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The grand opening of the Amant Art Campus in Bushwick, Brooklyn, (this year’s Project of the Year), took place on an idyllic Saturday in July. The sun was out but the air, vibrating in the mid-70s, was mild for summer in New York City. There would be a smattering of rain showers later that evening, but as the party ramped up, the light was falling across Grand Street in such a way as to lend even that snaggletoothed stretch of auto repair shops, storage facilities, and working-class rowhouses (see above) an aura of glamor.

This place, intensely gentrified despite its broken-down appearance, still isn’t where one might expect to find award-winning architectural design. But there, hidden behind a subdued facade that could just as easily be the front of a poultry plant, is to be found an essay on spatial and programmatic richness, the deft handling of humble materials, and effective, meaningful formal exploration.

Surprising discoveries such as Amant are a large part of what makes AN’s awards program so rewarding to produce and share with our readership. Here, bundled in one handsome edition, is a statement on the diverse and often unexpected realms where great architecture, great designers, and great products are appearing, across the North American continent and beyond. And this year represents an even richer portfolio of surprises with the addition of our Best of Practice awards (p. 80), for which our jury evaluated design firms from across the AEC spectrum on everything from quality of work to employee work/life balance.

Additional highlights for me include The Shelter Project (p. 23), a resource-packed wooden bus stop featuring a solar-powered charging station, rainwater cistern, and community message board; the student speculative project Area 10 (p. 64), which locates a museum and visitor center in the bottom of a giant crater made by nuclear bomb testing in the Nevada desert, showing a way other than depression and anxiety to engage with the more terrifying aspects of the Anthropocene; and the young practice Shin Shin Architecture (p. 88), which combines playful forms and gently seductive color palettes in assemblies that transcend vernacular, history, and identity to arrive at the sweetness of waking reality. Dive in and let us know what surprising finds you come up with! Aaron Seward
Germaine Barnes  
Director  
Studio Barnes

Anda French  
Cofounder  
French2D

Wonne Ickx  
Partner  
PRODUCTORA

Carol Ross Barney  
Design principal and founder  
Ross Barney Architects

Jason Pugh  
President  
National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)

Thomas Phifer  
Founder  
Thomas Phifer and Partners

Aaron Seward  
Editor in chief  
The Architect’s Newspaper

Samuel Medina  
Executive editor  
The Architect’s Newspaper
Nearly all that needs to be said about Archigram has been said. The words, however, were never really the point. From its formation in 1961 to its dissolution in 1974, the British design collective remained squarely in the “image business,” as the historian and Archigram booster Reyner Banham astutely pointed out. And of all the polymorphous reveries hawked by members Dennis Crompton, Peter Cook, Warren Chalk, Ron Herron, Michael Webb, and David Greene, arguably none were as arresting as Cook’s Plug-In City project from the mid-1960s.

The proposal defied cultural expectations of what architecture could be at a time when, as Cook sardonically wrote, “[t]he prepackaged frozen lunch is more important than Palladio.” What is seen in Plug-In City, Typical Section is less architecture and more infrastructure, i.e., the substratum that supports contemporary life, of which architecture is but one background character. Residents could moor and unmoor their prefabricated dwelling pods to the host megastructure at will or upgrade from one capsule size to a greater one, depending on life circumstances. Revisiting the project last year, Cook described Plug-In City as “a method of allowing people to grow their dwelling with themselves.” Likewise, the backing structural lattice that carried the control systems, conveyance, mail lines, and rubbish shoots would grow or decline with time, adapting to the exigencies of the day. (Plug-In City, while anticipating advances like Amazon Prime, would need some retooling for 2021.)

Winners of The Architect’s Newspaper’s Best of Design awards will receive a signed print of Plug-In City, Typical Section. Congratulations!
The honorees of *The Architect’s Newspaper*’s 2021 Best Of awards programs each receive a trophy designed by Viemeister Industries. At first glance, it may not look like much—a block of finished birch plywood, measuring 5 ½ inches by 3 ⅞ inches by 3 ¾ inches, carved in the shape of a B. But the humble nature of the material and the forthrightness of the form admirably represent the zeitgeist of 21st century architecture and design discourse: more democratic, more inclusive, more environmentally friendly.

“Normally, trophies are made out of bronze or glass or something like that,” said Tucker Viemeister of Viemeister Industries. “We wanted to make something that was more ecological, both in terms of the energy it takes to make it and the embedded values of the material. Wood became the best solution.”

Best intentions aside, the form and material also create a synergy, with the layers of the plywood creating sensuous stripes rounding the curves of the B, giving the impression of a stack of Bs. Most essentially perhaps, this discrete object confers its laurels while looking splendid in a home or office. “It looks good on your bookshelf next to your collection of beach rocks or something,” Viemeister continued. “It fits in. It’s not too in your face.”
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Cover image: The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial

Outside the Lines

Clockwise from top: Jason O'Rear, Jonathan Hillyer/Courtesy Bryony Roberts Studio; Helen Manson Photography
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Since 2015, Martino Stierli has been the Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). During that time the institution has undergone a major renovation and expansion, entirely rethinking the way it exhibits architecture in the context of its larger collections. AN editor in chief Aaron Seward spoke to Stierli recently about how the latter's department sets architecture within broader contexts, MoMA's commitment to changing the culture's outlook on the climate crisis, and how the department is expanding its curatorial approach while working to “destabilize” the Western canon.

Aaron Seward: Since MoMA's reopening in 2019, architecture and design have been more prominently displayed and thoroughly integrated throughout the museum. MoMA has described this as a "both and" approach that acknowledges architecture and design's interdisciplinary relationship to the visual arts. But architecture and design also have interdisciplinary relationships with literature, science, politics, and, well, pretty much every other type of human activity. How does MoMA keep a perspective on architecture's broad relationship to society?

Martino Stierli: We do this precisely through these interdisciplinary conversations that we have now in our collection galleries, where we have very much thought of each gallery being a separate module, almost like a mini exhibition, that are montaged together. We use the conceptual idea of the montage, where you have juxtapositions between “mini” stories. And you also have an interstitial space, which makes you think, “Oh, what does it mean to have this gallery that looks at a specific chapter of modernism next to this?” Let me give you an example. When we opened in 2019, we had a gallery that was called Design for Modern Life. It was a very large gallery that laid out this sort of strong societal vision that many of the avant-gardes of the early 20th century had. The idea was that the architect could become an active agent in societal transformation. But this was juxtaposed with Monet’s Water Lilies, which produces a completely opposite effect. So one gallery was embracing this productivist stance of what the Industrial Revolution did to our cities and societies and the potentials the avant-gardes saw in the Industrial Revolution for reshaping society at large; and then there was Water Lilies, a king of escapism from reality. This juxtaposition was jarring, but it was very strong, and I really think it made people think, “Oh my god, these things happened at the same time.” That was a great way for us as curators to show on the one hand, yes, what an incredible, transformative moment the Industrial Revolution was and the artistic production that came out of it, but on the other hand, there were also the social problems that it brought with it and the need to be able to get away from it.

AS: How does this approach differ from how architecture and design was exhibited previously?

MS: I would say what we had before was our own mini museum within the museum. Architecture and Design was located on the third floor. We had two galleries there. We were autonomous and could do whatever we wanted there. It was for the most part collection-based, sometimes also some special exhibitions. But there was never this direct relationship to things from other fields, so the juxtaposition I just described with Water Lilies could never have happened. You would have had to make the jump to the fifth floor [to make a similar connection], and now [those connections] are right there and you can’t avoid [them]. Our department has always been very interested and pronounced in situating architecture in a
larger political and social conversation. I want to mention a couple projects that I’ve championed since I came here. With *Toward a Concrete Utopia*, the [2018] exhibition about Yugoslavian modernism in the postwar period, the underlying question was “How does architecture serve as a tool, and how does it serve as an agent for societal transformation?” And I think that very same question is underlying my upcoming project *The Project of Independence: Architectures of Decolonization*, where you already have the whole political discourse, this idea of postcoloniality in the title. My own interest is very much in situating architecture within a civic discourse because I believe strongly that architecture is much more than just a pastime for wealthy people to furnish wealthy houses and private institutions, which so often is, unfortunately, the case in the United States. I fundamentally believe that architecture has a duty and a responsibility and the capacity to impact the way we live and articulate a vision for how we should live.

AS: Speaking of larger contexts and the responsibilities of architecture, the climate crisis is perhaps the largest and most pressing issue that humankind and architecture are facing, and now with the creation of the Ambasz Institute and the appointment of Carson Chan [as its director], MoMA has moved to address the built environment’s relationship with ecology. How do you see this playing out in curatorial programs, and how can an institution like MoMA contribute to moving the needle in the right direction in terms of how we build architecture vis-à-vis climate change?

MS: Thanks for pointing out the establishment of the Ambasz Institute, which I think is really a huge achievement for our department and for the museum at large. I’m convinced that this will help give us the means to position ourselves as a leader in this absolutely necessary transformation—not only of institutions but of the way we build and the way we inhabit space on a very broad scale. What can a curatorial department do? On the one hand we can provide a platform for conversation. We can use the amazing reach that MoMA has as a museum but also as an online presence, where we reach many people around the world, to articulate loud and clearly that this is the key issue architecture—and our whole civilization—must address. This is a matter
of life and death, and we need to talk about it, and we are going to force all of us to think about this matter. But more than just a convener of conversation, as a curatorial department we can also articulate imaginaries—to give people an idea of what a future of non-extractive existence on this planet could look like, how architecture can be harnessed toward this objective. That’s what historically MoMA has always been good at. It was founded with the idea of projecting for a relatively conservative American audience a vision, an image, of what modern living could look like. So many of our postwar initiatives were precisely about that: giving the everyday American museum visitor an understanding of what a better or different future could look like. This sounds a little bit idealistic, but I fundamentally believe that we have this responsibility to project an imaginary of a changed future.

AS: When I think of MoMA, and of modernism generally, I think of utopianism. Of course, these visions are very often compromised when it comes to implementing a reality. MoMA’s 2019 update refashioned the building to be a better environmental steward. It achieved a LEED Platinum rating. At the same time LEED and other rating systems have been criticized for being vulnerable to subversion and are often used more for greenwashing. In putting up shows that seek a vision for a future, do you feel a certain responsibility to hew closer to reality or do you think future visions should be as utopian as possible?

MS: Utopia, the way we understand it and the way that it’s often been criticized, was often a failure because it was driven by technology. We can use technology for the betterment of the world—technology in the broader sense, not just technological innovation but also the management of societies—but I think we are at a point in the history of civilization where we are aware of the incredible pitfalls and dangers of this [mindset]. And so I would say what we need are humbler utopias, which is a contradiction in terms. And I would even say that projecting imaginaries necessarily has to mean projecting utopias. You introduced the word utopia. I prefer the term imaginary because I think it’s possible to imagine different futures, and in fact it’s necessary to imagine different futures without adhering to the old techno-utopian drive, of which I’m personally relatively skeptical myself, which doesn’t mean I don’t think we can use technology to solve some problems, but I think for the specific issue of the climate crisis something different and more radical will be necessary. In terms of MoMA’s commitment, I know from the conversations that we have in the institution and from [director] Glenn [Lowry]’s vision that the dedication and commitment to really working toward such a different future and how MoMA can contribute goes much further than the LEED certification. We have a sustainability officer in place, Jean Savitsky, looking for how we are drastically reducing waste, how we are much less dependent on the grid, consuming less energy. The whole picture is being reassessed. It’s a really exciting initiative that we are embarking on.

AS: If you think of the climate crisis as being the prime motivating driver in architecture today, where would you see form, style, mood, material—all the things we love about architecture and experiencing buildings. How does that fit into our drive to create a more ecologically attuned built environment?

MS: Well, that’s what I meant by projecting imaginaries. In the end, I think we are committed to thinking of architecture in terms of a cultural conversation. We ourselves as curators are not going to resolve the technical issues, but what we can do is to encourage designers to think about giving form to these programs and these technologies. Very much in line with how the avant-gardes
in the early 20th century were giving shape to the impact of the Industrial Revolution and how it transformed the building industry through an incredible formal language. I do think we are on the cusp of such a moment. I’m not saying this is going to lead to a totally revolutionary new formal repertoire, but I do think this ecological recalibration will require new formal innovation.

AS: In addition to the climate crisis, the racial reckoning and calls for greater diversity and access are changing architectural discourse. Museums in general have also drawn criticism lately for not doing enough to address these issues. What do you think is the role of an institution like MoMA, and the A&D department specifically, in addressing these concerns, both internally as well as through the curatorial programs?

MS: Speaking from the point of view of the curatorial program, we do this through our commitment to not only expanding the Western canon as it’s been established, not least through MoMA, but also to destabilize it by looking at figures and places and themes that have been underrepresented or even systematically written out of the canon. Toward a Concrete Utopia was a reassessment of modernism from an Eastern, socialist perspective, and Project of Independence brings to the fore a generation of South Asian architects who have never had this kind of platform until recently. Doshi is a household name, but that’s a relatively recent phenomenon. I’m also thinking of the ongoing exhibition Reuse, Renew, Recycle: Recent Architecture from China, which brings in work from a part of the world that has not previously been represented in MoMA’s collection; and [the show] also looks at [this context] through the lens of sustainability. I also want to mention Reconstructions: Architecture and Blackness in America from the spring, which marked the first time that MoMA gave space to African American architects and their thinking on where we stand in our cultural conversation. So I would say our curatorial program over the last few years has been very consistently directed toward inclusivity and rethinking critically the role that MoMA itself has played in a politics of exclusion.
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AN’s Best of Design awards celebrate outstanding built and unbuilt architectural projects in a wide range of categories, from high-rises to temporary installations, giving as broad a picture of contemporary design as possible.
“The Amant Art Campus is a place where contemporary art and discourse live. It demanded a strong architecture, abstract in its context and cloaked with direct materials that have a sense of permanence. The poetry of the facades marks the passage of time each day with a treasury of shadows and light.” Thomas Phifer
DESIGNER
SO–IL

LOCATION
New York City

AN
Project of
the Year

PULPSTUDIO

VE TRITE
The Vetrine Collection for Pulp Studio by SICIS
LOISIUM HOTEL EXPANSION

DESIGNER
Steven Holl Architects

LOCATION
Langenlois, Austria

Project of the Year Finalist

NXTHVN

DESIGNER
Deborah Berke Partners

LOCATION
New Haven, Connecticut

Project of the Year Finalist

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DESIGNER
Kevin Daly Architects

LOCATION
Los Angeles

The Robertson Recreation Center replaces a beloved mid-20th-century recreational facility that was dilapidated beyond repair. Rob Rec, as the older structure was called, included a slightly undersized basketball court that was vital to a mostly underserved community. Professional players such as Nick Young, formerly of the L.A. Lakers and the Washington Wizards, and Cedric Ceballos, whose career also included a stint with the Lakers, honed their skills at Rob Rec. Its successor builds on that legacy while expanding the facility’s offerings. Now complete, the 12,000-square-foot, $11 million gymnasium and community center is organized around a regulation-size indoor basketball court and an outdoor half court. Visually light, the undulating metal-clad building—almost residentially scaled—bends around existing melaleuca trees. Given the center’s access to transit lines, parking has been kept to a minimum. And in a nod to sustainability, the interior relies on daylight and natural ventilation.

“This rec center has real charm and does real work. The undulating walls and roof squeeze the program onto a tight sight while maintaining heritage trees and opening clerestories on the interior, allowing lots of daylight into the basketball court.” Aaron Seward
The Shelter Project is a new bus stop for the Wellston Loop neighborhood of North St. Louis, designed in collaboration with local nonprofit community building organizations and transit authorities. The shelter design combines the necessary shade and seating elements of a bus stop with a cell-phone charging station, community bulletin board, and pantry to distribute common household goods to those in need. The roof is designed to capture rainwater for the adjacent garden and also features a solar panel to power the charging station and lights. A nearby fabricator donated the material and labor for the recycled-steel frame, and the structure is finished with wood slats hand-painted two colors to create a playful pattern. A local artist designed a mural for the wood fence behind the shelter in collaboration with an artist activist group to raise awareness of gun violence in St. Louis.
“Rich in texture and space, this urban design project successfully blurs the line between old and new, public and private, rustic and raw.”

Jason Pugh

**URBAN DESIGN**

**DESIGNER**
Penn Group in collaboration with Coscia Moos Architecture and DAVID RUBIN Land Collective

**LOCATION**
Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania

The Ironworks at Pencoyd Landing transforms a historic industrial site along the Schuylkill River into a new urban destination. Ironwork relics found on the 10-acre brownfield site were integrated into the design, so that 120-plus-year-old craneways frame a variety of urban rooms and mitigate the scale of the nearby highway and rail spur. The Pencoyd Bridge, a recently restored landmark mostly limited to pedestrians and cyclists, connects the reborn Ironworks to Philadelphia’s Manayunk neighborhood, while the creation of a new public plaza marks a point of arrival for visitors. With its varied programming (there is an on-site Marriott hotel) and deeply considered urban design (the project is embedded within an existing system of trails), the Ironworks at Pencoyd Landing draws together layers of interaction on the newly accessible riverfront to merge active and passive recreation with life events, meetings, and intimate dates.
NXTHVN

“An unapologetic celebration of materials—raw industrial materials, timber, masonry, and stone—that are tied seamlessly throughout the new public and private spaces with abundant natural daylight.” Jason Pugh

DESIGNER
Deborah Berke Partners

LOCATION
New Haven, Connecticut

NXTHVN is a not-for-profit arts incubator and community center founded by artist Titus Kaphar in New Haven, Connecticut. Dedicated to providing affordable workspaces for artists, mentoring local youth, and revitalizing the city’s Dixwell neighborhood, NXTHVN occupies two former factory buildings and a new addition designed by Deborah Berke Partners. The 40,000-square-foot facility includes professional artist studios, a maker space, co-working spaces, a “great hall” for events and performances, a 3D-printing fabrication lab, a gallery, a cafe, and apartments for artists-in-residence. The new addition’s facade is composed of glass and staggered gray brick, creating a clear distinction between old and new. Translucent glass at street level brings natural light into below-grade studios, while transparent glass on the upper levels opens views out to the neighborhood. A setback creates space for a rooftop terrace. Illuminated at night, the addition acts as a beacon for the center and signals renewed investment in the neighborhood.
DESIGNER
OJB Landscape Architecture

LOCATION
Dearborn, Michigan

The expansion and replanning of the Arjay Miller Arboretum at Ford’s World Headquarters delineate a new environmental model that expands the company’s focus on human health and wellness. As part of an analysis of the 200-acre Dearborn campus, a 15-acre portion of the existing arboretum was transformed from a manicured lawn into a thriving meadow that sequesters carbon, filters stormwater, and provides a home for birds and pollinator species. The genesis of the project was an effort to control stormwater in an area that frequently floods. The site has been reforested with 280 new trees that reflect the variety of the Midwest, planted in flowing groves. Understory planting knits together low-maintenance meadow grasses and perennials with new detention ponds to collect stormwater. Apiaries are nestled among a quilted pattern of a dozen different seed and plug mixes that correspond to the different topographic ecological conditions of the site.

“This is the type of landscape project that is not looking for formal fireworks or ostentatious originality but defines—with controlled design ambitions—a sensitive and intelligent approach to a ubiquitous problem: the mowed-lawn-next-to-highway landscape.”

Jason Pugh
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DESIGNER
Leers Weinzapfel Associates

LOCATION
Allston, Massachusetts

The District Energy Facility (DEF) embodies a state-of-the-art, cost-effective, resilient, and sustainable energy generation system for Harvard University’s Allston campus. Occupying a previously deserted rail yard, the DEF will slowly be surrounded by key campus buildings, including the recently opened Science and Engineering Complex and an in-progress hotel/conference center and midrise residences. Despite all this development, the building’s compact, cubic form helps it maintain a bold and refined presence. Aluminum fins wrap around the structure, revealing or concealing various equipment areas while putting technology on display. The project is a visual celebration of the numerous invisible benefits of district energy plants: resilience, energy efficiency, reduced energy costs, decreased carbon emissions, lowered air pollution, and minimized acoustic transmission.

“Often the architecture of infrastructure is at best an afterthought. This amazing District Energy Facility shows us both how and why design is essential to a livable environment.”

Carol Ross Barney

“INFRASTRUCTURE”Brad Feinknopf
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Steven Holl Architects’ design of the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) called for a “cool jacket facade.” This ventilated facade involved wrapping the building’s opaque outer weather wall with 1,150 translucent glass tubes up to 21 feet in length. The all-white glass tubes have an acid-etched surface with four translucent Vanceva Arctic Snow PVB interlayers that allow natural light into the galleries—a rarity for a museum—while protecting the artworks within. Punched openings in the weather wall offer a different experience of light behind the glass tubes. Daylight also flows in from clerestory glazing. At night, the glass tubes glow with a soft artificial light, making the Kinder Building visible from far away.

“The museum is a vessel of light—it contains and embodies the light of the day, amplifying the lyrical joining of art, place, and architecture. The facades capture and hold this ever-changing light. In the blink of an eye what was shadow becomes light, radically altering your physical relationship to the work.”

Thomas Phifer
“Nabi Boyd’s work is both precise and playful. The thoughtful approach to each project has a softness and ease with site while reimagining the terms of context and material.” Anda French

Designer
Nabi Boyd

Location
Santa Monica, California

Mora Nabi (b. Kabul, Afghanistan) and Sean Baer Boyd (b. Carpinteria, California) founded Nabi Boyd in 2018. Based in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, California, the firm has designed projects across coastal Southern California that move between the urban and suburban, the rural and the agricultural. Nabi Boyd explores architecture’s relationship to the landscape and natural conditions, examining ideas about siting, massing, color, and experience. The practice tends toward the thoughtful, simple, warm, and light, but also encourages the wild, playful, and curious. Key projects include Shepard Mesa Orchard House, a residence for a young family on a working cherimoya orchard at the top of a hill; Los Osos Grandma’s House, a backyard residence at a multigenerational family compound in a coastal suburb; and Bailard Avenue House, an addition to a 120-year-old cedar-shingled home.
The Harvard University Science and Engineering Complex’s (SEC) striking yet highly functional design sets a high standard for future development on Harvard’s Allston campus. The eight-level, 544,000-square-foot building is organized into three 4-story volumes connected by two glazed multistory atria that provide light-filled social hubs for faculty and students. The upper stories are clad in a facade whose layered design celebrates and calibrates the scale of the large volumes that comprise the research activities of the building. It also creates an identity for the complex and plays a crucial role in the building’s energy efficiency while enhancing occupants’ comfort. The SEC has received LEED Platinum and Living Building Challenge Petal certifications; complementing energy-conserving HVAC and lighting systems and landscaped roof terraces, the facade balances technical and aesthetic goals. Four principal facade types are used across the building, including the world’s first hydroformed stainless-steel screen, which wraps the laboratory portion of the structure.
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Amant is an arts campus spread across three blocks of rapidly changing industrial north Brooklyn. Rather than an inward-looking space isolated from its urban context, this cultural incubator is woven into the neighborhood fabric, offering public and private functions such as a cafe and artists’ studios. Each of its four buildings nestles comfortably within its industrial context and, up close, offers surprising tactilities, details, and depth that betray the familiar and the everyday. Public routes channel through large city blocks, circulating visitors through pockets of outdoor space and hidden entryways. Taken as a whole, the complex is a part of, benefits from, and contributes to the local community. Featuring galleries of various sizes with different light conditions, the campus is amenable to flexible curation as a group or individually and facilitates large-scale and intimate programs.
For the exhibition design of *Chicano — go Comics: 1960s to Now*, held at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in mid-2021, local architectural practice Norman Kelley wanted to re-create the experience of reading comics. To this end, the firm crafted installations that could be viewed between, within, and through portals that mimicked the function of comic panels. From the beginning, the architects were compelled by a mutual attentiveness to the art of drawing. For cartoonists, the scale of drawing is intimate—many of the original drawings in the exhibition are at a scale no larger than a letter-size piece of paper. This degree of intimacy is key to comics because they are also haptic objects: They require you to hold, leaf through, and get as close to the work as possible to inspect every narrative detail. Correspondingly, the exhibition design required visitors to pay close, and proximate, attention.

“This eye-catching exhibition design betrays an erudition of the subject matter, but not in any self-pleasing way. The displays reinforce the curatorial themes and beats, making fresh a graphic medium all but eclipsed by the cinematic success of its most tedious franchises.”

Samuel Medina

DESIGNER
Norman Kelley

LOCATION
Chicago

For the exhibition design of *Chicano — go Comics: 1960s to Now*, held at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in mid-2021, local architectural practice Norman Kelley wanted to re-create the experience of reading comics. To this end, the firm crafted installations that could be viewed between, within, and through portals that mimicked the function of comic panels. From the beginning, the architects were compelled by a mutual attentiveness to the art of drawing. For cartoonists, the scale of drawing is intimate—many of the original drawings in the exhibition are at a scale no larger than a letter-size piece of paper. This degree of intimacy is key to comics because they are also haptic objects: They require you to hold, leaf through, and get as close to the work as possible to inspect every narrative detail. Correspondingly, the exhibition design required visitors to pay close, and proximate, attention.
The Brugge Diptych was a temporary pavilion for the 2021 Brugge Triennale, TraumA, which was staged in the eponymous Belgian city from May to late October. One of several international commissions, the pavilion served as an event space for the Triennale’s programming, addressing issues in urban trauma. Docked within Bruge’s peripheral and residential waterways, the wood-framed structure was floated on pontoons so as to avoid any direct contact with the protected historic city. The pavilion abutted an abandoned 15th-century canal house, whose proximity was consequential in several ways. Through estrangements of orientation, material, scale, and posture, the Brugge Diptych attempted to recognize something of itself in its temporary neighbor, as if the two had some trauma to work through. After all, architecture is felt before it is understood.

“The project has a beautifully eerie presence that seems to operate both on the level of visceral experience and conceptual clarity.” Anda French

DESIGNER
Jon Lott/PARA Project

LOCATION
Bruges, Belgium

“The project has a beautifully eerie presence that seems to operate both on the level of visceral experience and conceptual clarity.” Anda French
On a traditional Chicago lot that borders an alleyway, Ardmore House flips the traditional residential section, arraying bedrooms on the first floor and living spaces on the second. The architecture of the home is designed around the primary value that architecture can completely engage with an urban context rather than shy away from it. This approach, encapsulated in Kwong Von Glinow’s concept of “living openly,” supports contemporary ways of living, emphasizing communal areas, interconnectivity, and flexible live/work spaces that receive ample natural light and engage the surrounding urban context. A curved double-height atrium runs the full length of the house to create an interior courtyard that vertically connects the common areas on the first and second floors. Defined by a large picture window and a curving wall, the courtyard offers an informal multipurpose area that connects to the open plan of Level 2 where four trusses support the house’s balloon frame, a quintessential Chicago touch.

“This house offers both a compelling conceptual study in reassembled domestic organization and a set of thoughtful, cozy, real-life spaces.”

Anda French
One Hundred is a new residential tower overlooking Forest Park in St. Louis. The skyscraper rises over 380 feet and includes retail, amenities, parking, and residential apartments with views of Forest Park and the Gateway Arch. Four-story tiers are stacked over the height of the tower. The angled facade creates generous outdoor spaces on top of each tier, providing terraces for a quarter of the apartments, as well as shared amenity space for the resident community atop the green roof podium. The apartments are designed to connect people to views of landmarks; each unit features its own corner living room with double exposures that provide views and daylight. To enhance the opportunities provided by the site orientation and environmental forces, the building’s leaf-shaped plan and tiered massing maximize its performance, reducing the overall energy load and increasing occupants’ comfort.
Sited on the upper end of a sloping lot overlooking a dramatic bend of the McKenzie River, the Divine House has a simple rectangular footprint and a gabled roof with deep overhangs. The plan is split down the center, with the northern half containing the smaller, more cellular programs and the southern half containing the larger living and dining areas, including the kitchen and an adjoining covered deck. Spaces are defined using a series of “solid” storage volumes, which allow for notable free movement throughout the house and establish the distinct character of each of the plan’s two halves. The methods of construction and the material palette are direct yet robust: The roof is raw corrugated aluminum, the siding is cedar with black pine tar, and the interior is finished in oak boards.
Montreal’s first “smart vertical community,” Humaniti is a modern mixed-use development designed to exist harmoniously with its pluralistic context. Located at the crossroads of three well-defined areas framing downtown and Old Montreal, the complex offers varying degrees of permeability with its surroundings, creating spatial moments based on elevation and building depth. The massing is defined by three elements, the first of which—The Crust—embraces the public plaza as a ground treatment. The Hive, the larger of the two towers, is an architectural gesture that reinforces the vertical city concept, recalling the typology of Montreal’s suburbs, while The Blades defines the urban elevation facing the old city. Registered for WELL Multifamily, residential pilot, and targeting LEED Silver certification, Humaniti meets stringent air and water quality criteria, promotes physical activity, and incorporates inspiring design features and works of art.

“Plenty of tower projects pay lip service to addressing human and metropolitan scales without getting either right. This one seems to find the balance between big-city verticality and the comforts of home.” Aaron Seward
KAWNEER’S CURTAIN WALL SYSTEMS ARE RECOGNIZED BY ARCHITECTS

The Harvard Divinity School, Swartz Hall project recently received an Honorable Mention in the Building Renovation category. Kawneer’s 1600/1600UT Curtain Wall systems were incorporated to deliver high thermal performance, versatility, reliability and value.

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The refurbishment of the Grand Théâtre de Québec required consideration of its two defining components: its Brutalist architecture, courtesy of the award-winning Quebecois architect Victor Prus, and a large-scale sculptural mural by Jordi Bonet. In response, the architectural team devised an innovative glass casing affixed to the concrete envelope. The solution shields the theater from the elements by creating a secondary, tempered envelope. The glass casing twists at the corners, lifts at the base, and fades, leaving the original building exteriors intact and perfectly visible. This glass addition plays with the perception of space; sometimes immaterial, sometimes reflective, it merges with its context, transposing art and architecture, while also expressing its delicate structure. The effect of this subtle intervention is not only to preserve the Grand Théâtre’s Brutalist stylings and artistic narrative but to recast them for the future.
Opened in 1928, the Sears, Roe-buck & Co. distribution center in Boston’s Fenway neighborhood was a retail powerhouse for decades. After Sears abandoned the 1-million-square-foot building in 1988, the landmarked property relaunched with a movie theater, offices, and big-box retail—the latter of which is particularly out of step with today’s iteration of the Fenway. Developers enlisted Elkus Manfredi Architects to reinvent the building for a high-energy work/play world while honoring the rich history of this neighborhood cornerstone. In stripping the interiors to their structural bones, the architects revealed the building’s true industrial character. And by removing large sections of the second floor, they were able to create a new social entry space and a grand food hall. Design features include exposed concrete columns and steel frames on storefronts and windows that connect to the outdoors. A new public park with world-class art installations replaces a parking lot, providing a dynamic destination for visitors, workers, and residents.
Situated in a former 1920s garage, Knoll’s D.C. offices and showroom juxtapose the warmth and richness of Knoll materials with the dramatic tall ceilings and rough concrete construction of the original building. The project is the iconic brand’s first store entirely at street level; large glass doors open out for events and outdoor furniture displays to connect with the surrounding neighborhood and attract passersby. The 7,700-square-foot open showroom centers on a vibrantly lit bar screened in bendable wood and highlighting Knoll’s expansion into hospitality furnishing. Smaller spaces are defined by multicolored drapery on L-shaped tracks, and offices are illuminated by a light box deeper in the space. For visual and material warmth, the design integrates Knoll textiles and custom acoustic felt products as architectural finishes. Colorful, light drapery is visible along the transparent street front, while felt baffles are suspended from 16-foot ceilings, concealing ductwork and ensuring an acoustically balanced space for productivity and comfort.

“Balance is not the first thing about showrooms that comes to mind. Too often, these exhibition spaces bow to the pressures of saleability or, conversely, the consumer’s self-perception. ARO’s D.C. showroom gets its exactly right.”

Samuel Medina
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BAYLOR SCOTT & WHITE HEALTH ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER

“This is a big building, but it feels approachable and workable thanks to generous views and sunlight.” Carol Ross Barney

DESIGNER
Perkins&Will

LOCATION
Dallas

The new Health Administrative Center rejects the typical layout of an office building in order to support a shift in workplace culture, promote health and well-being, and connect staff to the outdoors and core clinical functions. Fostering collaboration among once-siloed staff and eliminating corporate hierarchy, the 250,000-square-foot office space is organized along two 3-acre floor plates. Multiple floor openings and stairs connect the two levels, providing both visual and physical connectivity. They also encourage physical movement and reduce elevator use. The disadvantages of large, deep floor plates are mitigated by clerestory windows that are aligned with floor openings, bringing daylight to workspaces across both levels. Double-height amenity spaces and a five-story parking garage support the elevated office floors. The former in particular acts as an urban-scale porch, connecting key social spaces directly to the outdoors.
Nike Icon Studios LA is the flagship studio housing the company’s Global Brand Imaging operations. It also places diverse photographic and imaging functions—print editorial, product, video, post-production, and editing—under one roof. Packed with activity, and conceived around confluent ideas pairing art and science, the project is meant to embrace and bolster Nike’s restless spirit of innovation. The design for the studio is organized within an existing 42,000-square-foot, linear, pre-fabricated core-and-shell building along a central spine that serves as the primary circulation for both people and product.
DESIGNER
Mecanoo in collaboration with Beyer Blinder Belle

LOCATION
New York City

Formerly known as the Mid-Manhattan Library and reopened earlier this year, the transformed Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library (SNFL) has quickly become a city icon. As New York Public Library’s largest circulating branch, the SNFL offers access to 400,000 books and materials plus dedicated spaces for learning, services, and gathering, including a new rooftop terrace accessible to all New Yorkers. Constructed in 1915 as a department store and used by NYPL since the 1970s, the building has been renewed for the 21st century and expanded to 180,000 square feet; seating and public computers have doubled. Most of the library’s materials are creatively housed in the Long Room, composed of five floors of browsable stacks and a dramatic new three-story atrium. The rooftop addition, called the Wizard’s Hat, houses program and event spaces, and accommodates various building needs. In the words of NYPL president Anthony W. Marx, the SNFL is “the central circulating library New York City has long needed, wanted, and deserves.”
The Rectoria is an icon for both the Tecnológico de Monterrey campus and the city of Monterrey. Designed by the campus’s original planners, Mario Pani and Enrique de la Mora, and inaugurated in 1954, it housed the library, great hall, offices, and teaching spaces. Successive renovations degraded the original design yet maintained the building as a showcase. Sasaki’s recent interior renovation of the Rectoria aims at adapting its spaces to contemporary needs and providing new areas for meeting and learning, including galleries, an amphitheater, and multipurpose rooms. Locally sourced materials, terrazzo flooring, wood screens and partitions, and bronze and glass railings help put in focus the restored elements of the building and heritage pieces such as the murals by Jorge González Camarena.
The new Cohen Quadrangle for Exeter College, Oxford, reinvents the city’s 700-year-old collegiate tradition: from inward-looking courtyard to an outward-looking, inclusive, and barrier-free “home” for living and learning. A campus within a building, the 64,600-square-foot Cohen Quad incorporates a porter’s lodge, seminar rooms, a multipurpose auditorium, a special collections archive, cloisters, the Learning Commons (Oxford’s first dedicated social learning space), a courtyard amphitheater, a cafe, fellows’ studies and apartments, 90 study-bedrooms, family kitchens, and offices. The building embodies three key architectural concepts: the architectural promenade, a place of gathering, and home. These ideas are embedded in an S-shaped plan, in the fluidity and variety of gathering spaces, and in the expression of shelter represented by a curved stainless-steel roof. Intricately detailed in a palette of limestone, cherrywood, concrete, and brass, the Cohen Quad offers a new model for how a scholarly community might live, work, and coexist.
The Audrey Irmas Pavilion is a new addition to the Wilshire Boulevard Temple’s Glazer Family Campus that will serve as a multipurpose event space for both the congregation and the surrounding city. The pavilion is designed to be a "machine for gathering," forging new connections with existing campus activities and inviting the urban realm in to create a new civic anchor. The building is sufficiently iconic to be recognizable as a new civic entity but subtle enough to complement the iconicism of the existing temple. The pavilion consists of three distinct gathering spaces—a main event space, a chapel and terrace, and a sunken garden—as voids punctured into the sides of the building. Within each space are a series of openings that filter light and frame views of the temple and historic school, reorienting visitors to the complex and beyond.

“The playful, wonky massing admirably undercuts the severity of the revivalist architecture of its neighbor. But the best bits are to be found inside.” Samuel Medina
The Home Building at Thaden School responds excellently to its context, and what a context: a stunning campus (by EskewDumezRipple, Marlon Blackwell Architects, and Andropogon) and nearby in the Ozarks the beautiful work of Fay Jones. The roof echoes Blackwell’s morphing sheds, while the wooden slats on the facade and in the great hall recall Jones’s Thorncrown Chapel—a truly elevated rural vernacular.

Aaron Seward

DESIGNER
EskewDumezRipple

LOCATION
Bentonville, Arkansas

The Home Building anchors the new Thaden School in Bentonville, Arkansas. The building takes visual cues from the region, with board and batten facades and all-wood construction incorporating the beauty of vernacular architecture, most notably the Ozark farmhouse. As the heart of the campus, the Home Building provides an expansive dining hall where all of the campus comes together for meals. Students take classes in a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen, one that deeply espouses the school’s “learning by doing” mantra. The adjacent landscape features fruit and vegetable fields, orchards, and a working greenhouse. The Home Building, much like the extended campus, strives to establish an innovative vision for the future while reflecting the rich pastoral heritage of the surrounding landscape.
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To create a bold vision for the University of Oregon’s future, the reimagined world-class Hayward Field provides quality training facilities to attract top track athletes, diverse amenities for prominent meets, and an unmatched fan experience, with space for up to 25,000 spectators. The design team was inspired by championship-caliber athletes, resulting in a theme of movement. The stadium’s seating bowl and roof are flowing and asymmetrical, growing in height toward the finish line, where the most seats and amenities are concentrated. The stadium’s north end is open, creating a connection to the campus and community, with the stadium tower serving as a landmark and marking the main entry to the complex. The legacy of the competitors and events made famous here is honored by branding elements placed throughout.
The Waterline Club is a 3-story, 100,000-square-foot comprehensive amenity that seamlessly melds the first-of-its-kind program with Rockwell Group's stunning interior design. At the club's nexus is a dramatic bridge and curved stairway, over which rises a 30-foot-high ceiling equipped with diurnal lighting systems. Athletic facilities include a full-size indoor tennis court, a regulation basketball court, a squash court, a 30-story rock-climbing wall, an indoor soccer field, an 82-foot saline lap pool, a children's swimming area, a hot tub, spa treatment rooms, a state-of-the-art fitness and training floor, and dedicated studios for yoga, Pilates, and boxing/MMA. A creative suite includes studios for music recording, video, photography, and podcasting. Entertainment spaces include a great room, a full-service restaurant, party room, game room, screening theater, bowling alley, and private card parlor. Rounding out the amenities are a full-service dog care facility, an indoor skate park, and a themed 4,600-square-foot children's playroom area.

“Anchored by a spectacularly elegant stair surrounded by columnar supports that descend from a sculpted ceiling, the Waterline Club interior is a splendid display of design.”

Germane Barnes

Designer
GID in collaboration with Rockwell Group

Location
New York City

The Waterline Club
In Langenlois, Austria, on a gently south-sloping vineyard an hour west of Vienna, the Loisium Hotel and Wine Center celebrates the rich local heritage of an ancient wine vault system. Designed by Steven Holl Architects (SHA), the complex’s first two buildings sought to create an analogical relation to the geometry of the cellars. The new 30-room extension—conceived by SHA as being “out of the ground”—references the original vault system via precast vaulted rooms; a pool at the entry further underscores this curved geometry. The roofs and walls of the expansion building are clad in Rheinzink, a matte natural material that was pre-weathered to blend with the landscape and sky. Glass walls in the hotel rooms provide views of the mountains, vineyards, and hotel grounds.

“The vaulted forms, material detail, and framed views make this a stellar architectural proposal.”
Germane Barnes
“We shape our buildings: therefore they shape us.”
- Winston Churchill

Congratulations Lake Flato Architects for your work on Editor’s Pick for Commercial Hospitality projects, Hotel Magdalena.
As a leading cancer treatment and research institution, The City of Hope National Medical Center needed a place where its doctors and researchers, who were previously spread across a multiacre campus, could collaborate. The Medical and Administrative Leadership Pavilion is a 110,000-square-foot home for all of them, providing the proximity and immediacy necessary to encourage collaboration while aligning with The City of Hope’s mission to improve health through the sustainability of its overall environment. The LEED Gold Version 4–certified project uses aggressive shading strategies to let ambient natural light deep into the building while mitigating the negative effects of heat gain; a solar farm sits atop the roof. A large second-floor terrace serves as an arrival point and a gathering space for community events.

“This deeply considered facility is a model for healthcare design. The second-floor terrace and exposed circulation on the upper floors are particularly inspired.” Samuel Medina
The Lawrence J. Ellison Institute for Transformative Medicine of USC is centered on changing the soil of cancer research. By combining places for research and treatment with transitional and social spaces for interaction, the 84,000-square-foot building inspires innovation and transforms patient wellness in a nature-centric environment that promotes well-being. A 3-story atrium centralizes an open and transparent vertical circulation to encourage the paths of researchers, patients, and physicians to crisscross. This amplifies the power of collaboration to provide the greatest impact on patient treatment, creating a transformative healing environment. Additionally, labs with modern technology and social spaces allow doctors and scientists to interact and meaningfully, positively affect patients’ lives.
The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial celebrates the life and accomplishments of the 34th president of the United States. Located at the center of a 4-acre landscaped plaza, the memorial features a large-scale stainless-steel commemorative tapestry, bronze sculptures, and an inscription wall. L’Observatoire International was commissioned for a full scope of lighting design: illuminating the plaza and its pathways, the memorial core, and surrounding streets. The lighting concept shapes the memorial square as a volume of light. Through a horizontal layering of lighting, the site becomes a three-dimensional space, lending it a sense of interiority. The memorial is transformed into a welcoming “urban room” whose perimeters are defined by light rather than physical walls. The layering directs particular focus to the memorial core while anchoring its individual elements within the plaza.
Adjacent to the Wilshire Boulevard Temple in the center of Los Angeles, the Audrey Irmas Pavilion shapes a new presence for this busy city. L’Observatoire International worked with OMA and Gruen Associates to amplify the urban presence of the building, while retaining a welcoming atmosphere for the community. On the ground floor, a large arched banquet hall invites the public inside. Lined in wood, the space is illuminated to emanate a welcoming atmosphere that extends to the street. On the upper levels, interior and exterior event spaces are positioned to overlook the temple, and an amphitheater connects to the roof garden. A consistent and unifying system of diffuse and accent lighting runs throughout most interior spaces of the building, from the circulation spaces to the offices and event areas, to maintain a cohesive overall scheme of illumination.
Since the rise of industrialization, global construction has favored concrete and steel, materials that must now be reconsidered in light of their embodied carbon and life cycle costs. Homegrown advances two areas of sustainable construction through the development of a biomaterial panel and a reformable molding system. Four walls create an exterior room composed of invasive kudzu and bamboo, forestry waste, and bioresin. A novel programmable forming system was developed, consisting of a single reusable and reformable pneumatic mold that allows for the manufacture of complex, double-curved surfaces without traditional single-use disposable molds. Homegrown repositions the material aesthetics of the Digital Turn, replacing smooth, crisp, machined tectonics with an architecture that is “fuzzy” and naturally sourced. Materials are sorted based on scale and fiber size to produce panels that are alternately thin and dense or thick and porous. The exterior is flat and angular, while the interior is undulating.
ASH STREET HOUSE

Located in North Lawrence, the Ash Street House comprises a 1,500-square-foot primary house with a contiguous 500-square-foot accessory dwelling unit (ADU), all set in an old working-class neighborhood known for its quality soil, large trees, and curbless streets. Trains and farm trucks are within earshot, and towering grain elevators are only blocks away. The design recalls the Midwestern farmstead vernacular of the region, though the provision of an ADU is the result of a recent attempt to increase density in residential areas closer to downtown Lawrence. The LEED Platinum-certified house was designed and built entirely by students over a nine-month period.

"Although simple in their design, this house and accompanying ADU provided students with an excellent, mostly unparalleled opportunity. Not only did they engage with matters of construction, but also of zoning and sustainability." Samuel Medina

DESIGNER
STUDIO 804 (School of Architecture, University of Kansas)

LOCATION
Lawrence, Kansas
As part of the Nevada Testing Site, Yucca Flat was the host for over 900 bomb detonations, resulting in the creation of Sedan Crater. This project takes Sedan—a crater over 300 feet deep, with a 1,150-foot diameter—as the site for an Area 10 Interpretation + Research Center. Area 10 will inform people of nuclear armament and its consequences for humanity and nature through learning spaces such as an exhibit of “atomic gardening” (the study of plants that can grow from the radioactivity of the land). The goal is for the visitor to leave with a deeper understanding of history and an awareness of the importance of peace.
DESIGNER
Teeple Architects and Cibinel Architecture

LOCATION
Winnipeg, Manitoba

The University of Manitoba’s Desautels Concert Hall will be a state-of-the-art performance venue enabling the Faculty of Music to showcase a broad range of musical performances. As the grand finale of the multiphase construction of the Taché Arts Complex, the 400-seat facility is carefully integrated into a constrained preexisting context. To the north and west, the site is framed by the perpendicular wings of Taché Hall, a 1911 campus building that was recently renovated by Patkau Architects as part of the ARTlab complex. With the overall size and shape of the hall largely driven by performance requirements and site limitations, the design of the exteriors grew from a desire to ameliorate shadow impacts while creating a formalized sequence of arrival befitting a concert hall. The venue is designed with superior acoustics, optimal sightlines, and a configurable stage for a variety of performances.

“One of the great challenges of making theater buildings good neighbors is finding ways to wrap the program with an architectural expression that doesn’t overwhelm the surroundings with looming blank walls. This project does that admirably—the curved entryway and shifting planes of the envelope come together to create an eminently approachable and seductive building.” Aaron Seward

Courtesy Teeple Architects and Cibinel Architecture
Located in the heart of almond country, which depends on honeybee pollination, the nonprofit Honeybee Discovery Center educates the public on how “bees and humans adapt to the challenges of an ever-changing world.” Its new home will be a model high-performance building illustrating how development can alleviate the very problems that plague bees. Inspired by research into the efficient use of resources by both bees and the farm structures common to the region, the project is pursuing net-zero-energy and net-zero-water goals, as well as LEED Platinum and full Living Building Challenge certifications. Energy consumption will be 80 percent below average, and on-site energy production will yield 25 percent more power than needed to meet all the building’s annual needs.
Assemble Chicago

Extending Chicago’s legacy of urban innovation, Assemble Chicago is a carbon-neutral residential community in the heart of the Loop designed to give rise to a more resilient and vibrant city. Proposed for Chicago’s 2020 C40 Re-Inventing Cities competition, this mixed-use project will provide 207 apartments for downtown’s moderate- and lower-income workforce. The building is grounded by The NeighborHub, a highly public multilevel podium that hosts ecological, community development, and cultural programming for local residents, neighborhood groups, and businesses. Rising above this base is the residential tower itself. Notably, each apartment features a contemporary version of Chicago’s classic bay window. Stacked over the height of the tower, the bay windows create a rhythmic, vertically articulated facade that resonates with the area’s architectural character.
The project envisions a new typology for the country’s western region by pairing the leisure activities of a bathhouse with the utilitarian functions of a data center. (Why not capitalize on all that wasted heat?) Located near a resort, Pink Thermal Baths is the new destination getaway to recharge your body and soul. Like the ephemerality of global data flows, the center is fully subterranean and hidden from sight. All the visual, auditory, and olfactory experiences are concentrated within the exuberant, colorful interiors of the square bathhouse. The excess heat from the servers is dispersed into pools akin to a hot spring. The conic shapes of the various rooms add a touch of calming monumentality and help to control interior air temperatures.

“Stark vertical geometries are a highlight of this very pink project, where the interior and exterior color palette provide a pleasant contrast with the natural scenery.”

Germane Barnes
Inhale, Exhale, Sag, Flex is a proposal for developing city-owned lots throughout Los Angeles into flexible, easily fabricated public bathhouses. The proposal’s primary function is cleaning and relaxation for the individual and the collective. Like the bodies within, the bathhouses’ architecture is continually sanitized and maintained. The project comprises two buildings—a steam house and pool house—separated by a stairway.

The steam house, called Flex, is enclosed by an expanding quilt of water bladders that fill up as steam evaporates and bodies exhale. The pool house, Sag, is supported by a frame structure wrapped in building paper that is periodically removed and dried. The ensemble offers interior landscapes of curtains, pipes, water, steam, plunges, and bodies, where both architecture and people are able to collectively self-care.
The Innovation Center is envisioned as a gateway to a new transit-oriented live/work development at Suffolk Downs. Located near Revere Beach, a historic place of recreation for greater Boston residents, the center will feature a signature curved roof evoking a sail or gentle wave. The design takes advantage of the prefabricated, precise modular assembly of mass timber elements such as glulam and cross-laminated timber panels to create a cost-effective and materially efficient structure—which will be the largest timber structure in the Boston area when completed in 2023. The center is pursuing LEED Gold certification, reflecting the development’s commitment to sustainability and promoting occupant wellness.
The master plan for a remarkable 641-acre site in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reclaim and repurpose an industrial fragment for public use. The plan reknits a tidal basin and freshwater wetlands with a land-use development vision that connects recreational, residential, and working pathways with a multimodal infrastructure, as well as ribbons of greenbelts, highlighting walkability and low-impact development. Open spaces capture rainwater and are a focal asset that helps regenerate native habitats, including ephemeral, freshwater, and tidal wetlands. On-site renewable energy generation and storage is also planned to bring about a zero-carbon future.
NAVY BLUE

This study should be commended for its forward-thinking approach toward coastline development. The affordable housing ‘prototype’ is a dying breed in American architecture, but one can imagine this scheme being repurposed along those lines.” Samuel Medina

NAVY BLUE is a redevelopment proposal that aims to transform Charlestown Navy Yard’s Pier 5 into a resilient community of live-aboard vessels, fabricated and assembled at the East Boston Shipyard. With the landward-side Charlestown Navy Yard already identified as a high-risk location, vulnerable to coastal flooding and storm surges, NAVY BLUE presents the city and region with an innovative and exciting blueprint for how to develop resilient coastal communities at the water’s edge. The team envisions as many as six basic prototypes, with living quarters ranging from 530- to 2,100-square-foot units. Each prototype consists of two levels, with a third-level head house providing access to a roof terrace in a variety of configurations.

DESIGNER
Utile

LOCATION
Boston
This new concept by ODA envisions a new typography of inner courtyards that break up a typical New York City block and expand the public realm. ODA’s concept for urban renewal blends existing infrastructure with a proposed zoning regulation that would maximize the public realm and increase green spaces throughout the city. Beyond the Street would open up existing city blocks to create interior courtyards and pathways through a mix of adaptive reuse, new development, and landscape design. The zoning regulation encourages developers to include bigger courtyards in their building projects, for an increase of floor area and height—resulting in privately owned areas becoming public. Owners are expected to comply with plaza standards and courtyard regulations set by the city.
HONORABLE MENTIONS & EDITORS’ PICKS
Concrete, stone, and wood ceilings characterize the interiors of the Lake|Flato–designed Courtyard House.
Designed by INFORM Studio, the Providence River Pedestrian Bridge has met with great acclaim.

TEMPORARY INSTALLATION
Outside the Lines
Bryony Roberts Studio

RESTORATION & PRESERVATION
Hall of State at Fair Park
Gensler

BUILDING RENOVATION
Harvard Divinity School,
Swartz Hall
Ann Beha Architects

UCSF 3rd Street Garage/
“Cellular Origami”
IwamotoScott

INTERIOR—RETAIL
Google Store Chelsea
Reddymade

COMMERCIAL—OFFICE
Lakeview Office Building
LMN Architects

INTERIOR—OFFICE
CME Center
Krueck Sexton Partners

INSTITUTIONAL—LIBRARIES
Adams Street Branch Library
NADAAA

INSTITUTIONAL—HIGHER EDUCATION
Morgan State University
Calvin & Tina Tyler Hall
GWWO Architects & Teeple Architects

GRAMERCY SENIOR HOUSING
Kevin Daly Architects

RESIDENTIAL—MIXED-USE
MIT Site 4
NADAAA

NADAAA

Nike World Headquarters
Serena Williams Building
Skylab

INSTITUTIONAL—LIBRARIES

INSTITUTIONAL—HIGHER EDUCATION

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### COMMERCIAL—SPORTS & STADIUMS
- Q2 Stadium
- Gensler

### COMMERCIAL—HOSPITALITY (RESTAURANTS & BARS, HOTELS, RESORTS)
- Mr. C Hotel
- Arquitectonica

### INTERIOR—HOSPITALITY
- Zeckendorf Towers Lobby
- SPAN Architecture

### HEALTHCARE
- Michigan Animal Rescue League
- Ply+ Architecture

### ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING—INDOOR
- CO-OP Ramen
- TM Light

### UNBUILT—EDUCATION
- University of Chicago Center in Paris
- Studio Gang

### UNBUILT—GREEN BUILDING
- Brooklyn Mass Timber House
- Schiller Projects

### UNBUILT—RESIDENTIAL
- Homegrown Courts
- Utile

### UNBUILT—CULTURAL
- Luther George Park
- Trahan Architects

### UNBUILT—PUBLIC
- Sunset Strip Gateway
- RIOS

### UNBUILT—LANDSCAPE
- Hypernature 066
- Lemay

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The Ford Calumet Environmental Center at Chicago’s Big Marsh Park was designed by Valerio Dewalt Train.
SOCIAL IMPACT
Leimert Park Community Fridge
Ehrlich Yanai Rhee Chaney Architects

ADAPTIVE REUSE
The Church
SKOLNICK Architecture + Design Partnership

BUILDING RENOVATION
East Hollow
Oza Sabbeth Architects

LANDSCAPE
1 Hotel West Hollywood
RIOS

INFRASTRUCTURE
Moynihan Train Hall
SOM

YOUNG ARCHITECTS
Schiller Projects
New York

CULTURAL
Coca-Cola Stage at the Alliance Theatre
Trahan Architects

TEMPORARY INSTALLATION
Beaux-Arts Ball on Table
NEMESTUDIO

RESIDENTIAL—MULTIUNIT
Granville1500
Lorcan O’Herlihy Architects

INSTITUTIONAL—HIGHER EDUCATION
University of Pennsylvania Meeting & Guesthouse
Deborah Berke Partners

COMMERCIAL—HOSPITALITY (RESTAURANTS & BARS, HOTELS, RESORTS)
Hotel Magdalena
Lake|Flato Architects

UNBUILT—PUBLIC
Memorial Bell Tower
Endemic Architecture

UNBUILT—URBAN DESIGN
Markham Square Housing District
University of Arkansas Community Design Center

UNBUILT—EDUCATION
The Chapel of St. Ignatius and the Gayle & Tom Benson Jesuit Center
Trahan Architects

UNBUILT—CULTURAL
Princeton University Art Museum
Adjaye Associates
AN’s Best of Practice awards acknowledge architecture as the diverse and collaborative endeavor that it is, conferring recognition on engineers, fabricators, and developers as well as architects.
Verda Alexander  
Founding partner  
Studio O+A

Refik Anadol  
Director  
Refik Anadol Studio

Sean Canty  
Principal  
Studio Sean Canty

Katherine Darnstadt  
Founder  
Design Trust Chicago

Jared Della Valle  
CEO  
Alloy

Erleen Hatfield  
Managing partner  
Hatfield Group

Michael Hsu  
Founding principal  
Michael Hsu Office of Architecture

Samuel Medina  
Executive editor  
The Architect’s Newspaper

David A. Rubin  
Principal  
DAVID RUBIN Land Collective

Pascale Sablan  
Founder  
Beyond the Built Environment

Troy Schaum  
Partner  
SCHAUM/SHIEH

Erica Stoller  
Advisor/former director  
ESTO

Ian Thomas  
Art director  
The Architect’s Newspaper

Kim Yao  
Principal  
ARO

Ann Yoachim  
Director  
Alberta and Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design at Tulane School of Architecture

Michael Young  
Founding partner  
Young & Ayata

All images courtesy the jurors
SHoP Architects
New York

SHoP Architects is a New York–based design and planning firm with major projects completed or underway on five continents. SHoP sets itself apart from its peers with a high-performance approach to architecture that forefronts the activation of dynamic public spaces, the use of technology to imaginatively reinterpret authentic building materials, a results-driven approach to sustainability, and an emphasis on the research and deployment of next-generation methods of project delivery. Notable SHoP projects include Brooklyn’s Barclays Center arena, the new Uber Headquarters in San Francisco, a residential tower nearing completion at 111 West 57th Street in Manhattan, and multiple diplomatic facilities for the U.S. Department of State. The firm’s work has been widely celebrated with a variety of honors, among them the Smithsonian’s National Design Award for Architecture.

“SHoP Architects has been at the forefront of architectural practice for decades—not just in terms of design caliber, but perhaps more importantly in redefining design process.” Kim Yao
A+I has raised the bar for the modern workplace: For 25 years, it has set the highest standards for its clients, delivering world-class spaces that reflect their values and vision, and support and connect their people. A+I has pushed the boundaries of workplace interactivity, technology, and creativity for brands such as Equinox, Squarespace, and Peloton. The firm, a woman-led practice that is 60 percent female, applies those same standards to its own office. In an industry where two-thirds of the highest earners on average are men, more than 50 percent of A+I’s highest earners and 40 percent of its principals are women. A+I is committed to making progress in the architecture field and a positive impact on the world at large—and on the people who experience the spaces it creates.

“*A+I’s spaces are wonderful places to work in. In addition, the firm has a record of gender and pay equity that exceeds industry standards and should be celebrated.*”

Katherine Darnstadt

WRNS Studio
San Francisco

Founded in 2005, WRNS Studio is an architecture, interiors, and urban design firm. Its multidisciplinary team of 189 people collaborates across four offices in San Francisco, Honolulu, Seattle, and New York. The studio works with today’s most transformative organizations to steward their brands with exceptional planning and design. Its portfolio includes work in a wide range of project types: hospitality, retail, education, workplace, civic and cultural, large-scale mixed-use, healthcare, and residential. Across all project types, scales, and contexts, the firm’s approach is informed by three ideals: beauty, sustainability, and a positive contribution to the public realm. As a long-time advocate for sustainable design, WRNS explores ways to conserve resources while promoting health and well-being for the people who will occupy its buildings. It consistently features prominently among annual firm rankings in business, sustainability, and design.

“A+I’s spaces are wonderful places to work in. In addition, the firm has a record of gender and pay equity that exceeds industry standards and should be celebrated.”

Katherine Darnstadt
Trahan Architects
New Orleans

Founded by Victor F. “Trey” Trahan, III, in 1992, Trahan Architects is a global architecture firm with offices in New Orleans and New York grounded in the belief that the mindful design of everyday spaces can elevate human experience. The firm brings a poetic approach to its work, considering each project as part of a unique ecosystem. It uses the tools of architectural practice—artistic expression, technical innovation, and the thoughtful selection of materials—to create designs that are socially influential, sustainable, and aesthetically sublime. In addition to winning several international design competitions, Trahan has received over 100 national, regional, and local awards, including five national AIA Awards. Trahan engages in a meaningful dialogue with its clients, colleagues, and the context in which it builds. It continually explores how the design process can contribute to the health of ecologies, communities, and landscapes.

JGMA Chicago

JGMA is a progressive architecture and design practice committed to interdisciplinary collaboration, active community involvement, and the enrichment of people’s lives through attentive and dynamic organization of space and materiality. The firm is devoted to serving the diverse neighborhoods that make Chicago a great place to live, work, and visit. Often, quality design can most benefit those who can’t afford it for themselves. JGMA believes that good design should not be reserved for the affluent and has made it its mission to support community-based not-for-profit organizations to develop spaces and programs. This support takes many forms, from offering pro bono services or identifying grants to developing capital campaigns or simply connecting clients with decision makers from the public and private sectors. As designer, the firm persistently cultivates its perception of what architecture is, rejecting the notion that designs can be reused or solutions can be predetermined.

“This practice is able to create buildings that articulate nuanced relationships between form and material. The inventive application of material often produces playful effects that are artfully imagined.”

Troy Schaum

“The diverse and thoughtful work in Trahan’s portfolio exposed a clear and intense relationship to both client and context. The work was remarkably versatile, showed clear technical capacity, and was tailored in a way that allowed me to see how carefully they tackled each inquiry.”

Jared Della Valle

“Troy Schaum

“This practice is able to create buildings that articulate nuanced relationships between form and material. The inventive application of material often produces playful effects that are artfully imagined.”

Troy Schaum

“This practice is able to create buildings that articulate nuanced relationships between form and material. The inventive application of material often produces playful effects that are artfully imagined.”

Troy Schaum
LEVER Architecture
Portland, OR

LEVER Architecture is a Portland, Oregon–based design practice that brings design excellence to buildings and spaces for mission-driven organizations and creative companies. Internationally recognized for material innovation and for pioneering work with cross-laminated timber (CLT), the firm tests wood-building systems and assemblies to push the envelope for safety, resilience, and sustainability in the industry. LEVER is dedicated to changing the design and construction paradigm in North America and beyond; it advocates for mass timber because it is a low-carbon way to build that connects urban development to rural economic growth. LEVER has pioneered multiple mass timber firsts, including the first building in the U.S. made from domestically fabricated CLT and the first wood high-rise to receive approval for construction in the U.S. These catalyst projects have inspired new mass timber developments and influenced timber research internationally.

General Architecture Collaborative (GAC)
Ithaca, NY

General Architecture Collaborative is made up of designers, artists, educators, and researchers dedicated to expanding the role of design to address social and environmental justice. With a focus on overlooked communities, organizations, and individuals in the U.S. and East Africa, GAC seeks to empower others through the process of making places. Its nonprofit status allows it to go beyond conventional architectural design by investing in R&D; building collaborations with sociologists, physicians, scientists, and educators; incorporating skills training into projects; and prioritizing the welfare of team members beyond wages. GAC’s work in the region exceeds building industry standards there, contributes to pensions and healthcare, and provides food and safety equipment.

“The presentation of [LEVER Architecture] was concerned with human scale and accessibility on many levels. While the projects varied in size, there was a consistent sense of humility, not hubris, from concept to design and construction.” Erica Stoller

“This nonprofit design organization reinvents traditional notions of practice, enabling work that marries direct community engagement with design excellence and impact. Their projects combine research and technological innovation with local building craft and materials, grounding the work in the place and community that it serves.” Kim Yao
BLDGS
Atlanta

BLDGS is dedicated to the creation of inventive and enduring works of architecture and urban design that reveal what may lie hidden in different contexts. The firm looks for conditions that intrigue its team so that these external influences “contaminate,” challenge, and become integral to the work. BLDGS’s work is not minimalist or pure, but instead establishes a productive tension that can upset expected narratives and develop productive problems as the basis for meaningful experience. At the same time, BLDGS principals David Yocum and Brian Bell are very careful about the elements they add to a project, resulting in an idiosyncratic process that oscillates between proposition and distillation: What is not there is as important as what is.

studio:indigenous
Glendale, WI

studio:indigenous dismantles stereotypes surrounding Indigenous design and offers a distinct vision of contemporary Indigenous culture. Founding principal Chris Cornelius, who was raised on the Oneida reservation in Wisconsin, has cultivated a highly personal approach that leverages the cultural underpinnings, devices, and thinking of Indigenous culture with a Western architectural education. Working at intensely varied scales, the practice creates cultural ports of entry that combine ancient ideas and construction techniques with overtly modern ones. The resulting body of work has established studio:indigenous not only as the leading voice in Indigenous architecture but as a critical and poetic voice in all of architecture. studio:indigenous was one of four architecture firms from the United States included in the Canadian pavilion at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale and was also the recipient of Exhibit Columbus’s inaugural Miller Prize Installation.

“Editing work with such extreme efficiency and thought requires diligence. The reward of this portfolio of work comes from a requirement that we patiently experience place as details reveal a story that is complex and unexpected.” Jared Della Valle
LOHA - Lorcan O’Herlihy Architects
Los Angeles

Founded in 1994 by Lorcan O’Herlihy, LOHA has grown to be a team of 25, with offices in Los Angeles and Detroit. The firm believes that architecture is a social act and embraces design’s potential to be a catalyst for change. LOHA begins each project with the facts on the ground, working from the bottom up, not the top down. Its vision—conceived as an “aesthetics of living”—is to create places where people want to live and work, where they can attach to the roots that are there and plant some of their own. Over the years, LOHA has brought together a group of talented architects from throughout the U.S., all of whom are dedicated to making cities more dynamic, more equitable, and more livable.

NEW ARCHITECTURE FIRM—NORTHEAST

ASDF
Syracuse, NY

Founded by Aurélie Frolet and David Shanks in 2020, ASDF pursues select projects that serve the public interest by integrating diverse criteria of sustainability, from the environmental to the socioeconomic. In addition to commissioned work and design competitions, the young firm routinely works with nonprofit organizations in the Syracuse area on small projects that have large impacts on social and environmental justice in the community. One such project is the New Americans’ Pavilion, currently under construction at Salt City Harvest Farm in Kirkville, New York. With spaces for meeting, dining, and teaching, as well as facilities for washing and packing local produce, the Pavilion will provide an important new social hub and agricultural job training center for New American refugees in the North Syracuse neighborhood. Alongside practice, Frolet and Shanks teach architectural design at Syracuse University’s School of Architecture.
Shin Shin Architecture
Santa Monica, CA

Shin Shin Architecture is a sister- and minority-owned full-service practice based in the Los Angeles area. Founded in 2019 by Melissa and Amanda Shin after they’d worked in renowned international firms, the practice will soon be completing a slew of projects—four accessory dwelling units, a gut renovation and second-story addition to a 1920s duplex, and a 22,000-square-foot furniture showroom. Other projects include a set of 3D-printed ikebana vases auctioned off for Black Lives Matter and COVID-19 relief, plus exhibitions like Four Corners, held at the Wedge Gallery in Los Angeles in 2020. An ongoing initiative documenting Detroit’s demolished buildings (the Shins are natives of the city) is being funded by a University of Southern California research grant.

Vellum Architecture + Design
Asheville, NC

Established in the fall of 2018, Vellum Architecture + Design is a collective of curious and creative building designers. Most of Vellum’s work is residential in nature and concentrated in the mountains surrounding Asheville. Driven by challenging and dynamic sites requiring careful analysis and response, the firm’s house designs have a deep connection to place. They are also tailored to the client, with whom Vellum works closely virtually every step of the way. And in an effort to reduce construction time and offset labor costs, the architects have been working to develop methods of prefabrication (using cross-laminated timber and other prefabricated elements) and integrated delivery. From the beginning, the design process proceeds by exploration and discovery, with the end result always attesting to this iterative, dynamic journey.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT—MIDWEST

site design group
Chicago

Site design group comprises an exceptionally diverse collective of professionals from around the world, including landscape architects, urban designers, planners, arborists, architects, and creative thinkers. Of this staff, 35 percent are minorities and 60 percent are women. Central to site’s work is the belief that good design should be accessible to all and that each project should improve the quality of life for its unique community. Since the firm’s founding in 1990, more than half its projects have consisted of public design services for parks, plazas, streetscapes, and public-private partnerships. In addition to billable work, site routinely engages in pro bono projects that benefit Chicago’s diverse communities. In 2020, it led a place-activation and tactical urbanism project in a disinvested community, creating gathering spaces and safe outdoor dining opportunities for local businesses amid the pandemic.

DEVELOPER—NORTHEAST

Alloy Development
New York

Founded in downtown Brooklyn in 2006, Alloy boasts a unique organizational structure that straddles architecture and development, enabling its team to go beyond the status quo in both professions. From historic renovations to large-scale towers and community spaces, Alloy is experienced in a variety of building techniques and aims to construct with Passive House principles or all-electric power whenever possible. The firm, which has designed several projects in close proximity to its Flatbush Avenue office, is guided by the mindset that each project has the ability to positively affect its surroundings—up to and including socially conscious initiatives that fall outside the bounds of conventional development or design. For instance, at a recent project Alloy launched a buyer-seed fund in partnership with a local foundation that will award grants benefiting the neighborhood.

“One of the impressive aspects of this submission is the high level of attention to design quality across different scales and contexts. This manifests in how the architecture is articulated in both the interior and exterior through subtle detailing and material decisions.” Michael Young
Stayner Architects
Los Angeles

Stayner Architects is designing a new model of practice. In addition to modeling in Revit, the firm models a capital stack and operational projections. It is not a design-build practice as defined by standard construction contracts, but it does design and does build. Unlike most “architect-developers,” Stayner doesn’t develop luxury housing but instead focuses on public spaces in which it has an equity stake—or it works for entities such as nonprofit foundations, cultural organizations, and educational institutions for whom architecture can promote social value rather than extracting capital. While not fitting squarely into the definition of architect, contractor, developer, or operator, Stayner leverages knowledge from each discipline for maximum impact.

Prince Concepts
Detroit

Prince Concepts launched in 2012 with a focus on improving the area surrounding its Core City, Detroit, base. Since then, the real estate development and property management company has acquired 17 acres of land, renovated 62,000 square feet of industrial property, built 20,000 square feet of housing, created 18,000 square feet of thoughtful public space, planted over 400 trees, and won nine national or international awards for its projects. By building with cost-effective materials and innovative techniques, Prince Concepts is able to allocate large sums of money for the development of public green spaces that the Core City neighborhood will enjoy for generations to come. In December 2020, the firm completed Caterpillar, an eight-unit, sanctuary-inspired residential project designed around a cost-effective, prefabricated Quonset hut. Elsewhere in Core City, it recently completed 5k, an adaptive reuse project that transformed a former 1950s supermarket with very little natural light into a worldwide corporate headquarters with three courtyards.
The thermal performance of conventional double glazing in the same thickness as a single pane for historical restoration. Bring your historical buildings up to code while keeping the same look and feel with Pilkington Spacia™.
Erie Architectural Products
Windsor, ON, Canada

For the past four decades, Erie Architectural Products has grown into a leader within the facades industry by investing in teams and technology to engineer, manufacture, and distribute proprietary curtain wall systems throughout the U.S. Designed to exceed the industry standards of today and perform ahead of the challenges of tomorrow, these advanced curtain wall systems actively prioritize thermal performance, impact resistance, and infiltration resistance. An on-site technology center gives company engineers the freedom to construct full-scale visual and performance mock-ups as part of the formal performance evaluation of a facade or as an internal research and development initiative. Following its 2019 acquisition by YKK AP, Erie Architectural Products is even more strategically positioned to employ its depth of experience, innovative solutions, and progressive approach to address the increasing demands of an evolving facades market.

Eventscape NYC
New York

A globally renowned, award-winning custom architectural fabricator, Eventscape is a preferred partner for design and architectural professionals worldwide with a creative vision that requires the highest standard of fabrication. It comprises a talented group of architects, engineers, designers, and fabrication specialists working in multiple materials with the latest equipment and technologies. Supported by advanced CAD and parametric design software, this skilled team operates at the forefront of digital fabrication. Eventscape’s passion for design innovation, use of multiple materials, and continual R&D allows designers and architects to push the boundaries of traditional building methods. The company is known for prefabrication of all building elements, ensuring the highest quality control with precise fit, finish, site integration, and coordination with all other site trades determined before installation. Eventscape is a one-stop shop where the most prestigious design firms go to play and make their dreams a reality.

“"The firm’s portfolio represented a scale of work from interiors to art objects and building facades that was indicative of the exemplary attention to detail and acumen with both digital tools and limitations of materials.”

Katherine Darnstadt
YKK AP America is a national manufacturer of commercial façade systems for specifiers and glazing contractors seeking smart design, quality engineering and exceptional customer support. With the support of our dedicated employees, we combine controlled manufacturing and thoughtful design to provide quality building solutions that will meet your performance, aesthetic and sustainability needs.

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Thank You for 30 Years!
LERA Consulting Structural Engineers
New York

Headquartered in New York but with offices in South and East Asia, LERA Consulting Structural Engineers is an M/WBE structural engineering firm providing services to architects, owners, contractors, and developers. Throughout its nearly century-long history, LERA has cultivated a peerless reputation for both conceiving and achieving innovative structural solutions for complex projects featuring daring architectural visions with ambitious yet constructible and economical structural designs. Its portfolio includes a wide variety of unique and award-winning designs for large-scale developments and new buildings, as well as renovations to existing and historic structures. Its services include complete structural designs, feasibility studies, peer reviews, value engineering, computational design, blast analysis, forensic consulting, and special inspections. LERA is also a participant in the Carbon Leadership Forum’s SE2050 Challenge, which facilitates substantive embodied carbon reductions in the design and construction of structural systems.

HDR Omaha, NE

HDR is a structural engineering practice focused on blending the science of engineering with the art of design. Part of a multidisciplinary company, its practice works alongside an integrated team that includes architects, designers, engineers, and clients to provide a more holistic design. The firm’s broad scope of projects includes community centers, performance spaces, athletic facilities, corporate office buildings, and healthcare and educational facilities. The structural practice, an early adopter of technological innovations, has constantly pushed boundaries to provide more efficient and economical designs that have been rewarded with numerous design awards. The structural team’s dedication goes beyond its work as consultants, with members using their skills to benefit communities by introducing engineering to K–12 students, including disadvantaged and under-represented populations; providing critiques to architecture students; serving on design committees; and teaching university classes to the next generation of engineers.
HDR started more than 100 years ago as an MEP team that brought electricity and modern waste management systems to towns across the Midwest. Since then, the multinational firm has garnered a reputation for providing custom engineering solutions to challenging projects. Its multidisciplinary engineering experts embrace opportunities to push boundaries and create new frameworks that can transform communities at many scales. HDR is constantly pushing the envelope on mechanical and electrical design through the creation of integrated systems, sustainable infrastructure, and intelligent buildings that optimize operations, maximize cost savings, reduce the incidence of failure, and create resilient systems that are less susceptible to cybersecurity attacks. HDR also promotes a collaborative and inclusive design process, one in which all team members have the opportunity to meaningfully contribute. This leads to better designs with greater positive communal impact—from large hospitals to small parks and everything in between.
PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO—MIDWEST

Hall+Merrick Photographers
Chicago

Steve Hall and Nick Merrick, former principals of the renowned photography studio Hedrich Blessing, founded Hall+Merrick Photographers in 2017. Their philosophy of creative architectural and design photography, meticulously seen and crafted, has been passed down to former apprentice Kendall McCaugherty, who joined the studio in 2018. Hall+Merrick works from a long-established tradition: masterfully presenting clients’ vision and design through interpretative, intelligent, and graphically composed photographs. Its reputation as a leading architectural photography studio, both in the U.S. and internationally, stems from the close working relationships it provides architects and designers. With each commission, Hall+Merrick works hard to become part of a client’s team and takes pride in its long-standing partnerships.

SUSTAINABILITY—NORTHEAST

The Living
New York

The Living is both a design studio and an experiment in living architecture. It brings together the natural and the synthetic, the human and the machine, the individual and the collective to explore the intersection of biology, computation, and the circular economy. The Living’s work with biology extends beyond biomimicry; instead of using biology as metaphor, the studio employs actual living organisms to create alternative kinds of architecture through bio-fabricating, bio-sensing, and biocomputing. The Living’s work with computation goes beyond efficiency; using generative design and artificial intelligence helps the studio to not only achieve high performance standards but also augment creativity and aid project stakeholders in discussing beliefs and making trade-offs. The Living’s work with the circular economy involves an expanded definition of sustainability and reflects a belief that buildings are dynamic systems over wide geographies rather than static objects.

“...ambitions reflected in work that is seeking to redefine the terms of the conversation around sustainability in design. The continuity of projects that bridge between research and built work is an important model for reimagining the relationships between building practices, material, and energy.”

Troy Schaum
Sol design + consulting
Cincinnati, OH

With a focus on affordable housing and “green historic,” high-performance retrofits, Sol design + consulting has served as a sustainability consultant on over 500 projects across the country and abroad. The 16-person firm provides services throughout the design process, from early-stage consulting and energy modeling to construction-phase testing and verification. Its diverse team includes professionals with backgrounds in architecture, construction, building diagnostics, and engineering. Among Sol’s accomplishments are certifying the first multifamily Passive House in Ohio for an affordable senior community and the largest single-phase LEED Homes development in the world. Sol also provides holistic design and consulting services on projects that seek to further push the boundaries of sustainable design, including Passive House– and Living Building Challenge–targeted designs and several deep energy retrofits of historic buildings.

INTERIOR DESIGN—NORTHEAST

Rafael de Cárdenas, Ltd.
New York

Rafael de Cárdenas, Ltd. is a small, accomplished studio with a multifaceted yet rigorously focused practice. The core motif of its work, and of the interests that unite its diverse team, is “the contemporary” in all its forms: the ambient manifestations and concretized parameters of the collective desires, ideas, and aspirations that make up the everyday. With projects in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, RdC draws equally on music, film, fashion, and the history of design. Despite its wide-ranging influences, the studio’s work is anchored by time-honed specializations: residential and commercial interiors, architecture, furniture design, art advisory, and brand development.

“This submission caught my attention because it was such a curious and unusual portfolio. At once unexpected and familiar, the details and spaces are beautifully poetic, but also challengingly innovative. I see the references to music, film, fashion they mention, and I think it’s this familiar yet futuristic presentation that makes this work so powerful.” Verda Alexander
CANY
New York City

CANY is a building enclosure consulting firm with 25 years’ experience providing the gold standard in building design, inspection, and restoration services. CANY’s staff is a unique collection of in-house architects, engineers, preservationists, and experienced technical consultants who provide detailed advice to a wide array of public and private owners, architects, developers, management firms, and institutions. CANY has extensive experience across all sectors, including commercial real estate, residential properties, governmental and educational facilities, healthcare and educational campuses, hotels, and museums. Past and current projects include the Empire State Building, One Grand Central Place, the Crown Building, Hudson Yards, the Guggenheim Museum, Montefiore Medical Center, NYU and Columbia University, and FAA air traffic control facilities across the country.
GRAPHIC DESIGN & WAYFINDING—NORTHEAST

Arrowstreet
Boston

Arrowstreet’s projects follow from the philosophy that graphics are integral to successful placemaking. Renowned for its expertise in academic and civic spaces, the studio leverages signage, wayfinding, environmental graphics, print, and branding to create innovative, unexpected, and comprehensive design solutions that enhance the experience of a place. Unique among its peers, Arrowstreet prioritizes building performance and sustainability as key components of every project. The production and installation of signage, wayfinding, and environmental graphic design affect carbon emissions, but information and guidance are hard to come by—so in 2020, Arrowstreet performed a regional survey to learn what resources were available to fabricators and vendors and how they incorporated sustainability into their practices. These findings were published by the Boston chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts and have spearheaded further conversations in the city’s design community.

LIGHTING DESIGNER—NORTHEAST

L’Observatoire International
New York

Founded by Hervé Descottes in 1993 and based in Lower Manhattan, L’Observatoire International is a leading global lighting design firm that collaborates with renowned architects and firms such as Frank Gehry, Steven Holl, SHoP Architects, and Diller Scofidio + Renfro. Emphasizing innovation, thought leadership, and partnership with every client, the pioneering firm has handled the lighting design and art direction for museum and cultural projects, performing arts centers, libraries and higher education centers, private residences, restaurants, and retail interiors. As an architectural design firm, L’Observatoire International leverages light as a medium to heighten and transform architectural effects. Like no other firm, it has mastered the ability to utilize light to create an unparalleled immersive atmosphere.
Oculus Light Studio  
Culver City, CA

Since its founding in 2012, Oculus Light Studio has grown from a two-person partnership into a full-fledged, award-winning design practice with offices in two cities and 150 ongoing projects. The projects range widely—from hotels and residences to museums and landscapes—spanning the country and totaling millions of square feet. In addition to thoughtful design, the studio gives careful attention to budget analysis and coordinates detailed site installations, all in constant collaboration with the design teams. Oculus has developed in-house systems for presentation techniques, CAD/BIM procedures, and milestone deliverables; with no time wasted on routine tasks, the methodology allows creativity and freedom for individual designers with no burning of the midnight oil, which is all too common in the design field. The studio fosters an office culture of openness and celebration of each individual’s strengths, resulting in next to no staff turnover.
One Architecture & Urbanism
New York

As a multidisciplinary practice of planners and designers, One Architecture & Urbanism believes that the climate crisis can serve as a starting point for collectively reimagining our cities. Working across the U.S., Southeast Asia, and Latin America, the studio consults with municipalities, development banks, and community-based organizations to develop integrated approaches for adaptive infrastructure, nature restoration, social resilience, and economic development. With undertakings ranging from project identification and strategic visioning to documenting resilience infrastructure for implementation, One Architecture & Urbanism’s team seeks to lay the groundwork for more resilient places and equitable communities. Architectural skill sets for designing infrastructure such as floodgates complement this planning work. The studio prides itself on using design tools to facilitate conversations between citizens, local organizations, businesses, policy makers, and content experts, which allows it to find alignment in shared goals and priorities.

Acentech
Trevose, PA

Founded in 1948, Acentech traces its origins to Bolt Beranek and Newman, the pioneer of the acoustics and audiovisual profession. Today, Acentech is one of the largest acoustical consulting firms in the country, providing services to American and international clients. In addition to acoustics and vibration mitigation, the award-winning company specializes in audiovisual, telecommunications, and security system design, as well as software such as the immersive three-dimensional acoustics simulation and rendering program 3DListening, which demonstrates the effects of acoustical designs for spaces that are yet to be built, and the proprietary remote noise and vibration monitoring system Remote Monitoring, which streams live project data over the internet. Acentech’s architectural projects span numerous typologies, including interior design, sustainability, historic preservation, and facade design.
HDR
Omaha, NE

HDR’s acoustics team makes buildings sound as good as they look, blending the science of sound with the art of design. Part of a multidisciplinary company, the architectural-acoustics practice works alongside an integrated team that includes architects, designers, engineers, building owners, and user groups. Throughout the project planning and preliminary design phases, the team pushes the technological boundaries of architectural acoustics by creating audio simulations (“auralizations”) of spaces to anticipate the impact of design decisions and model the impact of outdoor noise sources such as generators, chillers, and air handling units, among other considerations. The dedication of HDR’s acousticians goes beyond their work as consultants, with staffers using their skills to benefit the community, providing design assistance for nonprofits, serving on design committees, playing in community bands and orchestras, owning and operating recording studios.

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HONORABLE MENTIONS & EDITORS’ PICKS
Robert Hutchison Architecture designed the Rain Harvest Home in Temascaltepec, Mexico.
JDS Development oversaw the restoration and conversion of the Walker Tower in New York.

**DEVELOPER—NORTHEAST**  
JDS Development Group

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER—NORTHEAST**  
CRAFT | Engineering Studio

**PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO—MIDWEST**  
feinknopf

**SUSTAINABILITY—NORTHEAST**  
Arrowstreet  
BarlisWedlick

**INTERIOR DESIGN—NORTHEAST**  
Fogarty Finger  
Hacin + Associates

**LIGHTING DESIGN—NORTHEAST**  
Fisher Marantz Stone
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Firm Type</th>
<th>Firm Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>XL Firm</td>
<td>Behnisch Architekten</td>
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<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Large Firm</td>
<td>Montalba Architects</td>
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<td>West</td>
<td>Small Firm</td>
<td>Signal Architecture + Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Large Firm</td>
<td>Pappageorge Haymes Partners</td>
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<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Lighting Design</td>
<td>TM Light</td>
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Pappageorge Haymes Partners adapted Chicago's Old Colony skyscraper for use as student housing.
AN’s Best of Products awards honor manufacturers that produce the myriad components that go together to create buildings, interiors, and landscapes, from highly technical facade elements and glazing systems to furniture and fittings.
With composite siding taking the industry by storm, it’s often hard for manufacturers to stand out from the pack. But that’s what EQUITONE’s new geometric [lunara] collection does. It’s as aesthetically dynamic as it is robust.”

—Adrian Madlener
BEST CLADDING
EQUITONE [lunara]
KITCHEN APPLIANCES & PLUMBING

24-inch Combination Steam Oven
Fisher & Paykel
fisherpaykel.com

“Home bakers know how difficult it is to get a crisp, crackly crust on baguettes and sourdough loaves using conventional ovens. This oven ensures you’ll be turning out bakery-quality breads in no time. For the gluten-averse, there are several cooking functions to choose from.” Samuel Medina

BATHROOM APPLIANCES & PLUMBING

SensoWash Starck f
Duravit
duravit.us
"Antimicrobial surfaces have become the norm in the past two years. Formica not only ensured that this collection meets the strictest protection standards, but also went the extra mile, providing a full range of colors and finishes to select from.” Adrian Madlener

"This intelligent tool takes the guesswork out of identifying often elusive interior paint colors. It also reduces the need for excessive swatches and waste associated with that practice.” Adrian Madlener
“We appreciated the responsible approach of the brand in choosing postindustrial recycled plastic and other recycled materials and allowing modularity and versatility. The design is pure and simple, and it’s all about customization and playing with colors and finishes. That seems to be the correct design response to what is needed now in the contract world.” Odile Hainaut and Claire Pijoulat

“AuralScapes Acoustic Wall Panels
modularArts
modulararts.com

“This is a very smart modular acoustic product system designed with a set of variations that allow a designer to create customized patterns over large surface areas. The variations are interesting and seem suited to a wide variety of contemporary architectural applications.”
Adrian Madlener
Precision Patina
Zahner
azahner.com

Upfit 2.0
Landscape Forms
landscapeforms.com

“Landscape Forms introduced the first iteration of Upfit some years before the pandemic made people conscious of their work environments, the air that gets pumped into them, airborne contagion, and so on. That is to say, the design was a good deal prescient. The latest upgrade builds on the earlier model now that everyone has caught up.” Samuel Medina
TIMBER BUILDING MATERIALS

Mass Ply Lams
Freres Lumber Co.
frereslumber.com

STONE & CONCRETE

Brise Blocks
QCP
qcp-corp.com

“You might think the Brise Blocks an ersatz idea. ‘Not another inspired-by-midcentury-design so-and-so,’ you are likely thinking to yourself. But the system is versatile enough to yield pleasing results.”
Samuel Medina
Brains and Brawn

Freres’ Mass Ply Lams (MPL) are a veneer-based engineered wood product used to create monolithic beams and columns. They are strong, fire-resistant, and lighter per volume than traditional building materials such as concrete and steel—and are prefabricated to exact dimensions, simplifying transportation and assembly. On top of that, MPLs are eco-friendly. As a sustainable and renewable wood product, they use trees as small as 8 inches in diameter to produce panels as large as 12 feet wide by 48 feet long by 24 inches. They actually sequester carbon over their lifespan, and compared to concrete and steel, require a fraction of the energy to produce.

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"With a tendency to be bulky or cumbersome, bifolding solutions don’t always live up to the elegance of the idea. The Palisades line does, however, delivering an ultraslim frame with concealed hinges. In other words, it knows how to move out of the way." — Samuel Medina

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CRL
crlaurence.com
WINDOWS

Single Track Thermally Broken Invisible Frame
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goldbrecht.com

SAFETY OPENINGS

Model 523RX Security Shutter
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“It is encouraging and near revelatory to see such a ubiquitous product reimagined around an environmental position, especially as thorough as this. And to do it while offering a series of finish options that make it a standout in an otherwise staid product category. Remarkably well done on two critical fronts for our industry.”

Jonathan Tate
RESIDENTIAL FURNISHINGS

Lamé
The Davani Group
thedavanigroup.com

“In line with the latest trends in furniture design—be it from the collectible or contract sectors—these organic, flat-pack, and natural stone tables cut a striking profile.” Adrian Madlener

TEXTILES

Sunbrella Contract and United Fabrics Reflections Collection
Sunbrella Contract
commercial.sunbrella.com
DECORATIVE HARDWARE

Mixed Metals Bit Pull
Top Knobs
topknobs.com

ARCHITECTURAL HARDWARE

PD97PT
INOX
inoxlock.com
Minimalist lighting fixtures are a dime a dozen these days. Vibia’s Sticks luminaire stands out in its scale and proportions, and for how ‘architectural’ it can be. Add it to a room and it will completely transform the ambiance.”

Adrian Madlener
Hardie Textured Panels
James Hardie
jameshardie.com

“I like the honesty of this fiber cement panel system. It doesn’t pretend to be something it isn’t. This product allows for a variety of esthetic applications, and I especially like the larger scale and modularity of the panels that seem well suited to contemporary architectural expressions.”
Ken Smith

SOLARVOLT Building Integrated Photovoltaic (BIPV) Modules
Vitro Architectural Glass
vitroglazings.com
WEATHER BARRIERS, AIR BARRIERS, & INSULATION

RainScreen SA
VaproShield
vaproshield.com

“RainScreen SA takes the idea of a drainage mat that we all use on foundation walls and stretches it up over the building’s facades. I haven’t used it yet, but it seems like a great way to ensure the proper functioning of a rainscreen when you have a slim build-up and don’t have space for channels or other substructure on top of your sheathing.” Tom Wiscombe

HVAC APPLIANCES

ThermaPANEL Radiant Heating System
Therma-HEXX Corporation
therma-hexx.com

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Luminii luminii.com

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Connectrac Flex Raceway System and Wiremold ModPower System Legrand legrand.us

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Ascent Insulated Glass Unit Agnora agnora.com

CLADDING
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AS3000B Pre-Painted Bonded Sheet Arconic Architectural Products arconic.com

STONE & CONCRETE BUILDING MATERIALS
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Fortress Cladding Fortress Building Products fortressbp.com

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Guardian SunGuard SuperNeutral Essential 50/25 HT Coated Glass Guardian Glass guardianglass.com

WEATHER, AIR BARRIERS & INSULATION
FOAMULAR NGX Owens Corning owenscorning.com

SureSlope Prefabricated Tapered Products Atlas Roofing Corporation atlasrwi.com

HVAC APPLIANCES
Deluxe Wall-Mounted Indoor Unit Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US metahvac.com

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SOFTWARE
Vectorworks Architect Vectorworks vectorworks.net

SMART BUILDING, SMART HOME, & AUTOMATION SYSTEMS
Moxie Showerhead & Wireless Speaker Kohler Co. us.kohler.com

131 Luxxbox's illi acoustic pendant light
Skyline Design's Obscura PVC-free polyester film can be added to partitions to increase privacy.
Pablo Designs’ Candél light is designed for indoor and outdoor use.
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MASONRY: ACME
METAL/GLASS CURTAIN WALL: AM Architectural Metal & Glass Systems
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February 25

Philadelphia  
March 8

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March 23

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