literary historian Wayne Franklin, whose 1979 book, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers: The Diligent Writers of Early America*, also returns us to Hudson and the *Sailing Directions*. Hudson and his ilk, Franklin writes, were both dedicated observers and fastidious chroniclers. In catalogues, field books, and travel accounts, their words gave shape to this terrain as they narrated their encounters with the environments, ecologies, and peoples they would come to conquer and decimate. In other words, they described terrestrial activity. And some 233 years later, throughout October and November 1842, a young Karl Marx grappled with similar issues of resource extraction and terrestrial activity. It was for an essay—one of Marx's first—called "Debates on the Law of Thefts of Wood." At issue was a Prussian law that levied severe punishment for stealing wood, a criminal offense that Marx viewed in terms of resource allocation and commodity exchange. At one point, he writes, "In order to appropriate growing timber, it has to be forcibly separated from its organic association. Since this is an obvious outrage against the tree, it is therefore an obvious outrage against the owner of the tree." Marx, a diligent writer himself, wondered about the value of wanton destruction of natural resources in service of other institutions. "Forcible separation" is a loaded term, and yet it captures something evident throughout the pages of *Unless: The Seagram*

*Building Construction Ecology*. As much as architecture and building are interfaces between nature and society, they are also the very instruments responsible for the "forcible separation" that Marx bemoans.

And yet there may be another meaning for "forcible separation" at play, one that suggests that the object of architectural criticism is to remove the building from its multiple contexts. *Unless* comes at us fully formed, but oddly devoid of any accounts of specific land use planning and economic maneuverings that also inform the Seagram Building's construction ecology. Much remains to be written about the various policies that encouraged the construction industry's patterns of energy consumption in late-1950s New York. Fortunately, Moe's book appears at a time when writers, critics, and historians are more invested than ever in examining a building's site as more than a physical artifact—as a nexus of different social, economic, and economic processes. *Unless* adds a decidedly materials-oriented slant to such discussions, welcome and necessary, and unabashedly of the moment.


**Enrique Ramirez is a writer and historian of art and architecture. He teaches at the Yale School of Art.**

# Esto

Photography of the Built Environment

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Brooklyn Navy Yard, New Lab, Brooklyn NY, Marvel Architects  
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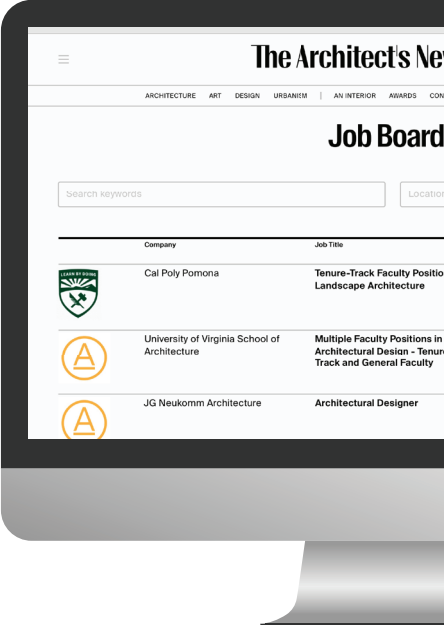
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# 50 Comment

## Prestige TV

Television cemented the idea that architecture was both a rarefied art and a key to the good life.



An image of a housing complex in Berlin's Hansaviertel neighborhood designed by Walter Gropius and The Architectural Collaborative appeared in a broadcast of *The Big Picture*.

While the opening night of Philharmonic Hall at Lincoln Center on September 23, 1962, was hailed as a watershed for the arts within New York City, it might have gone unnoticed by those living elsewhere. That is, were it not for an eponymous CBS News TV special, in which Aline Saarinen introduced the glamorous new hall to millions of Americans. At least for one night, architecture was at the center of the country's most prominent stage.

Television was by no means the only mass medium in which the public or professionals could find information about architectural design, although it arguably provided the widest exposure on such topics. By the time Saarinen was telling viewers about the new concert hall in New York, around 90 percent of American homes contained a TV set. The new medium played a key role in raising the profile of architecture in the United States and, in particular, helped establish the idea in the minds of the American public that architecture was art, but also a commodity to be consumed.

Programming about architecture and design, as well as the arts more generally, filled the television broadcasting day virtually from the moment there was a broadcasting day to fill. These shows had the sheen of high culture but also leveraged the full potential of a highly visual medium, making them attractive to network executives as a way of elevating TV's cultural cachet while also selling TV sets. At the same time, television was useful to arts organizations as well as architects, designers, and museum curators, in their efforts to reach new audiences and patrons. In the 1950s, the Museum of Modern Art in New York embarked on a "Television Project" that resulted in, among other things, a series of TV appearances by Edgar Kaufmann Jr. on Margaret Arlen's CBS morning show, in which he presented objects from his "Good Design" program. The American Institute of Architects, having only recently embraced public relations, extolled "The Great New Medium, Television" in its monthly PR newsletter in 1953. AIA chapters across the U.S., in Spokane, Washington; central Florida; Dallas; central New York state; and elsewhere soon took up the call to promote their profession, producing

programs with titles like "So You Want to Build" (1953) and "Design for Your Living" (1954). Many individual designers and architects also got in on the act. Charles and Ray Eames debuted their chaise lounge on NBC's Home show in 1956, while Philip Johnson appeared with Louis Kahn on an episode of the CBS show *Accent* titled "The Architect." Frank Lloyd Wright was a veritable fixture on television during these years, appearing on game shows and specials, as well as in interviews that networks continued to rebroadcast in the years after his death in 1959. (Wright was eulogized in the AIA Journal by TV host Alistair Cooke.)

Some programs did present critical appraisals of architecture projects, as in the case of a 1963 episode of *David Brinkley's Journal*, which argued that the modernist planned city of Brasília was an almost deserted place that few Brazilians wanted to visit or live in. But on the whole, the image of architecture presented in such programming was positive and upbeat, informed by producers' marketing and promotional goals. Programs emphasized architecture's prestige quality. Hugh Downs, host of an episode of the NBC News program *World Wide '60* dedicated to architecture, perhaps summed the mood up best, describing the spatial art as an expression of humankind's "search for beauty and elegance...a good deal more than a few lines on a blueprint." Other shows highlighted architecture's potential to make viewers' lives more comfortable and efficient. A sequence tracing Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's efforts to redesign a bus terminal in Chicago, featured on the arts program *Omnibus* in 1953, highlighted the architects' role in making "an efficient terminal, comfortable and pleasant, with every passenger freed of all the nuisance and trouble" that characterized the old, out-of-date structure it was set to replace.

These two seemingly contradictory ideas about good architecture—that it was an art form and that it made everyday life more comfortable—frequently merged in a discourse that emphasized the pleasurable physical and intellectual experiences well-designed spaces could engender. Good architecture should "elate the onlooker," argued Walter Gropius in a 1958 interview

for the NBC program *Wisdom*, and provide physical as well as "inner comfort." Eero Saarinen's architecture, according to Aline Saarinen, speaking on a 1967 episode of *Creative Person*, had a way "of making you feel as if you wanted to take a deep breath, of standing taller, of being a human being." "You enter a well-designed building," claimed Philip Johnson on *World Wide '60*, "and you feel better and you put on a necktie because it seems a more formal and glorious place to be." In a televisual tour of the 1957 *Buildings for Business and Government* exhibition at MoMA presented on *Omnibus*, critic Brendan Gill praises the terminal at Lambert Airport in St. Louis (Minoru Yamasaki, 1953–56), saying: "Comfort is here, and convenience. Hardly less important is the sense of pleasurable anticipation that this brilliant cage provides. For this is a happy marriage between inside and outside, between the world of flight and the irritating world of only waiting to fly. Though on the ground, you have the sense of already being contentedly airborne."

As the "you" address adopted in many of these programs ("you feel better," "you have the sense") makes clear, these programs were invitations to the TV audience to take part in the experience of these spaces, often through consumption. Any viewer, such programs implied, could delight in the comfort of an Eames chaise lounge by purchasing one, or in the beauty and efficiency of Lambert Airport Terminal by buying a plane ticket. The image of architecture TV conveyed was one in which buildings were regarded simultaneously as works of art and as consumer goods, capable of satisfying viewers' practical needs as well as elevating them intellectually and spiritually.

Of course, purchasing a television was the other way in which viewers could partake in the experience of architecture. Many early TV producers, including the influential NBC News president Reuven Frank, sought explicitly to use TV to re-create for viewers the experience of a particular site or event. Referencing an Emmy Award-winning NBC documentary about an escape from East Berlin, Frank told *The New York Times* in 1965, "You can get all the facts in a newspaper. Television can show you what

it's like to be digging an escape tunnel." The approach Frank endorsed was evident across TV programming in these decades. Gill's description of Lambert Airport Terminal on *Omnibus*, for example, unfolded against tight close-ups of its architectural model, which featured tiny passengers scattered through the terminal. Background sounds of jet engines and muffled PA announcements completed the effect of verisimilitude. *World Wide '60* was premised specifically on live transmissions beamed to viewers' homes from all over the world, a feat made possible by the new technology of the telecommunications satellite. Taking full advantage of such advances, the series' episode "The Shape of Things—Architecture" began by transporting viewers to architectural sites throughout the world, including the Great Pyramid in Giza, the Via Veneto in Rome, the Ritz Hotel at the Place Vendôme in Paris, and a public housing estate in London.

The presentation of architecture on TV is noteworthy for its use of visual spectacle to virtualize viewers' experience of it, but also for the way in which the messages presented in one program could be reinforced by those that aired before or after it, or in the advertising of its sponsors. Images of modernist structures like Lever House (1950–52) or the Seagram Building (1954–58) were visible not only on *Omnibus*, *Accent*, and *World Wide '60* but also in the news coverage of divided Berlin that proliferated leading up to and following the 1961 erection of the Berlin Wall. Programs like the U.S. Army documentary series *The Big Picture*, the newsmagazines *CBS Reports* and *Close Up!*, and network news specials like "The President at the Wall" (1963) all incorporated liberal footage of modernist architecture in West Berlin, such as a housing complex designed by Walter Gropius and The Architects Collaborative (1957). The 1962 broadcast from opening night at Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall, designed by Harrison & Abramovitz, included a commercial for the program's sponsor Corning Glass that consisted of a tour of its new Glass Center, also designed by Harrison & Abramovitz.

While their precise influence is difficult to gauge, in the visual and narrative discourses about architecture on American TV in the 1950s and 1960s, one can easily detect the seeds of what would blossom in the 1970s and '80s into a culture of global architectural spectacle, associated with works like Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers's Centre Pompidou in Paris (1971–77) and Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao (1993–97). The very idea that a building could and indeed should have a significant impact beyond its immediate milieu, its image carried via mass media to audiences (and potential visitors) around the world, is one that television clearly played a role in shaping and promoting.

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