When work began in 2002, Santa Monica firm Pugh + Scarpa’s Fuller Lofts was seen as a major coup for LA. The 104-unit project, built out of a 1920s cast-in-place concrete Fuller Paints warehouse in Lincoln Heights, included 50 percent affordable housing and was considered the flagship project for Livable Places, a nonprofit affordable-housing developer cofounded by Scarpa principal Larry Scarpa and other major players. But the project has been plagued.

**Venice Snag**

After successfully receiving de facto approval for a major hotel on the Sunset Strip, Los Angeles architect Eric Owen Moss is experiencing a bumpy ride in Venice, where he’s seeking consent to build 35 feet higher than current planning standards.

Opponents attack density and affordability of new downtown plan

**Berkeley Brawl**

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After successfully receiving de facto approval for a major hotel on the Sunset Strip, Los Angeles architect Eric Owen Moss is experiencing a bumpy ride in Venice, where he’s seeking consent to build 35 feet higher than current planning standards. The architect is fresh off an August 6 victory in West Hollywood.

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New location for Broad’s art museum sought

**Up in the Air**

Eli Broad’s effort to build a new museum on the corner of Wilshire and Santa Monica boulevards in Beverly Hills may be all but dead. Sources close to the project have told AN that the billionaire art collector is looking elsewhere. Meanwhile, the Broad Art Foundation,

**Stalemate**

The 104-unit Fuller lofts.

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In a recent New York Times article, Nicola Ouroosoff argues that the New York Five—Peter Eisenman, Charles Gwathmey, Michael Graves, Richard Meier, and John Hejduk—rose to prominence in the 1970s when New York was “beginning to close itself off to innovative architecture.” Though the critic allows that New York could then still claim to be the country’s center of architectural thought, he suggests that the Five created out of that era’s vibrant culture “the last heroic period in New York architecture.”

In his story, titled “As Heroes Disappear, the City Needs More,” Ouroosoff goes on to reassert—with very little evidence—an often repeated claim. In the subsequent decades, he writes, “The country’s creative energy shifted westward, to Los Angeles, whose vibrant mix of urban grit and nature, abundance of relatively cheap land and lack of confining historical traditions allowed architects to experiment with a freedom that had become virtually impossible in New York.” California’s supposed freedom produced architects like Michael Malzarz, Kevin Daly, and Chris Gerik, a cadre of talent, Ouroosoff says, with “no real equivalent in New York.”

However important these architects may be—clearly, like many other LA architects of their generation, they do impressive work—to suggest that New York has no comparable talent is absurd. Ouroosoff, long an admirer of Southern California architecture, turns even an article on the New York Five into an exercise in promoting LA’s “creative energy” and decrying New York’s “dearth of ‘innovative architecture.’” His claim that the most important contemporary works to rise in New York over the past decade were designed not by New Yorkers but by Angelenos (Thom Mayne, Frank Gehry), a Japanese woman (Kazuyo Sejima of SANAA), and a Frenchman (Novel) might actually be seen as a vote for the city’s confidence, strength, and openness—not something to be condemned.

But more consequentially, using a discussion of the New York Five to argue that the city has closed itself off to innovative architecture is simply wrong-headed. For example, when the New York Five first appeared in 1967 at an Arthur Drexler—curated exhibition at MoMA, they had just emerged from East Coast universities and built only a few private houses. It was New York’s architecture media infrastructure (magazines, publishers, museums, galleries, and critics) that created the group, and it is frankly still without parallel in this country. In addition, the educational institutions in New York’s East Coast orbit, from whence came the Five, were and are still the most important in the world. These institutions educate and support architects with teaching positions at the highest level—including nearly every LA architect of any importance. Due in part to this unrivaled critical mass, the level of discourse, critique, and even experiment in New York can hardly be called staid. The type of architectural thinking that produced plans for the High Line and Fresh Kills landfill, for example, are only two recent New York projects, could only have come out of the East Coast architecture hopper.

The Times article concludes that in New York, “Real change will first demand a radical shift in our cultural priorities.” Politicians will have to embrace the latest Western architecture theory and the direction of urban education toward small, intimate learning environments as cosmopolitanism that was once the city’s core identity. Yet a recent trip to Los Angeles to look at the city’s new high schools, including Coop Himmelblau’s new Central Los Angeles High School, makes it seem that the politicians in that city have already begun to do so. They are building gigantic new schools, buildings that despite their stated architectural aspirations are misguided about the direction of urban education toward small, intimate learning environments as anything in recent memory. In fact, it is in New York where design-savvy administrators like David Burney at the DDC and Janette Sadik-Khan at the DOT are creating new models of cosmopolitan architecture right under the nose of those who want to believe that “nothing has come out of New York in decades.”

WILLIAM MENKINS
Edward Cella Art + Architecture is a welcome addition to LA's Museum Row at 6018 Wilshire Boulevard, across from LACMA. Relocated from Santa Barbara, Cella recently moved into the storefront gallery designed by Lisa Landworth of Landworth Deboleske Associates. It's twice the size of his former space; the 2,000 square feet are broken up into three rooms, each with its own character. The front draws north light from the street, the middle has a skylight, and the small back room has low tungsten lighting for the display of drawings. "I was attracted by the clarity of Lisa's design and the high quality of construction," said Cella. To give it a distinctive signature, he commissioned a two-person workstation with built-in storage from Ball-Nogues Studio. They created a sculptured block of industrially-cut laminated workstations with built-in storage from Ball-Nogues Studio.

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Taecker said that all new buildings would be required to meet LEED Gold or higher. As for the affordable housing, he said there was only so much the market could bear, especially during a downturn. Furthermore, the inclusionary housing bonus is already set to 20 percent citywide, and changing that standard could drive development out of the very areas in which the plan is attempting to encourage it. "Five percent of nothing is still nothing," Taecker said. He also suggested that many of the petitioners were concerned with height more than anything else.

If the referendum goes down in defeat, the plan will go into effect immediately. As passed, it allows developers to put up eight buildings of 100 feet to 225 feet in height. The city now caps building heights at 85 feet, although there are variances for affordable housing and sustainability inclusions. The plan also calls for the creation of large public open spaces, called “park blocks,” and for smaller places; the modification of streets to top out car speeds at 25 miles per hour; and the further promotion of retail space downtown. New development fees would go to open space creation, landscape improvement, tree planting, and new street signs.

Given past history, even if the referendum passes, it may not succeed with voters. Seven years ago, a measure to reduce building heights along major streets failed in a citywide vote by 80 percent. Bates has also threatened to sue the two council members if the referendum passes. While he has yet to meet with the city’s legal team, he is concerned that the wording of the referendum was deliberately misleading and did not accurately describe the zoning plan. "It seemed to us unreasonable that two people could circumvent the will of hundreds of people and years of meetings," Bates said. "We have a really great plan, and it’s sad to see this hiccup."
The Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Central Los Angeles Area High School #9 for the Visual and Performing Arts, which opened on September 9, is a building destined for infamy—and this probably suits its avowedly radical designer, Wolf D. Prix, just fine. The collection of large geometric shapes tilted and torqued like distorted chess pieces, reminiscent of a Russian Constructivist dream, is a powerful waking vision to drivers whistling past on the adjacent 101 freeway, and to denizens strolling Grand Avenue on a night out at Walt Disney Concert Hall or the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

Prix's firm, Coop Himmelb(l)au, was brought in by the city's self-appointed civic czar and reigning arts patron, Eli Broad, to transform an early, no-frills plan for a school into a signature campus form an early, no-frills plan for arts patron, Eli Broad, to trans-
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Grab A Seat

One of San Francisco's newest parks measures just 7,000 square feet. It's a simple affair: a few sets of cafe tables and chairs with a row of bollards and planters separating it from a busy intersection. Thanks to the city's new Pavements-to-Parks initiative, in May this temporary pedestrian plaza replaced a two-way street, where 17th Street intersects with Castro and Market. Two more such plazas, in the Mission and Potrero Hill, are scheduled to open by the end of September. There are plenty of reasons to cheer for this step on the path to a more pedestrian-friendly city. But what makes these parks truly remarkable are the fast-track way in which they were created—a highly visible experiment in urban planning, where the community can test-drive the design and provide input before it becomes permanent.

It took only a few months to get sign-off on the plaza design and three days to install it. Design services were supplied pro-bono by the firm Public Architecture, labor was provided by the Department of Public Works, and all materials were donated. The bollards are cardboard concrete molds, lined with plastic and planted with palms and flowers, and the asphalt was painted tan to distinguish it from the street.

It's a refreshing shift from standard operating procedure, where discord among constituents and difficulties in securing funds can bog down public projects for years. “By implementing a site and allowing the space to be the laboratory, you don’t have to try and get everything right from day one,” said Andres Power, project manager for the initiative and an urban designer in the city’s planning department. “The model is to be very creative in how we pull together resources and materials—there’s very little capital expense. It’s a great way to show that we can make a difference very easily.”

San Francisco is the second major city to try this approach after New York’s pioneering foray in 2007, where 31 temporary plazas are currently in the pipeline. New York transportation commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan masterminded the project and in a talk last year galvanized Ed Reiskin, who heads San Francisco’s department of public works. Based on the response to the first park, he’s ready to declare a success. “People are requesting more plazas, we have architecture firms clamoring to partner with us for free, we have some corporate sponsors—these are all good signs,” said Reiskin.

San Francisco’s happy twist on New York’s program has been to bring in individual design firms to tackle each park, showcasing creative energy when there is little budget. Local architect Jane Martin, best known for making it easier and cheaper to take a jackhammer to a sidewalk in order to create a garden, used fallen trees from Golden Gate Park in her design of Guerrero Park in the Mission—a symbolic link between the start of underutilized road, a lack of nearby public space, community interest, the ability to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, public attractions like cafes, and a neighborhood steward willing to keep an eye on things.

San Francisco’s department of public works is now reviewing a list of 25 to 30 sites that meet the five criteria set by the initiative: a stretch of underutilized road, a lack of nearby public space, community interest, the ability to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, public attractions like cafes, and a neighborhood steward willing to keep an eye on things. San Francisco’s happy twist on New York’s program has been to bring in individual design firms to tackle each park, showcasing creative energy when there is little budget.

Local architect Jane Martin, best known for making it easier and cheaper to take a jackhammer to a sidewalk in order to create a garden, used fallen trees from Golden Gate Park in her design of Guerrero Park in the Mission—a symbolic link between the start of one park to another. And for “Showplace Triangle” in Potrero Hill, San Francisco design firm Rebar decided to co-opt the iconography of the road, using turn-lane arrows to generate a mosaic-like pattern. The firm has its own inspired pavements-to-parks effort: PARK(ing) Day, in which urban activists temporarily take over parking spaces to create tiny public parks for a day. The event just celebrated its fourth year on September 18. Since its inception, PARK(ing) Day has grown into a worldwide phenomenon, with large-scale efforts in LA, Portland, and Seattle as well.

“There’s a whole movement of interim use as a way of activating urban spaces,” said John Bela of Rebar. “We’re circumventing the traditional planning processes and showing what’s the minimum infrastructure required to turn these sites into beautiful public places.”

Lydia Lee
In August, the Los Angeles city council unanimously approved an emergency ordinance to prohibit new digital billboards, multistory supergraphics, and some freeway-facing signs. The move was enacted to prevent the city’s current “Interim Control Ordinance” (ICO), which temporarily bans new outdoor advertising, from being struck down in a court challenge. But the emergency measure creates more ambiguity for developers and architects as they wait for the issue to be settled. “It resolves uncertainties for the city, but creates more for architects and developers,” said Paul Rohrer, an attorney at Manatt, Phelps & Phillips who represents several developers.

For the past year, the city council has been working to develop new rules for billboard advertising that will stand up against legal challenges. In the meantime, the city has continued to pass temporary moratoriums as stopgap measures. The most recent temporary ban was challenged in court by Liberty Media Group, which claimed the ICO violated several California codes, and argued that the city had prevented Liberty Media from obtaining permits to erect supergraphics while issuing permits to other media companies and developers. The case was scheduled for a hearing before a federal judge on August 17, but has now been postponed to consider the new ordinance’s effect on the case. The council feared that if the ban were to be defeated, billboard companies would overrun the city with applications for new signs. The unanimous vote represents an about-face for Seventh District Councilmember Richard Alarcón, who had previously called for a law that would allow councilmembers to coordinate sign swaps that would remove some signs in exchange for allowing new digital signs.

The continued delays for a comprehensive sign ordinance have frustrated architects and developers. In March, the City Planning Commission recommended a different ordinance to the city council that included plans for 21 “sign districts,” including Hollywood, Universal City, Westchester, and Boyle Heights. The latest emergency measure essentially nullifies such special-use districts. Large development projects in proposed sign districts that have gotten entitlements for off-site advertising signs but have not yet gotten building permits are now out of luck, since the city will no longer issue permits for new billboard types included in the ban.

According to Derek Ryder, a member of the AIA/LA Ad-Hoc Sign Committee and principal at the architecture firm Alias Designs, the ongoing legal wrangling and emergency bans are taking a toll on architects. The uncertainty around sign regulation means architects and developers “are unable to finalize their designs or pro-formas, and may be choosing to extend submit- tal dates for projects just to know which way the city council will go on this issue,” said Ryder.

Rohrer, citing the legal challenges presented by billboard company World Wide Rush against the city’s temporary ICO, in addition to the Liberty Media court case, echoed Ryder’s concerns. “The uncertainty hurts architects by discouraging development,” he said, adding that the more critical issue is enforcement. “If the city isn’t properly enforcing the laws they have, passing new laws doesn’t help.” For his part, anti-billboard activist Dennis Hathaway of the Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight foresees future court challenges to the latest ordinance.

Within the design community, opinions on the issue are split. “For the architects and developers who support digital billboards, a permanent ban would be a setback to the cause of technological expression, freedom of speech, and unfettered commerce,” said Ryder. “For proponents of a public space dedicated to the public without the loud, simplistic messages of commerce intruding on your every view down the street, a permanent ban would be a modest step forward in a city already heavily blighted by the excesses of a powerful billboard industry and an auto-centric urbanism.”
Architects, like vines, are challenged by a steep slope and, in both instances, the product is often more interesting than had it been rooted in the flats. As late as the 1940s, plots in the hills around LA were practically free; Sunset magazine even gave them away as a premium for new subscribers. Wright, Schindler, and Neutra all created memorable houses in Silverlake and the Hollywood Hills, and Escher GuneWardena Architects have created a worthy addition to that legacy. The three-level house they built for a young couple in Glassell Park is spare, sustainable, and site-specific. It also feels surprisingly spacious for its 2,400 square feet.

The clients chanced upon the architects 12 years ago, when Joe Sola, a widely exhibited artist and his wife, Erin Wright, first visited their office in Silverlake and were inspired by an array of models. (In the meantime, Sola was hired away from the Gagosian Gallery by Michael Govan to be director of special projects at LACMA.) The design took shape soon after they found the site in 2000, but delays in financing and securing permits pushed construction to 2007-2008. Throughout the nine years of gestation, the basic concept remained unchanged: three rectangular forms loosely stacked one atop the other. A garage-studio occupies the base, bedrooms and a linear gallery are at mid-level, and the upper level is an open-plan living-dining-kitchen. The north-south orientation was determined by the need for access and parking at the end of a sloping street. Recessed glass sliders at either end frame contrasting views, up to a nature preserve and down to a neighborhood of small, detached houses. Engineer Andrew Nasser, who worked with John Lautner in his later years, devised an economical solution for the retaining walls to generate three 12-foot-high stepped terraces. This allowed the house to be built as a type-5 wood-frame structure without caissons. The three volumes of the house form a cubist block that is shrink-wrapped in white Sarnafil, an inexpensive and durable thermo-plastic membrane developed in Switzerland. Sheets of this material were heat-welded to create a taut skin that unifies the composition and provides good insulation. It’s a technology that the European pioneers, struggling to create purist structures in northern climates, would have embraced with passion.

The interior is also treated as a seamless whole. White walls and ceilings of painted gypsum board complement the white floor, which is covered with an industrial-grade laminate that can easily be washed down. Playing off these white boxes are planes and containers of boldly grained Douglas fir plywood. The stairs that link the three levels are treated as narrow white fissures, with an outer layer of the plywood also used as warm-toned paneling for the master bedroom, sliding screens, and storage closets. The cool rationality of the design is enriched by the contrasts of dark and light, of the narrow wood-lined spine on the second floor and the luminous expanses of the living areas above. There, two storage blocks, a kitchen island of white Corian, and lacquered cabinets float free within the void. It is architecture as a minimalist artwork that comfortably accommodates a collection of works on paper (protected from glare by roll-down blinds) and an eclectic mix of plain and vintage furniture. Still to come is the landscaping that will bind the house to the native trees, shrubs and grasses that flank it on two sites. The owners were able to purchase a double lot, which should ensure that their immediate neighbor will be designed to the same high standard as their own house and, hopefully, engage it in a creative dialogue. In a land-hungry city, that’s an ideal that is rarely achieved and it will provide an even greater challenge for an architect than did the original bare site.

Clockwise from top: Three floors are stacked off-center, allowing for varied views; light pours in through large windows in the upper-floor kitchen; a suspended fireplace in the living room; the house is built into the hillside; interiors are clad in Douglas fir plywood.
foot gallery complex will Descanso, the 2,800-square-foot gallery and exhibition space to be one of Los Angeles' only and nationally produced art shows, and thematically-curated exhibitions. The Gardens to exhibit their work in solo shows, group shows, and thematically-curated exhibitions.

The mission, said David Brown, executive director of Descanso, will be to inspire a new appreciation of nature through visual arts. He added that the gallery plans to invite artists to come to the Gardens to exhibit their work in solo shows, group shows, and thematically-curated exhibitions.

"We wanted to respect the structure that was already there," said Fisher of his design, "and yet add to it, resulting in a structure of the level of quality of an exhibition space that one would do from scratch."

The design includes two exhibition spaces to be created within the existing structure, and a new 1,300-square-foot gallery to be built into a hillside adjacent to the former garage. The design incorporates both vertical gardens and roof gardens to create visual connections between the setting and the new structure. "We wanted to respect the structure that was already there," said Fisher of his design, "and yet add to it, resulting in a structure of the level of quality of an exhibition space that one would do from scratch."

The approval brings valuable transit occupancy taxes from its hotel component to the adult in the room, as the only one who sees the greater good, and the greater good just happens to be particularly good for Eric Owen Moss."

While project developer Valley Heart Group LLC has filed an application with the city, at press time a hearing date for the project had not been set by the City of Los Angeles Planning Department.
A multi-level bus stop that not only serves mass-transit users but doubles as a produce stand; a grocery store planned for a low-income neighborhood where currently fresh fruits and vegetables are all but unattainable; a proposal to rezone vacant city properties for farming uses; and a site-specific volume constructed for harvest fog. Those were just a few of the entries in a design competition dubbed Redesign Your Farmers’ Market, whose winners were announced on September 2.

Initiated 30 years after the advent of the first farmers’ markets in Southern California, the competition asked designers, architects, farmers, chefs, vendors, and shoppers to devise innovative improvements for the supply chain that delivers produce grown by local farmers to urban residents. Sponsored by GOOD magazine, The Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, CO Architects, The Los Angeles Good Food Network, and The Architect’s Newspaper, Redesign Your Farmers’ Market drew 65 entries from countries as far away as Lithuania. The range of concepts was equally far-reaching, from the simple and highly executable—new ideas for structuring booths, small containers to transport produce, or renovations to existing markets—to the sweeping and politically challenging, like Jacob Lang’s intricate planning manifesto to rezone underutilized land for farming in areas where fresh and inexpensive produce is most needed.

Though submissions contemplated multiple avenues of improvement, two trends were evident. The first was the use of school properties as markets/urban farmlands. The second was the reconfiguration of municipal bus lines, subway cars, or trains to convey fresh fruits and vegetables throughout cities.

Ultimately, however, the Farm on Wheels concept from Los Angeles–based landscape architecture firm Mia Lehrer and Associates, which revitalized the idea of a centralized market and married it with a neighborhood truck system, won the day. Under the model, local farmers would bring their produce to a centralized Farmers Distribution Market, which integrated a farm into the Hollywood Harbor Lofts in Anaheim.

The jury, composed of farmers’ market organizers, journalists, theorists, and farmers, cited Lehrer’s proposal for several reasons: for its capability to deliver food across income and ethnicities; for its keeping small farmers in charge of their own profit levels; for its inclusion of a market component allowing farmers to continue a personal interaction with consumers; and for its sustainable approach. Electric trucks would replace gasoline dinosaurs.

First runner-up was The New City Center of Urban Farming by im Studio mi/Los Angeles, which integrated a farm into the Hollywood farmer’s market. The second runner-up was San Francisco–based BCV Architects’ The Urban Field Farm Stop, which suggested building produce stands into bus stops.

And Hydroponic Farmers’ Market by San Francisco architect Michael K. Leung was the third runner-up, with an undulating, horizontal form of polypropylene mesh to enclose a hanging farm that literally feeds off fog. The mesh recalls the fleetingness of the fog it is intended to harvest, while creating a promenade for consumers who purchase the fruits of the farm at ground level.

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The Dallas Cowboys, Texas Stadium in suburban Arlington, and the stadium's owner, Jerry Jones, could have renovated the well-loved but worn-out old Texas Stadium to fully embrace the spirit of the fans and city. “The stadium needs to be stamped with the DNA of its surroundings,” he said. “Sports facilities are very meaningful places for people because of the memories associated with them.”

That sense of nostalgia could make it difficult for fans who bonded with the 38-year-old Texas Stadium to fully embrace the scale of the new venue and the over-the-top experience it offers: Two high-definition screens running from 20-yard line to 20-yard line hang 90 feet above the field, flanked by two smaller screens, each 27 feet tall by 48 feet wide. Fans, whether seated in a luxury suite or at the top tier, have unencumbered views more akin to indoor arena seating than to that of a traditional stadium. (Unfortunately, NFL punters have already proven that they can hit the screens as well.)

While the Cowboys originally expressed an interest in going green, announcing in 2008 that they were signing onto the EPA’s now-defunct National Environmental Performance Track, HKS did not respond when asked to discuss any sustainable features. If the apparent lack of green bothers Cowboys fans, you wouldn’t know it. Less than one year before the stadium opened, the Dallas News reported that 85 percent of the 2009 season tickets had been sold. Cowboys fan Steve McPherson voiced the opinion of many when he said that the new stadium “doesn’t really matter to me, but I’ll probably make it to one game this season. I am interested in seeing those big screens.”

Allison Milionis
NEW STATE INFRASTRUCTURE PANEL INCLUDES NO ARCHITECTS

Back in February, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger created a new program to foster private investment in public infrastructure projects in the hopes of stimulating a notoriously underfunded sector in California. On July 24, it was announced that the program would be overseen by a panel of experts known as the Public Infrastructure Advisory Commission. But it turns out that none of the commission's 23 members are licensed architects, drawing protest from the LA chapter of the AIA.

On August 11 John Kaliski, president of AIA/Los Angeles, wrote a letter to Dale Bonner, chair of the commission and head of the state's Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, which oversees the commission. "We are greatly concerned that the omission of an architect on the PIAC Board will deter from your mandate 'to help state and regional transportation agencies develop performance-based partnerships that deliver real value to the public,'" Kaliski wrote.

While the letter commended the state for taking steps to "resolve the current fiscal crisis" through public-private partnerships, Kaliski urged Bonner to "reconsider the present embodiment" of the commission. The commission was created by Senate Bill 4, which opens the door for public transportation entities to bid on the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of transportation facilities and work related to them. The agency hopes it will help close a projected $50.3 billion gap for the state's infrastructure facilities and work related to them. The growth in maintenance, and operation of transportation facilities and work related to them. The agency hopes it will help close a projected $50.3 billion gap for the state’s infrastructure needs over the next decade. The commission will identify opportunities for such projects, research and analyze similar projects around the world, generate best practices, and provide advice and procurement-related services. The commissioners in charge of this program include a number of transportation and infrastructure experts from government, labor, academia, and business, but there are also representatives from such unrelated groups as the Reason Foundation, Disney, and investment banking. There are only two engineers on the commission, and no designers.

Responding to why an architect was not included in the commission’s composition, agency spokesman Michael Bowman said that the commission is “not tasked with designing plans [but with] providing best practices for financing agreements.”

But AIA/LA remains steadfast. Will Wright, director of government and public affairs, said an architect could still provide valuable perspective on financial matters. "Having an architect on a commission that reviews project delivery arrangements can provide invaluable insight regarding how to maximize best value for the investment and how to best integrate that investment with the community," Wright wrote in an email.

And Kaliski reiterated that the vast experience of architects could not be ignored. "The most important aspect of architect participation is that architects and landscape architects are called upon increasingly to integrate the relationship between development, building, infrastructure, and the environment," Kaliski told AIA/LA. "Infrastructure, particularly as it involves the co-location of resources, is most definitely an engineering and design problem."

According to Bowman, the agency has no plans to include architects, nor representatives of any other group concerned about the commission’s work. Bowman instead stressed that the commission will be transparent and that the AIA’s input was welcome.

MAGNETIC MOVE

In mid-September, federal authorities announced $45 million in funding to study the first phase of a Maglev corridor between Las Vegas and Southern California. If built, the California-Nevada Interstate Maglev project would create a 269-mile line from Las Vegas to Anaheim. The first stretch would run from Vegas to Primm, Nevada, on the California border. The funds had been approved years ago, but had been held up by congressional disputes.

NOT SO GRAND

Bill Witte, West Coast president of the Related Companies, told the LA Downtown News on September 18 that his company’s $1 billion, 1.3 million-square-foot Grand Avenue project (known as The Grand) will continue to be stalled for some time. He told the paper that the company “is waiting out the current recession and the frozen lending markets, and will still need an estimated $700 million construction loan.” The project still has no groundbreaking date.
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Even as the world gets greener, global power demand is growing, pushing renewable forms like solar energy into the mainstream. Meanwhile, buildings continue to top the list of power guzzlers, consuming 40 percent of world demand. As architecture moves forward, it will become increasingly important to not only use less energy, but to produce it. Aaron Seward investigates the promise and pitfalls of building-integrated photovoltaics, and the hurdles that remain in the way of architecture’s future.
When the global glass industry convened in Tampere, Finland in June, the top item on the agenda was the coming wave of solar power—glassy arrays spanning the desert and crowning rooftops. But architects in the audience took note of one prophet in particular: Léon Glessen, the CEO of Scheuten, a leading electric glass producer based in Germany. Office buildings, he pointed out, are notoriously wasteful, for they are occupied only five days in a week, and just eight hours a day. Factor in lunch breaks, sick time, and vacation, and they’re used about 12 percent of the time. These are primarily glass-clad structures, often 800 feet tall or higher, standing vacant most of the time: a vast opportunity, in other words, to generate solar power.

Over the past decade, the architectural glass industry has made huge strides in improving the material’s thermal and sun-control performance. Its next step is the gorill that Glessen went on to promote: energy production. Up until this point, creating buildings with energy-producing solar cells integral to the design—known as building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV)—has remained something of a chimera. On paper, BIPVs open the way to elegant, carbon-neutral architecture. In practice, however, they never seem to generate much power, usually only a fraction of a building’s overall demand. And aesthetically, today’s clunky panel systems leave much to be desired. “One limitation of many of the solar products is that they come in only standard sizes,” explained Michael Scheuten, a leading electric glass producer and the audience took note of one prophet in particular: Léon Glessen, the CEO of Scheuten, a leading electric glass producer based in Germany. Office buildings, he pointed out, are notoriously wasteful, for they are occupied only five days in a week, and just eight hours a day. Factor in lunch breaks, sick time, and vacation, and they’re used about 12 percent of the time. These are primarily glass-clad structures, often 800 feet tall or higher, standing vacant most of the time: a vast opportunity, in other words, to generate solar power.

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One of the world’s largest thin-film PV glazing projects to date, the Kanazawa Municipal Bus Terminal by Taiyo Architects was completed in 2005, with 3,000 panels customized to meet Japan’s heavy snow-load requirements. The canopy glazing has five percent transparency, producing 112 kWh and cutting the structure’s carbon footprint by 686 tons over a 20-year period.

Berlin-based solar-module manufacturer Solon opened its new corporate and production headquarters earlier this year. The design, by German firm Schulte-Frohlinde Architekten, features approximately 1,000 BIPV glass panels that encircle and sit atop the building’s green roof, producing 210 kWh in addition to providing solar shading for administrative spaces.

**SOLON HEADQUARTERS**

**KANJIWA BUS TERMINAL**
A 65-foot curtain wall with BIPVs arrayed in a varying density marks the entrance to the Lillis Business Center at the University of Oregon, designed by SRG Partnership and completed in 2003. The building was awarded a LEED Silver designation in 2005, in part due to four separate PV systems that produce a combined total of 46 kWh.

Renzo Piano is said to have conceived his original design for the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco without a solar canopy, but after seeing the PV technology available, the architect ringed the building with 720 PV-embedded panels that produce 172 kWh and helped the academy gain its LEED Platinum certification following its completion in 2008.
Kiss + Cathcart’s 2020 Tower concept is a study of what a New York net-zero skyscraper could look like. The tower’s slender profile increases the amount of sunlight hitting its BIPV glass facade, which with today’s technology could produce two-thirds of the building’s energy demands—about 100 kWh per square meter each year—with the remainder met by integrated wind turbines.

The National Association of Home Builders’ 2009 New American Home show house in Las Vegas, designed by California-based Danielian Associates, integrates a new type of PV technology into its poolside trellis and awning structures. The bifacial panels manufactured by Sanyo produce power from both sides, resulting in a previously unattainable 23 percent energy-conversion efficiency.

NEW AMERICAN HOME

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NEW AMERICAN HOME
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Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects
Photo: Michael Moran

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TRENDS: Sliding doors have grown up into versatile, operable walls

HARDWARE: The latest, sleekest mechanisms arrive with a whisper, not a crash

GREEN: High-impact doors for stormy weather offer good insulation, too
Born of the demand to minimize barriers without forgoing all privacy, a new breed of partition is emerging. Whether three feet wide or 300, sliding doors provide the impact and sophistication of moveable walls, with designs that fold, glide, or hide away. These new models allow for more flexible space—creating two conference rooms out of one, or turning a cozy kitchen into an alfresco dining area—and blur the line between indoors and out.

For homes, restaurants, hotels, and offices, there have never been so many choices available from both domestic and European designers. High-tech systems are redefining what the world expects from a door. JENNIFER KRICHELS unlocks some of the newest designs making a grand entrance.
The Leader in Opening Glass Walls

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Enjoy the best of both worlds: a room with a view that opens to the outdoors yet gives you the peace of mind only a weather resistant NanaWall provides.
Vitrosca uses glazing as a structural element to support the window, allowing for a minimal frame. The guillotine design, available in aluminum or stove-enamelled colors, has stainless-steel bearings and a precise pulley mechanism. The 18-mm profile accommodates all types of insulated glass, with a maximum glazing surface of 65 square feet per panel. Handles and press-button or cylindrical locks are integrated into the frame.

PK-30 panels are cushioned by a proprietary clear silicone gasket, ensuring easy operation and long life in commercial applications. Doors include sliding, hinged, pocket, and folding configurations, and major components are extruded from a high-grade recyclable aluminum alloy that creates a rigid yet lightweight panel. The satin-anodized finish resists corrosion and is easy to clean.

A lighter, thinner version of Raydoor’s patented twin-frame design, the Model 175 is a new 1 1/2-inch twin frame that allows for the use of one or more multiple panels in a narrower opening. The system, manufactured in Brooklyn, is available with folding, bypassing, telescoping, pocket, and stacking tracks that do not require a floor track. Though panels are available in 18 styles, system hardware is sold separately should a design require a unique panel material.

Manufactured in British Columbia and North Carolina, Raumplus North America’s German-designed sliding door systems can be installed as replacements within existing openings and on top-hung, double-hung, and barn-door tracks. With an extruded-silicone flap gasket weather strip that is compressed as a multi-latchpoint lever handle lowers the door, Maine-based Duratherm’s doors are designed for a range of weather. Wood frames in teak, mahogany, redwood, and jarrah produce no condensation, making them ideal for high-humidity environments.

With double-skinned safety glazing can incorporate electrical blinds and customized patterns on panels controlled by a ComforTronic actuator, which brings together mating aluminum profiles equipped with sealing strips.

Horizontal sliding wall panels from German manufacturer Sunflex can be stored in any position when open. The turning panels can be locked in place and are available in frameless, aluminum, and insulated wood and aluminum styles.
The Renlita Series 2000 includes counterweight-balanced doors for industrial/commercial and residential applications up to approximately 33 by 20 feet. The door suits locations with little headroom where minimum internal projection is desired, and accepts a range of cladding and glazing materials.

www.renlitadoors.com

Working with European hardware manufacturers, Weiland has developed a range of oversized liftslide door systems available up to 16 feet tall (and up to 10 feet tall for hurricane-rated models). All systems are custom-built in Oceanside, California, and are available in wood and aluminum with or without interior wood cladding.

www.weilandslidingdoors.com

NanaWall’s window-door combination system, available in FSC-certified wood and recyclable aluminum, creates a weather-resistant folding glass wall. The company’s systems are available from eight to 320 feet, and are certified for energy efficiency by Energy Star and the National Fenestration Rating Council. Each is tested to exceed air infiltration, water penetration, structural performance, and forced-entry standards.

www.nanawall.com

The Sliding Door Company’s sliding door system allows glass panels to be customized with wood or aluminum divider strips that can be removed or reconfigured without marking the doors. A patented panel-safety mechanism ensures that doors will not leave their tracks, which are 3/8-inch high and meet ADA requirements.

www.slidingdoorco.com

Modernus sliding doors have a stainless-steel frame with an inset ceiling track, making the door a good solution for low-profile room divisions in which a floor track is undesirable (as shown on page 21). Glass panels can be customized with any finish or pattern, and framing is also available in aluminum.

www.modernus.com

A manually operated mechanism simultaneously opens Rolmatic Corner doors, creating a 67-inch frameless glass opening. The top-hung, clear anodized aluminum clamping system eliminates both glass drilling and floor tracks, moving 3/8- or 1/2-inch panels of up to 198 pounds along a ball-bearing system specified for commercial and residential applications.

www.klein-usa.com
1 B.1000 FITTING
ASTEC
Designed for Astec’s 1000 10-mm and 12-mm glass panels, the flush-fitted, U-profile tracks in the ceiling help to guide the panel, but eliminate the need for ceiling supports because weight is distributed along sealed needle roller bearings in the floor. A plastic U-profile edge guard affixed to the glass guides the panel along its floor track, creating a frameless sliding glass wall system.

www.astec-design.de

2 FAD SERIES
SUGATSUNE AMERICA
Sugatsune’s lateral opening door hinges allow doors to swing outward within only half the space required by a conventional door, making them ideal for closets and cabinets in tight spaces. No bottom or top rail is required, allowing the door to close flush against the adjacent wall in overlay or inset configurations.

www.sugatsune.com

3 ZERO-STEP SILL
LA CANTINA DOORS
The proprietary Zero-Step Sill creates a level transition between interior and exterior floors. Though not recommended for areas exposed to precipitation, the sill integrates a sound-attenuating DraFlGuard seal with a DP35 rating for air, water, and structural performance. The seal is flush with the floor when doors are open, but a patent-pending lifter puts it in place as doors are closed.

www.lacantinadoors.com

4 BALDUR
KROWN LAB
Baldur sliding door hardware is custom-made for door panels of up to 400 pounds on tracks up to 20 feet long. Patent-pending hubless hardware on 4-inch exposed industrial bearings is made of precise, machine-finished stainless steel that resists rust or corrosion in humid environments.

www.krownlab.com

5 TERRA H
MWE
Designed for installations in which the ceiling cannot support the weight of a sliding door, the Terra H system is installed underneath the door leaf. The visible stainless-steel roller and runner rail leave very little static mass to be supported by the ceiling track.

www.mwe.de
Impact-resistant sliding glass doors from Atrium have laminated, tempered glass that reduces sound transmission and solar heat gain while meeting design pressure ratings for coastal wind and hurricane debris codes.

www.atrium.com

The recently released WinGuard sliding glass door is available in one- to eight-panel configurations, with impact-resistant insulating and laminated monolithic glass that reduces noise and filters out 99 percent of outdoor UV light. WinGuard Vinyl Casement doors qualify for the 2009 Stimulus Plan tax credit for energy-efficient products.

www.pgtindustries.com

After making its U.S. debut last year, Montag has achieved Miami-Dade and State of Florida HVHZ (high-velocity hurricane zone) impact certification. With impact design pressures of +66/-77 psf, four-by-eight-foot doors are available in two-, three-, or four-panel configurations with an optional remote operating system.

www.montagwindows.com

Not only certified to meet large-missile impact Level D and Wind Zone 4 testing standards for hurricane zones, Windquest vinyl doors can be ordered with LoE2-270 insulating glass with argon, enabling them to meet or exceed Energy Star guidelines in all climate zones.

www.kolbe-kolbe.com


www.raumplus.com

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www.vitrocsa.com
EXHIBITION OPENING

September 17

EXHIBITION OPENING

Led by Jeffrey Mellichamp, the design team for the 2010 AIA Design Awards:

SUNDAY 18

EXHIBITION OPENING

A World Alongside Images in the Margins of Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts
3:00 p.m.

The J. Paul Getty Center
120 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

EXHIBITION SHOWS

SUNDAY 21

EVENT

2009 AIA LA Design Awards Party
6:00 p.m.

American Cinematheque Egyptian Theatre
6712 Hollywood Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.aialosangeles.com

THURSDAY 22

Lecture

San Francisco Italian Futurist Design
7:00 p.m.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
803 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

SATURDAY 24

Lecture

Heracleum: Conserv and Interpreting the Roman Past
7:00 p.m.

The J. Paul Getty Villa
17955 Pacific Coast Hwy.,
Pacific Palisades
www.getty.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

The Bible Illuminated
The Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

SATURDAY 10

EXHIBITION OPENING

Tara Donovan
Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art
1600 Getty Center Dr.,
Los Angeles
www.mcasd.org

SUNDAY 25

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

New Topographics Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles
www.lacma.org

MONDAY 26

LECTURE

Johannes Richards
10th Annual Axline Lecture
7:00 p.m.

Old Globe Theatre,
Balboa Park
383 Old Globe Way,
San Diego
www.mcasd.org

SEKSATE: Bodies and Design
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St., San Francisco
Through November 8

The works in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art’s new group show share an organization that runs the gamut from the abstract to the disarmingly literal. In the former camp are pieces like Andrew Kudless’ P. Wall (2006/2009), a site-specific installation consisting of an undulating plaster-cast surface grafted onto the gallery’s 45-foot-long wall. Its globular forms evoke skin, muscle, and fat while avoiding specific bodily references. Anthony Aziz and Sammy Cucher’s chromogenic aluminum print Interior #7 (1998, above) evokes a sort of skin, with sparkled flesh tones receding into a non-organic rectangle. On the literal end of the spectrum are pieces like John Dickinson’s white-painted wood Bone Cigarette Table (1977), whose tabletop rests on four knuck-kneed skeletal legs. As befitting an exhibit with an animal take on architecture, not all the works on display are static, instead mutating over time as if alive. Alex Schweder’s imposing A Sac of Rooms All Day Long (2009) begins each morning as a crumpled pile of clear vinyl, and slowly inflates over the course of the day into the shape of two nested houses.
For anyone who was never graced by the presence and persona of Julius Shulman, Eric Bricker’s documentary film Visual Acoustics gives a precious and intimate entry into the life, work, and philosophy of one of the greatest photographers of modern architecture, who died this summer at the age of 98. The film, which screens at San Francisco’s Architecture and the City Festival on September 30 and receives its Los Angeles theatrical premiere in October, will certainly stir up fond memories for those who knew “Uncle Julius.” It reveals him as a master of the art of living, radiating a lightness of being and appreciation for the people and environment around him. It also reveals him as a stubborn and demanding artist who as a young man “took corrections” from Neutra and Schindler and was capable of giving just as harsh corrections to novices encountered on his projects or even on the filmmakers’ own shoot.

Visual Acoustics tells several stories in parallel—of Julius Shulman the humanist, artist, activist, and image-maker, and of the modern movement and Shulman’s major place in that history. The film cycles through the chapters of his life, from his youth on a Connecticut farm to his growing up, camera in hand, at the same time as the city of Los Angeles. It chronicles Shulman finding his calling with the making of a photo of an early Neutra house, and the world of collaborations to follow.

Shulman’s chronology is interwoven with that of the history and ambition of the European modern movement and the rise of California modernism through animated “visual symphonies,” designed by New York motion graphics specialists Trollback + Company, incorporating Shulman’s images, historical photos, and text, the animation work is subtle in its attempt to formally weave image to image, focusing our attention on the compositional strength and dynamism of Shulman’s photos. Lines merge with lines, or emerge as webs to reveal the per-spectival structure of both image and architecture. This subtle play is jarringly interrupted with a brief series of Monty Python-esque collages used to wittily present historical facts about the modern movement, potentially undercutting the historical credibility of the context. Fortunately, this comic interlude is counterbalanced by poignant interviews with scholars and curators (Thomas Hines and Joseph Rosa), architect clients (Mark Lee and Frank Gehry), and friends and fans (Ed Ruscha and Tom Ford) articulating the historical relevance of specific images, the architecture photographed, and the architect-collaborators.

To complement the architectural history lessons, the film gives us personal stories about Shulman, the architects, and their architecture through social calls to the owners of several photographed houses. Witnessing these visits, it is clear that Shulman’s photographs were vital in restoring Neutra’s Miller House and others to their original condition. But we also witness the ongoing relationships Shulman maintained with the original or subsequent owners of the houses he photographed.

Bricker, who befriended Shulman over the course of several years prior to making the film, takes us into the inner sanctum of Shulman’s Raphael Soriano–designed studio. Here we are given insight to both the quality of space in which he worked, the personal relationships with all those around him—his daughter, gallerists, and work associates—and the volume of images produced over his career. The man and his glass treasure-trove of images impressed Bricker at their first meeting, and in his film we see this archive being prepared for its future life in the Getty Foundation Archives. But most of all, it is this last-minute glimpse of Shulman’s joie de vivre that is the ultimate strength and value of Bricker’s film.

BETH WEINSTEIN IS FOUNDER OF THE NEW YORK–BASED DESIGN STUDIO ARCHITECTURE AGENCY.

Teutonic Tome

Designing Modern Germany
Jeremy Aynsley
Reaktion Books, $35.00

The history of design in modern Germany is as politically fraught as it is influential. Given this, plus the numerous existing histories on institutions like the Bauhaus or individuals like Peter Behrens, design historian Jeremy Aynsley was faced with a formidable task in the writing of Designing Modern Germany. The task, however, is also a worthy one, and Aynsley largely succeeds in delivering a history of German design from 1870 to 2005 that is informative, concise, and also comprehensive.

Aynsley’s is a straightforward chronology, covering a wide variety of media, from graphic design to textile design, interior design and architecture to furniture design, industrial design, and fashion. In doing so, he draws on numerous sources, incorporating contemporary newspaper and journal accounts, discussions of cultural theory and critical studies, even sources from popular culture and literature, such as Heinz Huber’s short story “The New Apartment” from 1958, which is used in an analysis of postwar West German interior design. Aynsley’s focus is not so much on individual objects or buildings, though he does highlight particularly influential examples, but more on the development of a German culture of design under the various political regimes of Germany’s 20th century. Thus, chapters are more likely to discuss important institutions or exhibitions, such as the Ulm Academy for Design or the 1914 Werkbund exhibition in Cologne, rather than perform analyses of particular aesthetic traditions or innovations.

In fact, Aynsley is to be commended for his ability to negotiate between the general and specific, deftly alternating between summaries of events that span decades, and discussions of individual designers such as Marianne Brandt or Margaret Jahny, whose careers are exemplary or whose work is influential. In addition, Aynsley avoids many of the pitfalls that plague other histories of German cultural production during this period. For example, in his discussion of the Weimar years, Aynsley examines the work of the Bauhaus, of course, but also the more traditional, conservative design that, as he notes, no doubt graced the majority of German households. He presents a nuanced discussion of design during the Nazi era in chapter three, acknowledging the unavoidable influence of the Nazis’ racist and nationalist ideology, but also the regime’s ambivalent attitude toward modernism and the “dilemmas” confronted by individual German designers of this period. Likewise, in writing about the postwar era, Aynsley offers a comparative account of design produced in both the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany), addressing the influence each country had on the cultural production of the other. Though there is much to recommend Designing Modern Germany, there are oversights. For example, while the political history that so influenced design in the Nazi and postwar eras is given fair due, there is almost no discussion in the opening chapter of the formation of the German nation in 1871, and the implications this may have had on debates about the role of design in German culture. This would be the place to introduce the theme of the so-called “problem” of German national identity. Not only did this issue influence the development of design culture during the so-called “foundation years” of the German nation, but it was almost always lingering beneath the surface of discussions about Germany’s cultural production throughout the 20th century. It was also an important factor in the competing design cultures of East and West Germany, for example.
A precise definition of urban design is elusive, as it has been since the term’s first articulation over 50 years ago at a Harvard GSD conference spearheaded by José Luis Sert. Today the term, like sustainability, is batted about by architecture firms and the media, pointing toward an interpretation that favors architects and their super-sized projects. While practitioners of the quasi-discipline are typically seen to fall somewhere between planning’s public policy and architecture’s formal concerns, the urban designer’s role in the process of development is often misunderstood and many times questioned. Urban Design for an Urban Century sets itself the task of clarifying the role of urban design in shaping urban places.

The book is the product of New York-based professor and practitioner Lance Jay Brown, David Dixon of Boston-based Goody Clancy, and the late architect and planner Oliver Gillham. The authors begin the book by acknowledging the ambiguity of the urban designer’s job, determining that a shared emphasis on “finding the right fit between people and place” predominates. To illustrate this thread, they collect all 70 winning projects of the AIA Institute Honor Awards for regional and urban design over the last ten years, commenting on these with respect to principles such as building community, advancing sustainability, expanding individual choices, enhancing public health, and making places for people.

Case studies are grouped into seven areas: regional growth, downtowns, older neighborhoods, new neighborhoods, waterfronts, the public realm, and campuses. It is clear from these divisions that one long-held purview of the urban designer, the public realm, is not the sole area of concern. Streetscapes and plazas and their accessory elements like furniture, signage, and trees are still addressed by urban designers, but so are land use, bulk, density, form, transportation, and ecology. Much of this expanded scope normally falls to planners and local jurisdictions, suggesting the urban designer’s role in giving form to public policy and private development at an early stage. Chicago’s award-winning Lakeshore East Master Plan by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) is a fitting example of urban design’s malleability. The plan is a guideline for future action by other actors, namely architects and their clients, following developed rules of land use, massing, and site coverage. Most notable among these is Studio Gang’s 80-story Aqua Tower, a design marked by undulating terraces barely foreshadowed by SOM’s Rockefeller Center-esque imagery.

Preceding the case studies and principles are an excellent, concise history of urban design. Thus in the end, Aynsley’s study of specific areas of German design history, such as Joan Campbell and Paul Betts, allowing the reader insight into further concentration remains grounded in practice, as are the case studies that compensate in diversity for what they lack in vision.

Gillham’s definition outlines three characteristics: multidisciplinary collaboration, outreach to stakeholders, and the enhancement of economic, social, and environmental realms. These broad concerns insufﬁciently portray what an urban designer actually does, but a review of the case studies points to placemaking generated by buildings, particularly via their form, size, and style. But instead of falling prey to ever-popular form-based codes, the authors attempt to steer the reader away from aesthetics and toward sustainability, social equity, the health of the common realm, and other concerns.

Defining urban design is difﬁcult primarily because the discipline has one foot planted in policy and the other rooted in physical form. The pull one way or the other depends upon the actual situation in which the urban designer works. Kevin Lynch’s assertion, quoted in the ﬁrst chapter, that urban design “comes down to the management of change” points us in the right direction. Attentive to the impact of policies on a diverse public and equally to design’s role in placemaking, urban designers are able to synthesize the competing forces shaping cities today. Ideally, with an emphasis on process and change, many of the traditional concerns found here will give way to issues like questioning consumption’s role in the social life of cities, and our relationship to nature and its processes. Brown, Dixon, and Gillham are aware of the need for social and ecological balance, but their admirable book-length exposition remains grounded in practice, as are the case studies that compensate in diversity for what they lack in vision.

John Hill writes the blog a Daily Dose of Architecture.
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