

The Architect's Newspaper

March/April 2022

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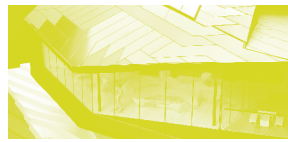
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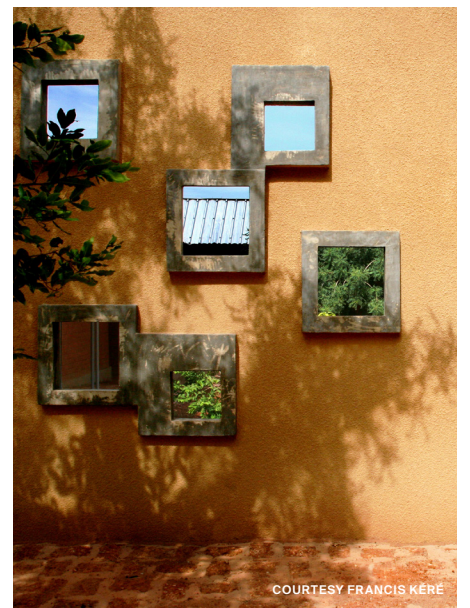
Francis Kéré is the 2022 Pritzker Prize laureate

Diébédo Francis Kéré, an architect whose playful ephemeral commissions have graced Kensington Gardens and the Coachella Valley and whose low-cost, technically innovative permanent structures have had an outsized impact in his native Burkina Faso, is the recipient of the 2022 Pritzker Architecture Prize.

Kéré is the 51st laureate of the prestigious architecture award and its first African recipient.

Also a distinguished educator and social activist, Kéré, 56, founded his eponymous, socially minded design practice in Berlin in 2005 shortly after graduating from Technische Universität Berlin with an advanced degree in architecture. Kéré first arrived in Berlin in 1985 on a vocational carpentry scholarship and maintains dual citizenship in Burkina Faso and Germany.

Kéré's first realized building, a primary school located **continued on page 4**



COURTESY FRANCIS KÉRE

AN FOCUS

Healthcare

Read on page 40.



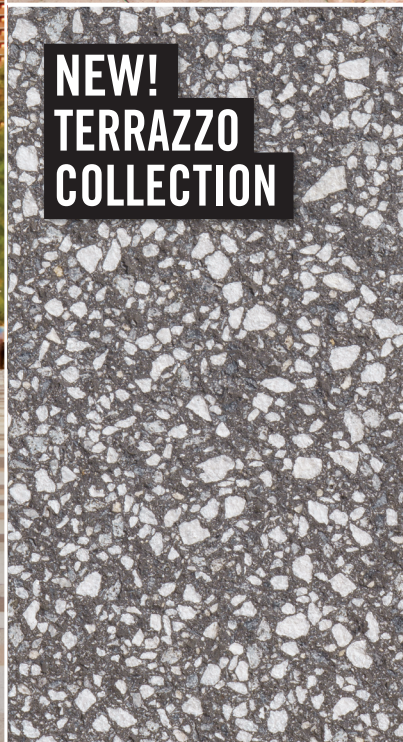
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STOP RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE!

Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine started in earnest on February 24. Since then, untold thousands have been killed, more than 2.8 million refugees have fled the country, and the nation's cities are being reduced to rubble under increasingly indiscriminate Russian bombardment. At this writing, there seems to be no end in sight to this appalling act of aggression against a sovereign nation and its people.

As sickening as it is to watch the devastation unfold from across the Atlantic, the feeling of powerlessness to do anything meaningful against it is just as hard to stomach. In the two and a half weeks since

the invasion began, however, many in the architecture and design world have come forward to voice their solidarity with the people of Ukraine and to suspend all ongoing work in Russia. They're doing their part to add to the growing weight of sanctions against the aggressor.

Those of us in the design media must reciprocate and advocate for a peaceful resolution. To that end, I have signed a joint statement circulated by Marcin Szczelina, chief editor of Polish magazine *Architecture Snob*. We reproduce that letter in full below. **Aaron Seward**

To the International Architecture Community and Beyond,

As architecture magazines that have always been engaged in social issues, we take action to oppose the Russian invasion in Ukraine and support Ukrainians by all means we have. Killing innocent people, violating human rights, destroying cities and disinformation actions must be stopped by all means. We all have a role to play.

All independent media have a great task in stopping fake news by verifying sources and providing the facts. The disinformation campaign has been being led by Russia for many years to destabilize Europe. The Internet and Social Media Research Institute noticed that within two days, most of the Polish anti-vaxxers social media accounts have turned to anti-Ukrainian accounts. The Russian invasion is happening also on the internet and is worldwide. There is an urge to use all possible media platforms to share reliable information about war.

As an architecture media and community we can provide help for Ukraine and people fleeing from Ukraine. Check what can be done in your country—write a letter to your authorities, donate money, organize a fund. Ask yourself how you can help Ukrainian architects and other professionals. Even if the war stops today, the crisis will take months, if not years. People will need housing and jobs. Maybe you are able to hire an architecture professional from Ukraine.

We boycott Russian architecture, companies, money and means of production. We call you to do the same. We are aware that not all Russians are pro-Putin, but sanctions of any kind—even small ones—help the cause. People in Russia must feel pressure to act against the dictator. The whole Europe must stand together against Putin's terror and imperialism.

No more war! Слава Україні!

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Building a Foundation

Francis Kéré is the 2022 Pritzker Prize laureate.



The 2017 Serpentine Pavilion at Kensington Gardens, London



The Startup Lions Campus is located on Lake Turkana, Kenya.

continued from cover in his birth village of Gando, was completed in 2001—four years before he graduated from TU Berlin and nearly four years after he established the Kéré Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to building vital public infrastructure in Gando. Encumbered by a harsh climate, horrific violence, and sparse economic and educational opportunities for its roughly 20 million residents, Burkina Faso, a landlocked West African country, is considered one of the least developed nations in the world.

Like many remote Burkinabè settlements, Gando, located in Burkina Faso's Centre-Est region, lacked a primary school during Kéré's childhood; he left his family at the age of seven for an education in the larger city of Tenkodogo. His school, as detailed in a short biography provided by the Pritzker Prize committee, was housed in a ubiquitous sort of institutional building found across Burkina Faso, a dark and poorly ventilated cement block structure.

Decades later, Gando not only has a primary school but a Kéré-designed library, educational garden, teachers' housing, and school annex topped by a rainwater-harvesting tin roof that feeds into an adjacent underground water tank for community use. A women's center and high school are both under construction, while a village medical center is in the planning stages. The buildings were constructed with the cooperation of villagers using indigenous materials and methods and aided by advanced engineering and sustainable building design. A far cry from stifling cement block boxes, they're durable, dignified, and climate-responsive structures. Kéré's work in Gando is the realized vision of a man setting out to ensure that a void in his own childhood—a safe, convenient, and comfortable place for learning—is filled for the sake of future generations.

"I am hoping to change the paradigm, push people to dream and undergo risk. It is not because you are rich that you should waste material," said Kéré in a statement shared by the Pritzker Prize. "It is not because you are poor that you should not try to create quality. Everyone deserves quality, everyone deserves luxury, and everyone

deserves comfort. We are interlinked and concerns in climate, democracy and scarcity are concerns for us all."

While Kéré's mud-brick Gando Primary School and other ongoing projects in the village are what first brought him international recognition (and an Aga Khan Award in Architecture in 2004), his firm has completed myriad other social projects, including housing, schools, community hubs, and medical centers, across Burkina Faso and further afield in Africa: the Dano Secondary School (Dano, Burkina Faso, 2007); the Centre for Earth Architecture (Mopti, Mali, 2010); Opera Village (Laongo, Burkina Faso, 2010); Centre for Health and Social Welfare (2014, Laongo, Burkina Faso, 2014); Lycée Schorge Secondary School and Noomdo Orphanage (both in Koudougou, Burkina Faso, 2016); Benga Riverside School (Tete, Mozambique, 2018), Léo Doctors' Housing (Léo, Burkina Faso, 2019); the Burkina Institute of Technology (Phase I, 2020, Koudougou, Burkina Faso, 2020), and Startup Lions Campus (Turkana County, Kenya, 2022), among others. Works-in-progress can be found in Burkina Faso as well as Uganda, Senegal, and the Republic of Benin, where his Benin National Assembly is currently under construction in the capital of Porto-Novo.

Hailing Kéré as a "singular beacon in architecture," the jury citation states in part:

Francis Kéré's entire body of work shows us the power of materiality rooted in place. His buildings, for and with communities, are directly of those communities—in their making, their materials, their programs and their unique characters. They are tied to the ground on which they sit and to the people who sit within them. They have presence without pretense and an impact shaped by grace.

It continues:

He has developed a sensitive, bottom-up approach in its embrace of community participation. At the same time, he has no problem incorporating the best possible type of top-down process in

his devotion to advanced architectural solutions. His simultaneously local and global perspective goes well beyond aesthetics and good intentions, allowing him to integrate the traditional with the contemporary.

Although Kéré's built works outside of Africa are less plentiful, they haven't suffered a lack of attention. Case in point is his commission for the 2017 Serpentine Pavilion in London, a blue-walled, tree-inspired structure that, much like his permanent African structures, harvests rainwater and makes atmospheric use of filtered natural light.

"I am fascinated by how this artificial landscape offered a new way for people in the city to experience nature. In Burkina Faso, I am accustomed to being confronted with climate and natural landscape as a harsh reality," Kéré said in a statement at the pavilion's opening. "For this reason, I was interested in how my contribution to this Royal Park could not only enhance the visitor's experience of nature, but also provoke a new way for people to connect with each other."

Two years after the Serpentine commission, Kéré took to the wide-open landscapes of the American West, making a colorful splash at the 2019 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival with his baobab tree-inspired tower installation, *Sarbalé Ke* (House of Celebration); a decidedly woodsy impression was made with *Xylem*, a timber pavilion at Montana's Tippet Rise Arts Center. His work has also been featured in group exhibitions at institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, the Royal Academy of Arts, Denmark's Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, and at the Chicago Architecture Biennial (2015–2016) and Venice Biennale (2010, 2014, 2016); solo exhibitions include *The Architecture of Francis Kéré: Building for Community* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2016), *Francis Kéré: Radically Social* at Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich (2020), and *Arbre à Palabres* at Berlin's Aedes Galerie (2021).

As an educator, Kéré has been a visiting professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and Yale School of Architecture;

in 2017, he was appointed to the new professorship of Architectural Design and Participation at Technische Universität München. He is also an honorary fellow of the American Institute of Architects (2012) and Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (2018) and a chartered member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (2009). Recent awards include the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Architecture (2021) and the American Academy of Arts & Letters' Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize (2017).

Members of the 2022 Pritzker Prize jury included chair Alejandro Aravena, Barry Bergdoll, Deborah Berke, André Aranha Corréa do Lago, Kazuyo Sejima, Wang Shu, Benedetta Tagliabue, and retiring United States Supreme Court justice Stephen Breyer.

As the jury concluded in its citation:

He [Kéré] has shown us how architecture today can reflect and serve needs, including the aesthetic needs, of peoples throughout the world. He has shown us how locality becomes a universal possibility. In a world in crisis, amidst changing values and generations, he reminds us of what has been, and will undoubtedly continue to be a cornerstone of architectural practice: a sense of community and narrative quality, which he himself is so able to recount with compassion and pride. In this he provides a narrative in which architecture can become a source of continued and lasting happiness and joy.

For the first time since the start of the pandemic, the Pritzker Prize ceremony will, as has been the custom in past years, be held in person at an "architecturally and historically significant" venue. Kéré will be awarded the \$100,000 cash prize and bronze medallion at the Marshall Building at the London School of Economics and Political Science, designed by 2020 Pritzker laureates Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara of Grafton Architects. A date for the ceremony in London has yet to be announced.

Matt Hickman

5 Eavesdrop

A Door Closes...

On February 24, in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine that day, the Moscow-based Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture, and Design posted an image on Instagram and Facebook reading, “NO TO WAR.” It published the same message—this time in Cyrillic—on the Russian social media site VKontakte. Four days later, as the war’s toll on Ukrainians worsened, the institute announced a pause in all its programming.

“We consider it impermissible to carry on business as usual in the present situation while lives in Ukraine are being lost,” a statement it issued read. “Establishing dialogue and cessation of hostilities in Ukraine is the single most important goal right now. Strelka Institute stands in solidarity with everyone pleading for an immediate end to this armed conflict.”

According to Benjamin Bratton, Strelka’s graduate education director, the statement set off an immediate reaction within certain circles in Russia. Administrators, particularly outspoken ones such as Bratton, who is based in San Diego, found themselves the target of vitriolic personal attacks and even physical threats. The institute quickly shifted into crisis mode, helping on-site staff find safe passage out of the country. Those who participated in street protests have been arrested and subjected to steep fines. (On March 4, the prosecutor general’s office announced that antiwar protesters would be prosecuted as extremists, making antiwar speech equivalent to terrorism.)

The fallout, Bratton suggested, may very well put an end to Strelka’s project to reshape public space and imagine an alternative future for Russia itself. Neither Strelka Institute nor any of its Moscow-based directors responded to multiple requests for comment.

“Everyone at the institute is horrified at what’s going on,” said Bratton. “We had students from, I think, 23 different countries. Every year we’ve had Ukrainian students in the program. We’re part of the international community that is horrified at what’s going on. The result is existential. We have alumni that are currently under house arrest for their participation in opposition movements. We have alumni that are fleeing the country. But I don’t want to compare their plights to that of the Ukrainians.”

Since its founding in 2009 with funding from Russian oligarch Alexander Mamut and guidance from Rem Koolhaas, Strelka Institute has carved out a unique position in Moscow, acting as both a public forum and an advocate for sensible planning policy. It has used the technical tools and language of architecture to intervene in public space and advance an ostensibly progressive agenda while remaining apolitical on the surface. The institute’s graduate educational program has hosted an international contingent of students and professors, organized into units addressing topical themes such as the New Normal, terraforming, and planetary governance. The panels and events it has hosted in its courtyard amphitheater and clublike bar designed by Wowhaus, as well as the future-gazing articles it has published in its online magazine, have widened public exposure to ideas circulating globally in the urban design field. More tangibly, Strelka’s independent urban design consultancy office has worked with Russian mayors to launch architecture competitions to reshape parks and streetscapes in Moscow and several other cities. Its biggest project has been the Diller Scofidio + Renfro–designed Zaryadye Park, located directly adjacent to the Kremlin, which the office shepherded from competition to completion phases.

“It was a difficult position to play,” said Bratton, in reference to the institute’s strategic wager. “Part of the philosophy in some ways is that cities outlast the regimes that built them and that one of the impacts that urbanism designers can have on the public sphere is literally, physically, the materialization of those forms.”

Some within Russia see the act of pausing operations as inevitable under the circumstances. “For many cultural institutions, especially private ones, there is now an acute question of whether to continue working or stop until the crisis in Ukraine is resolved,” said Maria Savostyanova, deputy publisher of Russian Art Focus. She pointed to two independent Moscow-based arts organizations, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art and the V-A-C Foundation, which opened in January in a former power plant renovated by Renzo Piano, that have also announced work stoppages. Like Strelka, both institutions receive funding from Roman Abramovich, a billionaire investor closely tied to Putin, and V-A-C from Leonid Mikhelson, owner of Russian natural gas producer Novatek.

Yet insofar as the wealth of oligarchs is a direct result of connections to the state, nominally independent institutions are bound by the same political constraints as government-run ones: Speaking out while continuing to work for them is impossible. It becomes a matter of which public an institution sees itself addressing, said Savostyanova. “The decision [by Strelka] to discontinue training programs and to suspend [its online publication] is an act of solidarity with the world and an open statement of position. As a rule, institutions now

decide to continue activities if the activity itself is more important in a humanitarian sense than expressing a position. In each case, institutions calculate their reputational risks. For the Strelka Institute, it is more important to remain among the globally oriented educational institutions.”

There are those who argue Strelka should have stayed neutral and that cultural activity should continue as a social lifeline. “The last thing we need is a cultural boycott,” said a Moscow-based architecture editor who wanted to remain anonymous. “In this situation, you have to just be diplomatic. Doing like Garage, just to stop everything, is the worst decision ever... Openly saying ‘We are for Ukraine,’ this is not a good idea, being here.”

In Bratton’s view, Russian politics have in recent years become more nationalistic, insular, and authoritarian, steadily imperiling the optimism of Strelka’s mission. “People are really sad to see this come to an end,” he said. “It’s just it’s going to have to be revived under a different context. There’s no way it could continue to happen with this war raging. So it’s only appropriate that a chapter has to close so that another one can open.” **Stephen Zacks**



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Bargaining for Better

Unionization at SHoP Architects stalled out, but architecture's labor movement is far from over.

On February 3, the bargaining unit aiming to unionize at SHoP Architects suddenly pulled its petition to organize from the National Labor Relations Board. In a statement posted to Instagram, the group of employees, formally known as Architectural Workers United (AWU), claimed that “a powerful anti-union campaign” had eroded the support the group had built up over the past year.

“At this time, after internal meetings and messaging from leadership, a number of SHoP employees have expressed a preference for an alternative way to address the issues that have been brought to light,” the statement read. “We do not yet know what that will look like, and we do regret that pulling the petition removes the opportunity to vote democratically, but we feel compelled to honor all voices and the current majority opinion.”

A spokesperson for SHoP told *AN* that the decision to stop pursuing the petition “reflects our staff’s clear desire to determine our collective future together as an employee-owned firm. Any allegations of bad faith campaigning are unfounded and an attempt to undermine the strong majority of SHoP employees who made their views known.”

SHoP’s principals didn’t respond to a request for comment on the unionizing effort prior to the February 3 announcement and have given no further explanation on how they will address the problems raised by employees. The firm is among a number of design companies that have recently rolled out employee stock ownership plans, a retirement benefit set up by means of an ownership trust. Others include Zaha Hadid Architects, IA Interior Architects, and Design Workshop.

“It’s disappointing, obviously, but the movement continues on,” said Andrew Daley, a former SHoP employee of seven years who recently began a role as an associate organizer at the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the global trade union that the collective from AWU aimed to affiliate with. “The SHoP workers have to do what is best for them, and we respect that.... This movement was never intended to be about one office alone.”

An architect from one of the other firms working to organize through AWU said the SHoP outcome means he and his colleagues will have to be all the more aggressive in their approach to garnering extra support within their office. “It hasn’t demoralized us,” he said, “but the news is making us realize that firms will use union-busting tactics to intimidate the most vulnerable at offices.”

AWU first made its intentions to organize known in a *New York Times* article that shed light on the issue of labor rights within the profession. The piece, which was published on December 21, introduced the average reader to the plight of architects: They are underpaid, overworked, given little time off, and not given a lot of credit for their highly technical and creative work. The pathways for career development and advancement are also murky for many.

But these problems aren’t new to those within the profession, and the pandemic, in many ways, made worse what many new to midlevel designers and project manag-

ers once faced in the office. Work-from-home policies are still in place at many firms, and some architects feel their work ethic and dedication to the practice go virtually unseen, as managers can’t physically monitor their productivity. Besides that, the expectation to “always be online” has been heightened and the boundaries for communication have been blurred.

“The pandemic created a situation of way more slippage,” Daley said. “None of it was intentional or done maleficly. It just further cemented some systemic issues and started a more organic conversation about how teams are actually working.”

COVID-19 wasn’t the only catalyst that sparked the movement. It was also the racial reckoning the country faced after the murder of George Floyd—a moment that woke up many employers to the diversity problems within their own organizations and across all industries. The influx of avowals made on social media and the letters of support that firms issued days after the event demonstrated that architectural leaders were paying attention.

But it’s been a year and a half since then, and many architects interviewed for this article revealed that the intentional and transparent conversations on diversity, equity, and inclusion started by firm leaders in the summer of 2020 have all but stopped. One designer from an international firm based in Brooklyn said having union representation might eventually help with implicit bias in the field, allowing people from different socioeconomic backgrounds the chance to work at the industry’s most respected firms—even those that show favoritism toward Ivy League graduates.

Of all the architecture firms in New York, according to Daley, it’s significant that employees from a prominent and sizable, design-forward firm like SHoP were the first to try bargaining for a more equitable work environment. “The firm talks about being innovative in the industry,” he said. “Why not be innovative about the ways in which workers are treated?”

With SHoP’s unit pulling its petition to unionize, it’s now up to the two other New York firms that are in talks with the machinists’ union and AWU to take this first step. Representatives of the firms agreed to speak only on background for this article, but both expect to announce their intentions publicly this year.

The goals of AWU are threefold: In the short term, it wants to gain recognition from one of these firms and start a transparent conversation about the employees’ priorities. In the long term, it wants to carve out a path for industry workers to unionize at their own firms and create density in the field. Finally, it hopes such a movement will force the federal government to enact legislative changes that promise better wages—including overtime compensation—and healthier workplace practices.

To form a legally recognized union, a minimum of 30 percent of employees have to sign union cards, first creating a bargaining unit. It’s standard practice, however, that units aim for above 60 percent support before filing a petition to organize. An employer has to voluntarily recognize the staff’s decision or the National Labor Relations Board will administer a secret ballot election in which the unit

needs more than 50 percent of votes plus one to win. From there, representatives from the union will enter contract negotiations with the employer to address the unit’s top concerns. All parties must vote to accept and ratify the contract or else negotiations will continue.

The bargaining unit at SHoP initially expected silence from the firm’s partners. One senior-level project director involved in the bargaining unit told *AN* that the group provided a letter to management on December 20, before the *Times* piece was published, saying:

We have grown accustomed to unsustainable practices such as endless overtime and deadlines which result in burn-out and a lack of work-life balance. We have accepted the lack of value of the architect within the building industry. We have normalized the exploitation of our time and our talent.

Dezeen later printed the letter in full. *AN* has on record from AWU that the partners hired a law firm to discourage the effort, a common maneuver by employers. SHoP denies the claim.

Members of units at other firms trying to organize are aware that their employers fear this process and understand the implications it may have for their reputation among clients. But they want the message of “It’s not us versus them” to be clear. “It’s critical they understand that this comes from our care for the industry,” two designers from one firm told *AN* on a call. “Our bosses have noted in the past that they want to do better but they’ve been pushed into situations where they can’t do better. We want to help them achieve their goal.”

Arguably, the biggest threat to unraveling the systemic issues faced by the industry is the Sherman Antitrust Act, which prevents monopolies in private business. In 1972 and 1990, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) underwent two antitrust proceedings that solidified the nature of industry work today: Architects compete for fees for free with no discussion of payment or bid winning, or else they’ll be charged with collusion for price-fixing.

According to Peggy Deamer, founder of The Architecture Lobby, an advocacy group that’s been vying for unionization within the profession for years, there’s another way to work around these laws. A third party, such as a university, she said, could suggest standard wage minimums for the industry. “That would take the willingness of all firm owners to confirm, knowing it supports the industry as a whole,” she said. “But firm owners are so indoctrinated with competition that they tend to think that approach is scary and unnatural.”

Some architects consulted for this piece worry about this option, citing the culture of overwork in firms today as a direct result of how architecture is taught in schools. AWU hopes changing legislation will have a trickle-down effect on curricula and studio structures. “It really does start in school,” said one architect. “We’re taught there that we’re not workers, we’re artists that create abstract things.”

The last and only time architecture employees were part of a labor union was

from 1933 to 1947. As recovery projects began during the Great Depression, the AIA “undersold” the value of architecture work to the federal government and the union of the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists, and Technicians formed against it.

When asked about the formation of a 21st-century union within the field, the AIA wouldn’t answer directly. Instead, a representative said via email that the AIA “has deep and active interest in equity throughout the profession, and is committed to enhancing the work life, employment, and practice culture of architecture firms and employees at all stages of their careers.”

With other “white-collar” professionals such as journalists and museum and tech workers looking to unionize, members of AWU are still hopeful that change in the design industry is just around the corner. Their awareness campaign is spreading rapidly from firm to firm and on social media, giving them confidence that even if SHoP’s employees are no longer on the path to unionizing, another group at another firm is.

“If it does happen here,” said an architect at one firm soon to announce its bargaining unit, “it will be a very, very powerful thing. All eyes are on this company.”

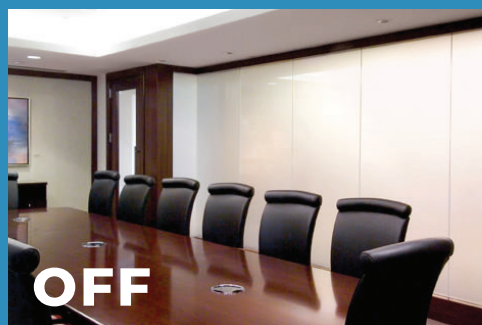
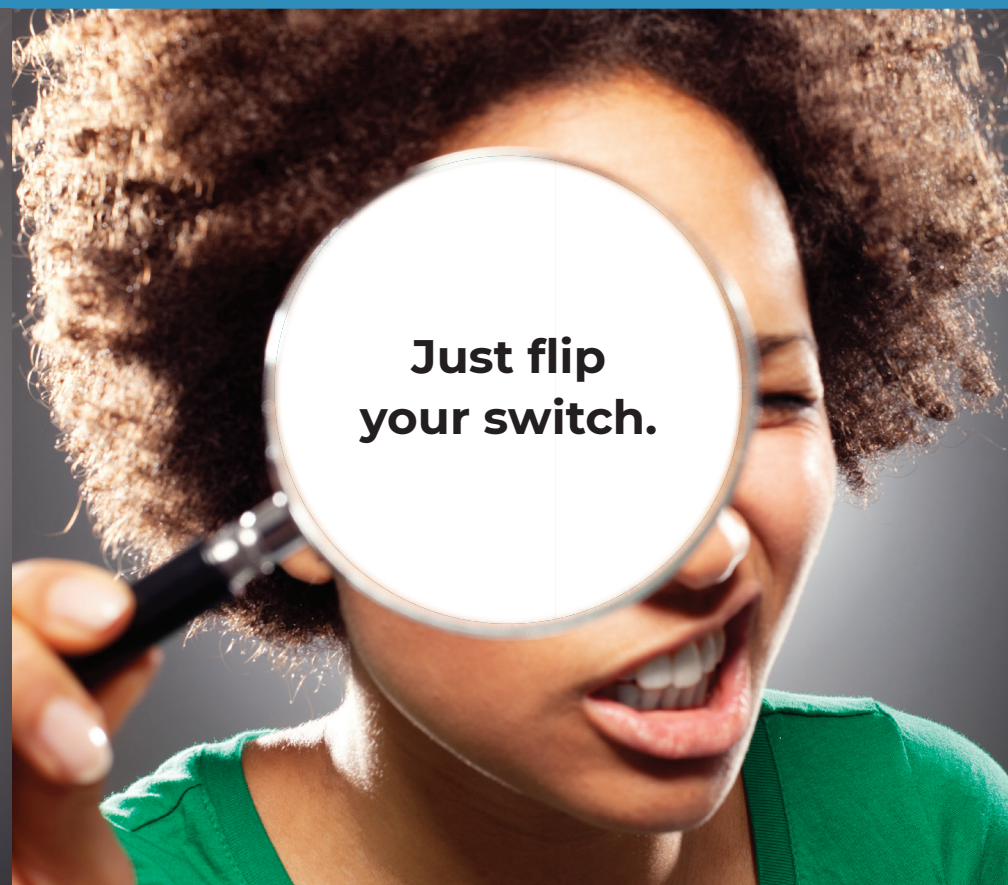
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8 News

Wood Lookers

WoodWorks reveals the winners of the 2022 U.S. Wood Design Awards.

Variety ruled the 2022 U.S. Wood Design Awards, which was backed for the seventh year by the WoodWorks–Wood Products Council. Incorporating CLT panels and glulam beams aplenty, the winning projects are all over the map and in the best way possible, ranging from Californian cabins to an Arkansan golf course clubhouse, a bustling Puget Sound ferry terminal to a buzzy Austin boutique hotel.

Among the architectural firms belonging to this year's winning cohort are Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects, LMN Architects, and Gensler. Perkins&Will and Lake|Flato Architects are the most heavily awarded practices of the bunch, claiming three prizes apiece in a program that this year included national awards distributed across ten categories, along with a total of eight regional awards.

The submissions were evaluated by an independent panel comprising Thang Do, a CEO/principal of the San Jose, California-based Aedis Architects; Jordan Komp, vice president and director of Thornton Tomasetti's Milwaukee office; and Steve Durham, executive vice president and director of collegiate projects at the Houston office of Kirksey Architecture.

Do singled out LEVER Architecture's Jury's Choice Award-winning Adidas North American Headquarters in Portland, Oregon. "It's a complex building, and they developed a complex set of solutions," he said. "It's a much more heavily programmed building than some of the others, which in itself represents challenges. I particularly love the thoughtfulness in terms of how mass timber was connected with other materials." **Matt Hickman**

Hotel Magdalena by Lake|Flato Architects



CASEY DUNN

National Winners

Jury's Choice

Adidas North American Headquarters

LEVER Architecture

Location: Portland, Oregon
Structural engineer: KPFF Consulting Engineers
Owner/developer: Adidas
Contractor: Turner Construction

Multi-Family Wood Design

Granville1500

Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects

Location: Los Angeles
Structural engineer: Labib Funk + Associates
Owner/developer: CIM Group
Contractor: Suffolk Construction

Commercial Wood Design – Mid-Rise

1 De Haro

Perkins&Will

Location: San Francisco
Structural engineer: DCI Engineers
Owner/developer: SKS Partners
Contractor: Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction

Commercial Wood Design – Low-Rise

Girl Scouts Camp Lakota

Perkins&Will

Location: Frazier Park, California
Structural engineer: Risha Engineering
Owner/developer: Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles
Contractor: Illig Construction Company

Wood in Schools

MSU STEM Teaching and Learning Facility

Integrated Design Solutions (architect of record and power plant), Ellenzweig (STEM addition)

Location: East Lansing, Michigan
Structural engineer: SDI Structures
Owner/developer: Michigan State University
Contractor: Granger Construction

Wood in Government Buildings

Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal | Mukilteo, Washington

LMN Architects

Location: Mukilteo, Washington
Structural engineer: KPFF Consulting Engineers
Owner/developer: Washington State
Contractor: IMCO Construction

Institutional Wood Design

Southwest Library

Perkins&Will

Location: Washington, D.C.
Structural engineer: StructureCraft
Owner/developer: D.C. Public Library
Contractor: Turner Construction

Sustainable Wood Design

Hotel Magdalena

Lake|Flato Architects

Location: Austin, Texas
Structural engineer: StructureCraft (wood), Architectural Engineers Collaborative (steel, concrete)
Contractor: MYCON General Contractors

Beauty of Wood

The Lighthouse

Gensler

Location: South San Francisco
Structural engineer: Arup
Owner/developer: Alexandria Real Estate Equities
Contractor: XL Construction

Durable & Adaptable Wood Structures

Timber Adaptive Reuse Theater

CO Adaptive Architecture

Location: Brooklyn, New York
Structural engineer: A Degree of Freedom
Owner/developer: The Mercury Store
Contractor: Yorke Construction

Regional Awards

G.K. Butterfield Transportation Center

Jacobs

Location: Greenville, North Carolina
Structural engineer: Jacobs
Owner/developer: City of Greenville
Contractor: Thomas Construction Company Enterprises

Moxy Oakland Downtown

Lowney Architecture

Location: Oakland, California
Structural engineer: DCI Engineers
Owner/developer: Tidewater Capital & Graves Hospitality
Contractor: Suffolk Construction

Norwell Public Library

Oudens Ello Architecture

Location: Norwell, Massachusetts
Structural engineer: LeMessurier
Owner/developer: Town of Norwell
Contractor: M. O'Connor Contracting

The Soto

Lake|Flato Architects (design architect), BOKA Powell (architect of record)

Location: San Antonio
Structural engineer: StructureCraft, Danysh & Associates
Owner/developer: Hixon Properties
Contractor: Byrne Construction

Hidden Creek Community Center

Opsis Architecture

Location: Hillsboro, Oregon
Structural engineer: KPFF Consulting Engineers
Owner/developer: City of Hillsboro
Contractor: Swinerton

Mystic Creek Clubhouse

DLR Group

Location: El Dorado, Arkansas
Structural engineer: DLR Group
Owner/developer: Murphy USA
Contractor: Clark Construction

Poplar Hall

Engberg Anderson Architects

Location: Appleton, Wisconsin
Structural engineer: CORE 4 Engineering
Owner/developer: Tanesay Development
Contractor: C.D. Smith Construction

University of Denver Burwell Center for Career Achievement

Lake|Flato Architects, Shears Adkins Rockmore Architects

Location: Denver
Structural engineer: KL&A Engineers and Builders
Owner/developer: University of Denver
Contractor: PCL Construction

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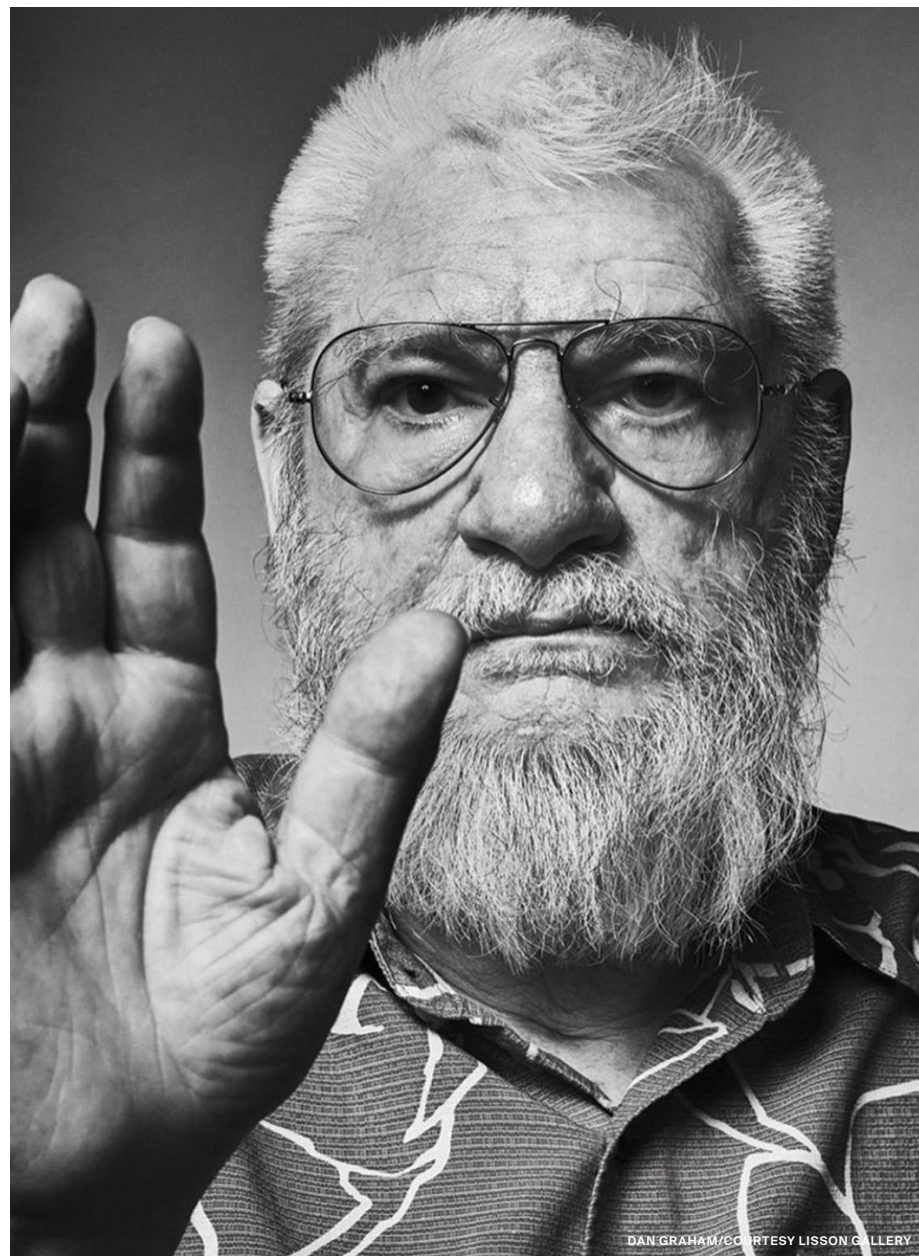


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Child's Play

The director of New York's Carriage House Gallery remembers Dan Graham, the playful yet intense artist who died in February at 79.



DAN GRAHAM/COURTESY LISSON GALLERY

Dan Graham was inexplicable, and I often felt that he wanted it that way. He possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of many subjects (art, architecture, rock music, arcane details about the lifestyles of ex-presidents) but parsed the information with such unrelenting idiosyncrasy that conventional histories were usually shredded in favor of his telling. Once it was dispensed with, the comfort taken in the common notions of the past and present was replaced by the appeal of Dan's fractured brilliance, flashes of convincing insight followed by assertions so ludicrous that you were sure he was fucking with you.

And I think he often was. His intellectual curiosity was enormous. A side effect of this insatiable appetite for engaging with not only art ideas but also the possible significance of a pop icon's astrological sign was that the world around him probably seemed to move too slowly—and he needed to speed it up. Sometimes that meant direct challenges to accepted opinion with something so out of left field that it would both keep you guessing while maintaining your focus on Dan rather than the intellectual status quo that he loved to attack.

I had come to know Dan Graham the artist several years before I met Dan the

person. I still remember my first encounter with his work, reading his "Corporate Arcadias" article in *Artforum* at the art school library, with clarity reserved only for those events that leave lasting impressions. If I returned there I could probably identify the spot I was sitting in when I read the piece. Taking what in most people's hands would be dry subject matter (corporate architecture and gardens), Dan's article was perhaps my first encounter with writing that was both playful and sharply critical, representing the possibility of an intellectualism unburdened by academic constraints or art world trends.

I eventually met Dan after moving to New York. Although it shouldn't have surprised me, his outside reputation within the field of contemporary art did not prepare me for his deep love of the absurd in everyday life (and commitment to highlighting it whenever possible) or the most convincing indifference to societal constraints I've ever encountered. While I had not been in New York for that long, there were aspects to its competitiveness that seemed to foster a kind of conformity, as though you had to calculate just how "far out" you could be as an artist but go no further lest you alienate those from whom you sought support. Dan would always



DAN GRAHAM/COURTESY LISSON GALLERY

Above: *Showing Off the Body*, 2016, two-way mirror glass and perforated steel

Far left: Dan Graham, pictured in 2017

Left: *Homes for America*, 1966-1989



DAN GRAHAM/COURTESY LISSON GALLERY

go further, dispensing entirely with what most would consider appropriate behavior.

But he was neither antisocial nor asocial. The truth was that Dan was an incredibly social person, and his art was about creating space both for and about social engagement. While public art in America is often reliant on spectacle or aesthetically limited by "good intentions" (the former designed to seduce its audience and the latter to distract it from the decades-long neoliberal assault on the public sphere), at its best the experience of Dan's pavilions embodies what he referred to as European socialism, an engagement with the public evident in a work by one of his favorite artists, Seurat's *Bathers at Asnières*, a space allowing for leisure in everyday life that might exist outside its relentless commodification.

One of the most poignant memories I have of Dan, a close friend of many years, is, perhaps oddly, from a Dutch architecture documentary he appeared in that had something to do with Rem Koolhaas being the next Philip Johnson. The main conceit of the film was to show famous architects a deck of cards one at a time and, in a solicitation into the machinations of power in the industry, ask who was the king, the queen, etc. When Dan was shown the deck he dismissed it with a wave of his hand, claiming

that this exercise, like the quest for power in architecture, was a "stupid game."

At another point in the film he's shown entering perhaps his most impressive work in New York, *The Rooftop Urban Park Project* at Dia Chelsea. As he's opening the rather cumbersome door that defines part of the cylinder at the center of the piece, he pauses to let a small child enter. While it could be seen as a somewhat innocuous moment and wasn't at all central to the goal of the film, there was something striking about this engagement on the part of a person who'd just laid to waste the will to power in the architecture profession, shown within the site of one of his greatest achievements, pausing to yield to a little boy who seemed disoriented but thrilled at the place he found himself in. But that was Dan. He hated power but also had it. He would create controlled environments where much of what happened was out of his control. But most of all he was a very intense, brilliant guy who loved child's play, and he went out of his way to do everything possible to facilitate it.

Peter Scott is an artist and the director of Carriage Trade Gallery in New York City.

It's Good to Be Free

Pedro Garcia Hernandez remembers the uninhibited Spanish architect Ricardo Bofill.



(FORGEMIND ARCHIMEDIA/FLICKR, ACCESSED UNDER CC BY 2.0)

Bofill famously converted an old cement factory outside Barcelona as his home and studio.



(JOANBANJO/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, ACCESSED UNDER CC BY-SA 4.0)

La Muralla Roja, completed in 1973, is both a full apartment complex and tourist attraction.

Freedom is incompatible with love.

A lover is always a slave.

—**Germaine de Staël**

Those are my principles, and if you don't like them...well, I have others.

—**Groucho Marx**

Ricardo Bofill always moved freely, a freedom exercised from a young age and that accompanied him throughout his life. Freedom is tricky and difficult to manage, since it implies that nothing and no one decides for you. Only you are responsible for your actions, your decisions, and every day, on every new project, every decision is made alone. Responsibility is never shared, and therefore one is condemned to loneliness.

Bofill perfectly embodied this freedom assumed as loneliness. His reluctance to share decisions with anyone made him an austere person, focused on work and reserved. His life was full of paradoxes and contradictions, of self-centeredness and loneliness, of successes and failures, of ups and downs, and all of that could be understood only from a single idea: freedom.

Freedom to learn

Bofill had four important pillars in his training as an architect: the family, the University of Barcelona, the University of Geneva, and being self-taught. Emilo Bofill and María Levi, his parents, were centered on Ricardo after his older brother, José, passed away; they pushed him to continue the family business and become an architect like his father. The University of Barcelona gave him his first years of learning and made it easier for him to meet other architects who years later became colleagues, friends, and enemies. Ricardo's expulsion from the university for his communist attitudes and links prompted his departure to Switzerland, where he finished his studies.

Bofill was also an autodidact who constantly redrew and traced works by other

great architects to learn, observe, and understand their architecture. To observe is to discover the differences we have between similar realities; to understand is to search for the coincidences we find between different realities.

One day Bofill told me that the plan of a building shows the limits of architecture, but the section shows the quality of the spaces.

Freedom to work

The Taller de Arquitectura was formed around 1962–63 but was consolidated in 1964 as a result of beginning the design of the Barri Gaudí in the Catalonian city of Reus. The beginning of the Taller was centered in the first years upon two people: Ricardo Bofill and his first cousin Xavier Bague, but Ramón Collado, Ricardo's foster brother and son of the Bofill family's maid, immediately joined the team. Over time, Collado also studied architecture and finally took an active part in the projects and especially in the construction management that the Taller carried out during the following years. Shortly after, Manuel Núñez Yanowsky (1942–) joined. A great sketcher with a background in theater, he was capable of imitating the style of any painter and was introduced to Bofill and Bague by Catalan theater designer and director Fabià Puigserver. The membership of Bofill and Bague in the clandestine communist party PSUC facilitated contacts with some Russian exiles, among them Núñez Yanowsky. The Taller began to grow little by little, incorporating thinkers such as Salvador Clotas and José Agustín Goytiso (1928–1999), a man of great culture who helped develop Bofill's ideas and arguments.

It was during this period that Bofill met Serena Vergano and Peter Hodgkinson, both of whom are part of the Taller to this day. Hodgkinson came to Spain from the United Kingdom, where he studied architecture at the Architectural Association and met some members of Archigram and Team 10. His solid academic training helped his development and growth within the structure of the Taller, where he

performed a very important role in the development of executive projects and in the realization of details and models, adding a dose of realism that facilitated the construction of the proposed ideas.

The Taller has always been structured around Bofill, with two creative pillars that formed: Núñez Yanowsky and Hodgkinson. Núñez Yanowsky was the creative, theatrical visionary, and Hodgkinson redirected his histrionic ideas by imposing order, structuring them, and caring for the construction. Bague and Collado were secondary but also very important.

The Taller intended to be a multidisciplinary practice around architecture, headed by Bofill. It was a community where writers, critics, mathematicians, architects, and all kinds of people could contribute ideas to the work being done. But most of these collaborators ended up leaving the Taller, fighting with Bofill over his growing role and over his making decisions unilaterally. The incorporation of Jean Pierre Carniaux (who joined in 1976 and opened the New York office in 1986) and the loyalty of Hodgkinson led to their being the definitive partners in the Taller, which ceased to be multidisciplinary and became the Ricardo Bofill firm.

Freedom to create

The Taller was founded with the clear idea of putting an end to Le Corbusier's linear blocks and creating an entire neighborhood that would facilitate relationships between neighbors and the city. Bofill carried out modular and aggregative systems research for about 12 years, which may have been the most interesting period of his career. The projects that came out of this research—Kafka's Castle, Red Wall, Walden 7—certainly gave him worldwide fame.

When he began to build in France, he abandoned aggregative systems and became more interested in prefabrication and postmodern architecture, which led him to his becoming an international architect, building a skyscraper in Chicago. His last few years were focused on large interventions in neighborhoods and cities

with an eclectic style and some influences from the past.

Bofill's career was irregular, with unexpected and often inexplicable stylistic twists. He was always ambitious and eager to grow, and it is very possible that these changes were caused by the influence of fashion, changes in the scale of the projects, the available technology, and/or the influence of his collaborators. He never justified his changes in style, never wanted to be linked to any university, never wanted to have followers or create any type of school; he always moved with absolute freedom not feeling he had to explain his decisions to anyone.

Personal freedom

On a personal level, he was consistent with that spirit of freedom. He was unfaithful to anyone, for instance the constant changing of partners, the focus on the Taller as well as his private life. He had two children with two women and ended up with a third partner, in addition to the innumerable lovers he had; that only gives us an idea of the sexual freedom he maintained throughout his life. His political ideals also changed throughout his life, from his being a communist to building a skyscraper in Chicago's Loop and other absolutely expensive projects for private companies.

He was Jewish by birth, but also in love with the countries of the Maghreb, and this shows his total freedom of belief and lack of religiosity.

An architect focused on his work, who did not hesitate to be the focus of gossip magazines when his son married the daughter of Julio Iglesias, throwing a spectacular banquet in his studio: Ricardo Bofill, a contradictory, brilliant, unfaithful, egocentric, and controversial figure, but who always has been and always will be a free spirit.

Pedro Garcia Hernandez is an architect. He has lectured at Harvard GSD, UCLAS, and Escola da Cidade São Paulo, among other institutions.

Cast in Concrete

A Boston Brutalist classic is threatened with demolition. Architects and preservationists should fight for its survival.

The completed works of Paul Rudolph have become a regular target for the concrete-hating development crowd. Buildings such as the Burroughs Wellcome headquarters in Durham, North Carolina, and the Shoreline Apartments in Buffalo, New York, were demolished with scarcely any acknowledgment of their architectural significance.

The architect's civic buildings haven't fared much better. In 2017, the original composition of the Orange County Government Center in Goshen, New York, was marred beyond repair, and a new, incongruous structure was erected alongside the remnants of Rudolph's original. Now the Rudolph-designed Government Services Center in Boston, particularly the portion referred to as the Charles F. Hurley Building, is at risk of the same.

The Government Services Center is a multi-block scheme first developed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority under Ed Logue. Opened in 1971, the complex was conceived alongside a wider downtown rejuvenation project that cleared a significant part of the area to make way for a new Government Center, which also included City Hall and the Federal Office Building. (These were designed by Kallmann McKinnell & Knowles and The Architect's Collaborative, respectively; the overall plan was prepared by I. M. Pei's office, with oversight from Henry Cobb.) These admittedly extreme interventions had an outsized effect in shaping modern Boston and helped catalyze a renewal of the city that has continued to the present day.

The two pieces of the Center—the Hurley Building and the adjacent Erich Lindemann Mental Health Center—are monumental works featuring rugged, bush-hammered concrete and distinctive curvilinear forms, such as the Hurley's iconic “frog,” which peers over Merrimac Street, and the staircases that spin out onto a public plaza. But the greater project, which Rudolph coauthored with Desmond & Lord and Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, remained incomplete: A soaring tower, designed but never built, would have anchored the site and enclosed a courtyard that Rudolph

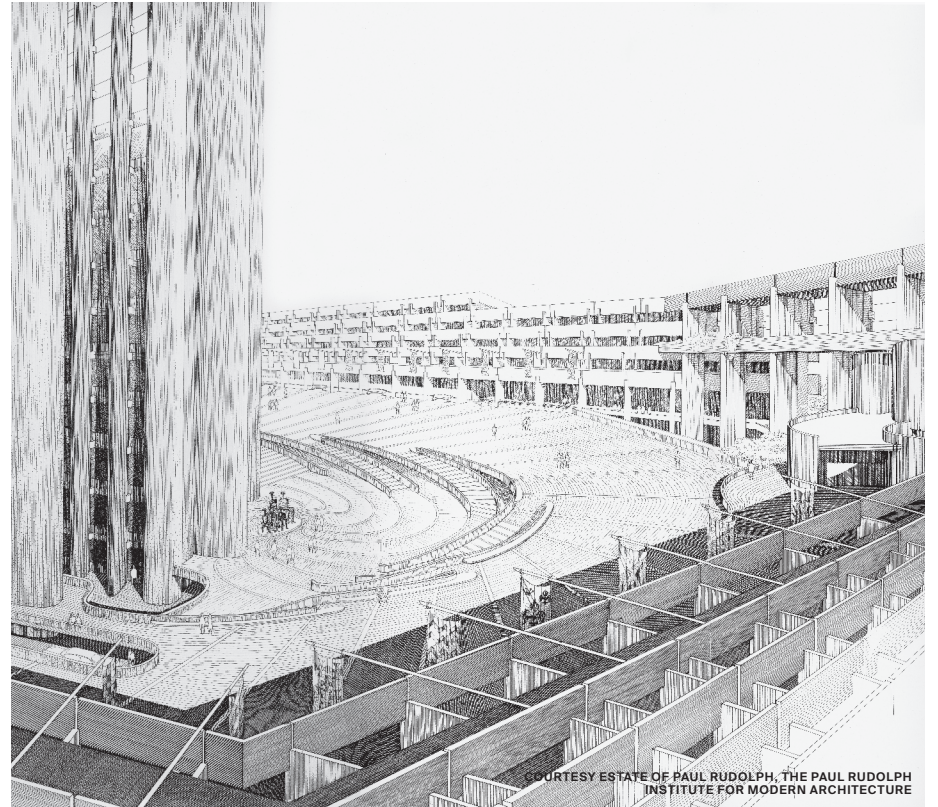
imagined as a welcoming refuge. As a result, a stagnant air clung to the Government Services Center for decades, which even the addition of Kallmann McKinnell & Wood's Edward W. Brooke Courthouse in 1999 failed to lift.

The complex also suffered at the combined hands of deferred maintenance and active neglect, making it less and less accessible. Points of entry were closed off and large stretches of both buildings were surrounded by a fence, which certainly didn't enhance the appeal of the neglected plaza. Worse, public spaces at the foot of the Hurley along Merrimac and alongside the Lindemann Center were converted to parking lots.

Acknowledging these deficits, the state moved to redevelop the Government Services Center site in late 2019, tacitly sacrificing the Hurley Building in the process. The decision, while heralded by some, sparked an outcry from the Boston Preservation Society and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, among others. A report on the complex highlighted the architectural significance of Rudolph's buildings, as well as the superlative Costantino Nivola murals that hang in the Hurley's lobby.

These arguments appeared to sway the state's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), and in 2020, the agency issued an RFP to transform the area while offering several options for retention, or complete removal, of the Hurley Building. (The Lindemann Center, a project more authoritatively “Rudolphian,” was not included in the scope of renovation/restoration.) In examining these options, proponents of saving Boston's postwar concrete architecture such as myself saw an opening.

Convinced that there was a way to preserve the Hurley Building, I consulted on a scheme that would bring the complex up to current building performance standards. The existing structure could be repurposed as research laboratories and offices for biotech companies, or start-ups looking for open office solutions, and the expansive floor plates offer a rough-and-ready backdrop for inventive space planning. A



COURTESY ESTATE OF PAUL RUDOLPH, THE PAUL RUDOLPH INSTITUTE FOR MODERN ARCHITECTURE

rethinking of the landscape would render two acres of open space for public use, opening up now-closed entrances to reintroduce foot traffic across the plaza. The strategic addition of ground-floor retail would bring commerce to a place left barren for far too long. Lastly, a tower equal to the one proposed by Rudolph and his team would “complete” the architectural ensemble, it's base a hybrid public space that would enhance the urban legibility of the site.

We were on the verge of submitting the project when we were informed that the tower wouldn't conform to the line the state had drawn between courthouse and new development, which ruled out using the open part of the site for the tower structure, even if it was a public space. Four other proposals were submitted, but their schemes and strategies for preserving the Hurley remain unknown. A scheme will supposedly be chosen this month, but there has been no public airing of the results.

Our project was informed by earlier efforts to help redefine attitudes toward City Hall, closely identified with the architectural “third rail” of Brutalism. These proactive efforts turned the tide of public opinion on the building, whose 50th anniversary was celebrated by then-mayor Marty Walsh and its architect, Michael McKinnell. Boston now has, in Michelle Wu, a mayor who unabashedly admires the building, and a multiphase renovation will make City Hall and its capacious plaza more accessible than ever, demonstrating how even the most despised buildings can be rediscovered through investment and care.

Unfortunately, a similar rehabilitation may not be in the works for the Hurley. Despite its earlier assurances, and against the grain of preservationists, DCAMM appears to have chosen a path toward replacement of the Hurley structures. If so, it's an unnecessary, costly decision that ignores the robust armature that the building offers as an artifact for reuse and reinvention.

It's no secret that the courthouse would like to absorb the land on which the Hurley stands. At the same time, the state stands to gain a large sum from selling off the property; undoubtedly, developers would be champing

at the bit. Meanwhile, local community groups have argued that the site, unburdened of its concrete behemoth, could be returned to public use. There doesn't seem to be any appetite for the kind of radical vision that the architects of the Government Services Center were willing to embrace—and that Rudolph himself continued to pursue throughout his later career, as seen in the experimental residential and commercial spaces he built in Southeast Asia.

Architectural ambition and development shouldn't be seen as mutually exclusive concerns. Here, preservationist arguments that place value on an eclectic city take on greater force. Such an outlook celebrates all elements of urban history, including those we don't particularly find beautiful, for as history suggests, standards of beauty are not fixed in place but oscillate over time—Victorian architecture was despised, then loved, just as so-called “concrete monsters” are now admirable Brutalist avatars. That the now over half-century-old Government Services Center has become part of the historical context upon which the modern preservation movement was founded, why not use the same tactics to ensure it receives the care and attention it deserves?

Chris Grimley is a designer and curator based in Boston. He is the author of *Heroic: Concrete Architecture and the New Boston* (The Monacelli Press, 2015); *Imagining the Modern: Architecture and Urbanism of the Pittsburgh Renaissance* (The Monacelli Press, 2019); and designer of *Henry N. Cobb: Words & Works 1948–2018: Scenes from a Life in Architecture* (The Monacelli Press, 2018).



KELVIN DICKINSON/COURTESY THE ESTATE OF PAUL RUDOLPH, THE PAUL RUDOLPH INSTITUTE FOR MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Top: Rudolph imagined a Brutalist campanile for the complex.

Left: The Hurley Building's three-dimensional facade

Riviera of the Mind

The Italian firm ELASTICOfarm sets a new precedent for Venice's Lido di Jesolo, while also breaking new ground for its "context-critical" practice.



*Everybody
summertime love
you'll remember me
everybody
summertime love
be my lover
be my baby*

It's 1987. An upbeat Italo disco sound is pounding as a young bikini-clad Sabrina Salerno sings "Boys, Boys, Boys," driving the crew boys crazy while dipping in and out of a Smurf-blue pool. These visuals, which laid the foundations for a decades-long aesthetic, belong to the history of European pop culture, while the pool itself belongs to the four-star Hotel Florida in the seaside town of Jesolo, the Venetian Miami Beach.

It's 2022. A few blocks from Hotel Florida, the crowded built fabric of Lido di Jesolo is shaken up by a new and unexpected visual: a cascading cluster of modular boxes, perched atop slanted stilts, shining brilliantly in the sunlight. Like Salerno emerging from the azure waters, this apparition floats above a sloped retail pedestal, surrounded by a plaza and topped by the turquoise rectangle of a swimming pool.

This building, a high-end housing development called *Le bâtiment descendant l'escalier* (literally "the building walking down the stairs"), was designed by the Italian firm ELASTICOfarm, led by Stefano Pujatti. The project aims to break with local conventions and maximize value, both urban—by opening up a new connection between the main street and adjacent back streets—and architectural—by providing sunlight to all units, which open onto shared galleries to the north.

Leaving the euphemistic comparisons aside—and this building is a Mies Award nominee, by the way—*Le bâtiment* prompts two reactions, one impressionistic, the other analytic. First, is this juggernaut walking on slanted stilts amid a quiet coastal fabric of ordinary apartment blocks? Yes, of course it is. And second, what does this indicate about the primacy of context? Since this is an extremely delicate and triggering question in Italy, we need a moment to talk about the Italian notion of "context."

While it would be impossible to squeeze the vast literature covering the subject into a few lines, it is essentially true that Italy's contemporary urban landscape is largely a product of postwar thinking, with no connection or respect for the Italian City™ as traded upon worldwide. Jesolo, for example, is tailored to a newly globalized holiday clientele, resulting in enormous amounts of built material, most of which opens on quite ordinary views or, if you're lucky, the seaside. Meanwhile, the economics of leisure as consumption provide a chance to produce new cultural expressions.

And here we are again, back to Italo disco, Italian summer mythology, and the now much-celebrated aesthetics of the Riviera. Lido di Jesolo is a matter of *mental* context: Here, what one wants most is the chance to see and be seen. This "show-off society," per Pujatti, draws visitors from nearby provinces and abroad. It has also attracted the attention of many renowned designers who have sought to make a mark on the place, including Zaha Hadid, Richard Meier, and Gonçalo Byrne, or to partner with local institutions on larger urban design projects, as Kenzo Tange or Aires Mateus & Associados have done.

Pujatti told *AN* that *Le bâtiment* was a big

break for his office. After studying at SCI-Arc, he spent time working for the Italian master of poetic structure Gino Valle, which is apparent in the way Pujatti's buildings reflect personal interests and preoccupations. It's what makes it very difficult to place the work in any geography/style/generation-based category. Instead, visual metaphors and seemingly incongruous material choices, such as the bladelike glass panels and chopped exposed brickwork that characterize the two ends of a florist's laboratory in the Piedmontese country town of Chieri (2008), predominate. Unlikely transpositions are another compelling device, a good example being the cantilevered stone "curtain" found at the Stoned House in San Quirino (2018).

The Jesolo project expands these themes to an urban scale. It gave Pujatti an opportunity to use form provocatively, hard to do in private residential projects, while also leaving the door open to spontaneity and chance in the design process. "We wanted something to happen, though we didn't plan that something in advance," Pujatti said. This can be seen on the southern facade, where the usual pairing of colored tile with white grout has been reversed. This solution, which is typical of bathroom interiors, reacts differently under varied light conditions, allowing the building to change moods by the hour.

Pujatti spoke about "seeking the potential for new expressions in between the meanders of ordinary use," which is a little like analyzing a dream or memory of a place. It requires one to construct a mental landscape from whatever disparate materials one has at hand. Perhaps this makes a useful frame for *Le bâtiment's* more curious moves, such as the sharp contrast between the slender structural columns

that gather at points on the ground and the boxy mass they hold aloft. Or the blue-green balconies that overlap on the north elevation and, in doing so, resemble a fishing net.

The intellectual category of "relational context" is apt to describe the construction or collaging of context through the positioning of design concepts toward material, but most of all immaterial, inputs arising from specific situations. This method can be applied in radically different contexts and geographies. To this point, part of Pujatti's practice is now based in Canada, where a project for the Weengushk Film Institute—designed in collaboration with KFA Architects and Planners—gains its pictorial force through its relationship to the surrounding forest. And a proposal for a Toronto house, called the *Maison Glacé*, would allow ice to jell on the facades, concretizing a perfect image of the regional landscape.

By the way, *Maison Glacé* (e) is French for "frosted house," but sounds a lot like "marron glacé" (sugar-frosted walnuts), a fine *confiserie* treat immediately evoking another mental landscape, of old-fashioned bourgeois European tearooms. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to run this interpretation by Pujatti. I suppose I'll leave it for the next installment of "context-critical architecture."

Giovanni Comoglio is an architect trained in Turin and Paris. He is a lecturer and teaching assistant at the Politecnico di Milano, and teaches History of Architecture at ISAD in Milan.

Top row: The many sides of *Le bâtiment descendant l'escalier* ("the building walking down the stairs")

Weathering a War

As war rages, Ukraine's collective memory is at risk.



ASHLEY BIGHAM

A week after Russian armed forces invaded Ukraine, residential areas had been reduced to rubble, a nuclear power plant had been targeted, and 1.5 million people had fled. Major financial and gas companies suspended their operations in Russia; economic sanctions tightened. The architecture industry did not stand by: In a display of solidarity, some of the largest design firms in the world have paused their Russian projects.

But while these actions are intended to isolate Russia economically and politically until the cost of invasion becomes too high to continue, they do little to alleviate the conditions on the ground. In 2019, Ashley Bigham and Erik Herrmann, founders of the Columbus, Ohio-based Outpost Office, were invited to lead a design seminar for the inaugural year of Ukraine's first independent school of architecture, the Kharkiv School of Architecture. They found students were eager to envision a post-Soviet Ukraine while staying true to the country's architectural past, both traditional and from more modern examples.

AN editor Jonathan Hilburg reached out to Bigham, who was a Fulbright Fellow in Ukraine in 2014, to determine the risk to historic structures and common urban fabric alike and how the Kharkiv School of Architecture has weathered the war thus far.

AN: Ukraine's cultural and historic sites are being bombed or are at risk right now. Are there any you would care to highlight that either have already been damaged or are in danger?

Ashley Bigham: At the beginning of this conversation, I want to state that the most important thing right now is that we focus on the survival and humanitarian needs of all people currently in Ukraine and those who have fled this war. The destruction of Ukrainian art and architecture is just one tragedy in a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis.

Last week security-camera footage of a missile strike on government offices in Kharkiv was widely circulated. This government office building is situated on Kharkiv's Freedom Square, also the site of the Derzhprom complex, one of the largest and most complete examples of constructivist architecture in the world. There are no reports at this time of damage to Derzhprom, but this is one of the many [buildings] I worry about. Take, for example, the

dazzling experimental market halls of Ukrainian architect Alla Anishchenko. Constructed in the 1960s and located in many Ukrainian cities, including Kharkiv, the capital Kyiv, Cherkasy, and Rivne, these halls use the repetition of simple geometries and expressive structural features to create dynamic, open interior spaces. Her designs are not only exemplary examples of modernist concrete structures, they are important pieces of city infrastructure still operating as food markets or grocery stores today.

During the first days of the invasion, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky recorded one of his daily video addresses in front of the House with Chimeras in the capital city of Kyiv. This unique art nouveau building from 1903, designed by the Ukrainian Polish architect Władysław Horodecki, is covered in sculptures of mythical creatures and large animals. [Standing in front of] its highly ornamented facade—truly one of a kind—was Zelensky's way of proving to the world that he remained in Ukraine despite false reports from Russia that he had fled the country.

It has been reported that the museum housing the paintings of Ukrainian folk artist Maria Prymachenko was burned. Prymachenko's work is a national treasure—bold and colorful compositions featuring themes and motifs from Ukrainian folklore. The anguish of this loss was assuaged this week by revelations that the paintings may have been saved by some museum staff, but this is just one example of the fragility of cultural artifacts in a war zone. As Russia continues to indiscriminately bomb civilian buildings in almost all Ukrainian cities, I have no doubt that we will see the loss of important cultural artifacts in the coming days.

There's a lot of attention being given to the bombing of the Babyn Yar memorial and of the older government buildings in Kharkiv, but apartment buildings are beginning to be targeted. The Brezhnev-era ones are not structures that are generally architecturally admired but do visually shape a lot of everyday life in the region, and the loss of these functional structures is devastating. Is there anything else we should keep an eye on?

In addition to the destruction of individual buildings and damage at symbolic sites like the Babyn Yar memorial, we are seeing the destruction of the urban fabric en masse. While it may be difficult to fully explain the architec-

tural significance of each individual building bombed in this war, we should not forget that the urban fabric itself is an important architectural artifact.

For example, there are several cities in Ukraine that are studied specifically for their urban plans. The city of Slavutych was the last Soviet "ideal city" designed to house the residents who fled the Chernobyl disaster. The city was designed as a collaboration between several nations each displaying unique architectural styles in distinct districts. The city planning of Slavutych also focused on being child-friendly and comfortable for residents, with ample green spaces, pedestrian pathways, and integrated social services. Another interesting example is the linear city designed to house the workers of the Kharkiv Tractor Factory. Linear cities reorganized the relationship between housing and industry as cities experienced great advances in technological production in the 1920s and '30s.

Most importantly, the urban fabric of a city should be important to the architectural community because it is significant to the people who live there. How do you assign value to your family apartment, your favorite cafe, your elementary school, or the maternity hospital where your children were born? We are witnessing the destruction of Ukraine's collective memory through the targeting of civilian buildings from Soviet-era housing blocks to local kindergartens. A friend recently shared the smoldering remains of a cafe in Kharkiv, reflecting on the many texts, conversations, and friendships that began in this little neighborhood shop.

How is the Kharkiv School of Architecture adjusting? More broadly, how are Ukraine's architecture students adjusting with the disruption to their education?

All aspects of normal life have ceased in Ukraine, including higher education. Ukrainians are focused on daily survival, remaining in contact with family members in different regions, and providing for their medical needs.

The students at the Kharkiv School were sent home several days before the invasion began to be with their families or relatives. The teachers and staff who remain in Kharkiv are living in basements or underground shelters as the city is under near-constant bombing. Those who were able to leave the city of Kharkiv are pouring all their energy into organizing and mobilizing humanitarian efforts: deliveries of food and medical supplies, housing internally

displaced people, organizing transportation for refugees to leave the country safely, and sharing reliable information about the current situation.

Do you have a sense of what design practitioners in Ukraine are thinking? I know this is a harrowing time both professionally, as it seems like all work has stopped, and from a personal perspective as both lives and livelihood are on the line.

One colleague from the Kharkiv School said they "dream of returning to rebuild Kharkiv," but for now, their focus is on their immediate safety. Every day of this war is bringing new challenges for citizens. There will be a time when architects will play a role in rebuilding Ukraine, but right now practitioners are doing what all Ukrainians are doing: volunteering to defend their cities, cooking food for displaced people, learning first-aid skills, sheltering children or the elderly—simply trying to survive.

Is there anything else you'd like to mention? What should people do if they want to help?

There is no place in Ukraine that is safe, yet millions of its citizens remain to defend their country. The world has watched the heroic efforts and resilience of the Ukrainian people in awe. However, we cannot let this admiration distract us from our own responsibilities as citizens in a globalized world. Ukraine desperately needs our help now and will continue to need support in the long term as they recover from this devastating war.

The Center for Urban History in Lviv, a trusted organization which works to preserve architectural history in Ukraine, has organized some information on how to support Ukraine [www.lvivcenter.org/en/updates/how-to-support-ukraine].

In addition to donating money, I have seen architects offer creative ideas for helping those affected by war: firms are offering paid internships for refugees, architecture schools [are] allowing transfer students from Ukraine, artists are auctioning NFTs to raise money, etc. I would encourage everyone to consider donating their unique skills to aid in this humanitarian crisis.

Ashley Bigham is codirector of Outpost Office and an assistant professor at the Knowlton School of Architecture at the Ohio State University.



ASHLEY BIGHAM

Top: State Circus building in the eastern city of Dnipro

Left: The Constructivist Derzhprom complex in Kharkiv

15 In Construction

Step Out

The Westly juts over its Upper West Side neighbors with a gravity-defying triple cantilever



COURTESY ODA

Architect: ODA
Structural engineer: WSP Group
Facade consultant: Thornton Tomasetti
Facade fabricator and limestone manufacturer: GGL Enterprises
General contractor: Urban Atelier Group
Glazing manufacturer: Guardian Glass

Real estate in New York City is a notoriously pricey commodity, and developers have long pushed buildings ever upward in a frantic bid to maximize their investments. But zoning laws place limits on those skyward thrusts, so in response, architects and engineers are compelled to find new solutions that boost floor-area ratios while achieving aesthetic dynamism. Few are as dynamic as the Westly, a gravity-defying new residential development on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

The approximately 140,000-square-foot project is the handiwork of local architecture firm ODA, which has completed numerous projects across the city that, in their massing, resemble Jenga constructs ensconced in glass, concrete, or stone. The Westly follows in this vein: The base of the tower rises from a 50-foot-wide lot at 251 West 91st Street and cantilevers thrice over its northerly neighbor.

The building broke ground in September 2019 and was expected to open its doors in late 2021. But social distancing requirements enacted in March 2020 threw a spanner in the works. After construction crews set the foundation, which includes rock anchors to stabilize the topsy-turvy structure, construction continued at a rate of approximately one floor per week, until workers hit the eighth floor, where the first cantilever juts 25 feet outward. The two successive cantilevers at the 11th and 14th floors protrude 40 and 55 feet, respectively.

Unlike with peer projects that rely on diagrid trusses, ODA, in collaboration with structural engineer WSP, opted for a concrete Vierendeel system. The decision ensured a rectilinear profile, which allows for nonobstructed and standardized window openings. However, the incorporation of those larger

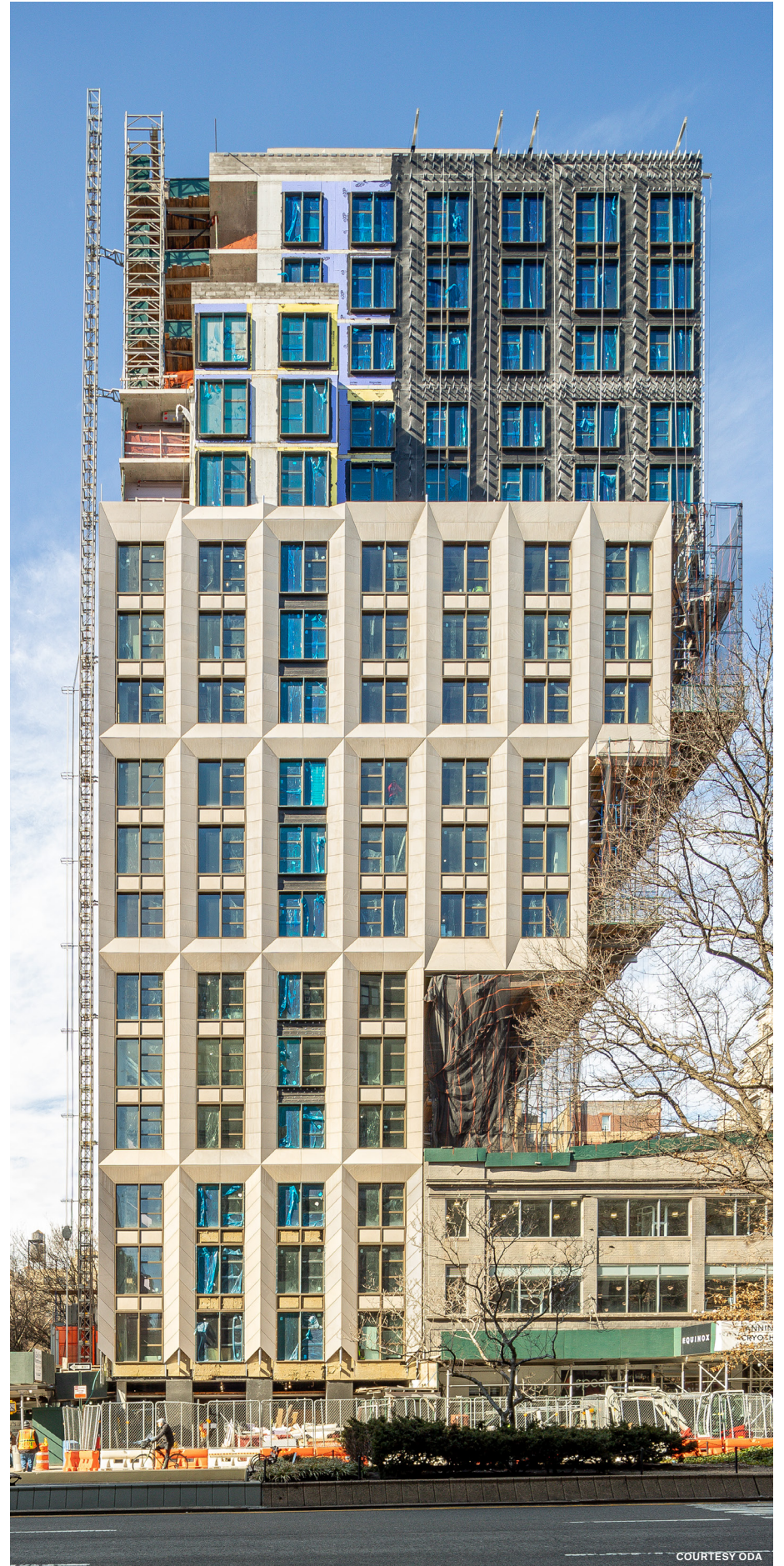
spans presented construction challenges that required special permitting.

Kris Levine, ODA's technical director, explained what this entailed: "When the first cantilever was erected, we had to obtain an After Hours Work Variance Permit from the NYC Department of Buildings in order to most efficiently and safely use the cranes needed to hoist the steel beams over the building and lay the foundation. During this time, the construction crew were permitted by the city to work for 61 hours straight."

Each cantilever was built atop a temporary steel platform that branched off from the tower's superstructure. The three cantilevered floor plates required between three and four weeks of construction apiece. "In order to secure the structure of the cantilevers, steel cross-bracings were put in place before the concrete of each floor was poured," continued Levine. "These diagonal beams served as temporary support, and once the concrete form was set and floating, they were torched out and the building was left with the concrete."

This being the Upper West Side, it was important to the design team to blend the new building into its historic context. To that end, the concrete structure was clad with a limestone-venered rainscreen suspended from a standard girt system. The panels extend over 1 foot from the superstructure to the property line in a chevronlike pattern at both spandrel and beam to evoke nearby masonry massing. The rainscreen is backed by 3 inches of wool mineral insulation and a 6-inch stud wall with closed cell spray foam insulation.

The Westly is expected to open later this spring. **Matthew Marani**



COURTESY ODA

Top Left: The rectilinear massing allows for non-obstructed, standardized window openings.

Above: Each of the cantilevered floor plates required between three and four weeks of construction.

16 Studio Visit

Can You Feel It?

MAD Architects channels West Coast vibes in its latest projects.

True to its name, the primarily Beijing-based firm MAD Architects approaches every opportunity with a certain level of audacity. Shortly after its founding by Ma Yansong in 2004, MAD made a splash with its daring design for the Absolute Towers residential complex near Toronto. (Locals call the slinky pair of towers “Marilyn Monroe.”) The trade press pounced on the project, which, in addition to raising Ma’s profile, helped break contemporary Chinese

architecture onto the global stage.

Since then, MAD’s footprint has grown exponentially, with a large body of work united by complex geometry and daredevil engineering. According to Ma, the goal of every project is to create an enveloping environment tuned to a particular emotional frequency. Many times the impulse is literalized in designs that resemble landforms, with stepped or slaloming circulatory routes and seamless exterior skins. Atmosphere

is prized above subtlety; the reference point—say, a glacier or boulder—is impossible to miss.

With trademark intrepidity, MAD opened its first international office in Los Angeles before securing any projects in the region. Ma himself was drawn to the city’s apparent embrace of all architectural styles, as well as its varied natural scenery. And like Frank Gehry—the L.A. architect par excellence—Ma explores form through spirited hand sketches, which he then gives to

his staff for digital translation. By all indications, he operates by vibes. “People try to rationalize my process, and I always go back to emotion,” he told *AN*. “Whenever someone visits one of our buildings, they’ll know how its environment felt when it was designed.”

Wherever in the world MAD makes its mark, its projects make sure to blend in by standing out. **Shane Reiner-Roth**

1



1 Gardenhouse

MAD's first project in Los Angeles—a mixed-use development on a tony stretch of Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills—was inspired by a driving tour Ma took of the San Gabriel Mountains. He was struck by the juxtaposition of ecologies, where homes set amid a forest command expansive views of the city, and endeavored to achieve the same balance in the urban center. Accordingly, each of Gardenhouse's 18 condos looks onto a richly planted central courtyard and the city outside. "The residents can participate in this shared community one moment," said Ma, "and feel a sense of reflective privacy the next."

2 Lucas Museum

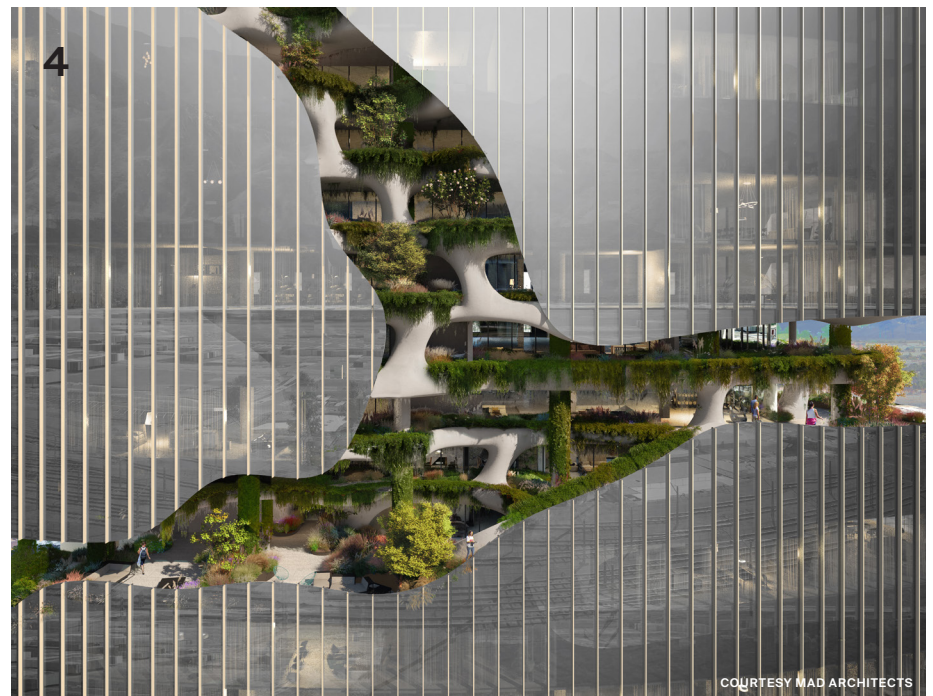
Originally slated for Chicago, the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art broke ground in Los Angeles's Exposition Park in 2018. The 290,000-square-foot building was designed as a new gateway to the park, which also is home to the Los Angeles Coliseum and the Natural History Museum. Set within an 11-acre landscape by local firm Studio-MLA, the spell-binding form can't easily be placed within the *Star Wars* galaxy (creator George Lucas is the institution's primary benefactor), though this is perhaps for the best. Had MAD indulged its usual tendencies, the city might have ended up with a Sandcrawler. The museum is projected to open in 2023.

3 The Star

When MAD was invited to design a 22-story office tower in the middle of a low-rise portion of downtown Hollywood, Ma knew he wanted to break with convention. "While there's a globally vivid imagination of Hollywood as a dream factory, the majority of the buildings there are actually quite banal and utilitarian," he said. The glimmering \$500 million tower, suitably named The Star, will feature a domed rooftop restaurant and garden inspired by the outdoor design of the nearby Hollywood Bowl. A glass exterior elevator is likely to become a destination in its own right.

4 One River North

The firm recently broke ground on a 16-story mixed-use tower in Denver's trendy River North Arts District. A multistory crevasse runs down the front of the project to create a biophilic ribbon containing gardens and outdoor amenities and culminating in a rooftop terrace with a pool. Apparently, the steep mountain landscapes surrounding Denver inspired the unconventional parti. The project is set to open in late 2023.





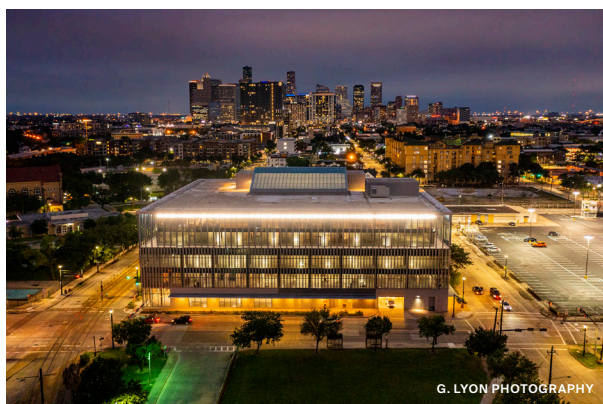
G. LYON PHOTOGRAPHY

Catalysis, Cooking, & Used Books

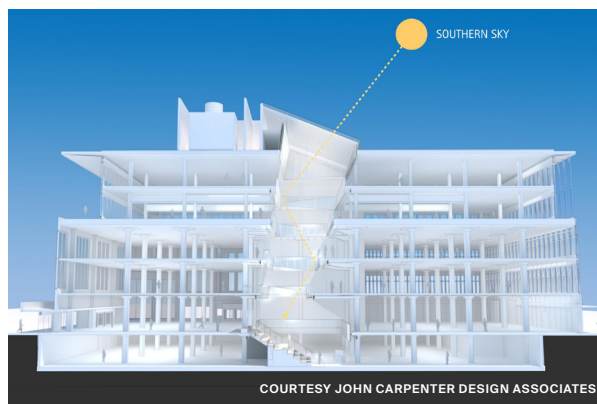
In this month's anthology, critics review a startup incubator, a workforce training center, and the renovation of a Breuer-designed library: SHoP Architects' Ion in Houston; The Kitchens at Reynolds in Richmond, Virginia, by Chris McVoy; and Cooper Cary's refresh of the Atlanta Central Library.



SHANNON O'HARA PHOTOGRAPHY



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COURTESY JOHN CARPENTER DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Facing page: Portions of the former Sears' facade were kept while large openings were cut into the plaster to admit daylight.

Above: A landscaped plaza featuring heritage live oaks and ample seating creates a welcoming entrance.

Far left: The Ion is situated roughly halfway between downtown and the Texas Medical Center, Houston's two largest employment centers.

Left: Section showing the atrium cut into the center of the building and the daylighting scheme

Plus and Minus

The Ion in Houston upgrades an art deco Sears into a tech-incubating cyborg

The Ion

Design architect: SHoP
Architect of record: Gensler
Location: Houston

General contractor: Gilbane
Structural engineer: Walter P. Moore
Facade consultant: James Carpenter Design Associates
Landscaping architect: James Corner Field Operations

Exterior curtain-wall glass: Viracon

The blocks surrounding Houston's old Main Street Sears have seen better days. When the department store opened in 1939, this section of the Fourth Ward, which is just south of downtown, was a quiet suburban neighborhood. Commercial storefronts lined the thoroughfares, and quaint bungalows nestled along the tree-lined streets. It may as well have been Mayberry, to hear some old-timers tell it.

Things took a turn for the worse in the 1960s, during the construction of the I-45 and U.S. 59 freeways. Thousands of homes, businesses, and churches were seized by eminent domain and demolished—particularly in the neighboring Third Ward, which was and is predominantly African American—while tens of thousands of people fled the area to new developments dispersed along the high-speed ribbons of concrete. The community was shattered. What businesses remained found themselves starved of customers. Many shuttered permanently. Others limped along, a shadow of their former selves. Economic depression set

in. Crime shot up. In a particularly vivid sign of the times, Sears sheathed its once-proud art deco facade in a corrugated metal slipcover and filled in its shop windows with bricks.

What's remarkable is that the Main Street store continued to operate in this condition until 2018, when the ailing retailer filed for bankruptcy and pulled out. By that time, the neighborhood itself was reduced to trash-strewn vacant lots and derelict buildings where people experiencing homelessness and drug addiction squatted and wandered through the roaring sound of the rushing freeway traffic like lost souls in search of the community that once thrived there.

It was a truly depressing situation. So completely depressing, in fact, considering the barbarism and racism that underpin the urban design moves that created these circumstances, that you almost have to approve of what is happening there now. Almost.

Even before its shuttering, Rice Management Company, which shepherds Rice

University's \$8.1 billion endowment, acquired the remainder of the ground lease on the old Sears and assembled some 12 other more or less contiguous plots. The purpose of this investment was the planning of an "innovation district" to incubate tech start-ups. Houston, it must be noted, was the largest city in America not to make Amazon's 20-city short list of potential sites for its second headquarters. Places like Indianapolis and Columbus, Ohio—even Dallas!—beat out the Bayou City. This gave way to some soul-searching among Houston's elites, who, Amazon or no, were already trepidatious about the future of the oil and gas industry. What the city needed, they decided, was a centralized hub where investors could meet ambitious young makers working in the areas of energy transition, medicine, and aerospace—a nurturing environment where the future of Houston's economy could take root and grow.

The Main Street Sears was the perfect spot. For one, the department store's large,



Above: The Forum stair provides access to the lower level, which houses the incubation space.

Top right: The added fourth and fifth floors are framed with structural steel and provide striking views of downtown.

Right: Classrooms and break-out spaces characterize the incubation space.



G. LYON PHOTOGRAPHY



G. LYON PHOTOGRAPHY

58,000-square-foot floor plates—a rarity in Houston—were ideal for creative office space. It's also located on the light rail line halfway between the city's two largest employment centers: downtown and the Texas Medical Center. What's more, the surrounding land was up for grabs and not yet overrun by the gentrification marching south through Midtown. Rice rechristened the old Sears "The Ion" and hired SHoP Architects, along with Gensler, John Carpenter Design Associates, and James Corner Field Operations, to transform the aging structure into the anchor space of a new city center dedicated to evolving the local economy.

This is The Ion District. An ion is an atom or molecule with a net electrical charge, which can be positive or negative. Ions are used as catalysts in chemical reactions, which is why Rice chose this name, though the bipolar nature of these particles says more than what was intended.

Houston's legacy of historic preservation is lackluster. For that reason, the client and the design team must be commended for seeing the value in restoring the art deco facade. But only the north and half of the east and west facades had any fabric worth saving. The rest of the building was always more service-oriented, and the whole thing was almost entirely windowless. To compete as creative office space, daylight was needed on the interior.

So the choice was made to glaze most of the building, including the two upper floors that were added to make the real estate equation work, and large windows were cut into the restored envelope. The resulting composition looks sort of like a giant, abstracted rendition of RoboCop's mug—the back and upper regions encased in high-tech metallic blue glass shaded by perforated metal fins, the lower front showing what remains of the human within.

RoboCop, as awkward as he was, had a lot of charisma. (Incidentally, *RoboCop 2* was shot in Houston, while the first film was made in Dallas—both cities filling in for a future Detroit imagined as even more dystopian than the present one.) The same is true of The Ion. The landscaped plaza that fronts the building features two heritage live oaks whose broad boughs shade plentiful seating, which, during my visit, was being amply used by people on their lunch breaks. Additional plantings were selected to attract charismatic insects, like the ladybug that flew into my partner's fingers as we stood there. The preserved face of the building at street level is home to hospitality spaces, including restaurants, a cafe, and a soon-to-come "taproom." They make this tech incubator also a destination for regular Houstonians looking for a bite or a drink.

Inside, the existing concrete structure is left exposed, as are the department store's

worn terrazzo floors. These patinated surfaces, as humdrum as they may be in the grand scheme of things, exude an aura that can't be re-created in new construction. An atrium cut into the middle of the floor plates admits a controlled but consistent amount of daylight, which pours down from a skylight tilted to the south and outfitted with fixed louvers. This light, which has a silvery quality to it, is refracted throughout the space by perforated aluminum panels that ring the atrium, reaching all the way down to The Ion's lower level (they don't use the "b" word, I was told), which can be accessed by a "forum" stairway. The lower level is where start-up entrepreneurs begin, engaging in workshops and refining their pitches. On the first level, in addition to the hospitality spaces, are an investors' suite and a large makerspace outfitted with 3D printers and the like. The second level hosts a co-working office. On the third are smaller leased spaces for companies that have moved past the initial incubation phase. The fourth and fifth levels are reserved for large tenants. Throughout the stack, the floor area around the atrium is meant to remain publicly accessible, the goal being to create a lively buzz up and down The Ion's core.

Though only 52 percent leased during my visit, The Ion was indeed lively with what I took to be young entrepreneurs cooking up

schemes for the future. Microsoft and Chevron had moved into the building, the first large corporations to stake their claim to the innovations that will presumably be fusing here as in a particle collider. The district that will grow around this catalyst building will, I guess, offer the sort of mixed-use urbanism that attracts enough talent/money density to precipitate a reaction and ignite a new economy, one that is hopefully a lot greener than Houston's oil and gas addiction. But what other reactions will The Ion catalyze? Is this just the walkable-urbanism version of the freeway in terms of the displacement it may cause in the Third Ward? And what of those lost souls who now wander in its shadow, prevented from even cutting through the parking lot by a high chain-link fence? Will they reap the benefits of the innovations taking place here or be blown away like so many dead leaves before the lawn man's blower? **Aaron Seward**



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IWAN BAAN

Lift off

A new multipurpose center brings ambitious architecture to an underserved Richmond community.

The Kitchens at Reynolds

Design architect: O'Neill McVoy Architects
Architect of record: Quinn Evans
Location: Richmond, VA

General contractor: Hourigan
Structural engineering: Silman
Civil and landscape engineering: Timmons
MEPF: Valley Engineering

Richmond, Virginia, has always been a cultured town, but for years it lacked a purpose-built base for contemporary art. And then, in 2018, one appeared on the corner of West Broad Street in the Fan District. The building, designed by Steven Holl Architects (SHA) for Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), marshaled frosted glass and sky-blue zinc into a willful composition of lozenges, bars, and

torqued planes. Holl described this collision of forms in the verbal tracery we've come to expect from him. Evidently, the converging volumes epitomized Bergsonian ideas about time, with partial recourse to Einsteinian (or at least non-Euclidian) geometry. Of course.

A more obvious referent was the traffic junction out front, where two of the city's major thoroughfares, West Broad and North Belvidere Street, bisect. They lend the walkable terrain around the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) at VCU an undeniable, if environmentally noxious, charge. For a form-inclined architect, it's an enticement.

Across town in the East End, another object building in suspiciously Hollian guise—the Kitchens at Reynolds—has appeared on the scene. Evidence of a connection abounds, starting with the layout of the 50,000-square-foot development. Two wings, linked by daylight corridors with slidable doors, cradle a courtyard further bounded by a working greenhouse. The splayed plan is in part a response

to a node in the local traffic network, a seemingly minor interchange (from the ground, at any rate) invested with a significance more conducive to the purposes of icon making.

These are hallmark signs of Holl's practice. There are more. Mischievously, the unspooled building presents a different face at every turn. Square windows appear to be haphazardly punched into structural concrete walls, tinged red and textured to resemble residential brick courses. This sturdy base slackens in places, as at the webbed corners of the court or the supplely formed benches that peel off from the facade. Plate glass optimistically inches down toward the sidewalk pavement. Up above, divergences in the massing signal a material change from concrete to glazing or copper sheeting. A penthouse volume slides off its pedestal to cantilever over the main entrance.

But the Kitchens at Reynolds is not a Steven Holl building. It was, in fact, designed by Holl's faithful aide-de-camp Chris McVoy

with collaborator Beth O'Neill. McVoy was integral to the ICA's realization, as he was to the build-out of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City and so many others. As an SHA partner, he has presided over triumphs and middling points. In the past decade, he began branching out on his own. He and O'Neill, a seasoned architect who also teaches at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, linked up in 2012, with the latter taking the reins. McVoy chipped in during his off-hours.

But the Richmond project, and a commission from the Bronx Children's Museum, shifted the balance for him. "Until recently, I was 100 percent with Steven, 30 percent working with Beth. I was working nonstop," McVoy told *AN*. "That changed in the last year—I'm now 30 percent with Steven and 100 percent with Beth."

Holl was approached by the philanthropist couple Steve and Kathie Markel, major donors to the ICA, about the East End job. He passed, but recommended O'Neill McVoy Architects. The brief came later, after



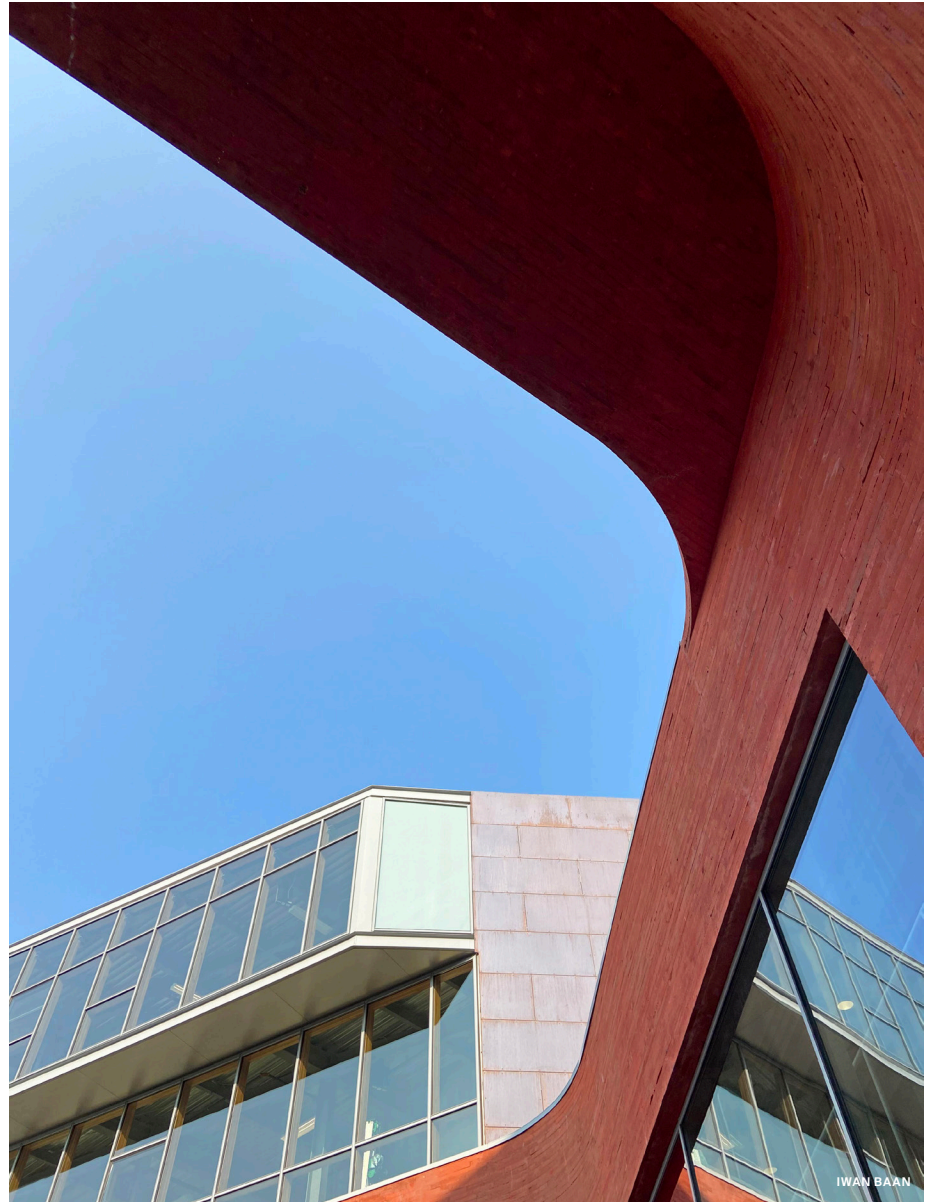
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Facing page: The Kitchens at Reynolds comprises two wings.

Top left: The building is located at a traffic circle in Church Hill North.

Middle left: Sliding glass walls expand the space of the courtyard.

Bottom left: One of the four on-site teaching kitchens.

Top right: The stacked glass volumes were designed for fine-dining restaurants.

extensive community engagement revealed more than a few priorities.

The predominantly Black neighborhood of Church Hill North is, in benign sociological terms, “underserved.” It lacks the everyday infrastructure (for instance, access to fresh food) that seamlessly accrues to wealthier hubs. North 25th Street is jarring proof of this. Up by the Reynolds interchange, the street conforms to the vision of desolate downtowns forever waiting to be “revitalized.” Cruise southward, in the direction of the historically preserved Church Hill neighborhood, and the street undergoes a transformation. There are more trees and less hardscape. The air is cooler, less saturated with desperation. All the well-reviewed restaurants and corner-store throwbacks are abuzz with chatter.

The city is slowly alleviating some of Church Hill’s ailments. In late 2020, the first phase of the Armstrong Renaissance project opened, unlocking a fraction of the expected 256 affordable units that will eventually be made available. Incentives are in place to encourage more housing construction. Corporations and philanthropists like the Markels have also become active in the area. Next door to the Kitchens at Reynolds, the pair launched a new health food store to address the neighborhood’s dietary troubles.

Among the conclusions unearthed by the

community outreach process—McVoy likened it to a “neighborhood charrette”—was the need for localized economic stimulus. The Markels approached prospective tenants to anchor a large development, in particular the culinary program at Reynolds Community College. It was soon discovered that nearly a third of enrolled students already lived in Church Hill, and receiving favorable terms, the college committed to the site.

Reynolds occupies approximately half of the building area. But for the demonstration theater and a few classrooms on level 2, the core culinary functions are all located at grade. Four teaching kitchens are positioned around the courtyard, which, thanks to those sliding glass doors, is likely to become a venue for private parties. The transparent vegetable shed along Nine Mile Road is meant to attract interest. A small cafe and the shallow, measured steps that lead to it indicate a natural entry point to the campus.

The double-height glazed boxes on levels 3 and 4 of the west wing are graded for restaurants, though the spaces have yet to be leased. The east wing, meanwhile, offers 12 affordable apartments. A fairly unimpressive number, but O’Neill and McVoy hope for more. Indeed, they’ve already drawn up plans for an additional two wings. “We’re architects,” said O’Neill, “so after being asked to design one

building, we of course came back with a site master plan.”

Without imposing itself on the neighborhood, the Kitchens at Reynolds has somewhat more mass than its architects’ conceptualizing admits. Though development in the surrounding area is picking up, much of it is low-rise, the result being that the Reynolds campus is unlikely to be challenged for bulk or height anytime soon. It makes a statement about what its architects call “urban form,” only to indicate the limits of that descriptor. As a discipline, urban design has outgrown the Lynchian categorical repertoire of paths, edges, nodes, etc. The notion that landmarks aren’t simply the by-products of rehearsed interactions and synced-up sightlines is by now tacitly accepted by designers. That they are no substitutes for reparative economic investment is just the rote truth.

At the same time, the Church Hill project is anticipatory, which is another way of saying hopeful. It’s obvious that O’Neill and McVoy have thought long and hard about the consequences of their work. Lecturing about the building, they like to show a slide of simple prompts that guided their efforts. These self-inquiries are wide-ranging. “How to transform this important crossroads site as catalyst for a positive future,” reads an early prompt under the heading “Past/Future.”

Another listed under “Program” asks: “How to infuse all spaces with natural light?”

That they mostly accomplished their high-order directives could be cynically chalked up to stage-managing. But the physical evidence doesn’t lie: O’Neill and McVoy have delivered a building of considerable substance that manages to do a lot in a far more challenging context than the VCU gallery. Will it be a *catalyst*? Here architectural terminology does us a disservice. We may speak of “wings” while neglecting the limits of uplift.

Samuel Medina



JONATHAN HILLYER PHOTOGRAPHY

Out of Frame

An interior remodel of Marcel Breuer's Atlanta Central Library demonstrates the fault lines—and even absurdities—of preservation causes.

Atlanta Central Library

Design architect: Cooper Carry
Associate architect: Vines Architecture
Design/build architect: Moody Nolan
Location: Atlanta

General contractor: Winter Johnson Group
Structural engineer: Sykes
MEP engineer: Newcomb & Boyd
Civil engineer: Long Engineering

The renovation of Atlanta's central library is easy to miss. With minor changes made to the facade, the Marcel Breuer-designed building appears much as it did in 1980, the year it opened. Its stark concrete volumes invoke the authority of a modernist master as the last word in any critical evaluation.

At first, such a critique was fixated on the demolition of a much-admired Beaux-Arts library to make way for the brutalist design. In recent years, however, preservationists have invoked a similar framing to protect Breuer's own building from such a fate, rallying against a possible plan to replace the city's main library branch with a new facility. During a half-decade of advocacy that began with an urgent save-the-Breuer petition and culminated in a public debate over modifications to the building's envelope—regarding whether to recognize patrons' requests for natural lighting—the preservationists lobbied on behalf of the architect's original "monumental" vision. Credited with both saving the library and ensuring the

integrity of its facade, this campaign has come to define how we understand the building—and evaluate Cooper Carry's recent intervention.

On the surface, the completed renovation seems to vindicate this narrative. After all, the building still stands, and the exterior alterations amount to just three banks of new glazing, deftly incorporated into the rhythm of the precast concrete panels they replaced. But look past the once-impenetrable facade, and the library begins to tell a different story. Compared with the former home of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York or with the erstwhile Pirelli Tire Building in New Haven, Connecticut, the Atlanta project is neither a meticulous restoration nor a redevelopment of a Breuer building that can profitably trade on the cachet of modernist nostalgia. The renovation doesn't hew to any historical sensibility at all, much less bear out the abstract value of design suggested by the Docomomo mode of appraisal. Instead, the contributions of Cooper Carry (supported by

Moody Nolan and Vines Architecture) attend to the more mundane demands of the library's economic, institutional, and urban circumstances, a set of considerations integral to the redesign but all too easily obscured by the critical frame of conservation.

Setting aside Breuer's place in the modernist canon, the renovation stands on its own as a capable reuse project, overwhelmingly concerned with immediate rather than historical stakes. It is a modest, yet welcoming city library with a few especially nice spaces that benefit from the new fenestration. Low shelving, colorful pods, ubiquitous charging stations, and other familiar tropes of recent library design absorb activity into a common background. The building's soft opening during the pandemic underlined this quality, with a number of areas cordoned off, waiting to assume their role as part of a heavily programmed plan.

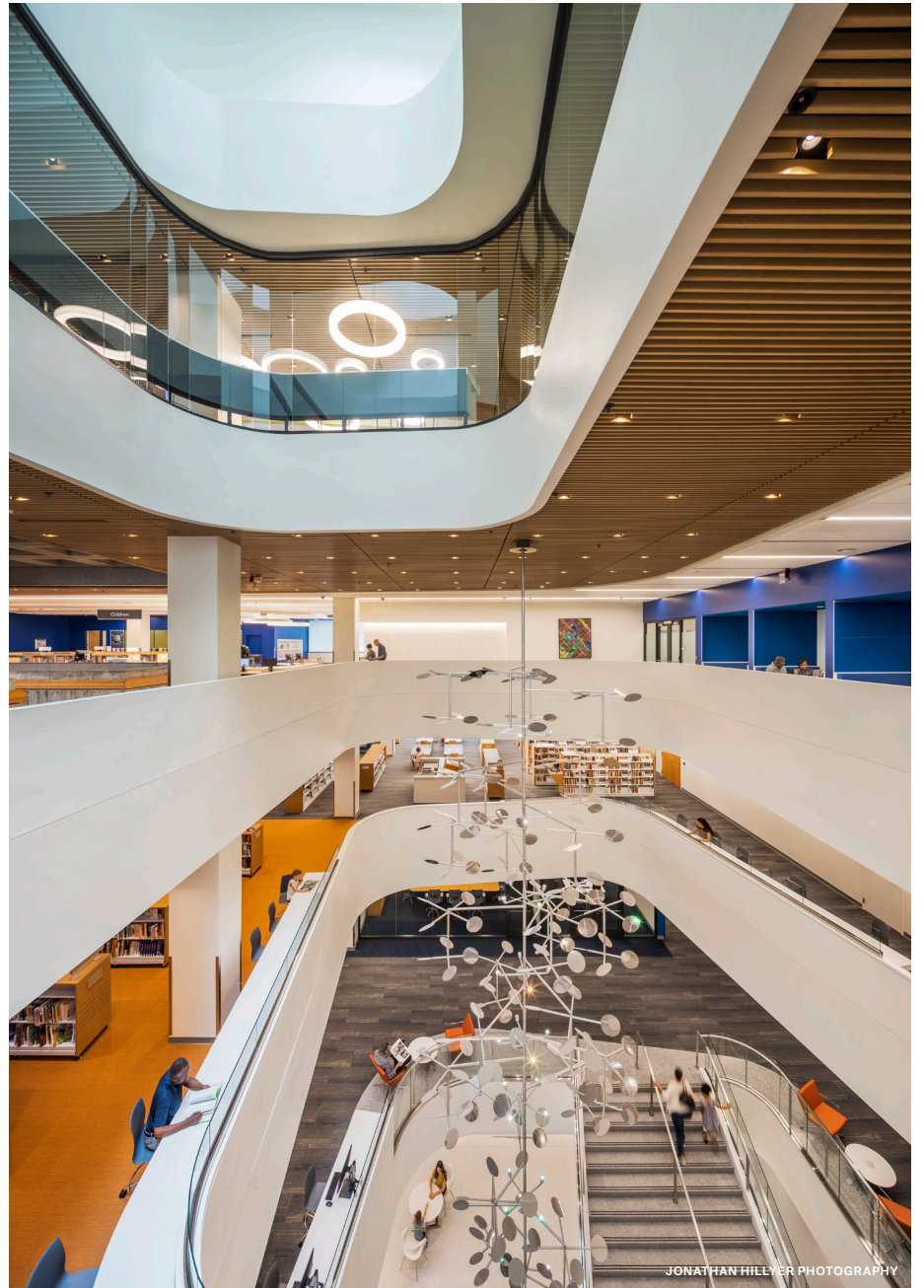
The two big "moves" of the redesign likewise signal a more animated but precisely



JONATHAN HILLYER PHOTOGRAPHY



JONATHAN HILLYER PHOTOGRAPHY



JONATHAN HILLYER PHOTOGRAPHY

Facing page: The new fenestration is in keeping with the original facade design.

Above left: The original skylights were retained.

Left: A retractable garage door offers access to the rooftop terrace.

Above: The interiors were substantially remodeled, owing to changes in the building's program.

calibrated future: a seating stairway beneath a new skylit atrium and a retractable garage wall that opens onto the roof terrace. These areas are ancillary to the main library functions, drawing their purpose instead from opportunities afforded by an existing book-sorting shaft and an underused administrative space.

So while the design does not exalt Breuer's architecture, in many such moments, the work of the renovation team takes its cues directly from the original structure. Sensitive to the limits of a public project's budget, the architects tightly interfaced old and new elements to make the most of the existing conditions. They were helped in this effort by the flexibility built into Breuer's plan, with its minimal internal partitions and provisions for the expansion onto unfinished seventh and eighth floor spaces. This not only made the project financially tenable—a determinant factor in the building's continued existence, given the scale of the bond measure and the failure of the advocacy campaign to secure

any legally protected status—but also meant that the requirements of a new program could be readily incorporated.

And indeed, the brief presented in 2018 brought important changes: library holdings were to be greatly reduced, and nearly half of the floor space was to be closed off from the general public, including the celebrated roof terrace (which, in any case, had been functionally inaccessible for years). The library's board of trustees, the stakeholder responsible for these changes, outlined this program in answer to ongoing digitization and the demands of new service elements like tech facilities and classrooms. To offset expenses, however, their plan also involved commercializing significant parts of the building as leasable space.

None of these decisions, however, found their way into the preservationists' critique. Long after it became clear that the building would not be replaced, a symbolic focus on historical continuity kept the facade as the central matter of discussion. Ultimately,

this focus overshadowed the real, material changes being made inside the library, ones far more consequential to its future. The concerned architect-advocates who took the floor in community meetings looked past the diminished program and calculations of rentable square footage, instead explaining why natural light in a library was actually undesirable. As alienating as this might be to a skeptical public—which appreciated the distinctive building but didn't necessarily see its modification as a betrayal—the position also represents a lost opportunity for architects to envision a legacy for modernism from outside the shadow of authorship. Beyond such a narrow notion of "saving the Breuer," the question of whether the facade changes were justified quickly falls away, while more pressing issues such as a library's responsibility to the public become available for debate.

Given the sudden demolition of Breuer's 1945 Geller House in January, and for many more practical, carbon-related reasons, it is

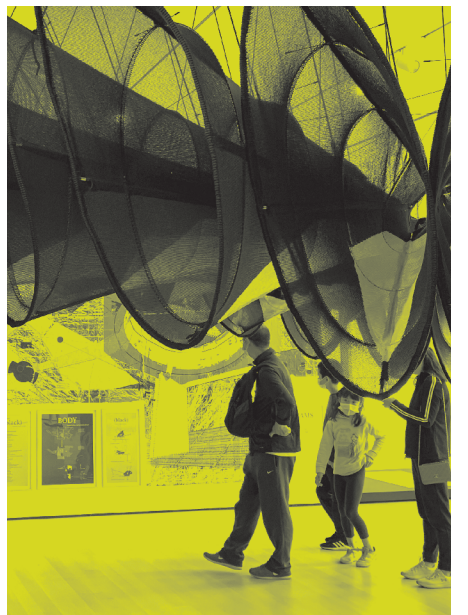
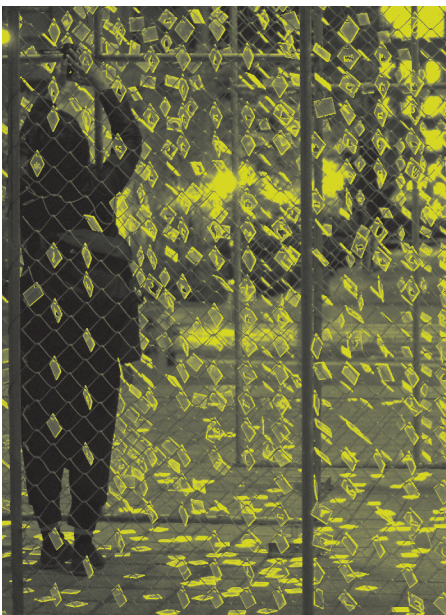
unquestionably good that the Atlanta Central Library was spared the wrecking ball. And it is also great that downtown Atlanta, for the first time in decades, has returned a pride of place to its public library. Nevertheless, we might do better to reevaluate its main frame of reference. The renovation is instructive because it reveals all that is at stake yet inaccessible to a preservation-based approach to architectural advocacy. A different strategy might have shed more light on the decision-making that informed so many of the project's architectural outcomes and possibly even suggested alternatives.

Shota Vashakmadze is an architect and historian currently pursuing a PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles. He hails from Atlanta.

THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS COMPETITION FOR YOUNG I

EMERGING

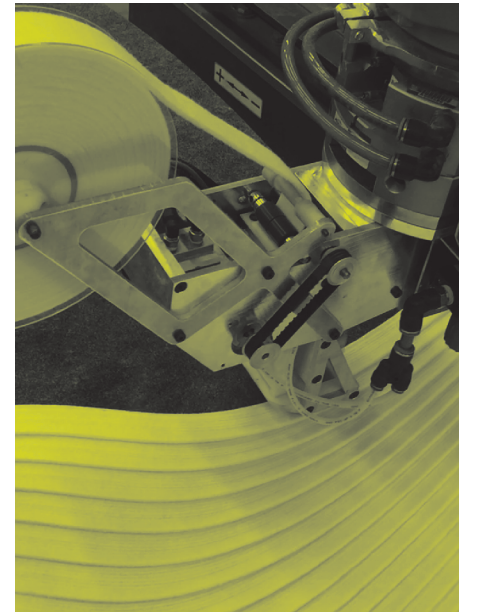
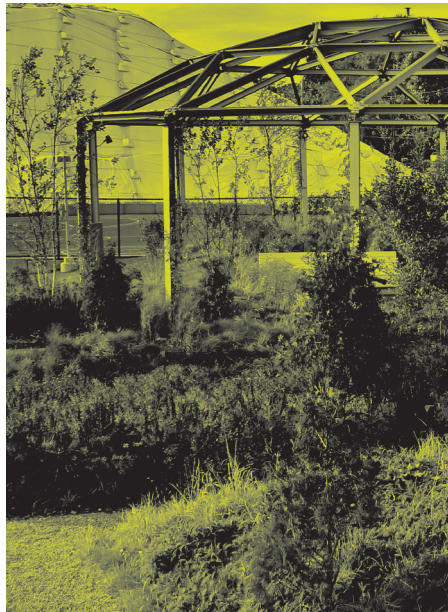
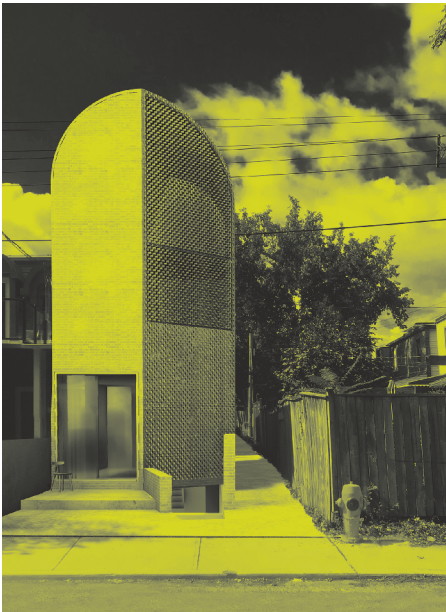
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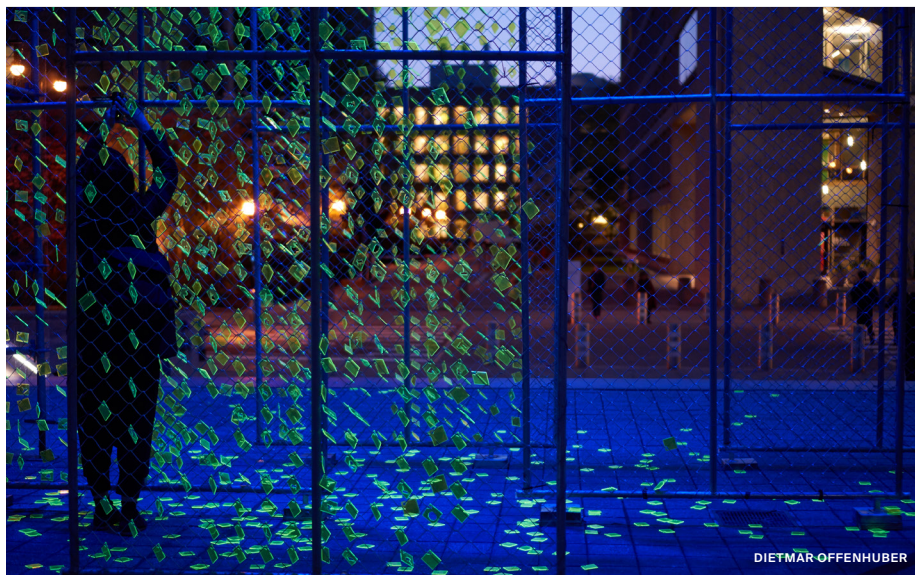
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2022



AZRA AKŠAMIJA

BORDERLESS STUDIO



Top: The Future Heritage Lab's *Memory Matrix* installation in Cambridge, Massachusetts
Above: Akšamija's *Silk Road Works* installation at the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale

Top: A 2017 installation highlighted the opportunity for green infrastructure Bronzeville, Chicago.
Above: A 2020 visioning project temporarily activated the underside of an elevated railway.

Since founding the Future Heritage Lab at MIT in 2016, Azra Akšamija has worked with countless refugees, empowering the displaced through art, design, and architecture. A refugee herself, Akšamija fled her native Bosnia in the 1990s and settled in Austria, where she went on to study architecture at the Graz University of Technology. She continued her education in the United States, earning a master of architecture from Princeton and a PhD from MIT, where she is now a tenured professor.

As the director of the Art, Culture, and Technology program, Akšamija contributes to the evolving discourse of socially engaged art and design by rethinking the complex relationship between creators and institutions. She uses her scholarly background in art, architecture, and history (with a specialization in Islamic societies) to investigate the ways social life is affected not just by cultural bias but also by conflict. As she told *AN*, her research revolves around the question "Where does one insert the preservation of heritage during a time of crisis?"

A provisional answer can be found in the activities of the Future Heritage Lab, which develops design methodologies to

uncover, unpack, and ease the unfathomable impacts of forced displacement. The group's work with inhabitants of Jordan's Azraq refugee camp yielded a series of low-tech designs applicable to everyday scenarios, including a vertical garden in a context where ground plantings are forbidden and a baby swing made from recycled school desks. Akšamija likens these humble, yet necessary interventions to a form of "trans-cultural technology" that challenges conventional humanitarian design.

The collaboration is among numerous ones documented in Akšamija's new book, *Design to Live: Everyday Inventions from a Refugee Camp* (The MIT Press). Written in Arabic and English, the book includes testimonies and contributions from residents of refugee camps, humanitarian workers, and researchers, as well as illustrations created by a group of MIT students who used photos of refugee inventions to reverse-engineer architectural drawings. "We are contributing what we can from the perspective of our skills as designers," Akšamija said. **Sophie Aliece Hollis**

For BORDERLESS Studio, a name doubles as a mission mandate. "Can we think across disciplines? Can we think through territories? No one belongs to a single identity anymore," said founder Paola Aguirre Serrano. "We don't have to choose one thing; we can collaborate, we can exchange."

That ethos has shone through BORDERLESS's work from its formal inception in Chicago in 2016, with a focus on research and social equity. Architect Dennis Milam joined in 2019, broadening the practice's operations to include physical spaces and large-scale installations.

"I was still working at SOM when Paola started [BORDERLESS]," said Milam, "always kind of understanding that I'd join at some point. Well, 2019 became that starting point, and I came in to develop the architectural practice."

A concentric diagram of the firm's methodology explains it all; ringed around "design values and practice" are "justice," "agency," "creativity," and "resilience." "Who doesn't have access to design?" reads a prompt above "justice." The question "How can design create more joyful experiences for everyone?" sits alongside "creativity."

BORDERLESS has completed projects across Chicago that turn underutilized parking lots (like Chicago Extra-Large in 2017), play courts (2021's Basketball (Art) Court), and underpasses (the California Avenue Streetscape Vision, 2020) into vibrant, engaging spaces. The 2021 Chicago Architecture Biennial, *The Available City*, proved an ideal venue to promote and build on earlier research, specifically the ongoing Creative Grounds project, which draws attention to the almost 50 schools across the city's South and West Sides to be shuttered in recent years. In the parking lot of an erstwhile school in the Bronzeville neighborhood, Serrano and Milam erected a colorful woven canopy that acted as a pop-up showcase for community initiatives. The 10-by-10-foot frame-and-canopy structure is intended to be easily replicable in similar sites across the city.

Add an interior retail project on Chicago's South Side to the mix, and the firm's built footprint is only growing. With a greater focus on Texan projects on the horizon (the studio has another office in San Antonio) and a move toward the architectural, BORDERLESS lives up to its name more and more every day. **Jonathan Hilburg**

ESTUDIO MMX



Top: A pavilion for the Jojutla Central Gardens, opened in 2019, features interlocking brick arches. **Above:** Angular geometries characterize the design of a new museum in Progreso, Mexico.

Estudio MMX was founded in Mexico City in 2010 (hence the name) by Jorge Arvizu, Ignacio del Rio, Emmanuel Ramirez, and Diego Ricalde. The four partners met while working for Alberto Kalach, and while they all went on from that office to do different things, they stayed in touch and finally decided to band together to form a collaborative practice. “When we got together, we always realized that four minds are better than one, so we like to work that way,” Arvizu told *AN*. “It’s not easy, because everybody is different.”

At the outset, most of the firm’s work was private houses and gardens, but it always harbored a desire to design public spaces and buildings. The opportunity came after the Puebla earthquake of 2017, which damaged and toppled thousands of buildings across Central Mexico, killing scores of people. Estudio MMX was commissioned to design a new civic center for the town of Jojutla, which was particularly hard hit by the tremor. The resulting project, the Jojutla Central Garden (2019), is a series of open landscaped spaces defined by arcades of crossing brick arches that borrow from the local vernacular while giving this inspiration a twist.

The project caught the eyes of the international design press and opened the way for a series of other public projects for the office, each of which seems to hinge on a particular disaster, whether natural or artificial. Mothers’ Monument Plaza in Tequila and the Aqua Verde Sports and Community Center (both 2020), for example, were both part of the effort to bolster community life and public space in the wake of Hurricane Willa, which devastated the states of Sinaloa and Nayarit in 2018. Hurricane Grace struck during the completion of The Regional Museum of Progreso (2021), which is notable in that 75 percent of its footprint is shaded, open-air public space. The Tamulé Civic Square in Tabasco and the Tepozan Arts School in Canalejas, meanwhile, provide other options for children, who are too often drawn into Mexico’s powerful organized crime gangs.

These projects show the potential of architecture to make a positive difference in a troubled world. In the words of Ricalde, “We have always focused on not necessarily architecture, but how architecture can change something else.” **Aaron Seward**

FELECIA DAVIS



Davis plans to reinstall *Flower Antenna*, her contribution to MoMA’s 2021 *Reconstructions* exhibition, at Penn State University, where she teaches.

As an architect and materials researcher, Felecia Davis readily identifies each camp’s quirks. “Architects love predictability. They want to know how a material is going to behave,” she said. “But researchers love unpredictability. We like playing with a material and seeing how it misbehaves.”

For years, she has channeled this “tension” into interactive art installations such as *Flower Antenna*, a knitted sculpture that modulated its environment via electromagnetic waves. Flamboyant yet also understated, the piece was one of several to be staged in the Museum of Modern Art’s 2021 exhibition *Reconstructions: Architecture and Blackness in America*. The New York museum was the largest venue Davis’s work has been given to date, unless one counts Manhattan itself: Her first project, *Walking Tours: Urban Riffs* (2004), catalogued the ghostly traces of historical African-American sites across the island-city. Anticipating augmented reality technologies, Davis combined wearable devices (“a camera strapped to your neck”) with early web design to create a hybrid installation that was staged, after a fashion, at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

“People keep thinking there was this big technological switch in my work past some point,” Davis said. “But I don’t think there is one.”

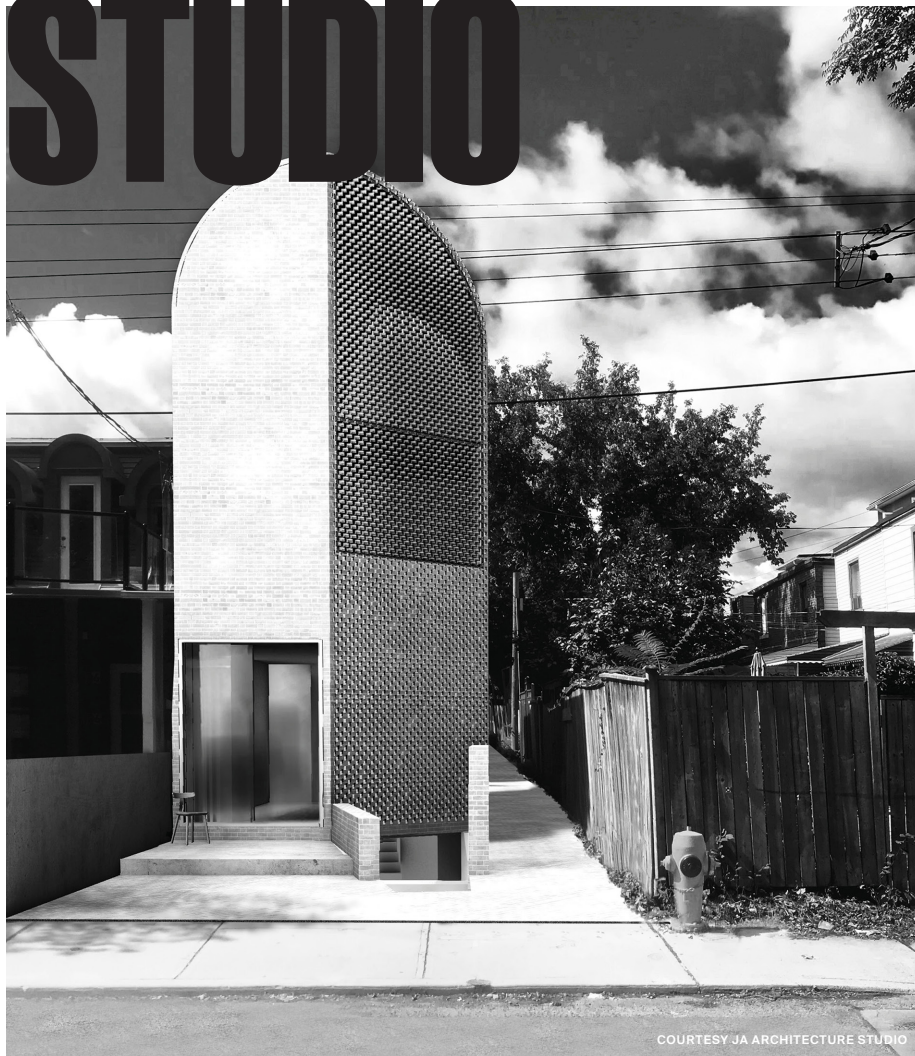
An engineer by training, Davis went on to practice architecture professionally. It was the 1990s, and the discipline was

only beginning to reexamine its conceptual apparatus; “hard architecture” gave way to “soft architecture,” elevating systems and processes to objects of design inquiry. This shift pushed Davis toward research, and in 2017, she completed a PhD in the Design and Computation program at MIT. Her work on smart fabrics—textiles, felts, quilts—became the basis of SOFTLAB, the research hub Davis directs at Penn State’s School of Architecture. Open to students of all experience levels, ranging from first-year undergraduates to late-stage PhDs, SOFTLAB explores the potential, as well as the discomfort, of what she calls “materialized digital media.”

By Davis’s own admission, her penchant for softness never had much to do with architectural discourse. She reaches for a biological metaphor: “It allows for fluidity, which I like because materials change constantly, as do we. Our bodies are these machines that want us to believe that everything is stable when it isn’t. But it’s not a conspiracy.”

That’s how some might describe the newfangled “machines” that overlie our everyday reality, Davis said. “Facial recognition systems are now part of architecture. These things are making our thresholds. They constitute what transparency and opacity mean and what they mean for different people, particularly Black and brown people. These are no longer exclusively material questions.” **Samuel Medina**

JA ARCHITECTURE STUDIO



COURTESY JA ARCHITECTURE STUDIO

Ja's design for a linear home on Markham Street in Toronto garnered the firm a Canadian Architects Award in 2020.

Behnaz Assadi and Nima Javidi, cofounders of the Toronto-based Ja Architecture Studio, like to talk about relationships: parts-to-whole, front-and-back, public-and-private. Perhaps the impulse to relate sets of pairs comes naturally to married architects. Or perhaps it's simply a useful frame for Ja's work, in which idiosyncrasies are imbued with significance and inflections become central points of interest.

Originally from Iran, Assadi and Javidi have fostered deep ties to their adoptive city, especially the West Queen West neighborhood, where they established Ja in 2010. Many, if not all, of their active projects are within walking distance of the office. "Part of the reason we made it that way," said Assadi, "is that we are familiar with the people here, with the aesthetics here. We just know what works."

Aside from Queen Street, a commercial corridor that forms the spine of the neighborhood, West Queen West is residential in character. Single-family homes—some of them Victorian, following the Toronto tradition, many more of them not—are neatly arrayed along avenues. They back onto minor streets and alleys called "laneways," which have become a sort of testing ground for Assadi and Javidi. When the municipal government passed a bylaw allowing for the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in 2019, Ja had already completed several studies that sought to "reverse an

essentially 'frontal' typology by activating the back," said Javidi.

The idea, Assadi added, has the potential to alter cultural norms around domestic architecture. "A backyard is key to the identity of a single-family house. With an ADU, the backyard becomes a courtyard, a kind of shared amenity. It changes the definition of single-family houses, in a good way."

Still, Assadi and Javidi, who teach design at the University of Toronto and New York's Cooper Union, respectively, aren't disrupters. Their designs for houses and small mix-used developments aim to engage and gently persuade. Cannily embedded within the grain of West Queen West, the projects are entirely of a piece. The same construction techniques—a hybrid of conventional wood-frame, concrete, and steel construction—and compositional elements—periscope volumes, eccentric staircases—recur but never grow stale.

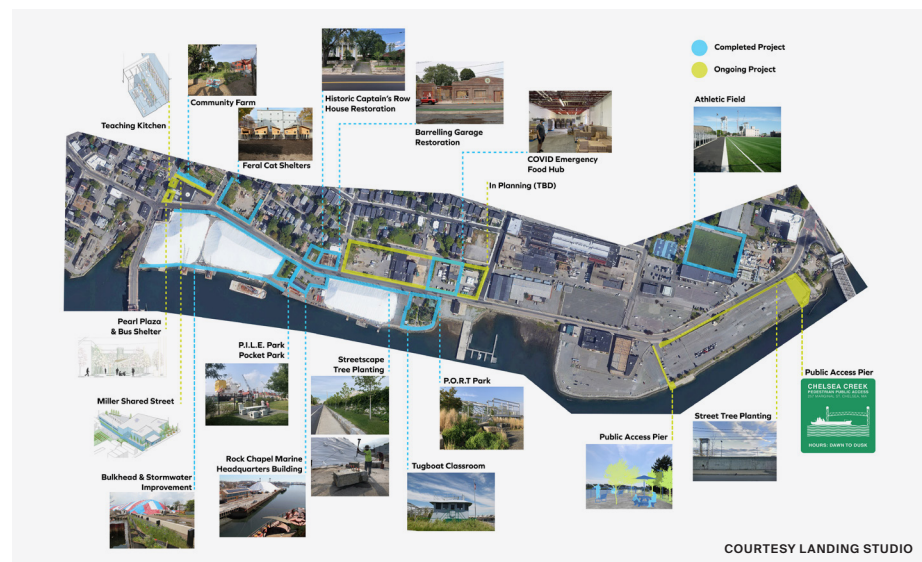
For all their fondness for relational thinking, Assadi and Javidi endorse autonomy of a kind. "In our practice, there is always a geometric desire that is autonomous from more practical demands," said Javidi. "Sometimes it operates in plan, sometimes it operates in section, sometimes it operates in iconography. But ideally it does all these things at once."

Samuel Medina

LANDING STUDIO



COURTESY LANDING STUDIO



COURTESY LANDING STUDIO

Top: PORT Park in Chelsea, Massachusetts, adjoins a seasonal salt terminal.

Above: A master plan for the area incorporates affordable housing, urban agriculture, and more.

Some of this country's most vital spaces—port facilities, highway underpasses, public works depots—are criminally overlooked by the design professions. But not by Somerville, Massachusetts-based architecture and urban design practice Landing Studio.

"What our work is really premised on is sort of 'fixing' infrastructural spaces," explained Dan Adams, who founded Landing Studio alongside partner in practice and life Marie Law Adams in 2005.

A Boston native who came of age in the era of the Big Dig, Dan, who also serves as director of the School of Architecture at Northeastern University, describes the work of Landing Studio as being decidedly less "aggressive" than the city's \$22 billion megaproject that rerouted an elevated stretch of the Central Artery into a greenway-topped tunnel. "Our work is nimbler than that and also premised on the notion that the infrastructure is still used and still valuable but just needs to be made more human and sustainable."

The PORT (Publicly Organized Recreation Territory) at Rock Chapel Marine in Chelsea, a small and dense city on Boston Harbor, illustrates Landing Studio's agile but powerful approach, in which industry and community coexist: What was once a 13-million-gallon oil tank farm is now a seasonal road salt terminal that gives way to a waterfront recreational hub complete with sports courts and public event space during

the water months—that is, when road salt is less in hot demand and local spots for quick pickup games and neighborly alfresco gatherings are more.

Among the most high-profile sites Landing Studio has engaged is the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Charlesgate, where a vital piece of connective tissue for Boston's three major historic park systems was forever altered by the construction of an overpass in the 1960s. Landing Studio has proposed mending the site through the creation of restorative natural landscapes and public open space. "A lot of our ongoing work is trying to improve spaces under highway viaducts and reconnect communities that have been separated or ecosystems that have been fragmented because of highway development," said Marie, who also lectures at MIT on urban design.

While Landing Studio has taken on projects outside the Boston area, the practice is generally focused on forging long-term relationships with communities in its own backyard.

"We struggle with it a little bit," said Marie of taking on projects in locales that are farther afield. "We're just not getting as rich of results, because we just can't be in the place long enough to do the kind of design advocacy work that we're able to do more locally." **Matt Hickman**

SEKOU COOKE STUDIO



NATHAN KEAY



COURTESY SEKOU COOKE STUDIO

Top: *Grids + Griots* was installed at the 2021 Chicago Architecture Biennial.
Above: The in-progress Syracuse Hip-Hop Headquarters, or SHHQ

Sekou Cooke is best known as a curator and theorist of Hip-Hop Architecture, which he first encountered as a student at Cornell in the mid-1990s. In the years before Cooke enrolled, Nate Williams, a DJ and architecture student, had already been turning the lecture hall into a party space. In 2014, while pursuing his master's degree at Harvard, Cooke published a seminal essay called "The Fifth Pillar: A Case for Hip-Hop Architecture" in *The Harvard Journal of African American Planning Policy*.

"In that essay I was really just trying to make a singular case for positioning architecture within the realm of all the hip-hop elements and saying that it can be a viable product of hip-hop culture," Cooke told *AN*. "It really was supposed to be a one-off thing, like, 'OK, I'm doing this. I've got the ideas out of my head. It's out. Now I can move on with my life.'"

The world, however, had other plans for Cooke. *ArchDaily* picked up the essay, it garnered a lot of national attention, and soon Cooke was hearing from others who had been writing about the topic. Those correspondences led to a 2015 symposium at Syracuse University, where Cooke was

teaching. Next came *Close to the Edge: The Birth of Hip-Hop Architecture*, an exhibition that premiered at the AIANY Center for Architecture in 2018, and, most recently, a book titled *Hip-Hop Architecture* (Monograph, 2021).

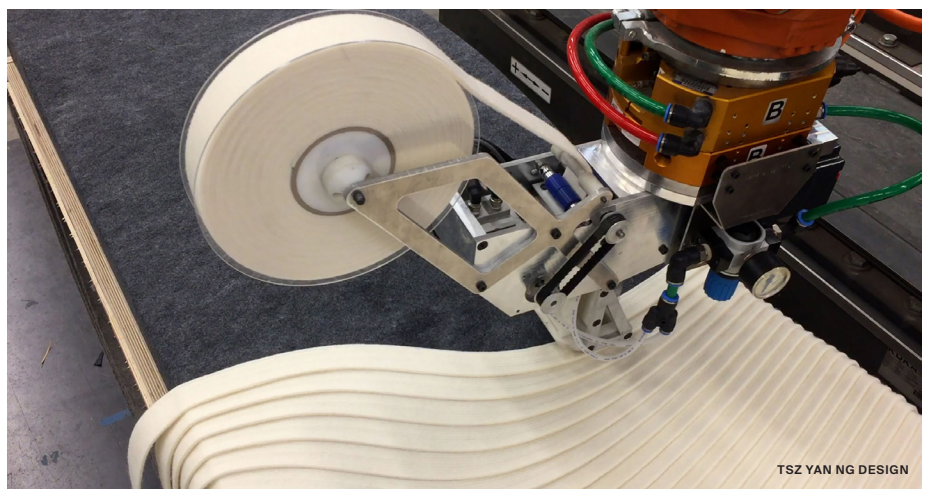
Today, the Jamaican-born Cooke is the director of the urban design program at UNC Charlotte and continues to run his eponymous studio, which he founded in 2008. His notable built work includes the Eat to Live Food Co-op (2013) in Syracuse and *Grids + Griots*, a community space made from a chopped up shipping container that was originally commissioned for the 2021 Chicago Architecture Biennial. Moving forward, Cooke said he hopes to continue working for progressive, well-funded nonprofits and move his projects through construction, which he sees as the ultimate test bed for architecture.

"I'm not a hip-hop architect. I'm not even a Black architect. I'm an architect and primarily I want to identify as an architect," Cooke said. "To me that means someone who is capable of developing really complex ideas and getting them built and tested in the real world." **Aaron Seward**

TSZ YAN NG DESIGN



KENDALL MCCAUGHERTY/HALL & MERRICK PHOTOGRAPHERS



TSZ YAN NG DESIGN

Top: The SPatial-LAMinated Timber (SLT) Pavilion at last year's Chicago Architecture Biennial
Above: The Robotic Needle Felting project explored additive techniques for nonwoven textiles.

Tsz Yan Ng is a Michigan-based designer, professor, researcher, and artist whose work seeks to challenge modern fabrication and manufacturing practices. "We haven't changed the way we build in so long," Ng told *AN*. "We need to think of it more productively—not just economically—and as a collection of different voices. Architecture is a global ecosystem of people, where the sum is greater than the parts."

Raised by parents in the garment business, Ng is well acquainted with the manufacturing industry and its shortcomings. She teaches a class at the University of Michigan on "Sartorial Architecture," which examines architectural and clothing manufacturing alongside these industries' global economic, social, political, and environmental impacts. The course challenges students to wrestle with the complexities—and inefficiencies—of making, say, a simple T-shirt and imagine alternative production systems. Ng is careful to foreground labor politics and how modern technologies might be used to alleviate unfavorable conditions for laborers.

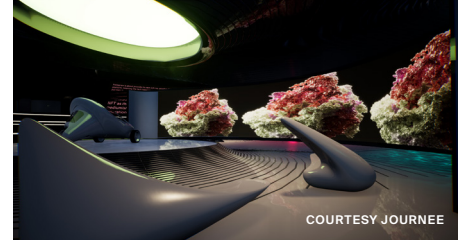
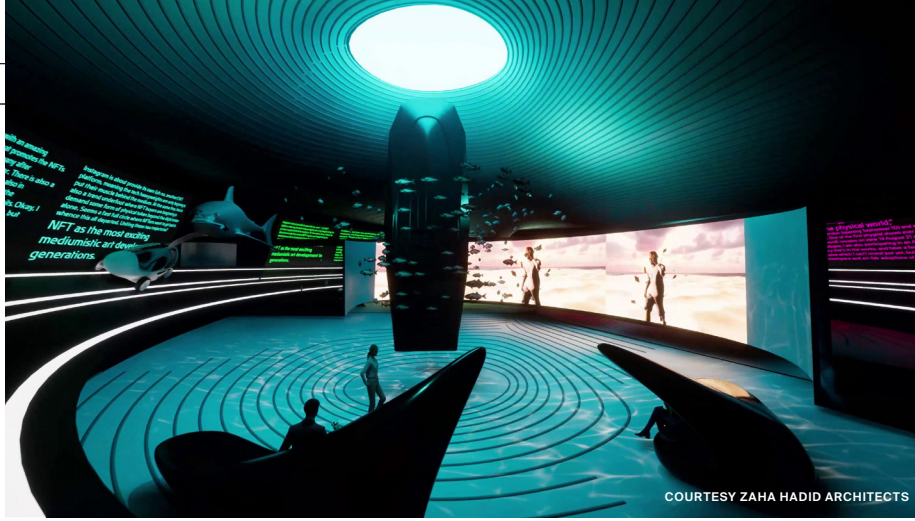
She further examines the textile industry in her independent practice, in which her keen interest in concrete also comes into play. For 15 years, Ng has conducted extensive scientific and applied research

on textile manipulation for use in creating and forming concrete. These two passions coalesced in the design of a garment factory in Shantou, China, for New York-based fashion brand Lafayette 148. The form of the building was driven entirely by the organizational structure of garment production; and innovations in post-tensioning concrete aided in providing well-lit and ventilated workspaces. A concrete brise-soleil, curved to resemble a woven textile, opened the interiors to light and air.

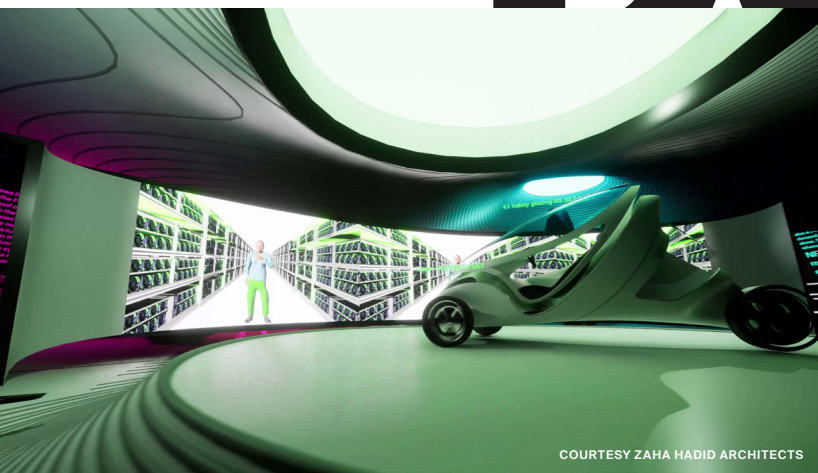
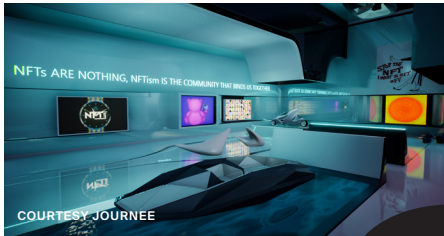
More recently, Ng partnered with a team from SOM on the design and fabrication of a shelter for use at the Chicago Architecture Biennial. The simple structure featured a canopy composed of "spatially laminated" timber, which Ng dubbed SLT (not to be confused with stress-laminated timber).

Throughout her career, Ng has situated her work within the R&D space of building science, which she hopes will see more investment in the coming years. These explorations pull in professionals from many disciplines—robotics, material science, engineering, history—furthering Ng's belief that collaboration across many fields is the key to pushing all industry toward a safer, cleaner, and more equitable future.

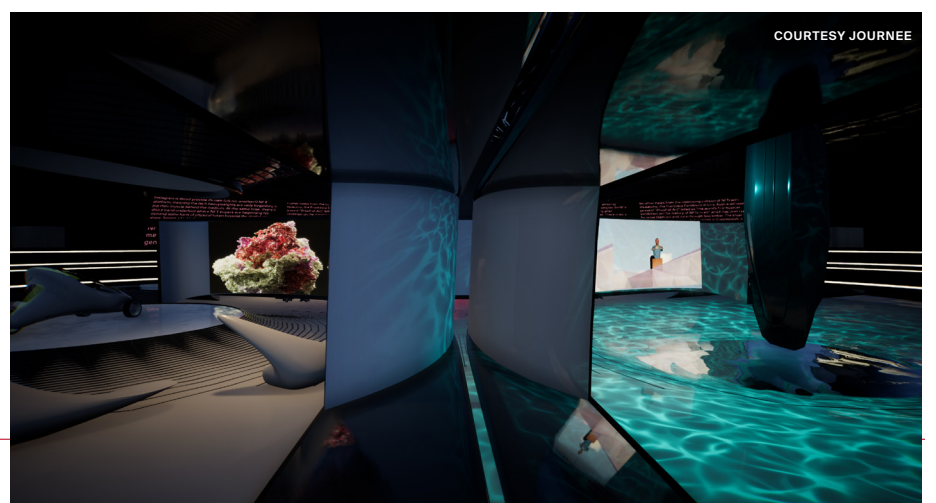
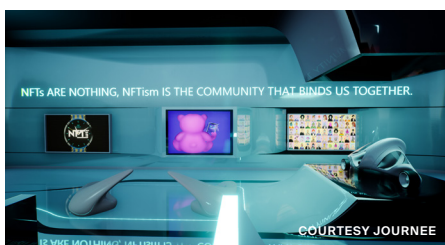
Sophie Aliece Hollis



THROUGH THE SILVER DOOR



Metaverses and NFTs are made of digital architecture, but what do they have to do with real architecture?





Difficult as it is to choose, I do have a favorite episode of *Frasier*. Season 10, episode 11, titled “Door Jam,” revolves around La Porte d’Argent, a new Seattle day spa frequented by high-profile socialites that Frasier and Niles are dying to get into. They eventually scheme their way into the club and have the most pleasing experience of their lives—until they find out about an even more elite level of membership locked behind a golden door. So off they go again plotting to unlock further access, spending gobs of money along the way. During a post-treatment scene in a room dubbed the “relaxation grotto,” the Crane boys eye a platinum door at the very back of the spa. By now out of patience, they simply barge in—only to emerge in a grimy alleyway, locked out of the establishment, naked and covered in various powders, wraps, and sliced fruit. In her infinite wisdom, *Frasier*’s producer Roz Doyle sums up the episode’s arc: “The only reason why you want to go there is because you can’t.”

For me, “Door Jam” is a fitting allegory for the emergence of metaverses and NFTs, which seem prone to the same sorts of status and exclusivity-based upselling, as well as the fraud and emptiness that lie beneath the surface or, rather, just outside the door. And yet, even within architecture, views on the subject are mixed. Everyone I speak to is either hell-bent on telling me that virtual worlds are the future of space-making as we know it or the most dishonest manifestation of manufactured scarcity to date. A sweeping judgment of metaverse space seems impossible.

A metaverse is any interactive online space that allows for open participation and shared stewardship. An NFT (non-fungible token) is a blockchain-secured digital asset existing in the metaverse; it can take the form of an artwork, currency, or just a cool hat that your online avatar can wear wherever “you” go. While it remains unclear what its exact parameters are, the

metaverse isn’t a “new” invention per se. Backed by a relentless marketing campaign, it rebrands older, existing platforms such as *Second Life*, a free and open-source metaverse that has been around since 2003. It would even be wrong to speak of the metaverse in the singular. In the past year, bolstered by the hubbub surrounding Facebook’s switch to Meta, a legion of metaverses have arisen to serve an audience geared toward expansion, capitalization, and the nonstop intrusion of big tech into the social lives of human beings.

Each self-designated metaverse contains a “spawn space” where every individual avatar entering that environment always starts. These spaces are clearly important areas of architectural inquiry, as they offer valuable insight into the underlying value systems that constitute them. They may or may not be designed by an architect (Zaha Hadid Architects recently designed a gallery for NFTs), but they are nonetheless “built” by open participatory communities. Their architectures, like everything else in the game environment, are designed to elicit the favor of or advance the aims of these communities. And so, in the spirit of inquiry, I decided to take the challenge head(set)-on. I bought a Quest 2 virtual reality system, hopped onto Twitch, and set off into today’s most popular metaverses. Here’s what I found.

Meta-Core

The spawn space for Meta’s Horizon Worlds (Facebook’s metaverse) looks like northern Arizona, complete with steep mesa walls surrounding an outstretched valley lined with palm trees and cacti. My perch is situated halfway up one of these mesa cliffs, in

typical Frank Lloyd Wright fashion. Yet the surrounding structure is vaulted and curvy, more akin to the desert oasis Arcosanti, which Wright protégé Paolo Soleri conceived “as a deliberate critique of the rampant culture of consumerism.” But to my horror, the space seems to have been outfitted by the likes of Crate & Barrel: dome lights, throw pillows, tweed couches, yoga carpets, a gas fireplace, and otherwise extraneous “stuff” of contemporary life—exactly the opposite of DIY desert modernist ideal. Nothing about the interiors elicit joy in me, nor does any of it fit my vibe. This is all fine by Meta, which allows users to purchase, download, and upgrade their home environments to their liking. Hooray.



Opposite page and top: Scenes from the virtual art valley that Zaha Hadid Architects developed for the 2021 edition of Art Basel Miami.

Above: Depicted is the standard home environment for Meta’s Horizon Worlds, i.e., Facebook’s metaverse. While the palm trees are a bit of a stretch, it is an oddly realistic vision of the Coconino Nation-

al Forest. The sensual lighting effects reinforce the conceit of an idealized Earth.



COURTESY RYAN SCAVNICKY

Cursed in the Afterlife

My visit to Horizon Worlds started off picturesque and wholesome: I dropped into a fun little shooting game and met a friendly someone who sounded like a child. After the game concluded, we were sent to yet another “lobby,” which is an actual space where avatars can socialize between matches. My friend giggled when I said I liked the low-poly trees—since for them the chunky conifer shape seemed obvious and unimportant. As we waited, my friend showed me how to complete routine tasks in the game, such as checking the leaderboard or tossing around a football.

But as soon as I stepped away to explore other areas and met some adults, everything became completely cursed. I was immediately catcalled. I reluctantly went to The Afterlife Club, a space oozing with lazy sci-fi tropes like illuminated hexagons and glowing node lights. I dashed toward the female-presenting robot bartenders, hoping for a glowing orange libation that looked like something from *The Jetsons*. A voice behind me offered to buy me a drink. I turned around to see four or five male-presenting avatars with masculine voices and was instantly bombarded with transphobic slurs. You see, I am a guy with long hair, and so is my Horizon Worlds avatar, but I'm shocked that that's enough for some folks to judge me in the metaverse. I spent the next few minutes feeling powerless while watching this pack of ignorant bros harass any female avatar who came through the door. Last time I saw a seedy pack of men treat others like this, I was at a real-life club in Vienna and my raucous disapproval of their behavior landed me a night in the ER. This time, shock had frozen me in a way that filled me with embarrassment for not saying more—what were they going to do, kick my ass? This whole space must suck for marginalized people. Harassment of this kind is a well-documented issue within the metaverse and is at the same time extremely concerning and sadly predictable.

Less than ten minutes into the experience my adrenaline was pumping and I started feeling nauseated. I hit the metaverse ski slopes, thinking some fresh air might lift my spirits. As I rode the chairlift up a cartoonish hill with pop-up-book-like dimensions, I saw someone tumble off in front of me. I watched them intently, concerned for their incorporeal safety. Against all odds they found a high point in the slope and readied themselves to climb back onto the lift, their eyes focused on the empty spot next to me. As my chair neared, I tried to help them up, but the mechanics of the game were poor and unfamiliar to me. I accidentally took their poles from them and one by one threw them off the lift while shoving the person to the ground. How's that for a pick-me-up? Feeling glum and fully sick to my stomach, I peeled off my goggles, had a big swig of (actual) beer, and ate a double ginger tummy drop. “What have I done?” I said out loud to myself, swirling in emotion.

Punk's Graveyard

After recovering my sea legs and a shred of emotional confidence, I made my way to another metaverse called Decentraland, the “first fully decentralized world” of its kind. It is not owned by a corporation, but rather by its users: a group of similarly interested individuals who operate a decentralized autonomous organization (DAO)—basically a blockchain-based company. I began by hitting the Random button on the avatar generator, which spawned me as an unfortunate creature whose sock-and-trouser geometry collision wasn't quite worked out, resulting in an unnerving glitch texture near my shins. It felt like wearing a shirt that needed ironing. Nevertheless, I and a handful of similarly costumed visitors found ourselves on a hilltop overrun with clouds in all directions, safely perched on a small patch of ground fenced in by three billboards resting aloft goofy Ionic columns. The billboards, which differed in height, advertised current events happening on the ground down below. In the center, a circular pool of water poured in on itself, similar to the aesthetic swirl of Anish Kapoor's 2014 installation *Descension* except highly triangulated. A cheeky diving board dropped users directly into the center of the vortex—a strange choice, seeing as we did not expect to make a splash as much as get sucked in.

This could be a contemporary acropolis. We could have instant access to unlimited information instead of stone-faced structural columns. One needs only a browser and an internet connection instead of

executing an arduous climb to the top of a hill. Yet rather than seeking wisdom, culture, or philosophy, here in Decentraland the quest is for coin and clout. This was reinforced by what I saw after jumping into the watery vortex: another piece of civic infrastructure designed after a bar (this one simply called Genesis Plaza Bar) filled with gaudy decorations of “line go up” meme culture—HODL, Musk, Doge, etc. Unlike the off-putting Afterlife Club, with its obnoxious slack-jawed chuds, this locale was empty and soulless.

I exited the communal space and made my way into the rest of the game world, which comprises multiple properties upon which any landowner can build whatever they want. And, yes, I mean landowner. You see, private property is taken to an extreme in this purportedly “free” space, which to me felt like walking through Europe in the Dark Ages: Accessing these fiefs requires specific types of NFT currency. Everyone is using a different currency and competing for your attention, trying to make ever more desirable experiences to sell to you, or simply to become the next viral meme. Even though property rights are already enforced through strict and impassable computer code, the presence of cop cars circling the map was a telling sight. How does one square calls for decentralization with the rampant valorization of existing power structures? How can something claim to be countercultural if it presents us with a laughably conventional, or just downright dreadful, version of the current world? Not exactly punk, is it?



COURTESY DECENTRALAND

Top left: An image of the author as he navigates a ski lift in Horizon Worlds.

Top, right: Works on display at the Museum of Other Realities

Above: The landing space of the Decentraland metaverse features abundant references to the Athenian acropolis. Voting even takes place on a website called the Agora.

Art in the Age of the Metaverse

To close out my journey, I paid a visit to the Museum of Other Realities (MOR), a Vancouver-based virtual reality start-up designed with the help of VR artist Samuel Arsenault-Brassard. It was a welcome change of pace from the gamified social life I had just endured. While MOR doesn't constitute the full ownership model of other metaverse spaces, it isn't designed to take over your social life. It is a simple virtual reality art showcase—and it got me excited for the potential of 3D space in VR.

The forms of the structure were careening all around me. The artwork—made by artists with years of experience in the medium—was beautiful and vibrant. The scalar shifts filled me with joy, and the ability to edit my avatar by drinking different potions (à la *Alice in Wonderland*) put a monster smile on my face. This is what virtual space, art, and interaction could feel like if it weren't designed to monetize every single interaction. Even in the metaverse, an art museum has real civic purpose, while the risks and spatial implications explored are a healthy balance of experimental spatial games with familiar spatial navigation. There are no exit signs, fire pulls, or even overhead light fixtures to get in the way of seeing this artwork. Even in the metaverse, what constitutes art is the same as it ever was: something called a museum and a wall label.

What are the right questions to ask as design professionals tackle future metaverse spaces? What is, and how do we define, a world? Of all the metaverses I visited, only MOR showed any hints of an answer. But generally, I suggest we remain skeptical of the next hyped NFT just waiting to be unlocked. Let's be more like Frasier, who at the conclusion of “Door Jam” inveighs against the human compulsion for more. “Why,” he asks his brother, “must we allow the thought of something that to this point could only be incrementally better ruin what is here and now?” (To which Niles quips, with foolish yearning, “I don't know. Let's figure it out on the other side.”) At almost every step in the metaverse someone is trying to take advantage of our desire to be included. What lies beyond the next Porte d'Argent could be the next big thing, but it is way more likely to be hot garbage.

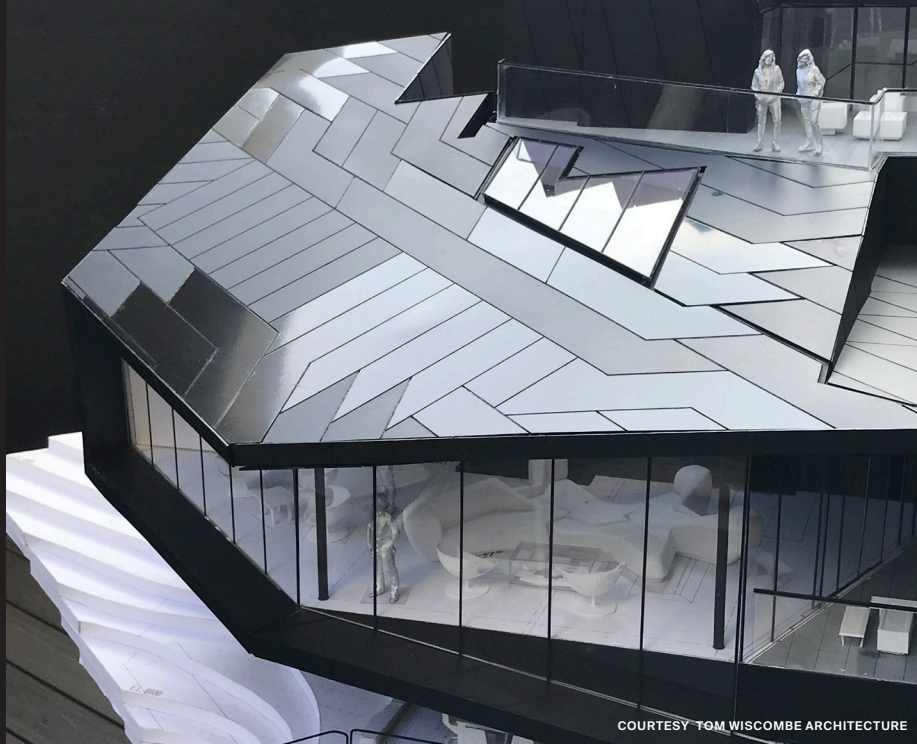
Ryan Scavnicky is the founder of Extra Office, a design studio that investigates architecture's relationship to contemporary culture, aesthetics, memes, and media to seek new agencies for critical practice. He teaches theory, criticism, and architecture at Kent State University.

CLOSE ENCOUN- TER



COURTESY TOM WISCOMBE ARCHITECTURE

**The Dark Chalet
by Tom Wiscombe Architecture
touches down on Powder Mountain.**



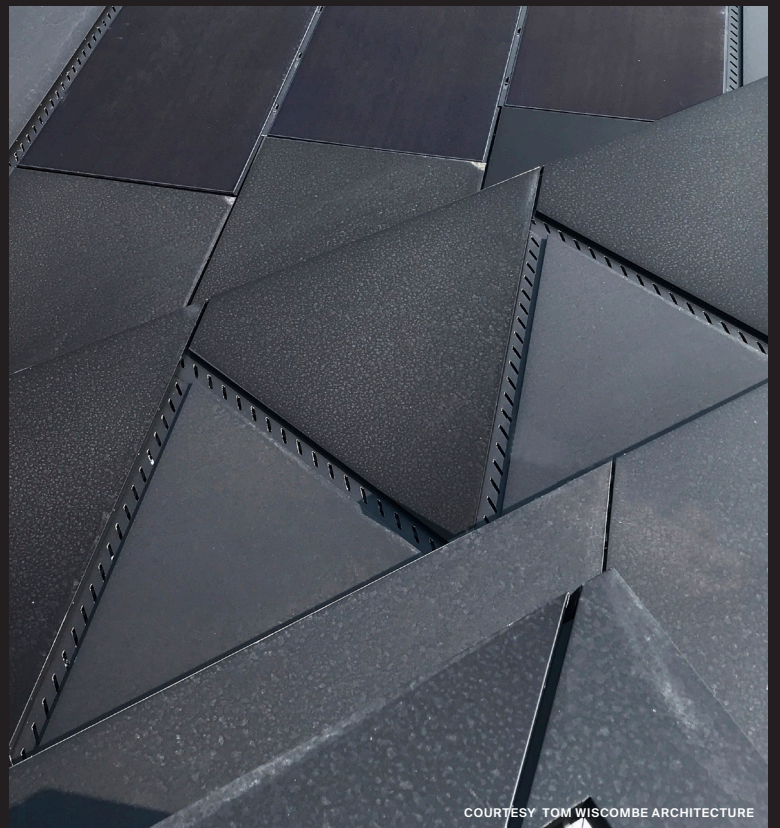
COURTESY TOM WISCOMBE ARCHITECTURE



COURTESY TOM WISCOMBE ARCHITECTURE



COURTESY TOM WISCOMBE ARCHITECTURE



COURTESY TOM WISCOMBE ARCHITECTURE

Summit Powder Mountain in Eden, Utah, is an ultraexclusive community for billionaires with good taste. The mountain resort is a preserve for refined, and in some cases adventurous, residential architecture by the likes of Olson Kundig, MacKay-Lyons, and Studio Ma. The most ambitious and beguiling design comes from the Los Angeles-based office Tom Wiscombe Architecture (TWA)—an angular and withdrawn mass perching lightly on the downslope of the ski resort. The so-called Dark Chalet is a bit brooding, and one can easily see why the 5,500-square-foot home has been likened in the press to an “alien spaceship.” In most instances that would be a hack descriptor, but the project does indeed have the bearing of stealth bombers and sci-fi space cruisers. The house is nearing completion, so *AN* caught up with TWA founding principal Tom Wiscombe to discuss what implications it may have for his practice and for architecture beyond.

The Dark Chalet's signature aesthetic is defined primarily by its “black on black” cladding, which had to be algorithmically segmented into jigsaw pieces to accommodate the house's jagged, gem-cut form. The facade assembly comprises matte and glossy panels; the former are aluminum composite, while the latter are

commercial-grade, integrated photovoltaic panels finished in black glass. The other standout feature can be found inside, where a massive central fireplace, itself embedded in a sculptural staircase, organizes the living spaces. Emblematic of TWA's interest in nested geometries and objects, the fireplace has a presence somewhere between rarefied and alienating. “It's weird because while [the hearth] ties all the levels together with the circulation and puts a fireplace in the living room—things you'd expect are going to happen in a house—when you're in there, it feels like this separate entity that's not totally fused with the rest of the house,” Wiscombe told *AN*.

The fit-out is nearly finished, and already the Dark Chalet marks a major milestone for TWA. Wiscombe chairs the undergraduate program at the SCI-Arc, the progressive L.A. school known for pushing the limits of form and technology. Prior to that, he enjoyed a long stay working at Coop Himmelb(l)au in Europe; returning to the United States, he set up shop under his own name and began churning out design proposals or competition entries. But he realized very few of these designs. That isn't a criticism. Speculative architecture is incredibly meaningful for architecture's image-based culture, and TWA's work has

for years been at the forefront of conceptual approaches to context, energy, and the objectlike nature of buildings.

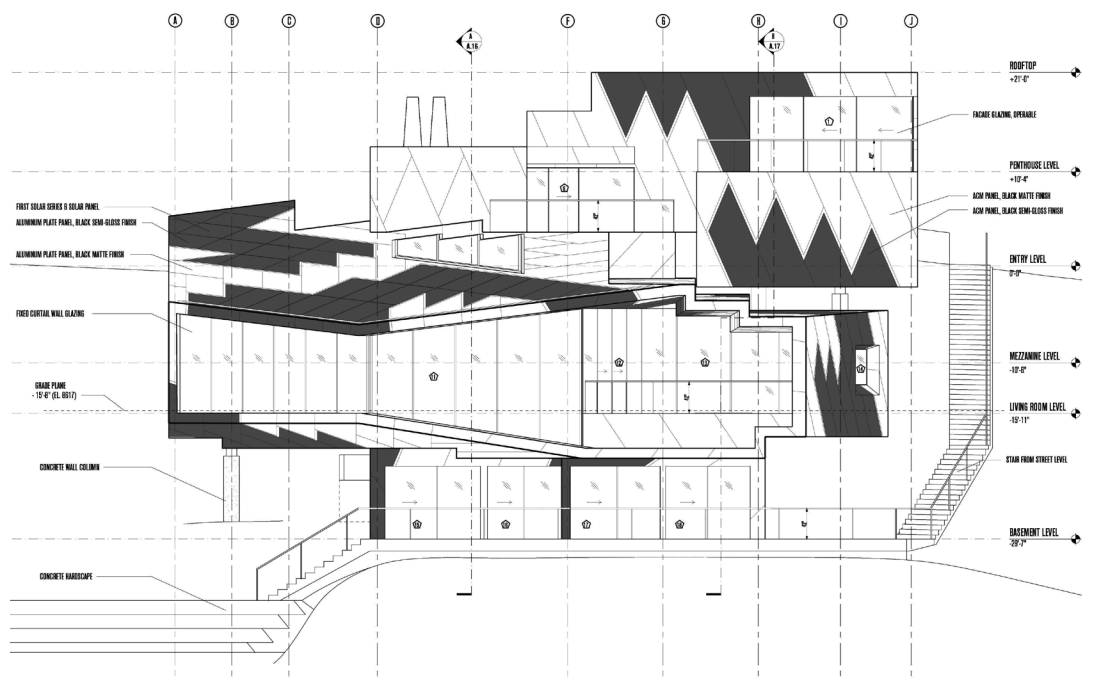
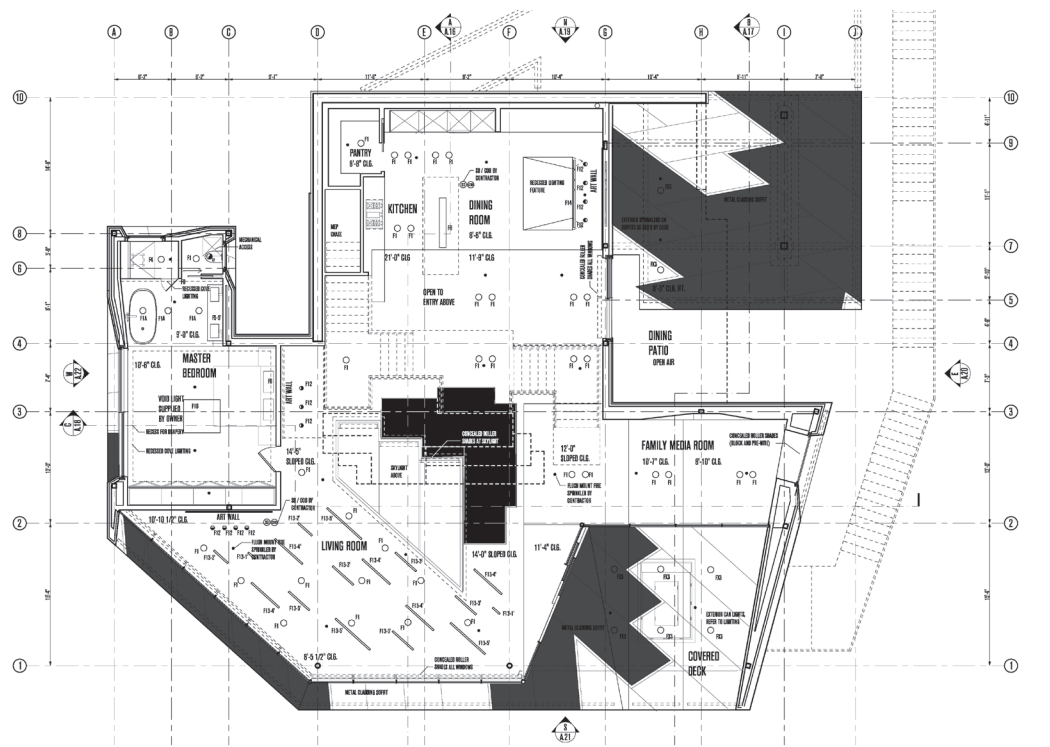
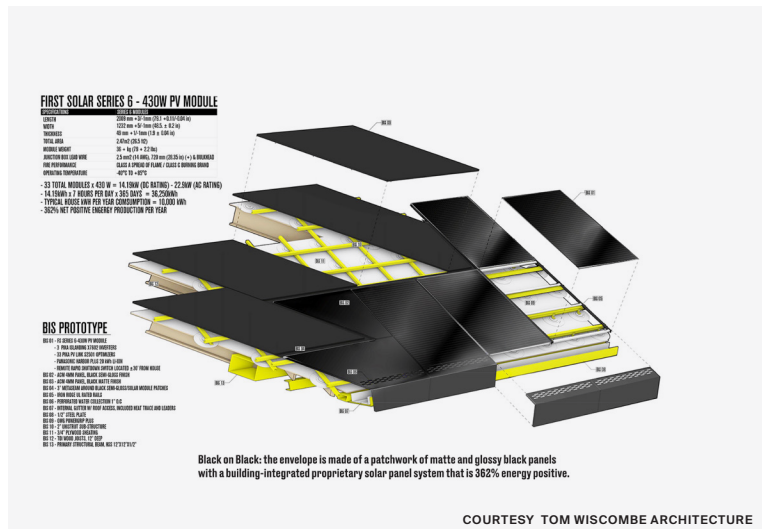
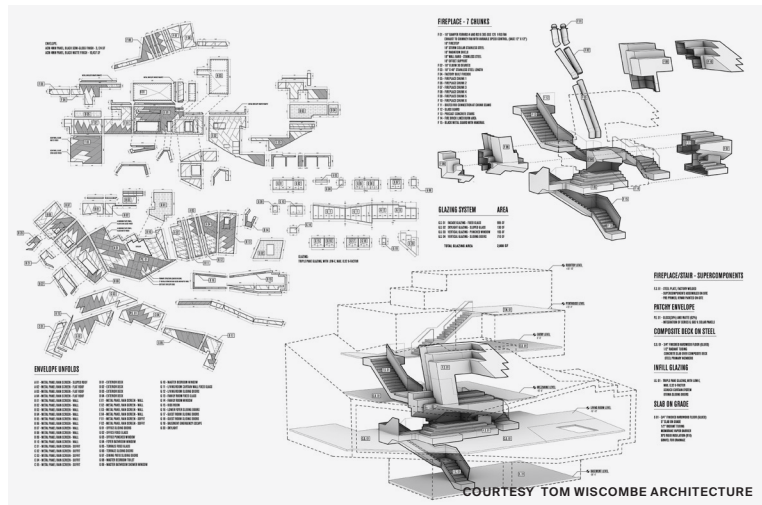
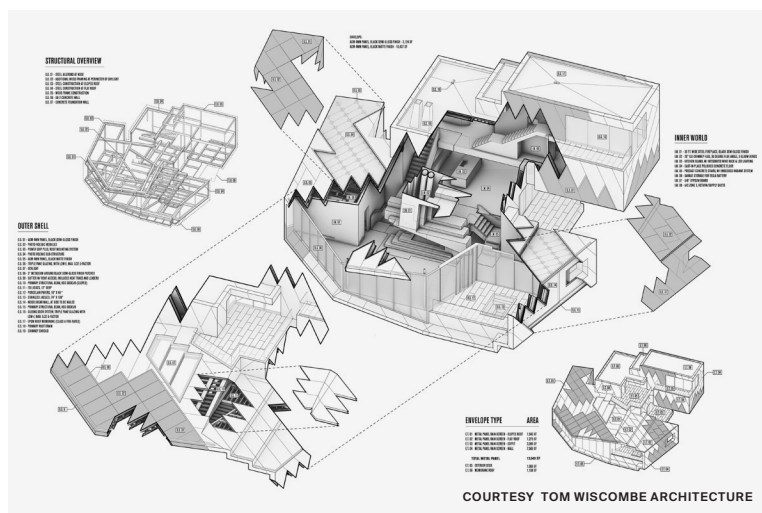
But Wiscombe maintains that he's not satisfied or interested in ending with the architectural image: “As an academic, I notice more and more a break between ideas of what architectural representation is and how we build or what construction documents are. I guess I've become tired of that. Anything that draws our architectural eye back into ideas about landing things on the earth is the sweet spot for me.”

“Landing on the earth” is something the Dark Chalet certainly does well. While the project raises many intriguing theoretical questions, the more interesting story tells of highly practical issues of documentation, representation, and construction. In an unorthodox move, TWA assumed responsibility for much of the modeling, detailing, and issuing fabrication files for the complex facade. This involved creating an original design model in Rhinoceros and then drone-scanning the entire shell of the substructure on-site once it was water-proofed, which resulted in an updated point cloud model with tolerances within about one-quarter of an inch. Once TWA had this model in hand, the designers remodeled the details of the facade again—“basically

what you would do if you were a facade contractor,” Wiscombe said.

Rhino and other modeling software can already facilitate some kind of design-to-fabrication process with CNC-routing and other tools, but applying that model at the scale and scope of a building, with its different trades and stakeholders, is no easy task. By taking over the fabrication files, TWA broke with convention, according to which the architect is responsible for design intent only, and the means and methods of construction or fabrication are the province of contractors and their subs. Wiscombe said he was aware of the risk his team was taking by flouting precedent, which has litigious implications: “As architects, we're always trying to stay in our lane, [but] if we're really invested today in integrated ways of building, I just don't think that we can do that anymore,” he said. The risk paid off at the Dark Chalet, where the metal panels and PV array, with associated substructure and power supply, flush together perfectly. The resulting facade anticipates producing 364 percent of the house's annual energy usage.

TWA also upended the look and use of construction documents, which cut up a building into thousands of flat, isolated moments. For Wiscombe, the ideal CD set



COURTESY TOM WISCOMBE ARCHITECTURE

is “the Revit file and a ‘Godzilla’ drawing or five ‘Godzilla’ drawings or however many are necessary to represent the full picture of the building so that ‘everyone gets it.’” His “Godzilla” drawings are dimensional cutaway diagrams similar to those packaged with Japanese toys and model-building kits, which detail the integration of exterior, interior, and in-between systems in a single drawing. While Wiscombe appreciates their striking and unique aesthetic atypical of architectural construction drawings, which tend to be quite utilitarian and convoluted compared with presentation drawings, he stressed their practical utility. “I’m just always looking at drawing sets, and I just don’t like [them]. You’re not giving an overview of what we’re trying to come together as an integrated group to build,” he said. Instead, he wants to protect the “object” of his architectural desire: “Don’t hurt it. Be kind. Show as many of its features as you can, inside and outside, simultaneously. [You] therefore also give everyone access to it, from the plan checker to your builder to your owner—everyone gets it when you draw like that.” Although Wiscombe admits his office didn’t quite get to that ideal drawing set with the Dark Chalet, it got far enough to achieve a successful proof of concept.

(The team achieved something similar—albeit at a smaller scale—with the interactive Sunset Spectacular billboard in West Hollywood.) Still, there remain concerns about the project’s surrounding context. The Summit Powder Mountain development was dreamed up by a group of mostly white tech CEOs and venture capitalists who get together to talk about climate change, anti-racism, and income inequality at a private resort where their vacation homes function effectively as tax havens. Asked about the political irony of this situation, Wiscombe pointed to the indirect nature of architecture and aesthetics. He cited the incredibly strict and conservative design guidelines that Summit placed on all buildings in the community, which TWA challenged in a number of ways, not least aesthetically. “What is ‘mountain modern’? What is ‘heritage modern’? What do all these words mean?” Wiscombe said, in reference to Summit’s self-description. “What I’ve found out in talking with them is it’s not clear. It’s very vaporous what it includes and excludes. I hope that I put a bunch of big question marks in terms of the answers to that.” He’s grateful for his clients and the chance to work on such a beautiful site, but he’s clear about not trying to make

excuses. “What we do as architects is inherently political, but I don’t think we operate in linguistic politics, where we speak ideas through language and take positions that way. I think we’re doing it in a much more backhanded, sneaky mysterious way through our work.”

Davis Richardson is a senior designer at Overlay Office. He teaches at the New Jersey Institute of Technology’s School of Architecture.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: The Dark Chalet’s “black-on-black” custom photovoltaic facade; the living room, with wraparound mountain views; a detail of the facade panels; and the nested fireplace, which anchors the house

This page, clockwise from top left: One of the “Godzilla” drawings TWA developed for the project; a plan of the primary level; an elevation indicating the steep slope; a diagram of the PV panel assembly; and another Godzilla drawing



BUILDING 150 E 58

The Architects & Designers Building is New York City's ultimate showroom resource. Located at 150 East 58th Street in Manhattan, the A&D Building offers discerning homeowners and trade professionals the finest collection of premium brands to suit any design project, whether modern, traditional, or transitional. Its 40 showrooms contain hundreds of distinctive products, spanning high-end residential and contract furniture, luxury appliances and lighting— all under one roof.

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Drummonds: The Jordan Winery

Founded in 1972 and largely untouched since its opening, the Jordan Vineyard and Winery in Healdsburg, California, recently underwent a major eight-month renovation that saw the complete transformation of its luxury guest suites. The new lodgings were designed by San Francisco-based interior designer Maria Haidamus to honor and enhance the vineyard's traditional French style through subtle modern touches.

Known for classic English designs with a strong contemporary edge, Drummonds was the perfect choice for the property's bathrooms and ensuites. The company, which continues to manufacture its wares in Europe, is unique for employing artisan techniques such as iron casting and lost-wax casting. It does so with an eye to combining high craftsmanship with modern quality control.

drummonds-uk.com



Drummonds' impressive freestanding Wye cast-iron tub in a painted finish is set against strikingly veined white marble. Cool nickel fittings feature throughout, from the Coll

basin taps and bath mixer to the towel rails and bathroom mirrors. The Double Thames vanity with an arabescato marble top adds a timeless feeling to the space.

eggerrmann: Tradition in the Modern



COURTESY EGGERSMANN

With the help of 50 artists and artisans, designers Eric Clough and Eun Sun Chun of 212box arrived at this amazing design, which uses 25 types of onyx and marble, for the Arabella, a luxury high-rise in Houston, Texas. The design duo

selected eggerrmann to create this ultra-black kitchen, outfitted with Gaggenau appliances. It features eggerrmann's graphite high-gloss Dallas range along with customized, full-length edge grip handles.



COURTESY EGGERSMANN

Kitchens are living spaces that invite us to indulge our senses; places that help to bond us with others, and the heart of the modern home. With eggerrmann, kitchens are only the beginning.

Founded in 1908 by Wilhelm Eggerrmann, the company rests on a strong design foundation, pulling on Bauhaus elements such as smooth surfaces, cubic shapes, and neutral color palettes. Its modern German kitchens and home living solutions are distinguished not only by unique stone cabinet fronts and exotic veneers, but also technological feats in cabinetry composition and ergonomics. eggerrmann's ever-evolving cabinetry and accessories offer exactly what you need to create a space that is uniquely you, whether you're working, relaxing, or entertaining. Maintain the modern aesthetic you love in any room in your home.

eggerrmannusa.com

Discover Design at the A&D Building

130 William: Designed from the Inside Out with Gaggenau



One-Thirty William, Adjaye Associates' first New York City condominium tower, was designed from the inside out with a people-first approach. Firm principal David Adjaye "understood this was a building not just to be seen, but to be felt," said Scott Avram, senior vice president of development for Lightstone, which developed 130 William. "The people who live here must experience the building every day—from the inside. Perspectives matter. Details matter."

With this in mind, Gaggenau worked to deliver the highest quality details. Textures, colors, and components "all work as a collection of specialness—something not found everywhere," added Avram. "Gaggenau, like our architectural and design partners, was a true collaborator. The company worked with the full team to realize the vision."

gaggenau.com/us

According to Avram, the development team wanted a building that wasn't common to downtown—something more than a "plug and play" glass tower. "It deserved a richness—from the exterior materials to the historically referenced arched windows to the modern yet sensitive interior spaces."

J Geiger: Shading's BIG Moment



Above: Saving time and money without compromising style, Inception Shades are a new pre-fabricated option that has already proved popular in the multifamily residential sector.

Right: The infinitely customizable R Series Shading System is meticulously constructed on-site for a precision fit.

In 2018, Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) relocated its New York office from Manhattan to Brooklyn's DUMBO neighborhood. Located at 45 Main Street, BIG's 50,000-square-foot office occupies the entire ninth floor of a 12-story building built in 1912. The renovated space is exceptionally modern—an open concept that maximizes daylight with glass-walled conference rooms and unobstructed windows. By eliminating walls and installing motorized solar shades, the BIG team can take full advantage of its Brooklyn Bridge view without sacrificing building performance.

BIG's office is outfitted with J Geiger's R Series Shading System, which features a mix of 200-plus wired and wire-free shades. The ceilings are entirely exposed, and wire-free rechargeable motors were an easy way to avoid pesky wiring. In terms of aesthetic and basic functionality, the two power options are nearly identical. Both motor types are linked to keypads, since it would be easy to misplace remotes in an office this large.

jgeigershading.com



40 Focus

Healthcare

AN FOCUS

March/April 2022

Two years ago, COVID-19 made its way across the globe, prompting every industry—especially healthcare—to adapt and improve upon operations in record time. With hospitals and clinics at max capacity, those working in design searched for a way to help—and they haven't stopped since. Architects, designers, and manufacturers continued to develop and deliver new or improved products that optimize the medical experience for both patients and healthcare workers, in any situation. From germ-conscious hardware to durable, sustainable surfaces, the following wares meet rigorous standards of function and beauty. Furthermore, three California case studies put all that we have learned throughout the pandemic into practice, demonstrating the highest standard of contemporary healthcare design.

A photograph of a modern building facade featuring a series of geometric, angular windows set within a light-colored, textured concrete or stone structure. The windows are arranged in a staggered, overlapping pattern. A thin, bright yellow line curves across the lower right portion of the image, intersecting the building's facade. The overall aesthetic is clean, architectural, and contemporary.

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Through the Looking Lab

A neuroscience and psychiatric hub at the University of California San Francisco allows researchers to interface with each other—and the public outside.

Design architect: Mark Cavagnero Associates
Architect of record: SmithGroup
Location: San Francisco

General contractor: DPR
Structural engineer: Degenkolb
MEP engineer: Critchfield Mechanical
Facade consultant: Walters & Wolf
Lab planner: Jacobs Lab Planning Group
Lighting consultant: Loisos + Ubbelohde
Sustainability consultant: Atelier Ten
Acoustics consultant: Arup

A lot is happening inside the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Neurosciences Building at the University of California, San Francisco's (UCSF) Mission Bay campus from moment to moment.

Patients struggling with the effects of Alzheimer's and other mental disorders confer with caregivers in a bank of exam rooms or in the MRI suite. Loved ones may be on hand or teleconferenced in to participate in treatment decisions. Administrators tap away at the desks in light-filled offices, while others make presentations in corner meeting rooms. Teams of scientists and researchers stationed in wet and dry labs on floors 3, 4, and 5 work toward cures, sometimes deep into the weekend. People crisscross the wood-paneled atrium, a much more pleasurable space than one might expect at a clinical or research facility, where, on certain evenings, a donor dinner or charity event may be taking place. Those searching for a much-needed break scale the stairs to the top-floor cafe and roof terrace or other social spaces clustered on the building's west side, where intermingling is encouraged.

Much, though not all (patient privacy is obviously considered), of this activity is visible, either to peers or other UCSF visitors, particularly in the early evening hours, when the hub, in the words of its architect, Mark Cavagnero, "becomes totally alive."

A staggering transparency characterizes the 181,500-square-foot, LEED v4 Gold-targeted building, whose intricate program augments those of nearby Sandler Neurosciences Center and Rock Hall, which, too, are dedicated to exploring and treating brain disorders. The other research labs and treatment facilities that form the top-rated UCSF Medical Center tend, in their architectural demeanor, toward involution. By contrast, the Weill Neurosciences Building is extroverted, disclosing in its attitude where others are concealing.

"The rest of the campus was designed with more traditional lab spaces," Cavagnero said, "where everything was kind of isolated and there was no exterior sun control, so everyone has their shades down and there's no daylight for researchers."

According to Cavagnero, lead donor Sanford I. Weill, former chief of Citigroup, tasked him with finding a "forward-thinking" architectural solution that satisfied the needs of multiple users and stakeholders and also had iconographic value. The exact meaning of "forward-thinking" was left for the architect to sort out. In explaining his concept, he reached for ethereal analogies, the most material of these being Japanese origami. "The idea of making science appear light, and not heavy and obtuse, really appealed to me," he said. "I wanted the building to feel like it was about lightness itself. This concept of light being hope."

But given the project's corner site, which offers primary exposures to the south and west, and the extensive use of glazing, an invitation to daylight might soon come to be

regretted. Various strategies were implemented to assuage this concern. The top-heavy massing, for one, results in a deeply shaded arcade. The first two floors, containing the clinical spaces and their waiting rooms, are stepped far back from the property line, which the upper floors, held aloft by concrete columns, meet.

To shield those higher floors, the design team, which included the local office of SmithGroup and facade consulting firm Walters & Wolf, among others, devised a prophylactic metal screen that preserved the desired transparency. Orderly white aluminum blades suspended from the glass facades deter heat gain while adding visual interest: Depending on one's approach, an elevation may seem opaque or clear, prompting the observer to "start reading form and abstraction in a new way," Cavagnero said.

The metal blades are "the primary point of the building's crisp outer expression," said Jon Riddle, a principal architect at SmithGroup. The description accords with Cavagnero's references to origami; the likeness comes into play at the top register, where the corners of canted penthouse volumes (separated by a gallery) are pulled up like butterfly wings. Riddle also compared the precise handling of the exteriors with the "precision care happening inside, where computer modeling and analysis are used to really target the area that needs treatment."

The same ethos informed the design of the interiors, which are flush with warm and natural materials, especially the prevalent use of sycamore. The wood paneling finds its way into all sorts of spaces, including exam rooms, though it's used most extensively in the full-height atrium. Lining back walls and soffits, the sycamore enlivens the broad room, especially during the day, when it's suffused with daylight falling through the center skylights and western facade. A durable marble acquired from a small quarry in southern France blankets the floor, a finish that would be cost-prohibitive for most facilities of this kind.

"The quality of those finishes was really driven by the donor, who wanted more of a hospitality feel," said Suzanne Napier, a SmithGroup VP, "and they do really go throughout the whole building, top to bottom, inside and out."

A telling thing happens at the corner of the atrium. The walls of a fire-rated stair core are partially glazed so that light can reach them. This visibility—counterintuitive from a functional perspective—also makes the stairs more attractive to the building's core user set. It's an elegant summary of the project's aims, Cavagnero said. "The underlying message was that there isn't anything happening here behind closed doors. We're all chasing the same dream. We're all trying to find the same cures, here in this wonderful new environment together." **Samuel Medina**



43 Case Study

A'N FOCUS

March/April 2022



TIM GRIFFITH



KYLE JEFFERS



KYLE JEFFERS

Opposite, top: At night the building “glows like a beacon of hope,” its architect said.

Opposite, bottom: The full-height atrium features extensive wood paneling.

Top: The building’s pointed profile resembles origami.

Left and above: The labs on levels 3, 4, and 5 are exposed on two sides—to the atrium and the outside.

Support of Nature

The Lawrence J Ellison Institute for Transformative Medicine encourages collaboration



Architect: Rios
Location: Los Angeles

General contractor: Sierra Pacific Constructors

Structural engineer: Risha Engineering

Windows: Arcadia

Doors: Western Integrated, EZ Concept

Interior finishes: Galleher, Thermory, Farrow & Ball, Amerlux

Fittings and furniture: Tacchini, Bernhardt, Hay, Herman Miller, Ariana Rugs, Tom Dixon, Bentley (carpet)

The Lawrence J Ellison Institute for Transformative Medicine in Los Angeles is an innovative cancer research center that harnesses nature to create a space conducive to the hunt for a cure. Founded by Dr. David Agus, author of *The End of Illness*, among other titles, with a substantial donation from Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison, the project encourages collaboration between researchers, patients, and others, by providing a comfortable and creative environment that overturns many expectations of what a laboratory building should be.

Designed by Rios, which provided architecture as well as landscape architecture and wayfinding services, the scheme derives from Agus's maxim: If you change the soil, the seed won't grow. "How do you change researchers' soil, mentally, and prime them to be collaborative?" asked Rios creative director Sebastian Salvadó. To answer this, the team looked to its landscape practice. "We have always put landscape thinking at the forefront of everything we do," Salvadó continued. "We really believe in the power of nature to create healthy spaces and spaces that we're comfortable in and spaces that feel familiar and engaging."

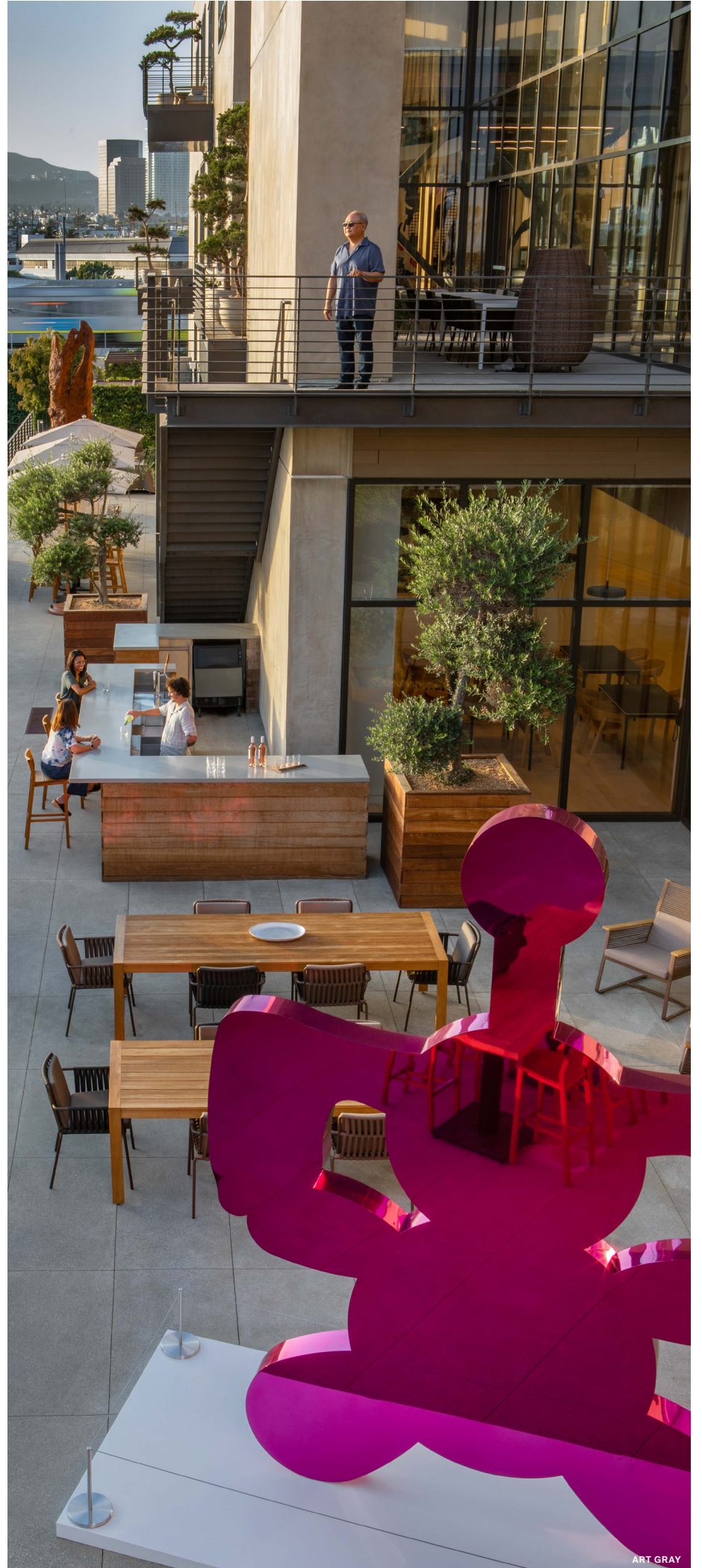
Unable to find an appropriate site for a ground-up building, the institute purchased a spec creative office designed by HLW that was still under construction. While the location, at the border of Santa Monica near the Expo Line, was ideal, the building's long, skinny footprint—79 feet wide by 300 feet long, with the

broad sides facing east and west—presented some challenges. However, Rios developed a concept that turned these challenges into a driver for the design.

"We needed the institute to be open and free-flowing, but it couldn't be so open that it had an inhuman sale," Salvadó said. "We had to create a gradient of differently scaled spaces." The architects divided the eastern side of the building from the west with a line and then made this line meander. To the east they placed the laboratories and other introverted spaces. To the west, they placed the open, collaborative spaces, like the communal kitchen, cafe, meeting rooms, and The Forum, a triple-height atrium that serves as the collaborative core of the project.

The meandering line breaks up the long, skinny floor plates into neighborhoods without introducing walls and doors. Meeting rooms and the few private offices were deployed as clusters of "boulders" that subdivide neighborhoods. The labs were also dispersed, which increased the cost of the HVAC system, but forces researchers to walk around and interact more. Throughout the building, access is provided to outdoor decks, even from the laboratories, though there you must also pass through an air lock.

The materials on the interior also lean toward the natural. In addition to an abundance of plants, there is a wealth of wood flooring, wood plank paneling, and exposed wood structure (stained to match the wood palette used in the rest of the building). Carpeting was used in the collaborative areas to make them softer and dampen the acoustics. In the lounge spaces the carpeting is even plusher and arrayed with custom upholstered dark metal furniture in sophisticated earthy colors. There is also a lot of art on display, including major works by Robert Indiana and Jeff Koons, yet another contemplative perk in this very comfortable and engaging lab building. **Aaron Seward**



45 Case Study

A'N FOCUS

March/April 2022



Opposite page, left: Plantings in the Forum and elsewhere bring nature inside.

Opposite page, right: Access to the outdoors is provided throughout the facility, even from the labs themselves, and art is everywhere.

Top, left: The wood structure was left exposed and stained to match the wood palette used elsewhere on the interior.

Top, right: A communal kitchen brings researchers, administrators, patients, and others together.

Middle, right: While the designs of the labs themselves are prescribed, ample glazing keeps them connected to daylight and views.

Bottom, left: Lounge spaces evoke a residential character with plush carpeting and cozy furniture.

Bottom, right: Comfort was prioritized in the patient treatment rooms.



46 Case Study

AN FOCUS

March/April 2022

First Steps

The Belardi Family Pavilion at the City of Hope medical complex puts a new master plan on the right track.



Architect: Gensler
Location: Duarte, CA

General contractor: Hathaway Dinwiddie Construction Company
Structural engineer: Walter P. Moore
Glass: Viracon, Technical Glass Partitions
Expanded mesh: AMICO Architectural Products
Louvers: Construction Specialties, Pottorff, Greenheck
Doors: Panda, Wilson Partitions
Ceilings: Armstrong
Interior finishes and furnishings: Hufcor, Bentley, G-Rail, Kvadrat, Mecho, Owens Corning, Shaw Contract
Landscape: Hanover Architectural Products

Founded in 1913 as a tuberculosis sanatorium in Duarte, California, City of Hope has grown into a leading center of medical research, education, and treatment. Located just 20 miles from Downtown Los Angeles, the sprawling 116-acre campus acts as the anchor of the National Cancer Institute, which has a network of clinical practice locations throughout Southern California and regional fundraising offices across the United States.

In order to optimize operations throughout this growing, multifaceted organization, City of Hope tapped Gensler to design a master plan that would unite existing functions as well as pave the way for future development. The project's first phase wrapped in 2021 with the completion of the Belardi Family Pavilion, a medical and administrative space that consolidates multiple research, surgery, and treatment departments, as well as executive offices. Breezy corridors take advantage of the climate and sub-

tly hark back to City of Hope's original function.

The form of the four-story, 96,000-square-foot building follows the curve of the campus's eastern-most property line, with primary frontage to the east and west. The east facade is outfitted with silver, sawtooth metal fins to mitigate solar heat gain. The inner edge of each fin is finished in bronze to burnish the light that bounces into private offices lining this side of the project.

On the western half of the building lies the "collaborative zone," which is spread over two floors. Conference and seminar rooms, food service, outdoor terraces and break-out areas are bounded by galleries and connected by exterior stairs. Perforated facade panels, calibrated at optimal angles to shade the promenade, are nearly imperceptible.

The meticulous facade detailing is part and parcel of the architects' wider sustainability strategy, which helped the building achieve LEED Gold Version 4 certification. Gensler factored embodied carbon into all of its design decisions, resulting in an emissions reduction of 2.8 million metric tons. Powered largely by the extensive solar farm atop the roof, the facility performs with twice the efficiency of standard office buildings.

"The pavilion will serve as a springboard that allows the campus to move into the future," said project architect Brian Fraumeni. As the first step in City of Hope's vision for a patient-friendly, ecologically conscious, and technologically advanced campus, the Belardi Pavilion has set the bar high for future development.

Sophie Aliece Hollis



47 Case Study

AN FOCUS

March/April 2022



Opposite page, top left: The building follows the curve of City of Hope's eastern-most property line.

Opposite page, top right: Silver sawtooth fins are lined with bronze to reflect warm-colored light into the eastern and southern sides of the building.

Opposite page, bottom: A large staircase invites visitors to ascend and engage with the building at multiple levels.

Top: The generously shaded exterior walkway looks out on the City of Hope campus.

Right: The Belardi Pavilion houses ample open plan office spaces to provide opportunities for departments to crosspollinate.



Furnishings

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49 Products

A'N FOCUS

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Acoustics & Textiles

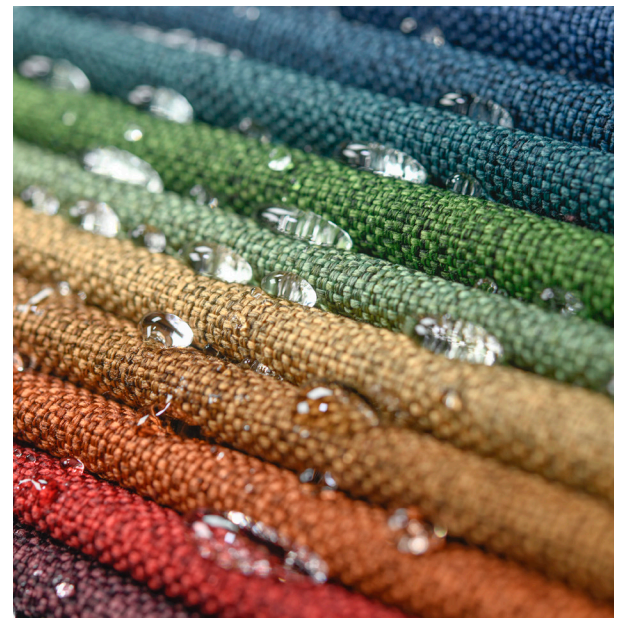
Although great care is taken to keep healthcare spaces as sterile as possible, they don't have to *feel* that way. These versatile acoustics and textiles employ high-performance technologies to ensure cleanliness without sacrificing color, texture, and playfulness. Sophie Aliece Hollis



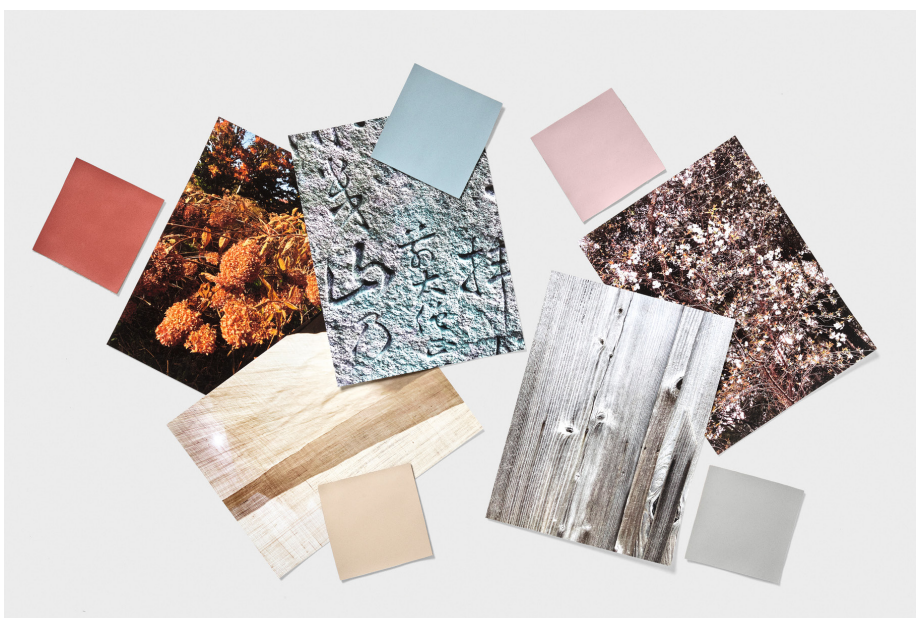
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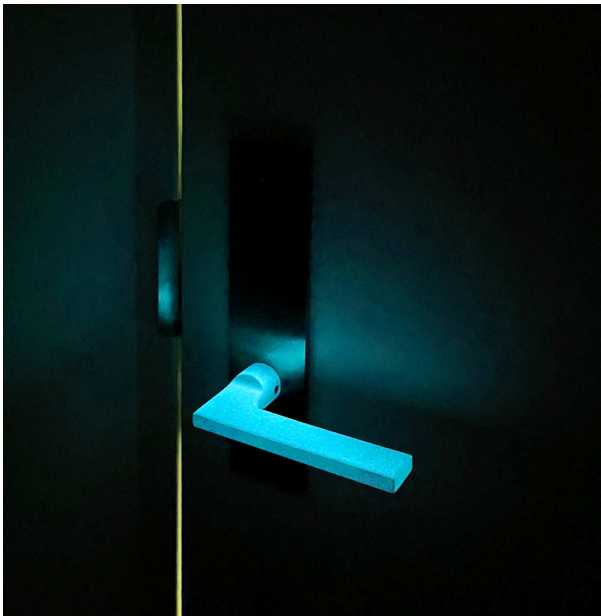
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Furnishings

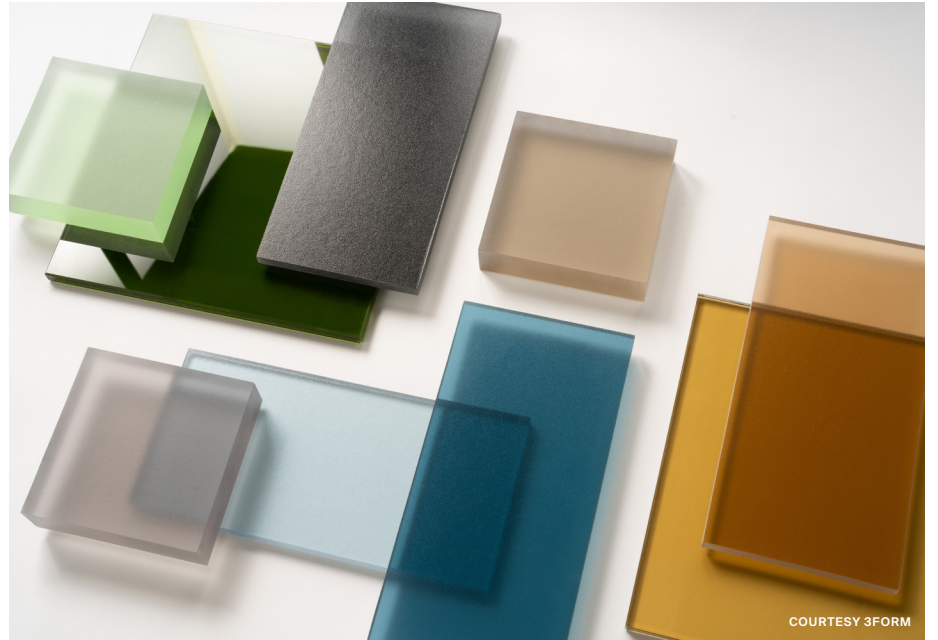
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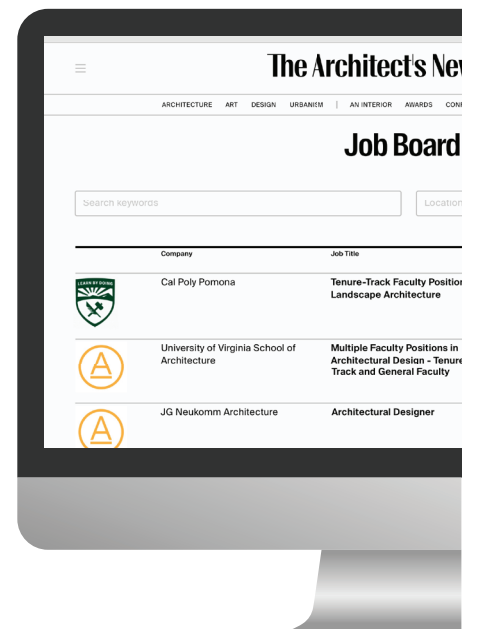
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58 Highlights

East

Zoe Zenghelis: Fields, Fragments, Fiction

Carnegie Museum of Art
4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Open through July 24



PRIVATE COLLECTION/COURTESY CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART

As a cofounder of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Zoe Zenghelis warrants a spot in the history books. But her six-decade-long engagement with the visual arts also deserves special attention. That's the intent behind her first solo exhibition of paintings, now open at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. The show, which spans four periods of Zenghelis's career, attempts to unite multiple strands of her practice, including

the teaching she did at the Architectural Association at London. Lesser-known OMA projects in the Mediterranean islands are related to Zenghelis's landscape paintings of her native Greece. These works and others pair architectural elements with bright colors, dreamy landscapes, and geometric abstractions, bridging the divide separating memory and fact. **Sophie Aliece Hollis**

Southeast

Container/Contained: Phil Freelon Design Strategies for Telling African American Stories

North Carolina Museum of Art
2110 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh, NC 27607

Open through May 15



MARK HERBOTH PHOTOGRAPHY/COURTESY PERKINS&WILL

The late architect and North Carolina native Phil Freelon was something of a hero in these parts. Over his 40-year-long career, he helped give shape to the South's civic spaces, working extensively on projects that foreground African American communities and identities. After successfully running his own firm, Freelon Group, he became the design director of Perkins&Will North Carolina, where

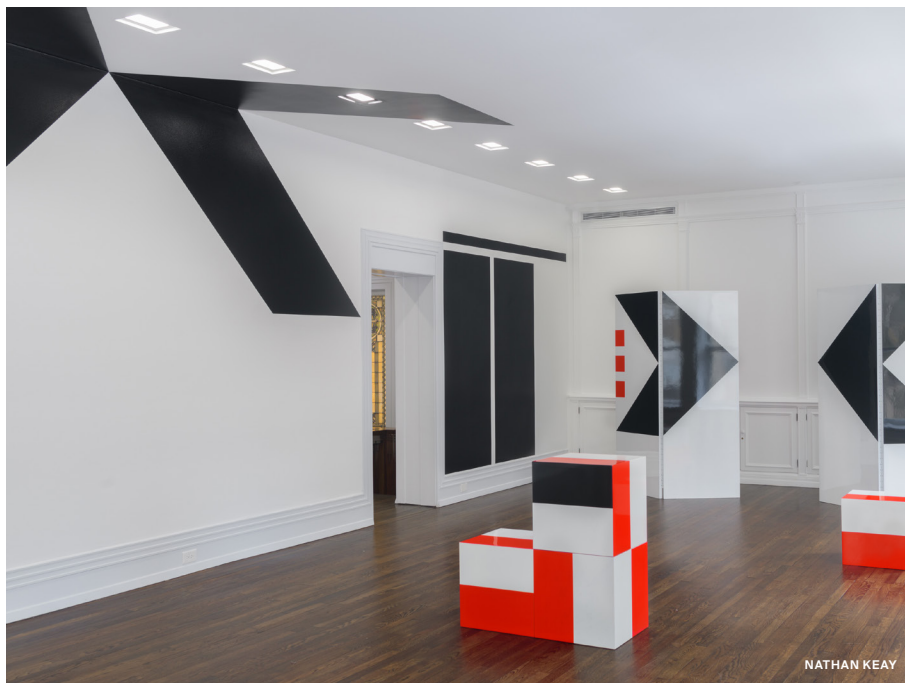
he worked on notable projects such as the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta. *Container/Contained* expands on Freelon's maxim that architecture should act not simply as a container, but as an active and integral element of public institutions. It shouldn't be missed. **SAH**

Midwest

Exits Exist, Barbara Stauffacher Solomon

Graham Foundation
4 West Burton Street, Chicago, IL

Open through July 9



NATHAN KEAY

Since 1963, Chicago's Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts has been housed in a turn-of-the-century Prairie-style mansion in the Gold Coast neighborhood. Even when hosting exhibitions, the Graham tends to fill its historic wood-framed galleries only sparsely. For *EXITS EXIST*, the script has been flipped. The exhibition, conceived by the San Francisco artist Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, contains almost no three-dimen-

sional objects. Rather, Solomon's intervention is limited to the gallery walls themselves, to which she has applied a series of red, white, and black supergraphics. The distorted letterforms—when deciphered, they spell out the exhibition title—and stark coloration underscore the spatial power of Solomon's preferred medium, which she first began exploring 70 years ago. You might call it a lifelong obsession. **SAH**

West

FUTUREKIN: Mental Health Machines for a Post-CRISPR World

SCI-Arc
960 East 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Open through April 17



MAY XIONG/COURTESY SCI-ARC

The self-described "science fiction artist and body architect" Lucy McRae launched her first solo show at SCI-Arc in February. *FUTUREKIN* dutifully imagines a dystopia where children are nurtured in synthetic, lab-grown wombs. Maternal attention and care are substituted for the embrace of "health machines," quasi-cyborgs that allude to the ideas of feminist theorist Donna Haraway. It

all sounds rather heartless, but the exhibition tries to push visitors past that knee-jerk reaction. As McRae explains, her machines are designed "to build trust and connection, reinforcing the protective embrace of a parent gone lost." It is, in a roundabout way, a hopeful endeavor. **Paige Davidson**

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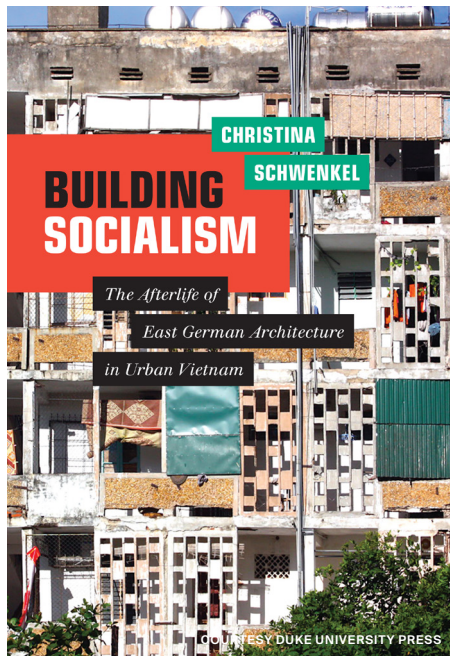
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60 Review

Building Socialism: The Afterlife of East German Architecture in Urban Vietnam

By Christina Schwenkel | Duke University Press, 2020 | \$31



In 2010, anthropologist Christina Schwenkel moved into the dilapidated modernist neighborhood of Quang Trung in downtown Vinh, Hò Chi Minh's birthplace and one of Vietnam's secondary urban centers. In the ensuing years, she lived intermittently among residents, studying their relationship with the buildings they inhabited. She tackled an extensive range of topics—from the patterns of occupation of space, changing political and economic conditions, and the deterioration of the aging buildings to family histories, gender and class hierarchies, and the affective bonds with their neighborhood. At one point, she even briefly enrolled in architecture classes at a local vocational school to better understand the organization of domestic space in traditional Vietnamese architecture. The result of such thorough fieldwork is a fine-grained image of life in Quang Trung, which traces a downward trajectory from an initial enthusiasm about the radical modernization of life, shared by residents and planners, to current disappointment with the “unplanned obsolescence” that makes some buildings almost unlivable.

If this narrative about modernist housing's failure seems familiar, the case of Quang Trung is far from typical. In *Building Socialism*, Schwenkel not only pays close attention to local patterns of life but also casts the estate as an important site of global encounter where architecture became entangled with geopolitics. Throughout the Vietnam War, the U.S. Air Force rained down bombs on cities such as Vinh, which was reduced to a sea of rubble by the conflict's end. The German Democratic Republic (GDR) came to the aid of its fellow socialist state, sending architects, engineers, and equipment to assist in postwar reconstruction. Comprising some two dozen modernist slabs, Quang Trung emerged from this act of international solidarity as a model for the modernization of the entire country. The stakeholders presented the project as a collaboration rather than foreign charity, revealing a clear awareness of the need to balance power relations between unequal part-

ners. The exchange did not come without its share of problems and contradictions, but it did establish bonds that survive to this day on both sides: In Vietnam, German generosity and superior engineering retain a mythical status, and in Germany the experience of Vinh still kindles personal memories of socialist solidarity, officially repressed by the public discourse since reunification.

With its dual focus, *Building Socialism* brings together two recent scholarly trends. On the one hand, architecture has always been an important locus of study for anthropologists, who have probed the apparent material solidity of buildings to reveal their inherently unstable social nature. Because of its aspirations to radically change society, the former socialist world has emerged as an especially productive site for such investigations, inspiring several fascinating books. Paving the way was *An Archaeology of Socialism*, Victor Buchli's 2000 study of Moisei Ginzburg's revolutionary Narkomfin building in Moscow; it was followed by other important works, including *Politics in Color and Concrete*, Krisztina Fehérvári's 2013 book about the spaces of domestic life in the panel buildings of socialist Hungary, and *The Palace Complex*, Michał Murawski's 2019 book about the Palace of Culture and Science, a Stalinist skyscraper that continues to dominate Warsaw's skyline. On the other hand, architectural historians have recently discovered the outside role that the former socialist world played in the Global South in the postwar decolonization process. Łukasz Stanek's book *Architecture in Global Socialism*, published in 2020, was a signal achievement in this respect, as it mapped for the first time the astonishing extent of architectural exports from Eastern Europe to Africa and the Middle East. Schwenkel extends this map to Southeast Asia even as she constrains her focus to a single site. It's a particularly effective tack that shows how the global and the local intersected in an alternative project of world-making distinct from capitalist globalization.

Building Socialism is divided into three parts, addressing respectively the destruction of Vinh during the war with the United States, the city's reconstruction in collaboration with East Germany, and Quang Trung's current state of decay. It opens with a view from the air, that of the U.S. pilots who perpetrated full-scale urbicide on Vinh. (A quarter of all American bombs expended in Vietnam were unleashed on the city.) This irrational “techno-fanaticism,” Schwenkel argues, was obsessed with destroying material infrastructure, but in reality, it obliterated entire social worlds. The perspective then shifts to the ground plane to tell the stories of Vinh's inhabitants, their mass trauma, and strategies of survival, including digging an underground network of trenches and tunnels. By the end of Part One, Schwenkel has shifted the perspective yet again, widening her frame to take in international responses to the destruction. The “sympathetic solidarity” that the countries of the so-called Second World forged with Vietnam found special resonance with East Germany in the appeals to the shared experience of suf-

fering brutal aerial bombardment.

Part Two comes closest to standard architectural history, as it discusses the work of East German architects and planners in Vinh and its adaptation to vastly different material and cultural conditions in Southeast Asia. Chapters move through progressively smaller scales, from the mobilization of East German expertise and technology for use in Vietnam, via the urban planning of Quang Trung, to the design of individual buildings and apartments. Schwenkel paints a complex picture of international solidarity often undermined by cultural differences, misaligned expectations, and racial biases, as well as by the contradictions between altruism and self-interest. As she shows, the East Germans' activities in Vinh were indeed motivated by anticolonial solidarity, but they also had other motives, among them a desire to improve their country's international standing. Similarly, the tremendous amount of material aid shipped to Vinh—in total, some 60 cargo ships' worth of machines, vehicles, and tools—appears less impressive in light of the fact that some of it was already considered obsolete in the GDR. Other contradictions emerged from the attempt to “translate” European modernism to a context such as Southeast Asia. Some of these translations were successful and involved input from both sides, attesting to the perception that the design was carried out collaboratively. For example, Quang Trung's climatic responsiveness continues to be praised, because it allows for ample airflow between buildings and through individual apartments. Other translations were more problematic, above all the shoe-horning of a largely rural population accustomed to collective life into individual apartments designed for nuclear families. The result was what Schwenkel calls “*Việt Đức* hybridity,” a peculiar mix of German technics with Vietnamese raw materials, unskilled labor (predominantly by rural women), and ways of life, which nevertheless made Quang Trung into the country's most modern neighborhood in material, functional, and aesthetic terms. From an architectural standpoint, this entire section of the book is especially enlightening, both for Schwenkel's thorough analysis and for access to previously completely unknown material about global transfer of architectural knowledge. One, however, wishes for more extensive illustrations, especially original architectural plans, but that may be a future task for an architectural historian.

Unlike the books' first two parts, which shift between macro- and micro-scales against the backdrop of the 1970s, Part Three is exclusively concerned with Quang Trung and the modulations of time. Its four chapters pursue a theme of obsolescence with respect to the original buildings, which are in evident decline due to the combined effects of age and unforeseen use. Especially fascinating is Schwenkel's discussion of various apartment modifications, which reveals both the cultural inadequacies of the original German design and the rise in living standards over the past decades. These modifications range from simple adaptations of the interior layouts to fit the princi-

ples of traditional geomantics (*phong thủy*) to the construction of *coi nói*, extensive exterior additions that hang precariously from the facades and serve a wide variety of purposes. In the book's concluding chapter, Schwenkel assesses the mass housing that has appeared around Quang Trung in recent years, leading her to some unexpected conclusions. Despite its shortcomings, the neighborhood still seems to fare better than the housing built after the political reforms of the 1990s, which is widely considered shoddy, environmentally unresponsive, alienating, and seismically unsafe. To be sure, Quang Trung itself underwent neoliberalization through the compulsory privatization of units, which put new economic burdens on its residents, and through the replacement of several original buildings. However, communal life in the remaining parts of the neighborhood, long adapted to its modernist framework, continues to thrive, and most residents not only favor Quang Trung's refurbishment over demolition but would like to see it protected as a heritage site and a monument to the international solidarity that produced it.

Throughout the text, Schwenkel expresses a simultaneous sense of dissatisfaction with and appreciation of Quang Trung. In so doing, she presents a much more nuanced picture of modernist mass housing and its “utopian” aspirations than the still-common narrative of unqualified failure would have it. She also makes it clear that many of the troubles that plague the neighborhood—deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate services, increasing inequality—stem from perceived betrayal by the state, which has replaced its original communal ethos with increasing individualism and marketization, thus disenfranchising its most vulnerable citizens, predominantly women. Architecture's failures from that perspective appear to be the product not so much of imperfect design but of a wider socioeconomic dynamic. This point should be familiar to readers in the United States, where the withdrawal of state support signaled the demise of affordable mass housing (Pruitt-Igoe being only the most iconic case of the process). However, Quang Trung offers a story of vastly different outcomes from those in the U.S., pointing to a great deal of specificity needed in assessing the outcomes of any architectural endeavor. In that respect, *Building Socialism* makes multiple important contributions to architectural scholarship. It shines a light on a place that rarely features in Western architectural histories, in turn raising numerous questions about modern architecture in general—its universalizing promises of utopian progress, its perceived failures, and its hitherto-unexplored paths of dissemination.

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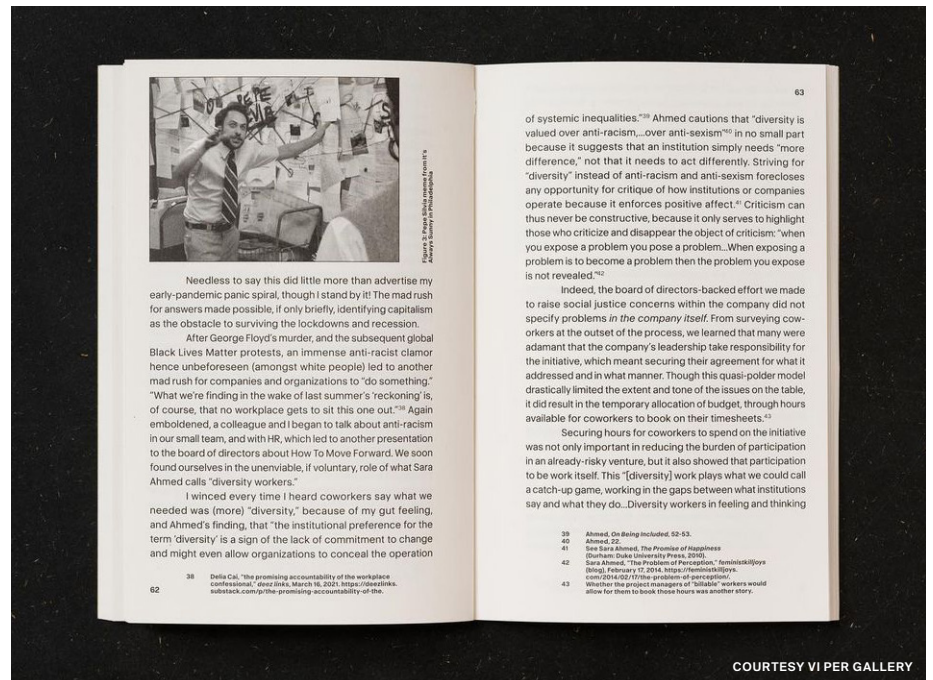
61 Review

“Can this be? Surely this cannot be?”: Architectural Workers Organizing in Europe

By Marisa Cortright | VI PER Gallery | \$25



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In her short new book, Marisa Cortright catalogues the experiences of EU nationals and non-EU nationals working in the architectural field.

In early February, workers at SHoP Architects in New York City dropped their petition to unionize the firm’s 135 employees. (See “Bargaining for Better,” page 8.) The decision, which ended a high-profile organizing drive, was gutting to many. Had the SHoP staffers succeeded, they would have established the first private-sector architects’ union in the United States since 1947. Still, their attempt gave real-world shape and stakes to what some in the architecture world, myself included, have been talking about for years: Architects are quickly proletarianizing. That is to say, they are starting to see that hitching their wagons to the idea of professional exceptionalism, to the hope that they might one day be firm owners, to the dream that someone with enough money will like their work enough to build it, is a dead end. They are instead betting on solidarity with the working class, first and foremost by recognizing their own status as workers.

Marisa Cortright’s short new book makes this same case, only within the European context. The pamphlet follows the thrust of her 2019 article “Death to the Calling: A Job in Architecture Is Still a Job,” published in the web publication *Failed Architecture*. Cortright’s irritation at the field’s self-perception shows in her studied avoidance of the term “architect”; she opts, instead, for “architectural worker.” While I found other terminological choices less clarifying—particularly her use of the sociologically spurious “professional-managerial class”—her messaging is admirably consistent across the book’s three essays (“Architecture,” “Europe,” and “Organizing”).

Drawing on interviews with designers living in and outside the European Union, Cortright paints a picture of what it’s like to work as an architect today and what possibilities for organizing already exist. Some snapshots appear rosier than others: One Spanish architect, for example, works with her husband “primarily on single-fami-

ly homes” and seems to be comfortably self-employed. Others are bleaker, such as when an architectural curator describes her boss’s dismissive attitude toward equal pay. They are all inflected with the lonely sentiment expressed by the quote, taken from the Yugoslav writer Ivo Andrić’s novel *The Bridge on the Drina*, from which the book’s title is derived: “No one recognizes your efforts and there is no one to help or advise you how to keep what you have earned and saved. Can this be? Surely this cannot be?”

From these vignettes, it becomes clear how organizing could lead to an identity crisis for architectural workers. The “calling” being what it is—per Cortright, an imperative “not to complete some task or travel somewhere,” but to “become something”—many might find it difficult to accept the full implications of a union, i.e., that it is inherently antagonistic to their bosses, even well-liked ones. Cortright notes that architectural workers are inculcated with certain beliefs from the very beginning of their education—for example, that designers work either solo or as part of a nonhierarchical team—and that those beliefs have created within the architecture profession cultural obstacles that stand in the way of collective solidarity.

But these obstacles aren’t merely cultural. By all indications, SHoP bosses perceived the union drive as a threat to the firm’s bottom line. (After declining to recognize the union, SHoP retained the services of a top New York law firm specializing in union-busting.) At the same time, its staffers weren’t moved in sufficient numbers by a message that closely resembles Cortright’s. Perhaps they still hold to the upward-mobility wager, which leads ineluctably to self-employment. In that case, it’s not surprising that they would chafe at the idea of identifying as members of a class with a different set of interests.

Change is possible, however, and those in the design professions are increasingly

becoming conscious of their class positions. A Swedish interviewee tells Cortright that the country’s architects’ union “is also an employers’ association, [which] means I’m not organized. I stayed far away from that association.” From this, Cortright draws the pragmatic conclusion that “there is no ‘us versus them’ when both are under the same roof.” An interview with a member of the Section of Architectural Workers of the London-based independent union United Voices of the World (UVW-SAW) deserves to be quoted at length:

I feel like I’m at a really interesting point in terms of how I see political action, because I’ve gone from very much, ‘oh, we don’t need the union’ in the space of [three to four months] to, ‘we really do need the union.’ I’m still trying to get my head around the fact that stuff won’t change unless someone’s pushing for it. Ultimately I think none of us really want to get into a fight, but all of us want stuff to change. And I still need to go through that process of realizing stuff isn’t going to change without putting up a fight.

UVW-SAW, along with the Future Architects Front and Foreign Architects Switzerland, which also feature in the book, represent a rising left wing in the architectural field seeking to improve material conditions of workers within it. Addressing these and other organizations, Cortright’s short volume is a good exploration of what the possibilities in organizing are, even as it also stresses that organizing efforts will necessarily vary by context and might even extend into the online realm. At the book’s conclusion, she cites an Instagram poll conducted by the architecture meme account @dank.lloyd.wright, whose purpose, evidently, was to demonstrate architectural workers’ desire to unionize. (Asked whether they would join a “dank lloyd wright union,” 94 percent

of respondents answered “yes.”) But while there is certainly a labor-friendly attitude among architectural workers, especially those who spend time on social media, the existence of the poll itself shows that there is still perhaps a fuzzy understanding of where unions get their power. Unless all of the respondents worked in the same workplace (remember, this is a *meme account*), unionizing would give them little leverage, if it was possible at all.

Still, Cortright’s willingness to take @dank.lloyd.wright and put its work in conversation with IRL organizing efforts gestures toward a level of growth—and growing political differentiation—within this broadly construed left wing of architecture.

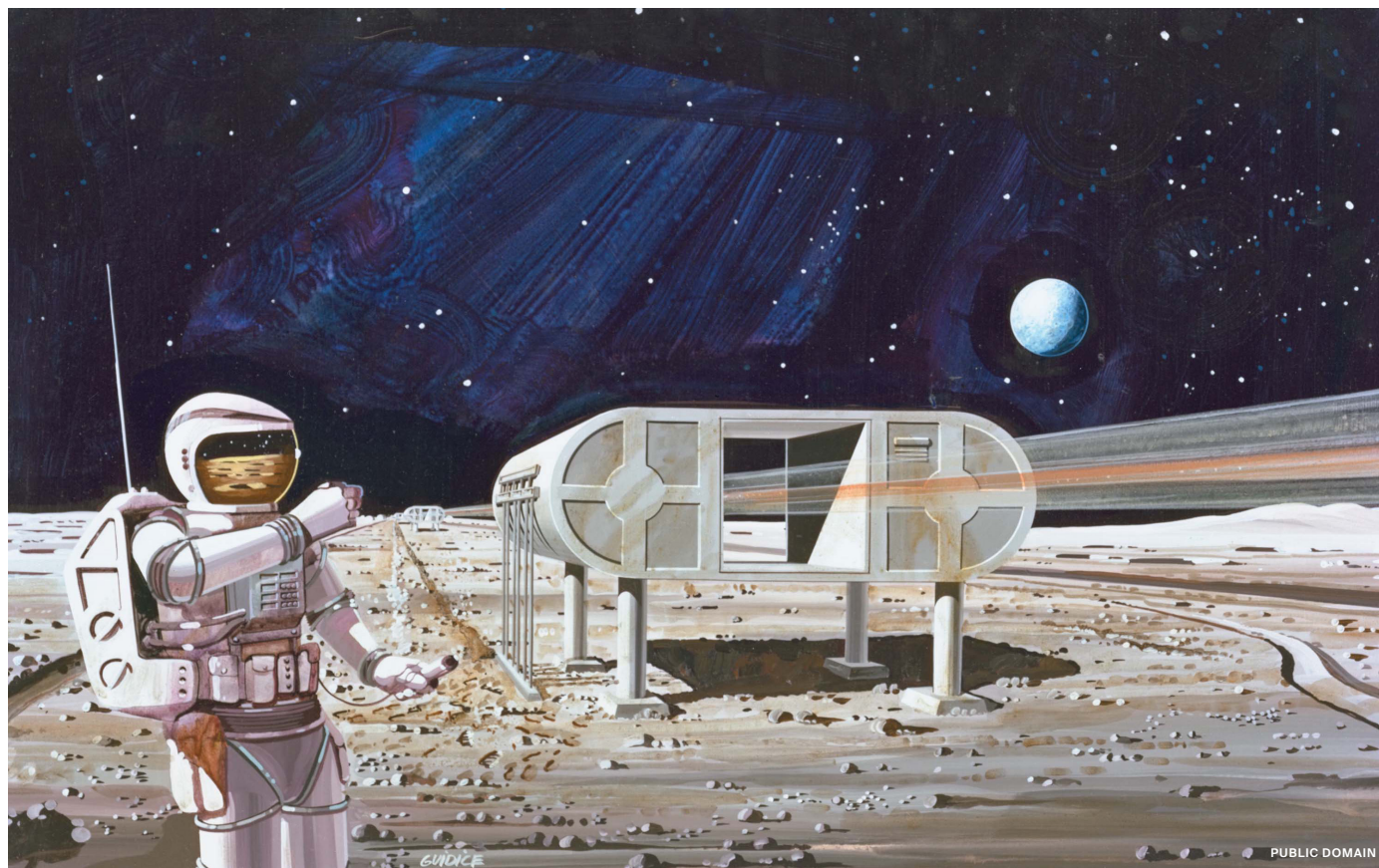
But perhaps the most useful part of the book is the breakdown of how Europe was politically and legally constructed, spelled out in the middle essay, wherein Cortright distinguishes between the working conditions of EU nationals and non-EU nationals. While the former experience a certain level of mobility—still always tethered to the whims of the market—the latter don’t enjoy such freedom and are hamstrung by tough competition with their EU counterparts for jobs that end up driving down wages for both groups. Architectural workers in the U.S. would benefit from a similar analysis, specifically as it pertains to divisions within their profession, so that they can better understand the conditions under which they organize. Overall, “*Can this be?*” poses more questions than it answers, which might be indicative of Cortright’s attitude toward the topic but also of this nebulous political moment, in which everything seems like a possibility, in which the old order is clearly not working, but a new order is not yet in sight—nor is it clear exactly how it’ll come about.

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62 Review

Space Forces: A Critical History of Life in Outer Space

By Fred Scharmen | Verso Books, 2021 | \$27



An illustration by the influential illustrator Rick Giudice depicts a moon colony.

As the world spins deeper into a global pandemic that shows few signs of abating, a new space race forms over our heads. Entry is open to all. Interested parties need only pay Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic \$250,000 for a chance to touch the edge of space (more than 600 customers are currently on the wait list). Back in July, a tiny handful shelled out \$28 million to dine with Jeff Bezos aboard Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket and passed the boundary of space in the process. Passage to the International Space Station can now be booked via Elon Musk's SpaceX, whose Falcon 9 rocket successfully deployed the first private trip to orbit in September. Cost: \$55 million.

To these would-be space cowboys, NASA had its chance and failed; only "great men" can drag the planet up and onward. The only problem is, the public isn't biting. As Vox pointed out, a majority of Americans polled by Pew Research are disillusioned with private space tourism and would rather see the extravagant amounts of money being thrown around by billionaires used to solve terrestrial problems. The sentiment isn't new: Public support for the Apollo missions was divided throughout the 1960s, when rampant income and racial inequality presented a much more pressing target for federal funding.

For their part, Bezos, Branson, and Musk see themselves as charting new paths for the human species, though they differ on the details. They are the self-appointed helmsmen pulling the rest of us into an impossibly bright future where profit charts only go up and to the right. Why resist?

Smug as they are, today's billionaire

Star Trek stans pick up where mystics, rocket scientists, and communists left off. As Fred Scharmen documents in *Space Forces: A Critical History of Life in Outer Space*, many have sought salvation among the stars. The book catalogues these 19th-, 20th-, and 21st-century visionaries, drawing a line from Nikolai Fedorov, the Russian originator of the mostly forgotten Cosmism movement to overcome mortality, to Bezos, a major exponent of longevity tech.

Not directly, of course. Fedorov believed that once humanity solved the riddle of death it might resurrect everyone who had ever died; the only way to sustain this exponential growth was unending expansion by whatever means necessary. (For example, should space-faring humans encounter another sentient species, it would be better to stamp them out at the first available opportunity.) Fedorov died in 1903, but his ideas resonated with utopian revolutionaries such as Alexander Bogdanov, whose 1908 novel *Red Star* depicts a socialist Mars, where Martians are freed from societal divisions by a lack of plate tectonics and labor is not compelled but willingly offered. But after exhausting the resources of their home planet, and an unsuccessful expedition to Venus, the Martians begin to eye Earth as a potential substitute. All that stands in the way of their cosmic destiny is human society, which, being less evolved and mired in backward, capitalistic strife, is worthy of extermination.

Bezos plays up the colonialism angle, though not explicitly. "The solar system can easily support a trillion humans," he has said in reference to Blue Origin, the

aerospace company he founded in 2000. By his own admission, Bezos modeled his Promethean dreams on the work of Princeton physicist Gerard O'Neill, whose 1975 NASA Summer Study program conceived of enormous toroidal or spherical spacecraft capable of sustaining life. These spinning megastructures, analyzed in great detail in Scharmen's previous book, *Space Settlements*, were to feature rolling pastures, lakes, and picturesque hill towns—a slice of Alpine Austria churning through the vacuum of space. Blue Origin even developed its own version of the "O'Neill cylinder," one populated with pastiches of Earth-bound landmarks.

Scharmen's narrative brings to mind the 2019 Brad Pitt film *Ad Astra*, which imagines the moon as a pit stop on the interstellar highway, its craggy surface smothered in gift shops and chain restaurants. It's a grim, if perfunctory, extrapolation of homo economicus, for whom everything—including the cosmos—appears fungible, there to be exploited, consumed, and trampled on.

Space Forces offers more avatars of hope, such as the novelist Ursula Le Guin, whose *Hainish Cycle* disperses versions of humanity across the galaxy, than it does dealers of doom. Wernher von Braun, the Nazi who headed up the American space program after Germany's defeat, is a curious mixture of the two.

Von Braun looms large in Scharmen's study for his relentless advocacy of manned spaceflight and Martian colonization. On Hitler's orders, the aerospace engineer oversaw the creation of the V-2 ballistic missile to terrorize Allied cities; the rock-

ets were assembled by prisoners in the underground Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp, where 20,000 would ultimately die as slaves to fuel Germany's war economy. Resettled in America as part of Operation Paperclip, von Braun quickly took to his adoptive homeland, publishing educational leaflets and science fiction stories that teased a near future where middle-class Americans would live and work among the stars. He even worked with Walt Disney (himself a Leni Riefenstahl fan and tacit supporter of Nazi policies) on a series of films popularizing human space flight.

It was von Braun's ability to code switch, to say the right things to the right people at the right time, that kept him in the public spotlight for so long. On the one hand, he was space's most effective salesman, almost guileless in his love for the subject. On the other, he lobbied the U.S. government to build an orbital station capable of deploying a nuclear payload anywhere in the world, thus subduing the Soviets or any other perceived enemies. "Peace through security" was always a core tenet of von Braun's ambitions, and his extended placement in *Space Forces* underlines a very real dichotomy at the heart of every epoch. Do we want to expand skyward for the sake of exploration or, instead, as an expansion of empire? Is it even possible to reconcile the fact that the rockets potentially carrying mankind toward its Mars were built on bloodshed and literal slave labor?

In the book's introduction, Scharmen argues that we should understand moving offworld as colonization even if no one is being physically displaced. After all, somewhere in the chain of resource extraction, manufacturing, assemblage, and testing, someone is being *immiserated*. For Elon Musk's or Jeff Bezos's utopias in the sky to be realized, people must be exploited (or as early science fiction writers admitted, enslaved). If Musk has his way, the first waves of space travelers may be pressed into service as Martian guinea pigs, thus ensuring the safety of the rich. And therein lies the rub: Funneling people into the furnace of progress is the only way forward, because it's how we've always done things.

Writing at the book's end, Scharmen reflects on the creation of the titular Space Force by former president Trump in 2019. He correctly surmises that sending the U.S. Armed Services into orbit will only induce greater militarization back on Earth, potentially ending in the extinction of the species. Humanity won't realize its potential up above. What our billionaires are peddling are repackaged versions of yesterday's future. If the promise of space exploration is one of wholly new ways of seeing, designing, and interacting with the universe, why does it look exactly like the '70s? Why are we carrying forward the same modes of thinking that so easily excuse human sacrifice? Why must a utopia for some be a dystopia for everyone else? *Space Forces* pulls back the sheen of space to reveal the dangers lurking within.

Jonathan Hilburg

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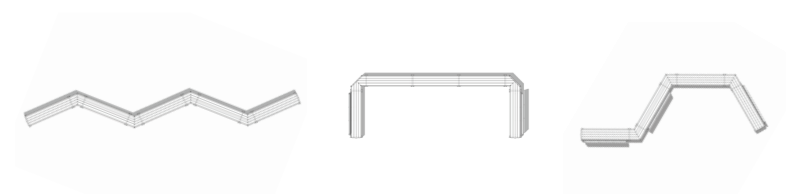
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