

# THE EAST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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**AN'S EXCLUSIVE DEBUT OF THE BJARKE INGELS GROUP-DESIGNED 40<sup>TH</sup> PRECINCT STATION HOUSE IN THE SOUTH BRONX**

New York's Finest will soon have BIG digs in the Bronx. Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) is designing a three-story, 59-foot-tall, 43,500-square-foot station house for the 40<sup>th</sup> Precinct in the Bronx's Melrose neighborhood. The 40<sup>th</sup> Precinct includes three South Bronx neighborhoods: Mott Haven, Fort Morris, and Melrose. The squad will move out of its current location, a 1922 three-story Renaissance Revival station house, and into a new home on a city-owned lot bounded by **continued on page 6**



**BALTIMORE LOOKS TO REVITALIZE ITS DOWNTOWN BY CLEARING VACANT HOUSES IN A MASSIVE FIVE-YEAR DEMOLITION PLAN**

**BALTI-LESS IS MORE**

Early this January on a cold Tuesday, the governor of Maryland stood at a podium in the middle of a street full of vacant row houses in Baltimore. On the left of Governor Larry Hogan was Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, and on his right stood an easel with a rendering showing his vision for that block's, and the city's, near future—an empty green lawn. As the crowd politely applauded, a backhoe began chewing apart an empty row house. This was the press event announcing Project CORE, Hogan's new plan to revitalize Baltimore by spending \$700 million by 2020. Baltimore is a city that was built for nearly a million people. Since 1950, its population has declined to less than two-thirds that number. The city **continued on page 8**

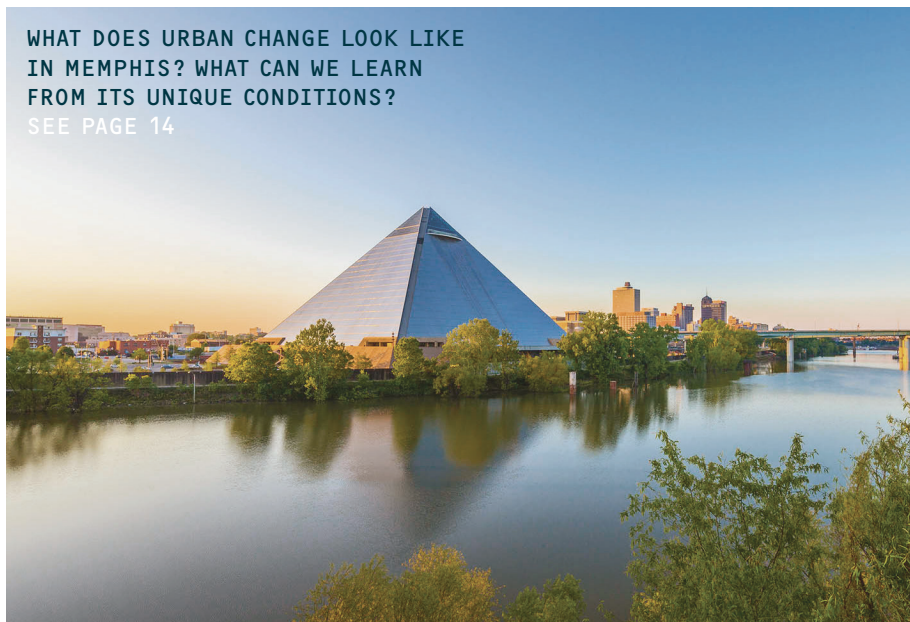


The Architect's Newspaper has a first look at Pritzker Prize-winning Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza's first United States project, a 34-story, **continued on page 6**

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Greenpoint and Williamsburg waterfront advocates recently celebrated two small, but pivotal, victories in a decades-long battle for walkways along the East River in North Brooklyn and 28 acres of waterfront parkland that were promised but never delivered by the Bloomberg administration's 2005 rezoning. Both victories could signal an important turn by Mayor Bill de Blasio toward community control and could restore a slight measure of confidence in the citywide rezoning process currently underway. Most remarkably, AECOM's incorporation of FEMA-recommended flood levels, a terraced amphitheater bluff, and a living shoreline into plans for the Greenpoint Monitor Museum waterfront are evidence of the penetration of resilient design into every corner of New York City's shoreline. The district's residents spurred the first victory last fall **continued on page 9**



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WHO SPEAKS FOR ARCHITECTS?

The New York architectural community’s relationship to Bill de Blasio’s mayoralty is a complicated one. Not only does the mayor not understand or value the contributions that design and architecture can make to the quality of everyday life, but he also turns his back on many of the positive contributions the Bloomberg administration made in that realm.

Bloomberg can rightly be accused of many things, including overstaying his welcome as mayor, but he was undisputedly good for architects and he appreciated the value design can bring to the metropolis. While the city certainly became a welcoming land bank for the one percent under Bloomberg, his DDC and DOT directors actively transformed every part of the city from Midtown Manhattan to Arverne in the Rockaways. Not only did we get a bike share program, but we also got new fire stations, libraries, and NYCHA community centers.

De Blasio, on the other hand, seems to consider design simply an add-on for the middle classes and a step to an increasingly gentrified city. Current agency heads have told us that there is a new collaborative spirit in city hall under de Blasio—and this is a good sign—but the mayor has never uttered a word about what his future city should or could look like. Nor has he nodded toward the benefits of a better-designed city.

It is an open question and one worth asking: How much is the architecture community contributing to de Blasio’s perception that architecture is only for the wealthy and middle class?

We all know that de Blasio is hyper focused on the most important physical issue facing the city: affordable housing for the poor, homeless, and even working middle classes.

As a result, architects in the city today cannot help but be supportive of the mayor’s housing initiatives if they believe in a diverse and livable city.

But the particulars of how we get to a more equitable city are more complicated. The architect Claire Weisz wrote AN, “Where does the architecture and design community stand on the recent decision not to extend the 421-a tax exemption or abatement program?”

This is a political initiative that would undoubtedly help encourage the development of housing in the five boroughs and help generate commissions for architects. It would also, if framed properly, help provide more affordable housing.

Perhaps the problem is that, while New York City has an unparalleled number of organizations devoted to design research and its impact on government policy, none of them actively lobby to take political positions on urban issues that are controversial or complicated.

It may be time for a political organization of architects that can demand, for example, that workers who build buildings be treated fairly and have decent worksites. For the first time in a half-century, new luxury housing is being created in the city that does not pay union scale wages to its workers. Perhaps it is time for architects to demand that workers on our buildings be paid a living wage or even start refusing work if this is the case with developers. These are difficult issues and it is hard to imagine individual architects making this personal stand, but what about forming an organization that makes the case for design and public policy around these hard, difficult decisions?

It’s time to recreate an organization like the Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) to make the connections between how to make a livable city for all and what architects can contribute to this discussion. ADPSR once made a connection between the costs of war and a lack of a dynamic urban policy (and was awarded an AIA citation of honor in 1993). A new and different organization might argue the connection between design and everyday public policy forcefully—and what the city might look like if it does make this connection. **WILLIAM MENKING**

ANOTHER PUBLIC BUILDING BY  
TOD WILLIAMS BILLIE TSIENT  
ARCHITECTS COULD BE HEADED FOR  
THE WRECKING BALL

SHOREHENGE

It if comes down this year, it would be one of the shortest-lived buildings in American history not intentionally built to be temporary.

This is the third endangered building in three years for Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, which saw its American Folk Art Museum taken down in 2014, just 13 years after it opened. Johns Hopkins University confirmed last year that it is exploring the possibility of demolishing all or part of the Mattin Center, a three-building arts complex completed in 2001, and is raising funds for the replacement.

This time the structure in question is a beach pavilion in Highlands, New Jersey, which opened last fall and is dedicated to the survivors of Hurricane Sandy.

Made of resilient concrete with openings in the roof to serve as skylights, it was erected on the site of a less sturdy metal gazebo that was destroyed by Sandy in 2012.

It is so new that the architects never even had professional photographs taken because they were waiting for some finishing touches. It is also not on the the firm’s website. According to studio director Octavia Giovannini-Torelli, they still consider it unfinished.

Now it may disappear.

The 1,100-square-foot building weighs approximately 173 tons and was designed as a multipurpose shelter and gathering spot for the public. It was a gift to Highlands from the Tilt-Up Construction Association, a non-profit group based in Mount Vernon, Iowa.

The organization had its annual convention last year in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and donated the pavilion to Highlands in conjunction with that meeting. Williams and Tsien designed it pro bono. The borough’s council officially accepted the gift before construction began and the borough issued permits for construction.

The pavilion is now endangered because the state of New Jersey claimed the owner didn’t obtain a permit for construction from its Environmental Protection Department, which regulates construction close to the shoreline. As a result, the state says the owner either must apply now for the permit or take the building down. The permit application fee costs \$3,000, and there’s no guarantee that the application will be approved.

Besides the permit continued on page 6

LETTERS

*The Architect’s Newspaper* editorial of December 11 reinforced the crucial role of civic leadership in advocating for land use policies, planning, and design approaches to keep New York City one of the most livable cities in the world—an effort the Municipal Art Society has championed for more than a century.

Most recently, MAS was the first to call out the “Accidental Skyline” developing along Central Park South—and in other pivotal neighborhoods—by demanding a moratorium on new supertall development, and calling for zoning code reforms to require transparency and public review for out-of-scale development. We halted the City’s shortsighted original

plans to rezone East Midtown—we identified 17 potential landmarks—and we continue to be the voice for planning and zoning policies that foster the kinds of economic diversity and varied creative and entrepreneurial uses a mix of building types makes possible, across the City. New Yorkers deserve a city by design, not by accident. Nowhere is our mandate clearer than in our steadfast championing of a new Penn Station and a revitalized West Midtown, where we successfully campaigned for a limited permit renewal for Madison Square Garden, and are now doggedly urging public and private sector stakeholders to invest in this piece of pivotal infrastructure and placemaking, upon

which the economic livelihoods of hundreds of thousands depends.

We spoke out firmly and early against the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s proposal to decalendar more than a hundred potential landmarks this fall, submitting testimony on 47 items in the backlog. We opposed the draconian timelines of Intro 775, and called on the commission to seek an alternative proposal for the Palace Theatre. And we, with countless partners, waited until late in the night to voice our serious concerns with the one-size-fits-all approach of the mayor’s Zoning for Quality and Affordability plan.

Since leaving the Urban Center, we’ve taken MAS to all five boroughs of the city we

are mission-driven to serve. We’ve cohosted dozens of community-based planning and resilience sessions with partners across the city—equipping them to advocate for complete neighborhoods that strengthen existing civic assets—and worked with a wide range of organizations in post-Sandy planning efforts.

MAS is a vibrant, ever-changing, responsive organization committed to building an urban fabric that best serves all New Yorkers—from sidewalks to skyline. We are continuing to cultivate effective partnerships and to mobilize together to protect and promote a more livable New York City.

MARY W. ROWE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
THE MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY OF NEW YORK



## SPEARING IMPAIRED

In recent years, there has been much backlash against mascots that misappropriate their meaning from American history. From The Fighting Illini of University of Illinois to the NFL's Washington Redskins, many teams have been pressured to adopt more neutral personas. However, the Florida State Seminoles have apparently doubled down on their offensive mascot by codifying it in the architecture of their stadium. The design for the addition to Doak Campbell Stadium features a tensile membrane canopy that will protect the new club level deck and the additional 6,000 premium seats. Central to the design are several horizontal outriggers that are shaped like spearheads, a nod to the controversial mascot.

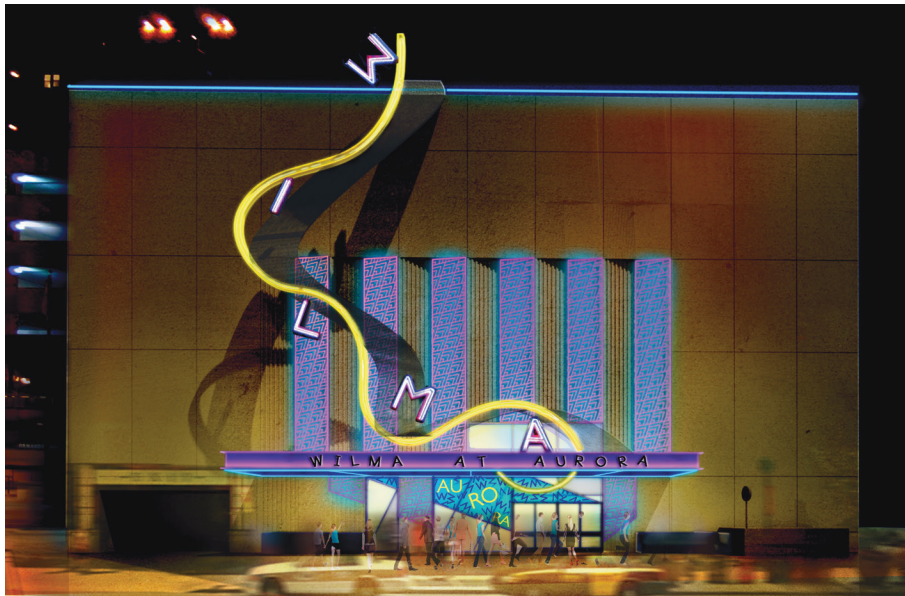
## PRITZKER PRIZE PROBLEMS?

What does it mean when the winner of the 2016 Pritzker Prize—Chile's **Alejandro Aravena**—just came off the jury of the very same award? He was on the jury from 2009 to 2015 and all the jurors from 2015 (**Lord Peter Palumbo** (Chair), **Alejandro Aravena**, **Stephen Breyer**, **Yung Ho Chang**, **Kristin Feireiss**, **Glenn Murcutt**, **Richard Rodgers**, **Benedetta Tagliabue**, and **Ratan N. Tata**) were on the 2016 jury—except Aravena. Two past winners were on the jury prior to receiving the award, but won five years after departing. **Shigeru Ban** served from 2006–2009 and won in 2014. **Fumihiko Maki** was a juror from 1985–1988 and won in 1993.

Aravena's quick turnaround suggests that there is an emphasis on a definition of architecture that Aravena represents and was put on the jury to make a case for...or that he is part a network that makes these decisions and leads to friends nominating friends for the prize. Is this common in the world of international awards and prizes, or is this how stars are made in 2016?

Additionally, Aravena is the executive director of Chilean firm **ELEMENTAL**, a practice with four partners: **Gonzalo Arteaga**, **Juan Cerda**, **Victor Oddó**, and **Diego Torres**. He alone is winner of the 2016 Pritzker, but in the official press release talks about “we”—as in “we think, with gratitude,” we hope to use its momentum to explore new territories,” and “we feel deeply thankful.” No achievement is individual... But it is Aravena who is accepting the award and the money, not **ELEMENTAL**, which points to the confusing nature of the Pritzker. If architecture is collaborative, then why still keep giving the prize to an individual?

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COURTESY THE WILMA THEATER AND KRISTIN ROBINSON DESIGN

### UNVEILED

**WILMA THEATER AT AURORA** Philadelphia's Wilma Theater just announced a multi-million-dollar transformation. Through the “Transformation Fund,” a \$10 million fundraising campaign, the theater's facade will be renovated with a colorful upgrade, the lobby will be converted into a public cafe, and an educational center will be implemented. The

facade will extend the neon aesthetic of the theater to its outward face.

Award-winning set designer **Kristin Robinson** is designing the upgraded facade, while board member **Jim McGillin**, principal in charge of **McGillin Architecture**, is designing the cafe and education center—to be named **HotHouse**—that will include 64 indoor and outdoor seats as well as a fireplace and high-top tables. The theater

is also currently pursuing a liquor license.

Wilma Theater is also set to receive a new name, “The Wilma at Aurora,” in honor of two board members' mother, **Chara Aurora Cooper Haas**.

The theater's transformation is estimated to begin summer 2017.

**MARIA ELENA MOERSEN**

**Architects:** Kristin Robinson with McGillin Architecture  
**Location:** Philadelphia, PA  
**Completion Date:** 2018



COURTESY RPG

> **COLUMBIA CARE**  
212 East 14th Street  
Tel: 212-246-3780  
Architect: RPG  
(Royal Promotion Group)

Manhattan's first medical marijuana dispensary opened its doors January 11 in Union Square. The Columbia Care flagship dispensary was designed by RPG, a New York City-based design and build firm.

Selected to design a branded experience for dispensaries, RPG produced a space focused on professionalism, care, and education. “Each patient is empowered with education and information via visuals, videos, and tablets, all geared at removing the stigma commonly associated with medical marijuana while bringing the highest standards of professionalism and dignity to therapy,” RPG explained.

In the center of the space lies a table for one-on-one consultations with pharmacists, and large photographs line the walls to “convey the beauty and wellness properties of various cannabis plants,” the firm said.

“RPG took Columbia Care's vision to create a consistent but unique patient experience by balancing our compassion, medical mission, and connection with one of nature's most powerful medicines,” Nicholas Vita, CEO of Columbia Care, said. “Their collaborative approach resulted in a design and final product that exceeded our expectations. Columbia Care will continue to value its relationship with RPG and looks forward to expanding this partnership nationally.”

RPG is currently designing nine other Columbia Care dispensaries, which will open their doors in the following months. **MEM**

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## BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA



## SPEED ART MUSEUM



wHY's New York office operates out of an airy SoHo loft where ideas are tossed around and explored with gusto. This salon-style energy is integral to the bicoastal firm's practice, providing the foundations for a diverse range of projects.

wHY was founded in Los Angeles in 2004 by Kulapat Yantrasast, who worked closely with Japanese minimalist Tadao Ando for years. The New York office was started in 2012 and is focused on bringing a multi-disciplinary approach to its work. The practice is structured around the collaborative efforts of four distinct yet interrelated workshops: buildings (architecture and interiors), objects (products and material explorations), ideas (research and strategy), and grounds (landscape environments). According to grounds workshop leader Mark Thomann, the teams' synergy fuels open and fluid discussions,

resulting in more interesting and lively designs. "We're finding it to be quite a successful model of working," Thomann said.

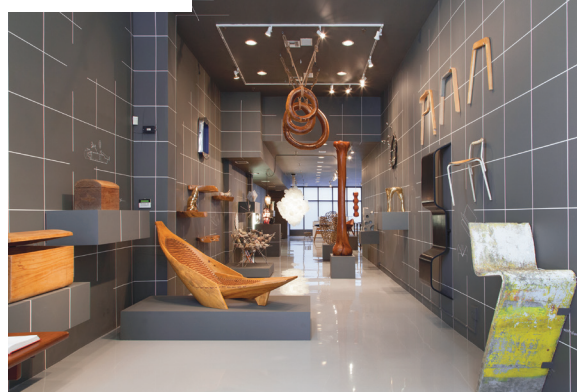
wHY's holistic attitude toward design is echoed throughout all of its works, from museums and art galleries, to residences, educational facilities, and large-scale landscape projects—such as Jackson Park in Chicago, for which the firm is currently developing a new master plan. In addition to a spectrum of nationwide projects, wHY is also working internationally with assignments underway in Italy, Thailand, and Egypt.

Another common theme that connects each project is a commitment to creating designs that transcend time. As New York office director and buildings workshop leader Andrija Stojic explained, "We like our buildings to look like they've been there forever, that they belong to the site."

## HARVARD ART MUSEUMS



## R20TH EXHIBIT



For Yantrasast, timeless architecture can be realized when its conceived in a way that embraces the long-term process of designing and constructing a building. "I think that more and more people these days consume architecture like it is fashion. It becomes an overnight sensation; one person can get a prize today, yet the next day there is a new flavor. We love fresh and exciting new things—we are human—but there's a time and investment we must put into architecture. It has to stand for more than that," he said.

Drawing on his experience working with Ando, Yantrasast is driven by a desire to expand architecture's role in society. His work seeks to impact people in meaningful ways—"I want people to look at our designs and think about how it can relate to them," he told AN. "I hope that they encourage people to think and to contemplate bigger pictures." **ALEX KLIMOSKI**

BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA  
CAIRO, EGYPT

First commissioned before the Arab Spring ignited in 2010, the initial design work for the Alexandria Library headquarters, which will be located in Cairo, has resumed after a period of political setbacks. "Now the project is back on, and they gave us a much bigger site and a much bigger program...the client really liked this as an idea to talk about culture," Yantrasast said. The project, which according to Yantrasast will function a bit like the Smithsonian, is planned to be a major cultural and arts center in Egypt.

SPEED ART MUSEUM  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

wHY was tasked with the master plan and redesign of the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, a 1927 neoclassical building with a history of additions. With this project, the firm applied its "acupuncture approach," which Stojic explained as a "very specific pointing and finding of problems." The renovation, which includes 20,000 square feet of new gallery space, a combined indoor-outdoor cafe, and a multi-functional pavilion, is set to open this March.

HARVARD ART MUSEUMS  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

In an effort to unify Harvard's three separate museums, wHY collaborated with Renzo Piano Building Workshop, curators, and senior leaders from the institution to redesign 100,000 square feet of gallery space. Careful attention to lighting and materiality helped to place emphasis on the approximately 250,000 objects in the collection, as opposed to the actual spaces that they occupy. The resulting design provokes a more fluid and cohesive viewing experience.

R20TH EXHIBIT  
NEW YORK, NY

For this exhibit, entitled *What's the Matter*, wHY did the exhibition design and contributed individual limited-edition furniture pieces including a lamp, chair, and table, all based in some way on a particular wHY project. According to Yantrasast, "The subject that we proposed was on materials and how different people from different times and different cultures have dealt with the same materials." Yantrasast likens wHY's process in designing the exhibit and its individual components to that of a laboratory or kitchen. Ultimately, the exhibit was about the objects themselves. "We didn't want to put objects in a domestic context so people could buy them, we wanted people to see them as they are—lifting the function out of them and focusing on how people process material objects."

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The station house entrance on St. Ann's Avenue. In keeping with the NYPD's philosophy of community policing, the public entrance beckons from the street, fostering connectivity between the precinct and the people it serves.

**BIG IN THE BRONX** continued from front page East 149<sup>th</sup> Street, Saint Ann's, Westchester, and Brook avenues.

The Department of Design and Construction's (DDC) set strict standards for police station design that provided the parameters. "Where the station houses of the early 1900s reflect an architectural language of fortification and stronghold, the design of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century clearly aims to express a sense of civic engagement," explained Ingels. "Independent of era, all precinct designs reflect a sense of solidity and durability, and we tried to evoke this same robustness in the 40<sup>th</sup>." Formally, this resulted in stacked boxes, or "bricks," that reference New York's classic redbrick police stations, and each programmatic element is meted out into its own rectangular space. There are four different-sized rectangular volumes per floor (except for the basement level) stacked irregularly with gaps in-between to create circulation spaces. According to Ingels, the team spent much of the schematic design phase working out the relationship between these volumes: "The building is essentially a physical manifestation of programmatic relationships." Segregation of function is intrinsic to the plan, but potentially detrimental to the overall harmony of the building. A three-story atrium is a central organizing principle that diffuses this compartmentalization by visually connecting programs, allowing total surveillance from the main desk, and channeling light into the building's core.

For security purposes, "glazing occurs only when the volumes are pushed back from the perimeter facades, affording protected views of the street below." At street level, setbacks created by the layered volumes make entrances and exits legible. On the upper floors, the setbacks allow for large windows, removed from the street.

The building is sensitive to its context and the awkward site provided additional design constraints. Flush with St. Ann's Avenue to

the east, an abandoned, below-grade freight line swoops in from the north to bisect the parcel, turning what should be a roughly rectangular site into a right triangle fused to a hexagon. The station house sits within the hexagon, at the corner of St. Ann's Avenue and East 149<sup>th</sup> Street, while the rest of the site is devoted to parking.

Looking to its neighborhood, the design communicates a desire to improve community-police relations. A multipurpose community meeting room sits adjacent to the main lobby. Nestled into the building but accessed through a separate entrance, the space is the first of its kind for the NYPD. Ingels noted that the facade communicates the department's desire for openness. "We've detailed the precast such that small glazed openings read as a perforation of the larger panelized system. The perforation here calls attention to the special function of this particular building block, but also allows for a transparency that is essential to the way NYPD and the City of New York are conceiving of this new type of public space."

Streetscaping around the lot's perimeter will further integrate the site into the community. A sawtooth oak at the site's southeastern corner, for example, will be the basis for a street planting scheme of the same trees. Two existing cottonwoods will provide ample shade for the larger lot.

The DDC, New York City's primary capital construction project manager, often commissions high-profile firms for civic projects. The firm chose to implement a modified version of BIG's 2014 stormwater protection plan for Manhattan as the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project. It tapped Steven Holl Architects to design a library in Hunter's Point, Queens, that broke ground last May, while Snøhetta was commissioned for the recently completed construction of new public spaces in Times Square. The DDC also picked Dattner Architects and WXY to design the Department of Sanitation garage and adjacent crystal-shaped salt storage shed that opened late last year. **AUDREY WACHS**



The community space in the station has a perforated facade that signals openness and accessibility.

COURTESY BIG

**SHOREHENGE** continued from front page

snafu, some residents say they don't like the building. Opponents say it blocks views of the ocean from some houses and from the local community center, which survived Sandy. They've dubbed it "Shorehenge" and "beast on the beach." They've created a Facebook page where they complain about it.

On January 1, the Highlands Borough Council voted to ask the concrete organization to take the building down. The concrete organization said it is a nonprofit that doesn't have the money or the contractor license to do so. The trade group said the construction work was donated by a consortium of regional companies, headed by Alston Construction, and that the borough is now the rightful owner.

"We were extremely surprised" to learn of the town's request to take down the pavilion, said Mitch Bloomquist, executive director of Tilt-Up. "But we're not going to take it down. The borough owns the building. They accepted it."

Bloomquist said his group has offered to provide assistance to the town in applying for the state permit. He said the offer

includes raising funds for the application fee, so no public money would be needed. "We're here to continue in the spirit in which we made the gift," he said. "It was done with love. It was done as a goodwill gesture."

Bloomquist said this sort of dispute has never come up with one of its projects before. He said the group, which turns 30 this year, typically seeks to work with a local community on a project that will improve it in some way, whether it is a permanent structure or an event at a local college. He said he asked Williams and Tsien to design the pavilion because he was familiar with their work and their "concern for the community," and he was delighted when they agreed.

Williams and Tsien are not directly involved in the dispute, and the principals did not respond to requests for comment. Giovannini-Torelli said that the architects are amenable to working with the town and builders to obtain the permit and keep the pavilion in place. She said they are waiting to hear back from the town. "We've been told to hang tight," she said. "We obviously want to see it stay up." **ED GUNTS**

The Williams + Tsien-designed concrete pavilion is not complete yet, and sits alone on the New Jersey beach as a threatened monument to resilience.



TANYA BREEN/ASBURY PARK PRESS

**SIZA MATTERS** continued from front

page 400-foot ultra-luxury residential tower in Midtown Manhattan.

New York-based luxury real-estate development firms Sumaida + Khurana and LENY commissioned Siza to build 611 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street in Hell's Kitchen. The tower will have 80 units and will feature a landscaped roof garden, a sun deck, and several private terraces. It will also feature amenities such as a private swimming pool, state-of-the-art spa and fitness center, children's playroom, screening room, and an entertainment space.

"Álvaro Siza is one of the world's most celebrated architects. We are honored to be working with Siza on his first building in the United States and believe that this project will capture the elegance and profound subtlety that is at the heart of his work. His sensitivity and collaborative mentality is teaching us as much about humanity as architecture," Amit Khurana, founding partner at Sumaida + Khurana, said.

The building will be a new project type for the architect, as he has built only one other similarly tall tower, the 519-foot-tall New Orleans tower in Rotterdam, Netherlands. This new tower, however, is more subtle and refined, akin to Siza's early structures like the Boa Nova Tea House and Piscinas de Marés in Portugal. The design for 611 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street features a subdued crown that tops an elegant gridded base.

Tadao Ando's 152 Elizabeth Street offers clues as to what to expect from Siza's tower, given the client's attention to light, material, craft, and detail.

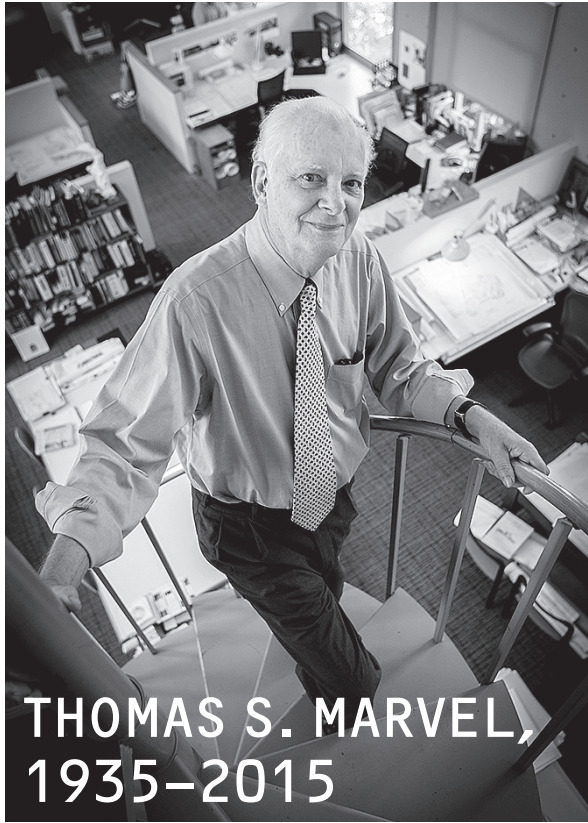


COURTESY SUMAIDA + KHURANA

The tower will be the second project in Sumaida + Khurana's portfolio of seminal buildings built by renowned architects with a particular attention to detail and craft. The other was 152 Elizabeth Street, the first New York building by Japanese architect Tadao Ando.

Michael Gabellini and Kimberly Sheppard will work with Siza to design the building's interiors. New York-based SLCE Architects will serve as the architect of record. Construction will begin summer 2016, and the building is expected to be complete in 2019. **MATT SHAW**





THOMAS S. MARVEL,  
1935–2015

COURTESY DEACON MARVEL

Thomas S. Marvel, FAIA, was born in Newburgh, New York, on March 15, 1935 and passed away on November 3, 2015 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was raised in Washingtonville, New York, a rural farming town of 1,200 people in the historic Hudson River Valley. His father, Gordon S. Marvel, was an architect practicing in Newburgh and five generations of the Marvel family were boat builders, marine architects, and architects. His mother was Madeline Jova, whose family founded the Jova Brickyard in Newburgh—the source for countless buildings in the New York region. He always felt that his family origins made it inevitable that he would carry on the family profession, as he wrote in the introduction to his portfolio: “I was born to be an architect. Never did I wish to be anything else.”

Tom studied at Dartmouth College in 1956, graduating with a degree in liberal arts. He was a member of Theta Delta Chi, on the rowing team, and a member of the “Engineers”, an a cappella group that toured throughout the United States. Subsequently, he studied architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and obtained a master’s degree in architecture, *cum laude*. Following his graduation from Harvard, Tom was awarded the Julia Amory Appleton Traveling Fellowship, which allowed him to travel around the world for four months

observing history, culture, housing, and cities.

While studying at Harvard, he met Lucilla Fuller, and they were married on April 19, 1958. He felt the strong urge to practice architecture and to the dismay of his parents, left Harvard and moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, where he worked at Synergetics, the office of R. Buckminster Fuller, and then at the IBEC Building Corporation in New York City. Both experiences focused on innovative construction techniques—Fuller’s geodesic structures and IBEC’s prefabrication process. In 1959 with a team from IBEC, he came to San Juan, Puerto Rico, to design low cost housing, which was an IBEC specialty in many developing countries in the world.

Tom, in the spirit of adventure, was excited by the design opportunities for a young architect in Puerto Rico, which was experiencing rapid economic growth. He stayed and started practicing architecture with the formation of his first partnership, Torres, Beauchamp, Marvel. He also felt a strong family connection to the tropics, writing “Puerto Rico and I found each other early in my career. There was a sense of returning to the Caribbean as my mother’s family had roots in Guadeloupe and Cuba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century”.

He took a brief hiatus in 1962 to complete his studies at Harvard and returned to Puerto Rico in 1963, after

having traveled the world. His practice blossomed, and he designed notable buildings including the Bayamón City Hall, the Education Building at the University of Puerto Rico, the convent for Carmelite Nuns, the U.S. Federal Courthouse in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands and U.S. embassies in Guatemala and Costa Rica. He designed numerous residences, including a very innovative house for his own family in a dense urban neighborhood that was published in Phaidon’s edition of *20<sup>th</sup>-Century World Architecture*.

Besides maintaining an evolving practice of architecture, he taught at the University of Puerto Rico School of Architecture and was a visiting critic at other schools in North and South America. He authored three books and wrote many articles in local and regional publications. Active in civic affairs, he served as commissioner in charge of planning and design for the effort to bring the 2004 Olympics to Puerto Rico. In 2011, following the devastating earthquake in Haiti, he convened a delegation of Haitian, Puerto Rican, and other Caribbean urbanists to develop a planning solution for communities, housing, and infrastructure in the Port-au-Prince area. He served at a U.S. national level in professional and architectural associations and was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1975. He was honored as Humanist of the Year in 2010 by the Puerto Rico Foundation of the Humanities.

Tom is survived by his wife Lucilla, his sons Deacon, Jonathan, and Tom, and seven grandchildren. He will be remembered as an architect who left an indelible footprint in Puerto Rico for generations of future architects and users of the numerous public buildings, plazas, pedestrian parks, hotels, sports facilities, and residences that he designed. Tom was a prolific sketcher, and has left volumes of sketches of landscapes, urban spaces, and buildings throughout the world. He was also a sculptor, from his years at Dartmouth to more recent work at his studio in San Juan, where with characteristic passion he created a distinctive series of clay, wood, and bronze sculptures of the human figure and hands. **DEACON MARVEL**



Architect: MdeAS Architects

## Instant Reclad

Built more than 50 years ago, **330 Madison Avenue** is once again becoming a trendsetter. A new, more modern curtainwall, designed by **MdeAS Architects**, was clad over the office building’s existing mullions to create a new and striking energy-efficient enclosure. It’s a cost-saving enhancement that more and more of the city’s aging buildings will covet—and it was accomplished without ever relocating tenants. Read more about it in **Metals in Construction** online.

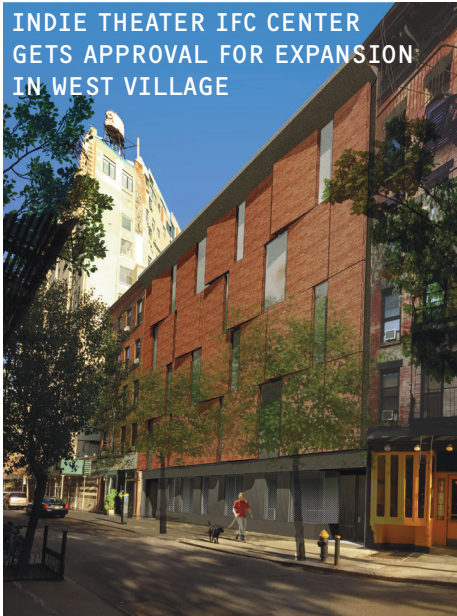
 **Ornamental Metal Institute of New York**

WWW.OMINY.ORG



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 3, 2016

## INDIE THEATER IFC CENTER GETS APPROVAL FOR EXPANSION IN WEST VILLAGE



After years of hosting DOC NYC, the nation's largest documentary film festival, and earning the highest gross-revenues in the country for many popular film screenings, the Sixth Avenue IFC Center will finally expand its venue in West Village. The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has approved the plans by New York City-based Kliment Halsband Architects (KHA) to double the size of the cinema to 20,000 square feet by building on an adjacent empty lot behind the current theater on Cornelia Street. With the expansion, the existing ground level screen will be removed and eventually added to the cellar, making room on the ground level for events. Then, six screens will be added to the existing five, raising capacity from 480 to 940 seats.

From the exterior, the brick and glass facade appears to be four stories—melding with the street condition. However, the interior consists of two tall theaters above the lobby lounge. Currently, there is no lobby, so theatergoers stand along the sidewalk on Sixth Avenue. By adding this expansive

space on the ground floor, the cinema will be able to better accommodate the many events it hosts throughout the year.

The Cornelia Street structure will serve as a lobby lounge, while the main entrance will remain on Sixth Avenue. According to KHA, there is no plan to mimic Cornelia Street's authentic elements. "Designing a building that blends in from the distance, but is completely unique close-up, is a victory for us," KHA's founding partner Frances Halsband told AN.

LPC wanted the lobby to be public but not too visible. In response, the firm designed a fritting, made of ceramic glaze over glass, to regulate the degree of transparency at street level. Enveloping the theaters above, the facade will have "movement and shadow" to provide visual interest despite its lack of windows.

According to KHA, the awkward triangular shape of the lot and division in zoning are the expansion's main challenges and it has taken two years to decipher what could be done. Additionally, because the two lots have different zoning designations—one residential



COURTESY KLIMENT-HALSBAND ARCHITECTS

and one commercial—the theaters have to be triangular. KHA needs to consolidate the zoning on the lots in order to build square theaters and reorganize circulation. Therefore, the firm is filing with the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals to begin these processes in a few weeks.

The IFC Center plays a big role in the downtown arts scene and hopes the expansion will enable their works of cinema to reach a broader audience.

KHA hopes to begin construction this summer, which will take approximately a year. **MEM**

**BALTI-LESS IS MORE** continued from front page has, at last count, more than 16,000 vacant houses. Baltimore is one of the oldest cities in the country; the dominant housing type is the attached row house. When one of these is left vacant, or is demolished, the entire block has less insulation, less structural integrity, and less social cohesion. Vacancy and demolition here can be especially costly and destructive.

A 2001 report on vacant housing in Baltimore, by James Cohen of the University of Maryland Urban Studies and Planning program details how vacant homes "contribute to neighborhood decline and frustrate revitalization efforts by becoming eyesores, fire hazards, and sites for drug related activity, vagrancy, and rodent infestation." A vacant house can become a location for crime, but it can also play a part in the larger economic system surrounding illegal activity. The same report cites the ownership and use of vacants for laundering profits from drug operations as a persistent hindrance to the city's attempt to renew empty neighborhoods.

Governor Hogan is hoping that this situation will be improved by removing vacant housing from the equation, and adding new empty space instead. "Fixing what is broken in Baltimore requires that we address the sea of abandoned, dilapidated buildings infecting entire neighborhoods," said the governor. "Together, we will transform these neighborhoods from centers for crime and drugs, to places our city, and

our entire state, can be proud of." Along with financing for redevelopment, Project CORE will spend \$94 million on demolishing vacant houses over the next four years, leaving grass filled lots behind.

The empty space in Hogan's rendering was reminiscent of another graphic recently produced by the Governor's office. In June of 2015, Hogan announced transportation spending for the state, with a map showing a vacant hole where Baltimore City should be. This came after the governor's announcement that the state would not be moving forward with a new light rail line in the city that had been planned for over a decade, and had already been approved for federal funding.

As architect and theorist Keller Easterling hints in her 2014 book *Subtraction*, on the architecture of building removal, the immediately obvious vacancy in the city can indicate other unseen things happening elsewhere within the larger system. The void left by the retraction of state funding for transportation in Baltimore may offer opportunities for the surrounding counties. And instead of the creation of new development through the addition of a light rail line, there is now the hope that subtraction of empty buildings can motivate renewal and reconstruction. With funds for "strategic demolition" set to rise as high as \$25 million a year by 2019, this program certainly offers new opportunities for architects in Baltimore. After all, who doesn't love a green field site? **FRED SCHARMEN**



AGATON STROM PHOTOGRAPHY/COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

## COOPER HEWITT FINISHES RENOVATION WITH NEW WALTER HOOD-DESIGNED PUBLIC GARDEN

## Public Park-ing

The Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum recently finished the last phase of its decade-long renovation by remediating its 7,600-square-foot garden. The museum hired Oakland, California-based landscape architect Walter Hood, who collaborated with Diller Scofidio + Renfro and local RAFT Landscape Architecture to integrate the garden into the museum and enliven underused areas.

Although it is open to the public now, when the garden was first created in 1902, it was the largest private enclosed green space in New York City. To connect the garden to its past, Hood's team used landscape architect Richard Schermerhorn Jr.'s original 1901 drawings as inspiration. They began with Schermerhorn's proposed rockery to create a

prominent, almost sculptural focal point. "The bedrock, the Manhattan schist, was a starting point. It appears throughout Central Park," Hood said. "We took the opportunity to make the schist more visible, sourcing bedrock from the gardens."

Hood also pulled from Luis Barragán's gardens of El Pedregal outside Mexico City and the Eastern tradition of rock gardens to ground the site in the area's geological history.

For the plantings, Hood kept things local—just across the street to Central Park. "The Cooper Hewitt is directly adjacent Engineers Gate and the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir, and many of the plantings here are different than what you see in the greater park," Hood said. "These were planted during the City Beautiful era and grow in contrast to

[Frederick] Olmsted's curation of local flora and fauna."

The team selected plants from the reservoir's periphery such as Yoshino cherry trees, the red chokeberry, and rhododendrons as well as native herbaceous plants. Benches designed by Yves Béhar and playful Heatherwick Studio Spun Chairs provide ample seating and invite the public to stay and relax.

The museum is already ramping up with events for summer 2016. Cooper Hewitt Director Caroline Baumann told AN: "We are excited to be bringing back our ever-popular Cocktails at Cooper Hewitt series and expanding it to include live performances throughout the summer. We've invited some of New York's most exciting dance companies and music ensembles to participate, transforming the garden's lush environs into a lively performance space, and I think our visitors will be surprised and delighted by what transpires." **OLIVIA MARTIN**



The city presented a rendering that shows part of its vision for the downtown: An empty grass lot

COURTESY MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



A view along the planned pedestrian walkway designed by AECOM



COURTESY AECOM

**WATERFRONTIN'** continued from front page when they voted to award \$599,200 of the \$19.5 million Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF) to the Greenpoint Monitor Museum's visionary waterfront design and permitting project. AECOM's Gonzalo Cruz, a Harvard Graduate School of Design alumnus who directs the firm's Urban Design and Landscape Architecture studio, prepared the support materials, leading the conceptual design pro bono. The project, dedicated to honoring the pioneering Civil War battleship manufactured there, its engineer John Ericsson, and Greenpoint patriots who fought to preserve the Union, presented a unique opportunity.

"They owned the land so the project did have the potential to go somewhere," Cruz said. "It was incredible for us to be able to help them. They're very committed to the site and the history. We provided a one-stop shop: People who can provide coastal and marine engineering services as well as design services."

To protect the land from erosion and to create a natural habitat, a living shoreline wraps the edge of the site with plantings of cordgrass, sea lavender, switchgrass, black needlerush, glasswort, and groundsel bush. An ecological walkway and scenic overlook loft above, providing a continuous public right-of-way that ties into the 2005 zoning resolution. During Hurricane Sandy in 2012, Bushwick Inlet flooded five blocks inland, so the team designed a tiered amphitheater facing the Manhattan skyline that ascends 12 feet above sea level, with berms that reinforce the upper edge, softened by a retaining lawn featuring educational displays about engineering and history. At the top, Cruz reserved a section of the site for the future Greenpoint Monitor Museum.

"It was a wonderful thing they did," said Janice Lauletta-Weinmann, president of the museum. "Without those conceptual drawings, it would have been very difficult to get the idea across what would have been nice in the neighborhood."

The GCEF award acted as a signal for the city government to eliminate the threat of eminent domain that has dogged the nonprofit since the 2005 rezoning clumsily designated its property as part of the anticipated 28-acre Bushwick Inlet Park. The Greenpoint Monitor Museum gained title to the one-acre parcel along the Bushwick Inlet in 2003 but has been unable to effectively fundraise with the threat hanging over it. Meanwhile, the Bloomberg

and de Blasio administrations neglected to acquire the other parcels designated for parkland before rezoning caused land values to explode. With the GCEF grant and AECOM's design moving to the next phase, the Greenpoint Monitor Museum project is now embarrassingly far ahead of the city's barely preconceptual zoning diagrams.

"There was some sort of idea of a beach situation, which at the time the plan was put together, was ten years ago," Cruz said. "There were some trends at the time where people were just latching on. Besides that there was nothing more. There was just a path full of benches; that's what the original master plan had along the site."

In December, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams and Mayor de Blasio's spokesman publicly affirmed for the first time that they would not support the use of eminent domain on the site.

Meanwhile, the battle for the rest of Bushwick Inlet continues: The Friends of Bushwick Inlet Park has been organizing regular street actions and protests aimed at pushing the city to acquire an 11-acre parcel for the park where the CitiStorage building burned down last January in a suspicious fire. Activists predicted a real-estate development would soon follow; six months later, Midtown Equities and East End Capital signed an option to purchase the land, floating the offer to build a section of the park in exchange for a variance to add residential units. Related Companies reportedly joined talks to provide capital; the developers could already build up to 600,000 feet of as-of-right commercial space. In late December, waterfront activists scored another important victory: A de Blasio spokesman affirmed in *Crain's New York Business*, "The administration would never accept a rezoning here that did not have the support of the councilman and community." CitiStorage is the last section of the now 27-acre Bushwick Inlet Park remaining to be acquired; activists say legislation sitting in a State Senate committee in Albany would use eminent domain to force its sale.

"A great park will be such a boon to this neighborhood," said Katherine Thompson, cocaptain of Friends of Bushwick Inlet Park. The people that have lived here for a long time and have done the fighting, it's going to be a really big disappointment if they feel like this neighborhood has been taken away by rampant outsized development that has disregarded the fabric of our community." **STEPHEN ZACKS**

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



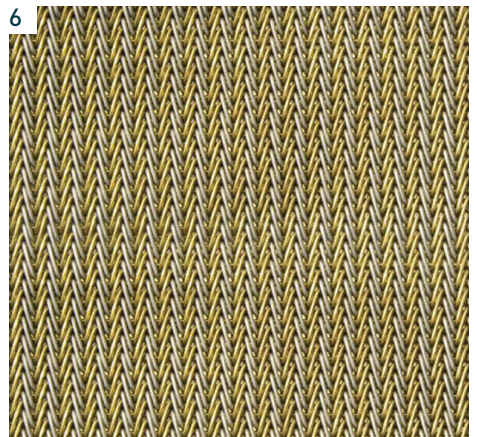
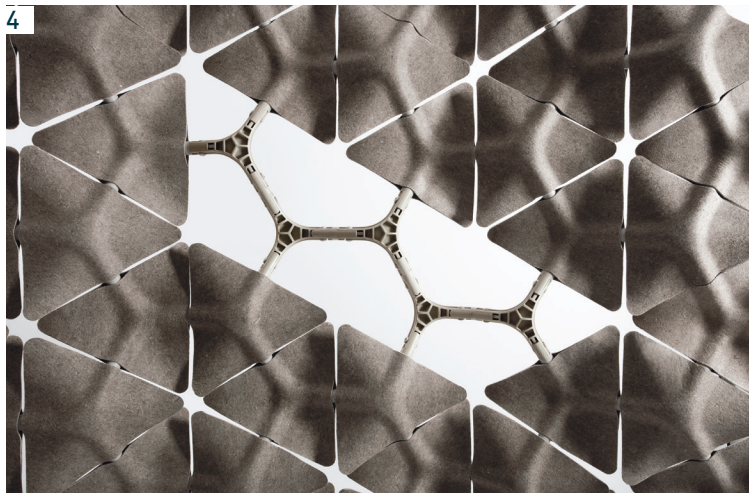
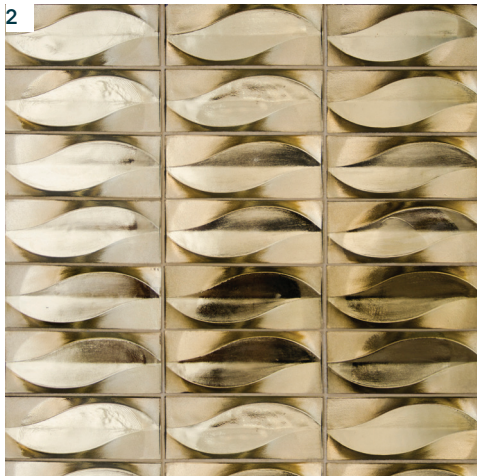
# World View

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

 **Steel Institute of New York**

WWW.SINY.ORG





# OFF THE WALL

FROM RECYCLED ACOUSTIC INSTALLATIONS TO INTRICATE TILE MOSAICS, THE LATEST WALL COVERINGS ARE INNOVATIVE, FUNCTIONAL, AND DOWNRIGHT STYLISH. BY BECCA BLASDEL

**1 ECHOPANEL  
KIREI**

EchoPanel tiles are made out of 60-percent recycled plastic bottles, eco-friendly dyes, and no added adhesives—earning them a GreenTag certification. The tiles retain up to 85 percent of ambient noise and are endlessly customizable. There are more than 30 color options that can be printed with any image or laser-cut in a variety of shapes.

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

**2 DIMENSIONI COLLECTION  
NEW RAVENNA**

Inspired by the Byzantine technique of placing gold pieces at certain angles to reflect light, the New Leaf tile mosaic is available in four color ways of metallic glass: platinum, rose gold, champagne gold, and gunmetal. In addition, the collection has two other modern mosaic designs inspired by the landscapes of Italy crafted in Italian marble.

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

**3 ORIGAMI  
AKDO**

Akdo's expertly cut marble tiles allow the veining on each piece to perfectly align with each other to create the illusion of a seamless line that looks folded like traditional Japanese origami. The patterns are offered in a choice of four warm taupe or cool gray colorways.

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

**4 SCALE  
LAYER DESIGNS**

A highly adaptable modular system, Scale is an acoustic partition that is intended to grow or shrink with an ever-evolving workplace. The system has a recycled aluminum stand and is comprised of injection molded recyclable ABS with pressed recycled hemp tiles available in multiple colors.

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

**5 SAKURA COLLECTION  
FIRECLAY TILE**

Hand painted on 70-percent recycled clay tiles, the Sakura Collection displays subtle earth toned hues that are derived from traditional Japanese landscapes, including patterns that resemble mountains, tortoise shells, and river rocks. They are available in eight-by-eight and six-by-twelve sizes.

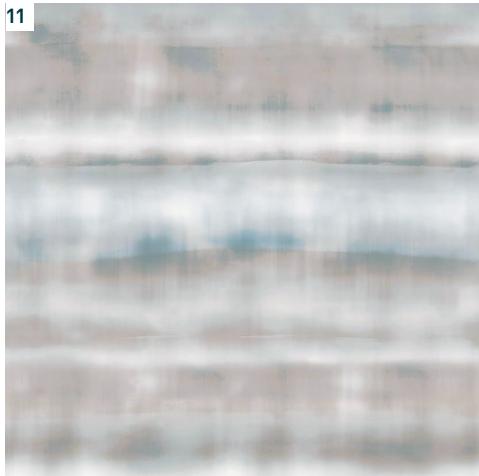
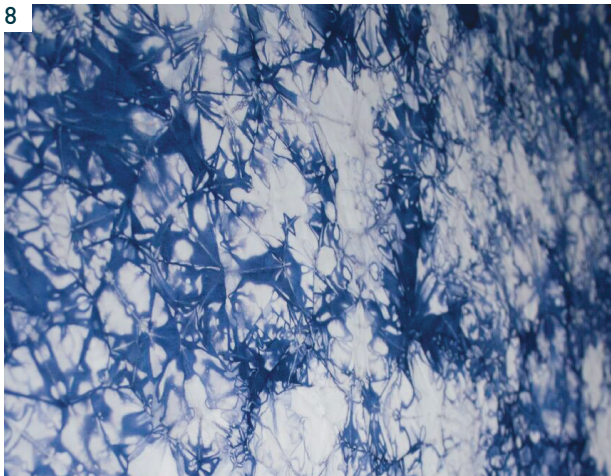
[fireclaytile.com](http://fireclaytile.com)

**6 TWEED MESH  
CAMBRIDGE  
ARCHITECTURAL**

Cambridge is known for its architectural mesh; it has recently released two new patterns, including a "tweed" mesh made with stainless steel and brass that resembles the weave of a classic wool overcoat—so much so that it has been used in several lounges for British Airways.

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





**7 XOREL ARTFORM**  
CARNEGIE

This high-performance wall paneling is available in over 200 colors and textures, with four different panel shapes that are each available in three sizes. Each panel is individually upholstered by hand using sustainable materials. The amount of highly-personalized combinations allows for a range of uses in both residential and commercial spaces.

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

**8 INDIGO**  
MAYA ROMANOFF

Part of a limited edition collection inspired by Maya Romanoff's studies in India and Southeast Asia in the late 60s, this pattern resembles a traditional fabric dyeing technique and is hand painted using indigo dyes on folded durable paper.

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

**9 MEDIAMESH  
AND ILLUMESH**  
GKD METAL

GKD's newest products, Mediamesh and Illumesh, are metal fabrics with a patented system of integrated LED lighting and reflective metal mesh. Illumesh is best for programmed lighting concepts while Mediamesh can be used to stream live video and graphics. They can also be used in tandem for a dramatic effect.

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

**10 DIGITAL IMAGERY**  
MOZ DESIGNS

Designers can print custom photos on .040- to .090-inch thick aluminum with either a glossy or matte finish that can be used on many surfaces including walls, columns, and ceilings. Graphics can also be printed on solid core or perforated aluminum with a variety of special colors and gradients.

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

**11 FADE**  
WALNUT WALLPAPER

This beautiful peel-and-stick ombre tie-dye pattern is available in two colors and can be easily removed and replaced. It is also made of vinyl, which makes it ideal for areas with a lot of moisture.

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

**12 BANDA**  
ESKAYEL

The tropics collection is designer Shanna Campanaro's interpretation of beach motifs in Belize and Nicaragua. The prints are a modern take on traditional wallpaper motifs like toile, shibori, and palm leaves, and are available in a variety of color options.

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

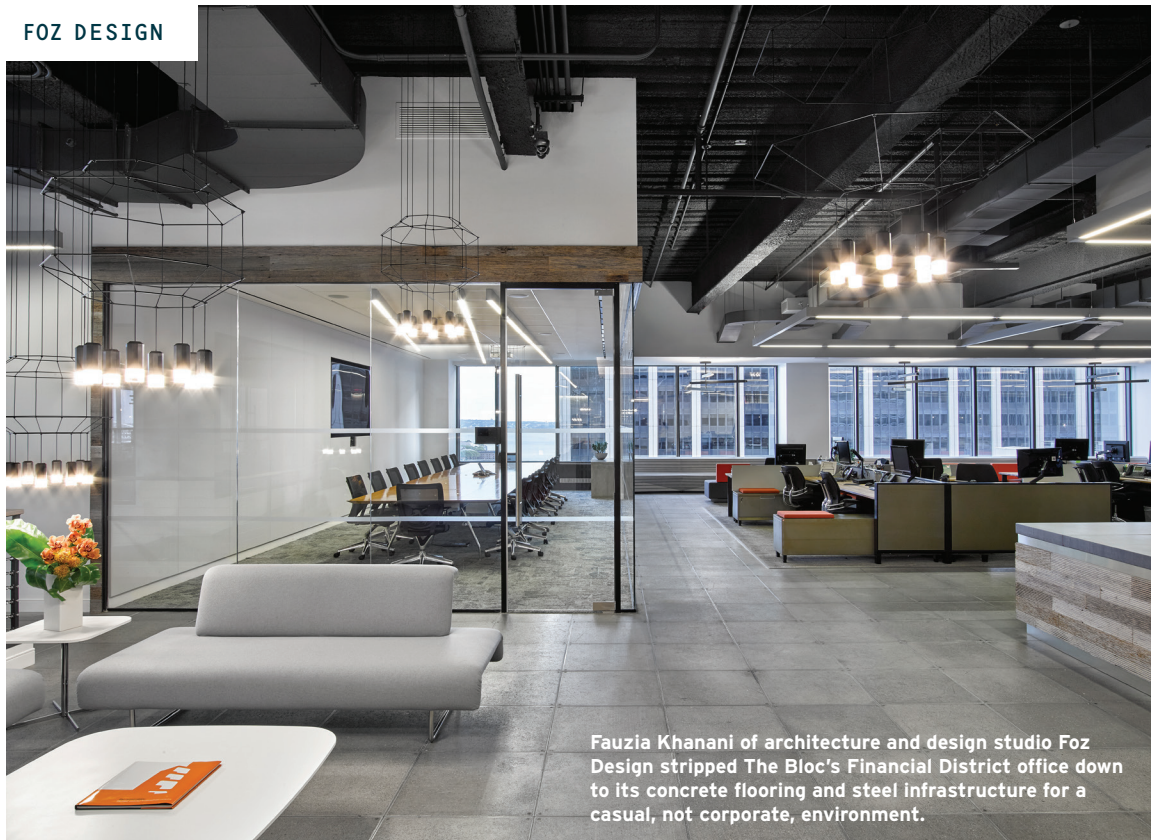
**13 GEO**  
WALLPAPER DIRECT

Part of a larger collection of hyper-realistic photo paper by Ella Doran, this print is intended to capture texture and sunlight on solid architectural surfaces and adds a touch of glamour to smaller spaces without the bulk of using actual stone.

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



## FOZ DESIGN



Fauzia Khanani of architecture and design studio Foz Design stripped The Bloc's Financial District office down to its concrete flooring and steel infrastructure for a casual, not corporate, environment.



When health-wellness creative engagement agency The Bloc approached its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it opted to go beyond the standard supermarket cake and champagne. Instead, the company merged its two New York City offices into one new space in the Financial District and refreshed its entire brand identity. For their new office space, founding partners Susan Miller Viray and Rico Viray chose Fauzia Khanani of architecture and design studio Foz Design, who also created two residences for the Virays.

The Bloc opted for two floors in a downtown building that was formerly occupied by stock traders who left after Hurricane Sandy flooded it. Following the storm, the space was unoccupied for several years, making it easy for Khanani to decide to completely gut it and start fresh.

After working between two locations for seven years, it was important to The Bloc that the new 55,268-square-foot space felt cohesive and could easily accommodate the entire 200-person staff. To achieve that, Khanani focused on constructing an open, democratic environment that capitalized on the building's 360-degree views of New York and didn't contain any dead space. This involved clustering conference rooms, amenities, and private offices at the building's core, and then taking what Khanani calls a topographical approach throughout the space—manufacturing slight elevation changes both structurally and visually.

The lowest point is at the perimeter along the windows,

where employees are encouraged to work casually and have informal discussions. "Part of The Bloc's culture is to have a lot of meetings, so it was a priority for them to provide different types of meeting spaces, whether it's two people, a conference call, or a quarterly meeting," Khanani said.

To encourage this sentiment, Khanani designed a custom maple bench with a slatted, undulating form that not only reflects the East River's currents, but also conceals the radiators behind it. The bench doubles as stadium seating to accommodate company-wide meetings that were previously impossible in the old office configuration.

Moving to the next "level," custom steel and solid-wood workstations by Teknion draw the eye up without necessitating structural changes. To avoid unease in such close, open quarters, Khanani carefully placed workstations so that no one is juxtaposed eye to eye. To further the area's sense of privacy and calm, Khanani incorporated carpeting and weighty textiles like wool and cotton that act as an acoustic buffer in the largely glass-filled space.

From the workstations, ADA-compliant ramps wrap around tiny two- and three-person meeting rooms, then lead to larger conference rooms and private offices. The enclosed spaces are 24 inches higher than the rest of the floor and have glass walls to preserve views and allow light to permeate.

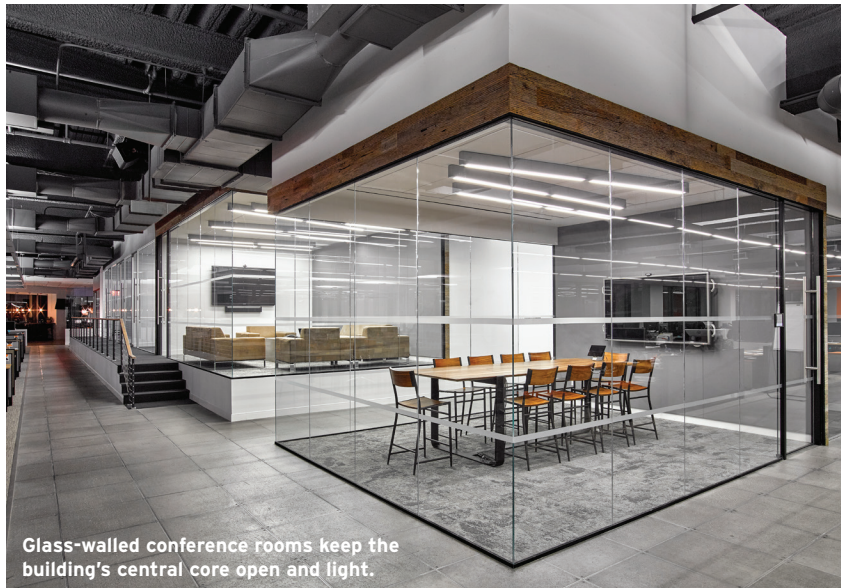
"The whole theme is a casual, industrial space; the idea was to not go back to what the Financial District was before," Khanani said. She balanced the more industrial aspects of the space with sculptural lighting and sleek furnishings from Teknion, Emeco, and Knoll. The color scheme for all of the materials and products Khanani selected is also the company's colors—orange, gray, and black—and prevents the space from feeling overly corporate, while enhancing brand identity.

The company moved in July 2015 with positive feedback. "I ran into a guy the other day in the elevator who asked if I was a new employee," said Khanani. "When I explained I was the architect, he thanked me because he had interviewed at The Bloc five years ago and decided it wasn't a good fit. Then, when he interviewed again this year he saw the new office and thought, 'I really want to work here now.' That was just the greatest compliment." OM

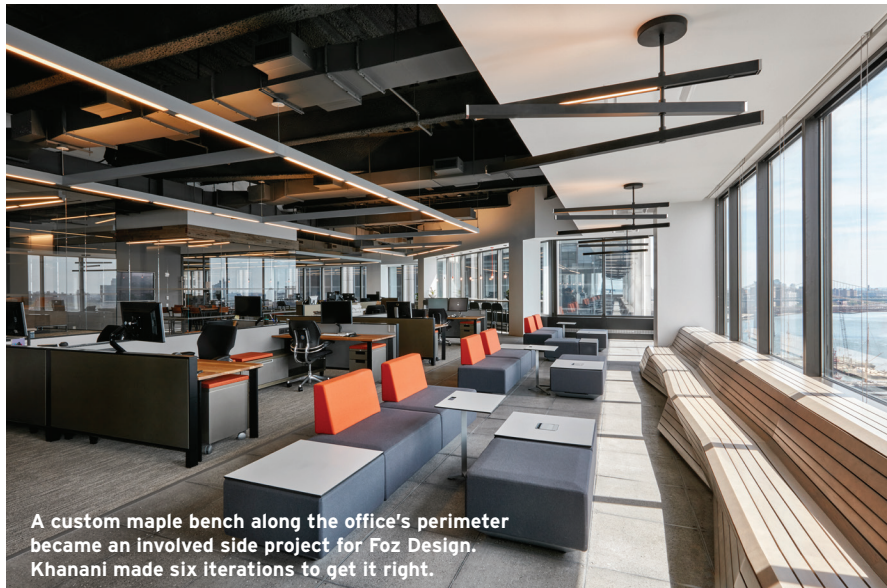
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**Architect of Record**  
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[benchmark-ny.com](http://benchmark-ny.com)

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[teknion.com](http://teknion.com)  
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Picasso Lighting  
[picassoltg.com](http://picassoltg.com)



Glass-walled conference rooms keep the building's central core open and light.



A custom maple bench along the office's perimeter became an involved side project for Foz Design. Khanani made six iterations to get it right.





Grace Farms, the River building; © Dean Kaufman



Grace Farms, the River building, Sanctuary; © Iwan Baan

# Grace Farms

Architect: SANAA  
Executive Architect: Handel Architects LLP  
Landscape Architect: OLIN

Sciame  
WHERE BUILDING IS AN ART



# The Memphis Movement

**A strong culture of arts-based regeneration and new civic-minded developments herald a long-anticipated turnaround for Memphis, but will the benefits of neighborhood-based revitalization spread citywide?**

**By Audrey Wachs**

In Memphis, there's nothing quite as fantastical as Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid, a 35-story riverfront sports arena converted into a complex of mixed use. Upon waking up in Big Cypress Lodge, the hunting cabin-themed hotel, visitors can go bowling in newly-purchased camouflage print bathrobes, practice sharpshooting at two indoor ranges, or take in panoramic views of the cityscape from an observation deck 300 feet high, accessible by a ride in North America's tallest freestanding elevator. Below, visitors can shop for speedboats—if you buy one, the staff will float it into the Mississippi River for you. It is an apt example of the diverse, large-scale projects currently cropping up in Memphis.

Not surprisingly, there's more to the city than self-contained shopping and entertainment zones. A 2014 study by Portland, Oregon-based think tank City Observatory found that along with those of New York, Chicago, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C., the Memphis metro area was one of only five of 51 metro areas over a 40-year period with five or more "rebounding" neighborhoods—areas that experienced drastic



COURTESY ARCHIMANIA





**Facing page:** Local firm archimania is building Tennessee's first net-zero office building. The complex, which includes a six unit apartment building, is intended to carry downtown's energy further south.

**Above:** Crosstown Concourse, a \$200 million, mixed-use redevelopment of a former Sears distribution center, will invigorate Memphis's Crosstown neighborhood.

**Below:** In Binghampton, about five miles from downtown, the Broad Avenue Arts District is a notable example of an arts-based corridor revitalization. Guillaume Alby's mural, *This is We*, faces a half-mile-long strip of galleries, restaurants, bars, and boutiques—businesses that often signal successful culture-based reinvestment.

declines in poverty rates. With everyone focusing on the downsides of gentrification from San Francisco to Boston, what could this finding tell us about Memphis?

Three Fortune 500 companies—FedEx, AutoZone, and International Paper—are headquartered there and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the University of Memphis are longtime civic anchors. Elvis, the blues, and barbecue perennially attract tourists.

Adaptive reuse flourishes downtown. Last April marked the grand opening of the aforementioned Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid. A local developer, the Henry Turley Company, is directing a \$53 million partial conversion of Central Station—currently an active Amtrak stop—into a restaurant, a movie theater, apartments, and a boutique hotel. The historic Chisca Hotel was transformed into an apartment building last year, and developer Billy Orgel's Tennessee Brewery will open to residents and businesses in late 2016. The Downtown Memphis Commission, an independent development agency, facilitates many of these projects.

What does small-scale urban investment look like in Memphis, and how does it relate to the city at large? Of the six rebounding neighborhoods in the Memphis metro area, only one is in the dense, older urban core—the South Main Arts District. There, local firm archimania is building the first net-zero office in Tennessee and

a residential complex to enliven a downtown corner.

These changes are not isolated: Four miles northeast in Crosstown, an old Sears distribution center is turning into an ambitious mixed-use, "health and well-being complex." And at Memphis's easternmost edge, Shelby Farms Park is undergoing a dramatic 20-year transformation that will tie it securely to surrounding communities.

Memphis asks the same question as many other cities: When certain districts come back strong, despite an overall climate of disinvestment, how does this affect the entire city?

#### "Archimaniacs" Push the Boundaries of Prime Downtown

"We are in a growth period, and I don't think it's just because of the economy," said principal Barry Alan Yoakum, referring to his firm, archimania, but he could have been talking about the excitement around new development in the city as a whole. Based in prime downtown Memphis, the firm is currently building itself a mixed-use, net-zero office complex eight blocks south of its current location.

Founded in Memphis in 1995, archimania is committed to revitalizing downtown. The firm purchased an awkward, 30,000-square-foot piece of land "for next to nothing" at East Carolina Avenue and South Main Street five years ago. Despite its prime location, the property was a challenge to

develop, with 12 feet of infill and an AT&T line running through the center. To prime the site, archimania lowered the line and brought the property level with the sidewalk.

This is the firm's second net-zero project. The approximately 5,000-square-foot office building currently under construction will be the firm's headquarters, and an adjacent 6,000-square-foot structure will contain six apartments. For Yoakum, the ambitious choice was simple: "We wanted to share more of what that property can handle. We're able to place apartments on the back side so that when our offices

are closed at night there's something to activate that space."

The complex extends activity on South Main, the busy spine of one of Memphis's largest arts districts. Yoakum mused on the transformation: "When we came here 20 years ago, it was nothing, it was pretty dead. It is now one of the busiest places in Memphis. People ask, 'Why are you going farther south?' Well, we want to bookend the development of South Main."

#### A Memphis Icon

The revitalization imperative extends out past downtown. In a

neighborhood four miles northeast of the South Main Arts District, Todd Richardson, a professor of art history at the University of Memphis, is leading the redevelopment of Crosstown Concourse, a \$200 million conversion of a former Sears distribution center into a "vertical urban village."

This is Richardson's first foray into development. Crosstown Concourse "is really a civic project," he explained. The idea came about six years ago as an outgrowth of Crosstown Arts, a community-based nonprofit that Richardson cofounded with Christopher



PAT BROWN





COURTESY BASS PRO SHOPS

**Left:** From North America's tallest freestanding elevator in the Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid, it's possible to see the speedboat shop, ponds stocked with live alligators, cypresses shrouded in Spanish moss, and Big Cypress Lodge, the rustic hunting cabin-themed hotel encircling the pyramid's perimeter.

**Bottom:** Crosstown Concourse's section depicts an extraordinary range of uses. Public art and community-based arts programming share space with a charter high school, restaurants, 265 apartments, and 620,000 square feet of commercial space.

Miner in 2010. Building on the city's rich arts and music history, Crosstown Arts staged hundreds of events, exhibitions, lectures, and performances to start conversations about the changes that could happen in Memphis.

The surrounding urban fabric is strong. Crosstown Concourse is bound on three sides by historic districts. It's close to Overton Park, home to Memphis College of Art and the Memphis Zoo.

The scale of the project—large—matches that of the city. Richardson emphasized that the 1.5-million-square-foot deco and art moderne

structure, built in 1927, "is a real icon in Memphis." The ten-story, three-square-block distribution center stands sentry over Crosstown, a neighborhood of low-slung homes and strip malls. At its peak, Sears employed 1,500 workers in the distribution center and retail store before closing the facility in 1993.

Richardson saw a need for a signature revitalization initiative that would get the neighborhood and the city excited. His eclectic team of fifty—architects, developers, business owners, activists, and financiers—want Crosstown Concourse to "put the neighborhood

back on the mental map of Memphis." Local architects Looney Ricks Kiss and Vancouver, Canada-based Dialog are collaborating on the project. Community institutions like the Church Health Center and St. Jude contributed to the development in its nascent stages, investing both for the project's quality and its spirit of civic engagement.

Others followed the anchors: 550,000 square feet of commercial space is already leased. With the development slated to open in 2017, the City of Memphis estimates that it will create 800 jobs and generate \$37 million in new

wages per year.

About 3,000 people are expected to pass through the building each day. For the development team, "density is a welcome by-product" of mixed-use, but the real driver is promoting diverse functions that work well together. Following the anchors, the structure is programmed for a 150,000-square-foot wellness center, a charter high school, and an arts area. Floors seven through ten feature 265 loft-style apartments, and 620,000 square feet of offices are spread over floors two through six. The ground floor boasts 60,000

square feet of restaurant and retail opportunities.

Adaptive reuse can be expensive. Crosstown Concourse costs \$9 million more than the lavishly kitsch Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid. The project received funding from 21 sources, including historic preservation tax credits.

A relatively small proportion of the street-level floor is reserved for commercial businesses to spur retail development in the surrounding neighborhood. There's a spillover effect already, Richardson said, citing a spate of restaurant openings close to the site.



COURTESY LRK



Does Richardson have concerns about gentrification? “Not yet. Neighbors are so happy that something’s going into the building. They’re excited about it.”

#### Development on the Edge

652,050 Memphians fan out over an area bigger than New York City. Despite Memphis’s size, the six lane roads and highways that slice through the city cut the drive from its eastern edge to the banks of the Mississippi River on its western edge to less than 30 minutes.

Twelve miles east of downtown, Shelby Farms Park is Memphis’s largest natural feature aside from the Mississippi. The 4,500-acre green space (almost five times the size of Manhattan’s Central Park) sits on the city’s outskirts, though around one million people live within a twenty-minute drive. The park is now undergoing a total renovation with new facilities by Fayetteville, Arkansas-based Marlon Blackwell Architects (MBA) and a master plan by New York’s James Corner Field Operations.

Acquired by Memphis through annexation in 1973, present-day Shelby Farms Park has a strange past. From 1825 to 1828, some of the land that the park now occupies was the Nashoba Community, a utopian settlement that educated and emancipated slaves. One hundred years later, the commune was converted into a penal farm that ran through the mid-1960s.

Shelby Farms Park was transformed into its present recreation-oriented program in the 1970s, though the space hosts more diverse activities than a typical city park. Agricenter, the self-anointed “Versailles of American agricultural technology” and the region’s largest urban farm, is building on the penal farm’s legacy of progressive farming and education, operating on 1,000 acres in the southeast corner of the park. Its buffalo herd is a crowd favorite.

Shelby Farms Park Conservancy (SFPC), the park stewards, commissioned Field Operations to develop a roughly 20-year master plan in 2008. Primary goals of the \$70 million project include creating an identity for Shelby Farms Park; connecting the park to the city and surrounding county via infrastructure improvements and better way-finding; promoting biodiversity; and improving recreational facilities.

Field Operations divided the park into 12 “landscape rooms,” such as orchards and berry fields, fishing ponds, and areas for horseback riding and agricultural development. Signature projects like the Wolf River pedestrian bridge, the Shelby Farms Greenline, and the Woodland Discovery Playground are already complete. Fifty-two-acre Patriot Lake will be

expanded to 80 acres; plans call for planting one million trees.

Much of the facelift focuses on the Heart of the Park, a central recreation area anchored by Patriot Lake. Currently under construction, these upgrades will open to the public this fall.

MBA designed four main structures to reactivate the core, a visitor’s center, a boathouse, an amphitheater for concerts on shore or films facing the lake, and a retreat center—restaurant, as well as lakeside pavilions. The center has an “ag-tech” aesthetic, explained project designer Stephen Reyenga. Referencing downtown’s orientation toward the river, the west-facing porch “frames the view out toward the lake.” The design incorporates local material where possible: The porch roof is Tennessee cypress; the stone is quarried from Arkansas. The restaurant tenant will be a branch of The Kitchen, the Denver-based nonprofit and upscale farm-to-table restaurant.

#### A Challenging Context

New developments like these three can have a trickle-down effect by spreading prosperity, especially in disinvested areas. Optimism sustains urban revitalization. Archimania, Todd Richardson, and SFPC justifiably believe in the transformational potential of civic-minded changes. The enthusiasm surrounding these three developments is palpable across Memphis. Citywide, trends are encouraging: Downtown residential occupancy rates are at 95 percent. The Broad Avenue Arts District and the remediation of Overton Square were cited by many during *AN*’s visit as examples of successful corridor revitalization.

Archimania’s complex should activate a southern corner of downtown, Crosstown Concourse may spur significant redevelopment, and Shelby Farms Park will likely broaden access to better public space. Quality amenities can anchor a neighborhood: These projects are bright spots on city terrain marked by persistent disinvestment. They should be praised for their intent and watched closely for their outcomes.

“There’s a cognitive bias we bring to neighborhood change,” said Joe Cortright, economist and coauthor of the report *Lost in Place*. “We don’t notice the very slow deterioration of neighborhoods.”

Long after the closing of the frontier, American cities still absorb collective fantasies of transformation. Until recently, Memphis left the door ajar: While most 19<sup>th</sup>-century cities closed their borders, Memphis grew by annexation into the 2000s.



**Above:** James Corner Field Operations is spearheading a 20-year master plan for Shelby Farms Park, Memphis’s largest green space. Marlon Blackwell

Architects of Fayetteville, Arkansas, designed outbuildings to activate space in the park’s core. The boathouse (top) restaurant and retreat center (middle), and

outdoor event space (bottom) open out onto 80-acre Patriot Lake, a recreational focal point at the heart of the park.





RON COON / AERIAL INNOVATIONS

**Above:** The Shelby Farms Park master plan is being implemented in phases. A central element of the Field Operations-designed Woodland Discovery Playground, completed in 2011, is a winding arbor planted with native trees and vines that demarcates the space's six play areas.

**Below:** Although famous for its musical contributions, Memphis has strong public art citywide. Since its founding in 1997, the UrbanArt Commission has completed over 140 projects, often in collaboration with community groups. Downtown, Jeff Zimmerman's

*A Note for Hope* (2008) overlooks AutoZone Park, home of the AAA Memphis Redbirds.



AUDREY WACHS

Suburbia, though, accounts for most of metro Memphis's rebound. Five of six rebounding neighborhoods are located outside the core downtown or in West Memphis, Arkansas. Declines in poverty rates may not be the result of new investment and opportunities for residents: The research is unable to determine whether residents in rebounding areas are getting wealthier, or whether there is an influx of people with higher incomes. Particularly in the South, Cortright noted, rebounding neighborhoods tend to be on the periphery of the metro area where formerly rural areas were developed into suburbs.

Architecture alone is not equipped to attack structural problems. Beyond neighborhood-level transformation, there's a limit to what a few signature projects can do to reverse the fortunes of a struggling city. For two years in a row, Memphis has had the highest poverty rate of any metro area of more than one million people—almost double the national average of 15 percent. Tom Jones, a consultant and blogger at *Smart City Memphis*, notes that

there are more people living in poverty here than the entire population of Chattanooga. While gentrification dominates the conversation in large metropolises, the effects of concentrated poverty, not gentrification, are the greatest challenge for most cities.

Is the city of Memphis rebounding? The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis offers perspective: Stubbornly high unemployment, a lackluster housing market, and weak growth in most industries indicate that there are many obstacles to economic recovery, although education, health, and business services remain relatively strong. Urban renewal projects "provide reasons for optimism."

When sprawl and entrenched poverty are prevailing conditions, what constitutes successful urban revitalization? At what scale? These questions can be asked not just in Memphis, but St. Louis, Atlanta, Detroit, and many other lower-density, high-poverty cities that are nevertheless experiencing reinvestment in targeted areas.

**AUDREY WACHS IS THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER'S ASSISTANT EDITOR.**



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FEBRUARY

FRIDAY 5  
EVENT

**First Friday: BIG**  
6:30 p.m.  
Office of BIG  
61 Broadway  
archleague.org

MONDAY 8  
EVENT

**Future Federal Workplace:  
A New Paradigm**  
6:30 p.m.  
District Architecture Center  
421 Seventh St. NW,  
Washington D.C.  
aiadc.com

TUESDAY 9  
LECTURE

**The Future of Making Things**  
**Lynn Allen**  
11:00 a.m.  
Miami Center for  
Architecture & Design  
100 N.E. First Ave.  
Miami, FL  
aiamiami.org

FILM

**Creating a 4D Video Sculpture:  
The Lower Manhattan  
Shoreline through Time**  
(Bob Bowen, 2015)  
6:30 p.m.  
The Skyscraper Museum  
39 Battery Pl.  
skyscraper.org

THURSDAY 11  
LECTURE

**Architecture for  
Humanity Boston**  
6:30 p.m.  
Boston Society of  
Architects Space  
290 Congress St., Suite 200  
architects.org

SYMPOSIUM

**National Museum of African  
American History and  
Culture (Part 1)  
A Discussion with  
the Structural Engineers  
and Architects**  
6:00 p.m.  
SmithGroupJJR  
1700 New York Ave.  
aiadc.com

FRIDAY 12  
SYMPOSIUM

**Architecture in Print:  
New Editorial Manifestos**  
**Jimenez Lai, Shumi Bose, et al.**  
1:00 p.m.  
Ware Lounge, Avery Hall  
1172 Amsterdam Ave.  
events.gsapp.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

**Beauty—Cooper Hewitt  
Design Triennial**  
Cooper Hewitt,  
Smithsonian Design Museum  
2 East 91<sup>st</sup> St.  
cooperhewitt.org

MONDAY 15  
LECTURE

**Pezo von Ellrichshausen**  
6:30 p.m.  
Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall  
1172 Amsterdam Ave.  
events.gsapp.org

FRIDAY 19  
SYMPOSIUM

**Resilience by Design**  
**University: Amale Andraos,  
Matthijs Bouw, et al.**  
10:00 a.m.  
Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall  
1172 Amsterdam Ave.  
events.gsapp.org

WEDNESDAY 24  
LECTURES

**Parks & People**  
**Steve Coleman**  
12:30 p.m.  
National Building Museum  
401 F St. NW  
go.nbm.org

Vo Trong Nghia

6:30 p.m.  
University of Miami  
School of Architecture  
1215 Dickinson Dr.,  
Coral Gables, FL  
aiamiami.org

SUNDAY 28

**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Opening of The Radical HIVE**  
**Social Housing Experiments**  
**in South America**  
6:00 p.m.  
Miami Center for  
Architecture & Design  
100 N.E. First Ave.  
aiamiami.org

MARCH

WEDNESDAY 2  
LECTURE

**Preserving South  
Street Seaport**  
**James Lindgren Book Talk**  
6:30 p.m.  
The Skyscraper Museum  
39 Battery Pl.  
skyscraper.org

FRIDAY 4  
FILM

**Brooklyn Farmer**  
(Michael Tyburski, 2015),  
27 min.  
6:00 p.m.  
Boston Society of  
Architects Space  
290 Congress St.  
architects.org

EVENT

**First Friday**  
6:30 p.m.  
Office of Morris Adjmi  
Architects  
60 Broad St.  
archleague.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

**Thom Browne Selects**  
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian  
Design Museum  
2 East 91<sup>st</sup> St.  
cooperhewitt.org

MARCH 12

**EXHIBITION CLOSING**  
**Brooklyn in Process**  
**Work by Marvel Architects**  
Usagi NY  
163 Plymouth St., Brooklyn  
usagi.com/ny



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**KLAUS WITTKUGEL AND ANTON STANKOWSKI**  
OSMOS Address  
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P!  
334 Broome St.  
p-exclamation.com  
Through February 21

*OST UND øder WEST* is a two-part exhibition on the ideologies of modernist graphic design. The exhibition contrasts East German works by Kalus Wittkugel (1910–1985) with West German works by Anton Stankowski (1906–1998).

Wittkugel and Stankowski studied under the same teacher in Essen, Germany, and both achieved success in 1930s advertising. While Wittkugel designed with socialist ideals in East Germany, Stankowski was taking a constructivist approach in the West. This exhibition includes a variety of their works—including vintage photography, posters, books, prints, and ephemera—to make a comparison of the two designers' ideologies.

“Twenty-five years after the reunification of East and West Germany, significant issues surrounding the dialogues of design and art within the divided state remain under-explored,” stated P!. The *OST UND øder WEST* exhibition retraces this history in a material manner.

The exhibition was curated by Prem Krishnamurthy and Cay Sophie Rabinowitz and runs from January 14 to February 21 in two locations, OSMOS Address and P!.

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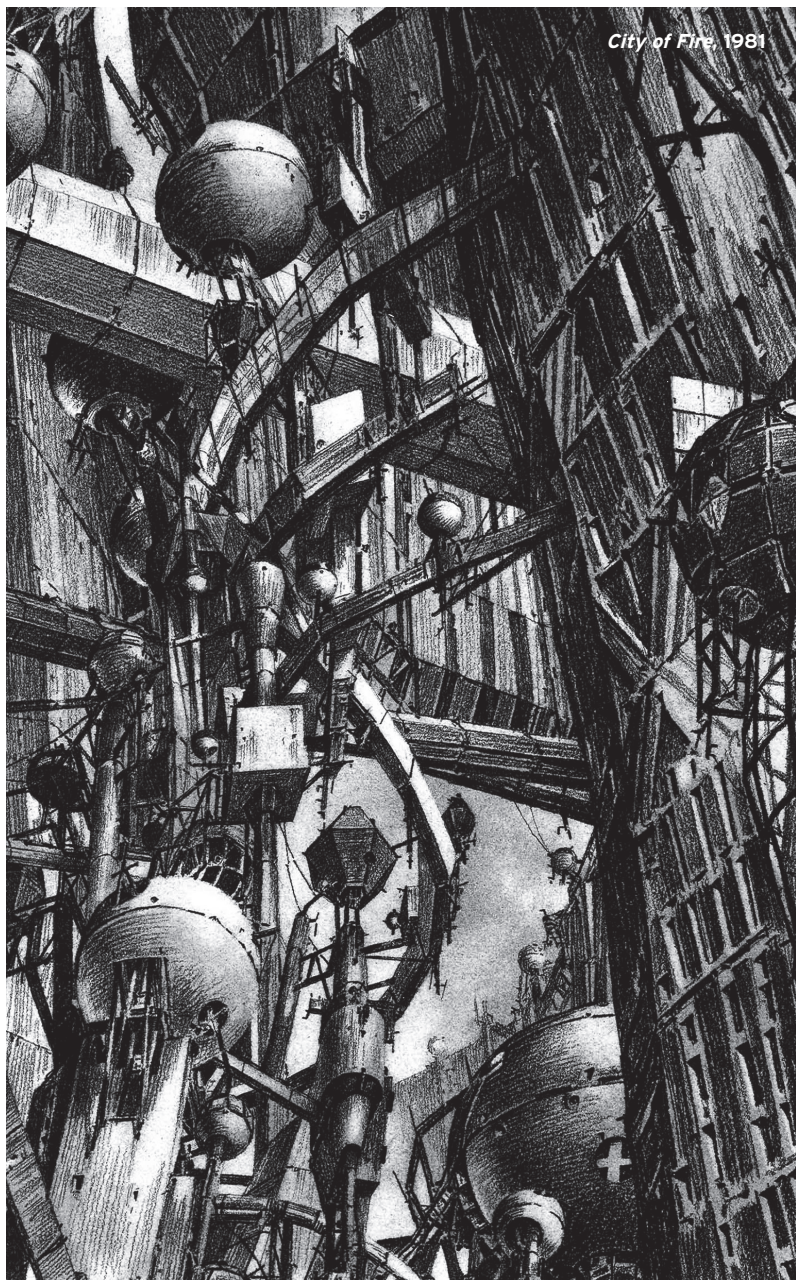


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COURTESY ESTATE OF LEBBEUS WOODS

## LEBBEUS WOODS: BLOGGER

*Slow Manifesto: Lebbeus Woods Blog*

Lebbeus Woods (Author), Clare Jacobson (Editor), Princeton Architectural Press, \$29.95

Lebbeus Woods's period of greatest notoriety coincided more or less with my student years. His extraordinary drawings were much admired and often copied; his concepts of open-ended and parasitic structures were hugely influential. I attended the Bartlett School of Architecture during the Peter Cook years, when Woods was a frequent visitor and something of a guru.

All of which is to describe a landscape in which Woods figured prominently, although it wasn't one in which I particularly participated. I was heading in a different direction and it wasn't until I came across his blog, begun in 2007, that I developed a more personal appreciation of his work.

The first thing that struck me then was that he was writing a blog at all. For someone of his stature it seemed a remarkably generous gesture. It was words written for free for anyone to read, uncommissioned and put out in the world without much fanfare or pretence. It helped that it was a genuinely exciting period for architecture blogs, lots of new voices eager to take part in a free-flowing and dynamic conversation. Blogs democratized architectural criticism. Suddenly, you didn't need an editor or a commission from a magazine to

be a critic. Nor did you need to spend time making a fanzine and finding a way of distributing it as previous generations of ambitious young architects and writers had done. Instant global access was possible and the words stood on their own merits. A number of interesting young writers, many of them now established authors, built their careers from blogging.

But Woods was none of these things and he didn't need to write a blog to be heard or to get attention. So there seemed to me a special kind of open-mindedness to his writing one, including his willingness to engage with readers' comments, not all of them positive. But beyond the interest of an established architect engaging with a medium that tended to disrespect its elders, what was Woods's blog about? Was it an offshoot of his design work or a separate branch of criticism?

In his perceptive introduction to *Slow Manifesto*, Christopher Hawthorne discerns a conservative strand to Woods's writing that was somewhat at odds with the drawn work. Woods's tone was measured, ruminative, almost scholarly. He wrote about a wide variety of topics: The Bosnian War and the siege of Sarajevo figure heavily as Woods proposed

a number of projects relating to the conflict. He also wrote about drawing—at which he was exceptional—and the work of other architects that he admired. And he pondered the point of speculative and experimental work. Some of his thoughts on architectural education—particularly on collaborative and “analogical” design studios—still offer important alternatives to the cult of individual genius that presides in most schools today.

But mostly, Woods's blog was the product of a mind that was preoccupied with architecture, a necessary outlet for thoughts that couldn't always be expressed through drawing or teaching. The words seem to come after the work as attempts to frame and explain its preoccupations, but there is a speculative quality to the writing too. It is neither criticism nor justification, but another way of thinking about the same issues.

Blogs usually have no clear end point. They tend to drift away with ever more sporadic posting. The apologetic “It's been a while since I last posted” entry is one familiar to most bloggers. There comes a time when they cease to be fun or useful or when other things take over. And **continued on page 23**

## Prometheus Unfounded

*Open Source Architecture*

by Carlo Ratti with Matthew Claudel, Thames & Hudson, \$24.95

The most strategic pathology of modern architecture is its split personality. While it is the profession that lays claim to perhaps the most basic human need, it long ago traded in the staid certainty of presiding over dwelling in favor of the vitality of an identity crisis. Leon Battista Alberti famously breathed life into the modern architect from the cadaver of the “mere carpenter” that he himself had simultaneously decapitated, destabilizing the discipline by counterpoising thinkers and doers. The resulting tension between the serious business of laying bricks, springing vaults, and putting bread on the table and the cultural popularity contest of authorship and ideas became the strong force that still glues together a volatile and vibrant discipline. To keep the schizophrenic discipline vigorous, this tension must be regularly stoked. *Open Source Architecture* is a recent fillip.

The Thames and Hudson-published non-book is the elaboration of an eponymous article that Carlo Ratti and a cohort of

“adjunct editors” first assembled for *Domus* in 2011. The text masquerades as an open source experiment itself as a printed “wiki”—one to be thought of “not as a book, but as a debate, or a joke, or a brainstorming session.” The ambition is no less than to dump the “top-down, comprehensive design” model of the “Promethean architect” typified by Le Corbusier, the Albertian *par excellence*, for the “Choral Architect [who] weaves together the creative and harmonic ensemble,” an editorial authority that sits somewhere between top-down and bottom up to orchestrate a networked design process fit for the mechanics and mental theatre of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If architecture can now be digitized into data, it goes, then the Molotov cocktail of Creative Commons licensing, crowd funding, and open source sharing fueled by the Internet will become an explosive enough force to recover the participatory ambitions that failed in the 1960s and 1970s.

Albeit cloaked in the drag of collaborative,

third person, circumstantial, and equivocal rhetoric, this is a manifesto. Manifestos construct an image of reality into which readers are to be thrown hoping they will stay there and ultimately construct it. Speed is vital; anything to remove friction is permitted. Twisting the facts and bungling history are encouraged. *Open Source Architecture* plays by the rules of its genre, but while the picture it paints for the future of architecture is clear, its understanding of the open source world it cops from to do so undershoots present reality. For a book published in 2015, it presents an antiquated model, underestimating the present and thereby underselling the future, the capital sin of a manifesto.

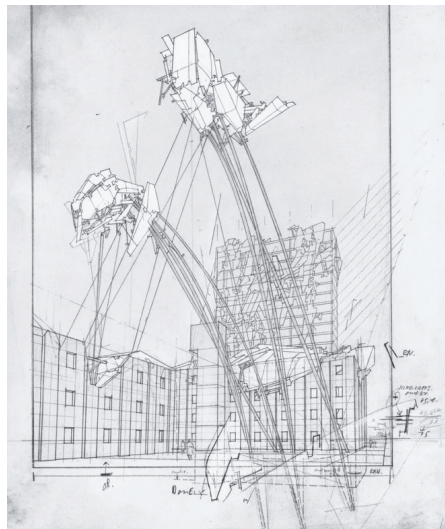
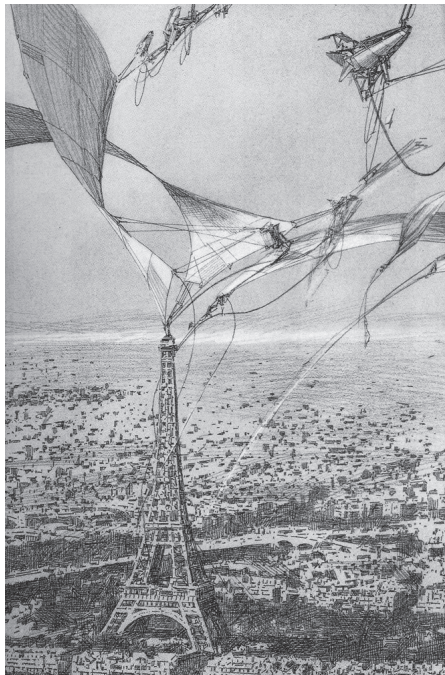
A contemporaneous text from outside of architecture by blogger Venkatesh Rao provides a benchmark. Invited by Andreessen Horowitz, the venture capital firm cofounded by the cofounder of the first commercial web browser, Rao spent a year studying the Silicon Valley habits of practice and mind from its epicenter. The study resulted in “Breaking Smart,” a series of essays published freely online that construct an explicit discourse from the largely tacit knowledge embedded in the same new software-driven complex of ownership, sharing, funding, and networking that drives Ratti's text. The difference is that for Ratti, “the success of software is a direct provocation

for architecture's paradigm shift,” whereas for Rao, architecture is precisely that which cannot participate in the software revolution.

Presenting software as the third “soft technology” after writing and money, Rao's text diagnoses the effects of its democratization from the military-industrial-academic scale of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the desktop of most American teenagers, forcing a shift in ethos from the distribution of scarce resources to one that “must be approached with an abundance mindset.” The figure that will “wield disproportionate influence on the emerging future” is the hacker, the new problem-solving archetype that brandishes an iterative, trial-and-error, pragmatist approach that will eclipse the “architect,” which for Rao is the hacker's idealist, purist, and anachronistic opposite. Whereas Ratti's formula relies on drawing a homology between architecture and software, Rao's presents their fundamental incompatibility: the power of software is in-dissociable from its softness and architecture will always be hard.

Ratti's label for the outmoded dinosaur still practicing “starchitecture” in pursuit of the “Bilbao Effect” to be extinguished by software relies on the two-and-a-half century old idea inscribed in Goethe's “Prometheus,” the first text to recast the Titan from a cautionary tale of the Renaissance to **continued on page 23**





COURTESY OF ESTATE OF LEBBEUS WOODS

Left: *Aerial Paris*, 1989. Aeroliving Labs: an imagined "community of heavier-than-air structures over Paris." Right: *High Houses*, from *War and Architecture*, 1993.

**LEBBEUS WOODS: BLOGGER** continued from page 22 to a large extent their time-consuming, mini-essay format was rendered obsolete by Twitter's breezy, instantaneous chatter.

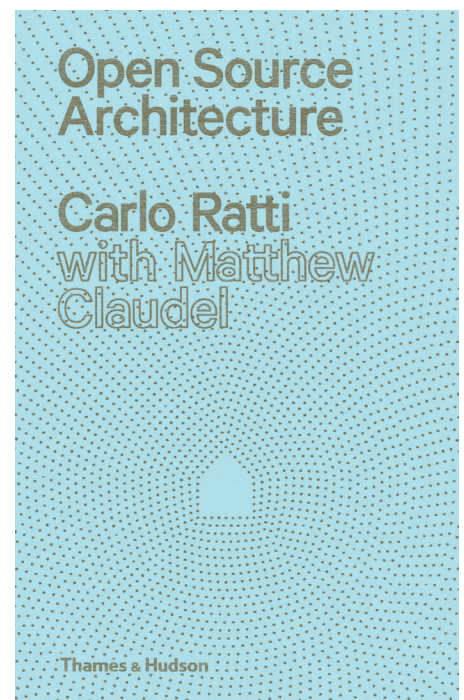
Lebbeus Woods's blog came to a more sudden end. His last post—"Goodbye (sort of)"—is still there at the top of his homepage, a lingering and moving elegy. This book brings together a selection of the posts that preceded it, minus the readers' comments that formed such an essential part of blogging. Published together they read as a conventional if randomly

organized collection of short essays. But something has been lost too, not least the immediacy of someone's thoughts popping up every other day or so: a real-time transcription of the ideas preoccupying them. That sadly is no longer possible. So we have *Slow Manifesto*, which serves as a record of a remarkable mind, still thinking, still moving through ideas until the end.

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**PROMETHEUS UNFOUNDED** continued from page 22 the exemplary genius for the artist. In the same year, 1772, Goethe wrote an ode praising Erwin, the name of an architect inscribed on the Strasbourg Cathedral that the young writer mistook to be singularly responsible for the towering marvel, a collaborative gothic creation built over generations. Goethe revived Prometheus while making of architecture a frozen and flawed image to fit his imperative. Ratti does the inverse, calcifying the myth to throw forward a new architect over its dead body. But myths can't be killed, they are trans-historical weapons to be refashioned as needed, and Prometheus has recently risen again. As Rao tells it: "Through the seventies, a tenuous balance of power prevailed between purist architects and pragmatic hackers... As a result of pragmatism prevailing, a nearly ungovernable Promethean fire has been unleashed." Prometheus has been adopted by the very open source movement Ratti invokes, and precisely, as Rao's analysis illustrates, by claiming its transcendence of architecture.

This lexical pedantry may seem frivolous, but if the stakes are the very figure of the architect, then Prometheus is well in play. While he was writing the first architecture treatise since Vitruvius, Alberti also penned *Momus*, a satire featuring an anti-hero explicitly modeled on Prometheus that historians Manfredo Tafuri and Mark Jarzombek have used as a cipher to decode a more complex agenda than canonical history has allowed. While Ratti's impulse to invoke the Promethean in projecting



a new architect in the age of software is well founded, a closer reading of both contemporary techno-culture and architecture history is wanting. As architect and Yale professor Keller Easterling warned in her contribution to the book, "Wiki as encyclopedia is easier than wiki as manifesto."

**TROY CONRAD THERRIEN IS THE CURATOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND DIGITAL INITIATIVES AT THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION AND MUSEUM.**

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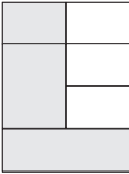
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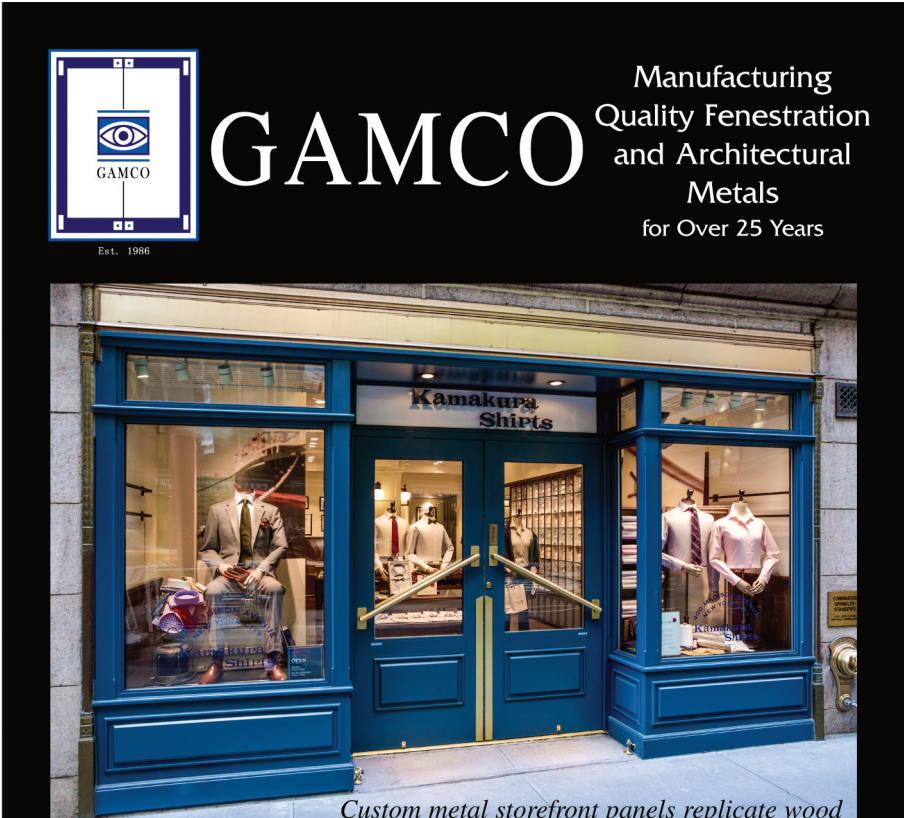
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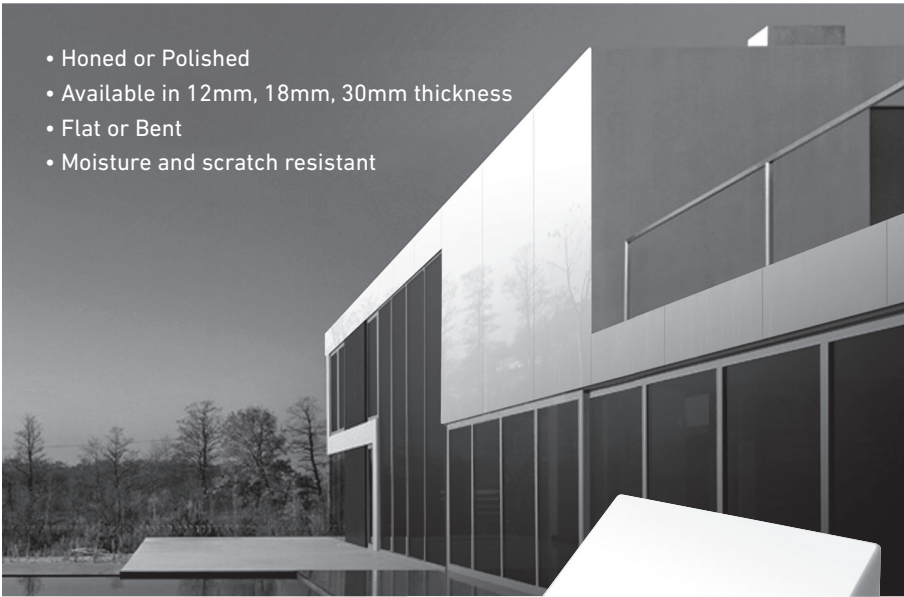
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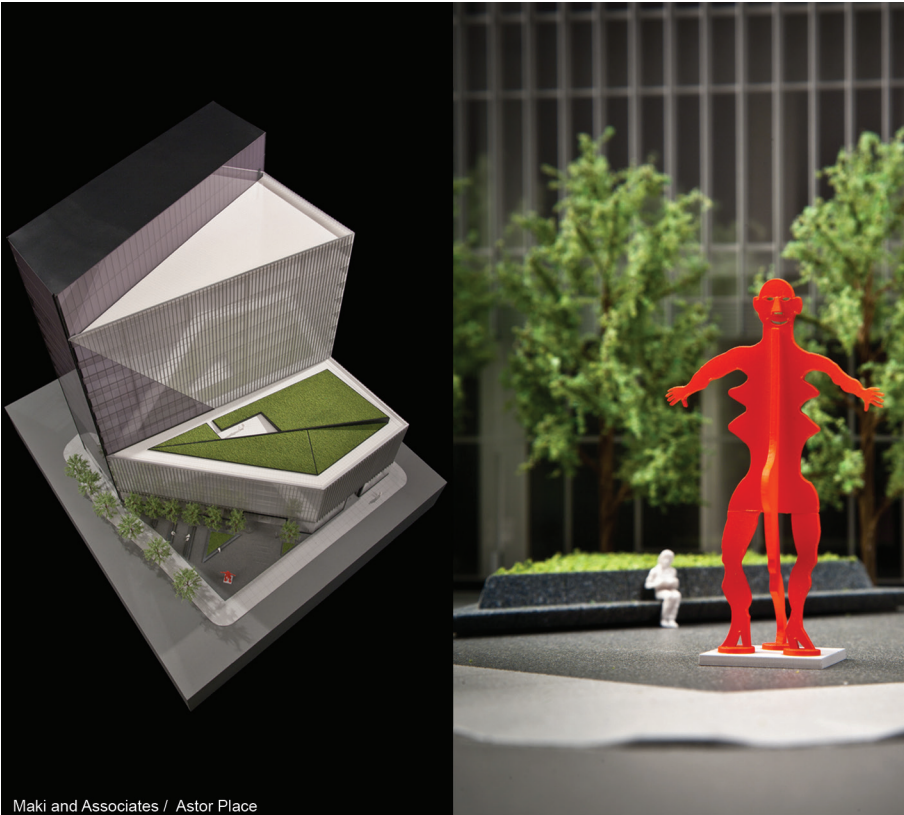
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# FROM FERGUSON TO BALTIMORE:

## THE FRUITS OF GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED SEGREGATION

In Baltimore in 1910, a black Yale law school graduate purchased a home in a previously all-white neighborhood. The Baltimore city government reacted by adopting a residential segregation ordinance, restricting African Americans to designated blocks. Explaining the policy, Baltimore's mayor proclaimed, "Blacks should be quarantined in isolated slums in order to reduce the incidence of civil disturbance, to prevent the spread of communicable disease into the nearby White neighborhoods, and to protect property values among the White majority."

Thus began a century of federal, state, and local policies to quarantine Baltimore's black population in isolated slums—policies that continue to the present day, as federal housing subsidy policies still disproportionately direct low-income black families to segregated neighborhoods and away from middle class suburbs.

Whenever young black men riot in response to police brutality or murder, we're tempted to think we can address the problem by improving police quality—training officers not to use excessive force, implementing community policing, encouraging police to be more sensitive, prohibiting racial profiling, and so on. These are all good, necessary, and important things to do. But such proposals

ignore the obvious reality that the protests are not really (or primarily) about policing.

In 1968, following hundreds of similar riots nationwide, a commission appointed by President Lyndon Johnson concluded that "our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal" and that "segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans." The Kerner Commission (headed by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner) added that "What white Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."

In the last 50 years, the two societies have become even more unequal. Although a relatively small black middle class has been permitted to integrate itself into mainstream America, those left behind are more segregated now than they were in 1968.

When the Kerner Commission blamed "white society" and "white institutions," it employed euphemisms to avoid naming the culprits everyone knew at the time. It was not a vague white society that created ghettos but government—federal, state, and local—that employed explicitly

racial laws, policies, and regulations to ensure that black Americans would live impoverished, and separately from whites. Baltimore's ghetto was not created by private discrimination, income differences, personal preferences, or demographic trends, but by purposeful action of government in violation of the Fifth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Amendments. These constitutional violations have never been remedied, and we are paying the price in the violence we keep seeing.

Following the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, I wrote "The Making of Ferguson," a history of the state-sponsored segregation in St. Louis County that set the stage for police-community hostility there. Virtually every one of the racially explicit federal, state, and local policies of segregation pursued in St. Louis has a parallel in policies pursued by government in Baltimore.

In 1917, the U.S. Supreme Court found ordinances like Baltimore's 1910 segregation rule unconstitutional, not because they abridged African Americans' rights to live where they could afford, but because they restricted the property rights of (white) homeowners to sell to whomever they wished. Baltimore's mayor responded by instructing city building inspectors and health department

investigators to cite for code violations anyone who rented or sold to blacks in predominantly white neighborhoods. Five years later, the next Baltimore mayor formalized this approach by forming an official Committee on Segregation and appointing the City Solicitor to lead it. The committee coordinated the efforts of the building and health departments with those of the real estate industry and white community organizations to apply pressure to any whites tempted to sell or rent to blacks. Members of the city's real estate board, for example, accompanied building and health inspectors to warn property owners not to violate the city's color line.

In 1925, 18 Baltimore neighborhood associations came together to form the "Allied Civic and Protective Association" for the purpose of urging both new and existing property owners to sign restrictive covenants, which committed owners never to sell to an African American. Where neighbors jointly signed a covenant, any one of them could enforce it by asking a court to evict an African American family who purchased property in violation. Restrictive covenants were not merely private agreements between homeowners; they frequently had government sanction. In Baltimore, the city-sponsored Committee on Segregation organized neighborhood associations throughout the city that





**Opposite page:** Protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, following the police killing of Michael Brown. **Above left:** According to the Kerner Commission report in 1968, “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” In April, a month later, riots broke out in more than 100 cities, including Baltimore (shown). **Above right:** Baltimore’s Perlman Street was razed in 2010 due to “blighted conditions” caused by vacant lots.



could circulate and enforce such covenants.

Supplementing the covenants, African Americans were prevented from moving to white neighborhoods by explicit policy of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which barred suburban subdivision developers from qualifying for federally subsidized construction loans unless the developers committed to exclude African Americans from the community. The FHA also barred African Americans themselves from obtaining bank mortgages for house purchases even in suburban subdivisions, which were privately financed without federal construction loan guarantees. The FHA not only refused to insure mortgages for black families in white neighborhoods, it also refused to insure mortgages in black neighborhoods—a policy that came to be known as “redlining,” because neighborhoods were colored red on government maps to indicate that these neighborhoods should be considered poor credit risks as a consequence of African Americans living in (or even near) them.

Unable to get mortgages, and restricted to overcrowded neighborhoods where housing was in short supply, African Americans either rented apartments at rents considerably higher than those for similar dwellings in white neighborhoods, or bought homes on installment plans. These arrangements, known as contract sales, differed from mortgages because monthly payments were not amortized, so a single missed payment meant loss of a home, with no accumulated equity. In summarizing her book, *Family Properties*, Rutgers University historian Beryl Satter described it this way:

“Because black contract buyers knew how easily they could lose their homes, they struggled to make their inflated monthly payments. Husbands and wives both worked double shifts. They neglected basic maintenance. They subdivided their apartments, crammed in extra tenants and, when possible, charged their tenants hefty rents. ...”

White people observed that their new black neighbors overcrowded and neglected their properties. Overcrowded neighborhoods meant overcrowded schools; in Chicago, officials responded by “double-shifting” the students (half attending in the morning, half in the afternoon). Children were deprived

of a full day of schooling and left to fend for themselves in the after-school hours. These conditions helped fuel the rise of gangs, which in turn terrorized shop owners and residents alike.

In the end, whites fled these neighborhoods, not only because of the influx of black families, but also because they were upset about overcrowding, decaying schools and crime. They also understood that the longer they stayed, the less their property would be worth. But black contract buyers did not have the option of leaving a declining neighborhood before their properties were paid for in full—if they did, they would lose everything they’d invested in that property to date. Whites could leave—blacks had to stay. The contract buying system was commonplace in Baltimore. Its existence was solely due to the federal government’s policy of denying mortgages to African Americans, in either black or white neighborhoods.

Nationwide, black family incomes are now about 60 percent of white family incomes, but black household wealth is only about 5 percent of white household wealth. In Baltimore and elsewhere, the distressed condition of African American working- and lower-middle-class families is almost entirely attributable to federal policy that prohibited black families from accumulating housing equity during the suburban boom that moved white families into single-family homes from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s—and thus from bequeathing that wealth to their children and grandchildren, as white suburbanites have done.

As I described in the “Making of Ferguson,” the federal government maintained a policy of segregation in public housing nationwide for decades. This was as true in northeastern cities like New York as it was in border cities like Baltimore and St. Louis. In 1994, civil rights groups sued the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), alleging that HUD had segregated its public housing in Baltimore and then, after it had concentrated the poorest African American families in projects in the poorest neighborhoods, HUD and the city of Baltimore demolished the projects, and purposely relocated the former residents into other segregated black neighborhoods.

An eventual settlement required the government to provide vouchers to former public housing residents for apartments in integrated neighborhoods, and supported this provision with counseling and social services to ensure that families’ moves to integrated neighborhoods would have a high likelihood of success. Although the program is generally considered a model, it affects only a small number of families, and has not substantially dismantled Baltimore’s black ghetto.

In 1970, declaring that the federal government had established a “white noose” around ghettos in Baltimore and other cities, HUD Secretary George Romney proposed denying federal funds for sewers, water projects, parkland, or redevelopment to all-white suburbs that resisted integration by maintaining exclusionary zoning ordinances (that prohibited multi-unit construction) or by refusing to accept subsidized moderate-income or public low-income housing. In the case of Baltimore County, he withheld a sewer grant that had previously been committed, because of the county’s policies of residential segregation. It was a very controversial move, but Romney got support from Vice President Spiro Agnew, who had been frustrated by unreasonable suburban resistance to integration and mixed income developments when he had been the Baltimore County Executive and governor of Maryland. In a 1970 speech to the National Alliance of Businessmen, Agnew attacked attempts to solve the country’s racial problems by pouring money into the inner city as had been done in the Johnson administration. Agnew said that he flatly rejected the assumption that “because the primary problems of race and poverty are found in the ghettos of urban America, the solutions to these problems must also be found there... Resources needed to solve the urban poverty problem—land, money, and jobs—exist in substantial supply in suburban areas, but are not being sufficiently utilized in solving inner-city problems.”

President Richard Nixon eventually restrained Romney, HUD’s integration programs were abandoned, Romney himself was forced out as HUD Secretary, and little has been done since to solve the urban poverty problem with the substantial resources that exist in the suburbs.

Ten years ago, during the subprime lending boom, banks and other financial institutions targeted African Americans for the marketing of subprime loans. The loans

had exploding interest rates and prohibitive prepayment penalties, leading to a wave of foreclosures that forced black homeowners back into ghetto apartments and devastated the middle class neighborhoods to which these families had moved. The City of Baltimore sued Wells Fargo Bank, presenting evidence that the bank had established a special unit staffed exclusively by African American bank employees who were instructed to visit black churches to market subprime loans. The bank had no similar practice of marketing such loans through white institutions. These policies were commonplace nationwide, but federal bank examiners responsible for supervising lending practices made no attempt to intervene. When a similar suit was filed in Cleveland, a federal judge observed that because mortgage lending is so heavily regulated by the federal and state governments, “there is no question that the subprime lending that occurred in Cleveland was conduct which ‘the law sanctions’.”

Baltimore, not at all uniquely, has experienced a century of public policy designed, consciously so, to segregate and impoverish its black population. A legacy of these policies is the rioting we have seen in Baltimore. Whether after the 1967 wave of riots that led to the Kerner Commission report, after the 1992 Los Angeles riot that followed the acquittal of police officers who beat Rodney King, or after the recent wave of confrontations and vandalism following police killings of black men, community leaders typically say, properly, that violence isn’t the answer and that after peace is restored, we can deal with the underlying problems. We never do so.

Certainly, African American citizens of Baltimore were provoked by aggressive, hostile, even murderous policing, but Spiro Agnew had it right. Without suburban integration, something barely on today’s public policy agenda, ghetto conditions will persist, giving rise to aggressive policing and the riots that inevitably ensue. Like Ferguson before it, Baltimore will not be the last such conflagration the nation needlessly experiences.

*This article was originally published by the Economic Policy Institute.*

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