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

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 40th Precinct in the Bronx’s Melrose neighborhood. The 40th 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 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

CONTROVERSY CONTINUES AT BUSHWICK INLET PARK, PART OF NORTH BROOKLYN’S 2005 WATERFRONT REZONING PLAN

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
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 undisputably good for architects and appreciated the value that 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 class.

As a result, architects in the city today cannot help but be supportive of the mayor’s housing proposals and 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 Weiss wrote an article about the real estate industry in the city. She argues that it is time to recreate an organization like the Architects/Designers/Planners Society (ADPSR) once made a connection between the costs of war and a lack of a political organization of architects that can demand, for example, that workers who build buildings be paid a living wage or even start refusing work if this is the case. 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 development of housing in the five boroughs and help generate commissions for the public. It was a gift to Highlands from the borough’s council officially accepted the gift before the roof to serve as skylights, it was erected above the local council’s building. It is so new that the architects never had the opportunity to discuss 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 political organization that makes the case for design and public policy around these hard, difficult decisions. It is time to recreate an organization like the Architects/Designers/Planners Society 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 political organization that makes the case for design and public policy around these hard, difficult decisions. It is time to recreate an organization like the Architects/Designers/Planners Society 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.

Shorehenge, once a popular landmark, was designed by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien Architects, which was honored by the American Folk Art Museum taken down in 2014, just 13 years for Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, and was destroyed by Sandy in 2012.

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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 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 of 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 Arétaea, Juan Cerda, Víctor 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?

SEND RACE BAIT AND JURY INVITES TO EAVESDROP>ARCHPAPER.COM

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 café, 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

COLUMBIA CARE

212 East 14th Street
Tel: 212-248-3780
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,” said Marie Tocci, COO of Columbia Care. “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

P3 COMFORTS. COMFORT FOR ALL SENSES.

The P3 Comforts series by Duravit and Phoenix Design provides the ultimate comfort – in its look, its feel and its function. The thin edges and delicate shapes of both, washbasin and bathtub, are as characteristic as they are comfortable. The generous width of the basin provides 3/4 of additional seating comfort. A perfect match is the bathroom furniture range L-Cube. More at www.duravit.us
The ArchiTec T’s NewspAper Febru Ary 3, 2016

STUDIO VISIT - WHY NEW YORK

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 biocostal 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."

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

BIBLIO TICA 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.

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."
The Original – occasionally imitated, never equaled. The ¾” profile Vitrocsa sliding glass wall. Proven and tested since 1993, with over 30,000 Vitrocsa units installed in over 30 countries.

Now also Dade County Hurricane Impact rated.
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.

The Department of Design and Construction’s (DDC) set strict standards for police station design that provided the parameters. “Where the stations houses of the early 1900s reflect an architectural language of fortification and stronghold, the design of the later 20th 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 40s.” 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 lobby 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 sweeps in from the north to bisect the parcel. Ingels’s request was to add a slightly 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 149th 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.

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

SIZA MATTERS continued from front page

New York–based luxury real-estate development firms Sumaida + Khurana and LENY commissioned Siza to build 611 West 56th 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.

“Alvaro 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 56th Street features a subdued crown that tops an elegant gridlike base.

SHOREHENCE continued from front page

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 “commitment 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.”

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.

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.
Thomas 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 “Ingeiner”, 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 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 20th-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 1976. 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.

THOMAS S. MARVEL
1935–2015

Ornamental Metal Institute of New York
WWW.OMINY.ORG

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.
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, the new 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 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 its works of cinema to reach a broader audience.

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

A view along the planned pedestrian walkway designed by AECOM

**WATERRONT** 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 needle rush, 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 the Manhattan skyline that ascends 12 feet above sea level, with berms that reinforce the upper edge, softened by a retaining lawn featuring 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 600,000 feet of as-of-right commercial space. 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**
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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
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

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 dying technique and is hand painted using indigo dyes on folded durable paper.

mayaromanoff.com

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

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

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

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

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

INDIGO

MAYA ROMANOFF

MEDIANEWS

GKD METAL

DIGITAL IMAGERY

MOZ DESIGNS

FADE

WALNUT WALLPAPER

BANDA

ESKAYEL

GEO

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DIGITAL IMAGERY

MOZ DESIGNS

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WALNUT WALLPAPER

12

BANDA

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13

GEO

WALLPAPER DIRECT
When health-wellness creative engagement agency The Bloc approached its 15th 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.”

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  mufsonpartnership.com

- **Contractor**
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- **Furnishings**
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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 that is a unique interpretation 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...
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 Wk, faces a half-mile-long strip of galleries, restaurants, bars, and boutiques—businesses that often signal successful culture-based reinvestment.

decreases 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 hotel. The historic Chisca Hotel theater, apartments, and a boutique stop—into a restaurant, a movie station—currently an active Amtrak million partial conversion of Central Turley Company, is directing a $53 million partial conversion of Central Station. The complex, which includes a six unit apartment building, is intended to carry downtown’s energy further south.

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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 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.
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.
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.

Shelby Farms Park’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.”

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

Architects of Fayetteville, Arkansas, designed outbuildings to activate space in the park’s core. The boathouse (top), visitor’s center (middle), and outdoor event space (bottom) open out onto 80-acre Patriot Lake, a recreational focal point at the heart of the park.
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.
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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 pretense. 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 blogs. 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, 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—were thought to be prescient 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. 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 apologic “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.

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Prometheus Unfounded

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 between top-down and bottom up to orchestrate a networked design process fit for the mechanics and mental theatre of the 21st 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 ’70s.

Albeit cloaked in the drag of collaborative, third person, circumstantial, and equivocal rhetoric, the blog 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, 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 21st 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 ’70s.

Ratti’s label for the outmoded dinosaur still practicing “starchitecture” in pursuit of the “Bilbao Effect” to be extinguished by software is a direct provocation 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—were thought to be prescient 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.

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Blogs usually have no clear end point. They tend to drift away with ever more sporadic posting. The apologic “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.

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Slow Manifesto: Lebbeus Woods Blog

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

"Promethean" 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 21st 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 ’70s.

Albeit cloaked in the drag of collaborative, third person, circumstantial, and equivocal rhetoric, the blog 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, 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 21st 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 ’70s.

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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.”

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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.

Charles Holland is a director and cofounder of Ordinary Architecture in London and writes often about architecture, including the popular Blog Fantastic Journal.
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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 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.” This 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 1926, 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
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, cramming 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-1900s 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 1984, 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 City, 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 existing 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, giving rise to the rage in 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.
WASHINGTON, DC
March 10
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