The Best of Milan Design Week
Gallery Talk: Volume’s Claire Warner Worrell Yeung takes on modernism
DUST Studio’s earthy Marfa Suite
Rafael de Cárdenas in Beijing
Signal shows how reuse is done
Pictorial: The CCA’s carpet fetish

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*On the cover and left: Hermès’s Contemplating Materials installation was a highlight of Milan Design Week.*
RENDEZ-VOUS WITH YOU

ligne roset

Prado, Christian Werner
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It could be that you picked up this issue of AN Interior at one of seven showrooms participating in our annual Design District Crawl in the NoMad and Flatiron neighborhoods of Manhattan. We were all hoping this fall would usher in a “return to normal” vis-à-vis the pandemic. While that has not come to pass due to the rise of the Delta variant and middling vaccination rates among Americans, our collective need to come together and socialize again, for business and for pleasure, has pushed us to find safe ways (inoculated, masked, and distanced) to convene, coronavirus be damned.

But chances are you received the issue in the mail at your home or office (perhaps they’re the same place now), just like you receive your print editions of The Architect’s Newspaper (the “AN” in “AN Interior”). As the name suggests, unlike the many other publications that endeavor to cover the world of interiors, we focus on the considerable contributions of architects to this field of design. After all, architects have since time immemorial thought of the interior as an integral part of any overall design project, all the way down to the fittings, fixtures, and furniture, a point made amply clear in our conversation with Volume Gallery cofounder Claire Warner (page 10).

It is in the spirit of honoring architects’ contributions to interior space that we, for the fourth year in a row, present our Top 50 list (page 30). Chosen by editors, the firms included here are all working at the forefront of the profession. The list is intentionally diverse by firm size, reputation (many are quite young, while others have been leading the pack for decades), demographics, geographic location in North America (including Mexico and Canada), and type of work—everything from large public and institutional projects to single family homes and installations. We hope you like our selections.

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Volume Gallery in Chicago wants nothing more than to cultivate new American design talent. By Adrian Madlener

In Conversation: Claire Warner
It’s been more than a decade since Volume Gallery arrived on the collectible design scene, and in that time, the small Chicago-based platform has consistently punched above its weight. Chalk it up to pluck and sheer good taste: Volume has cultivated a roster of smart, experimental, critique-oriented talents that distinguishes it from the rest of the pack. Sam Stewart, Thaddeus Wolf, and Anders Herwald Ruhwald were all given a big push by the gallery. And it’s not just designers. Unique for collectible design, Volume invests in architects foraying into the realm of object making, working closely with practices including Norman Kelly and Young & Ayata. This mandate harks back to the discipline’s origins—in addition to buildings, architects once masterminded furniture and interiors—and aligns well with Chicago’s own design tradition. Volume’s reach isn’t limited to the Windy City, however, and the gallery routinely engages emerging practitioners from all over the United States. In many respects, it is more akin, according to cofounder Claire Warner, to an “incubator” for formal risk-taking, as can be seen in its most recent spate of exhibitions. Warner and cofounder Sam Vinz commissioned new collections from Christy Mason, Ania Jaworska, and most recently Jonathan Muecke, encouraging each to hone his or her ideas in order to spark critical discourse. AN Interior market editor Adrian Madlener spoke to Warner about the gallery’s mission and why making a functional chair is beside the point.

**AN Interior:** What’s the story behind Volume Gallery. How and why did you and Sam Vinz decide to launch the platform?

**Claire Warner:** Sam and I met while working at Wright auction house [in Chicago]. I was a 20th-century design specialist, and Sam was developing a contemporary design program. With the 2008 financial crisis, everything got derailed and we were both let go from Wright. I started thinking about opening my own gallery based on the question, where American design is going. In the 20th century, there was a huge residential design market with innovation coming from Charles and Ray Eames. Manufacturers were doing a lot of experimental and interesting things. That had all since evaporated. I was also seeing historic American talents Claire Falkenstein and Ruth Asawa selling at auction for much less than their European counterparts or what their works were truly worth.

My idea was to focus on the country’s overlooked design heritage and craft tradition, which at the time was still quite a dirty word. I was talking to designer Jonathan Nesci about my idea. He mentioned that Sam was looking to do the same thing. Based on this coincidence, we decided to join forces and establish Volume Gallery. The moment was not unlike the present one in that we set out to launch a new platform in the middle of a crisis. We thought that if we started a business and it failed, we could blame it on the economic downturn. It gave us the freedom to develop what we really wanted to do. That was the general mood at the time. Nesci was one of our first exhibitors.

**AN:** Why was it important to set up shop in Chicago?

**CW:** When we opened there were a few galleries in Chicago that paired some contemporary and 20th-century design but none that focused exclusively on the former. There wasn’t really a viable platform for young, experimental talents, especially in the Midwest, where a lot of them are based. Being in Chicago puts us in close contact with them, but we also are keen to look everywhere. I think a large part of the art market has been kind of pulling from the same sources and really kind of being prohibitive of who gets to participate. One thing I like about design is that it feels open; it doesn’t follow the same rules.
break out of your comfort zone, which is what we like our designers to do. That kind of unique conceptual ideation informs a lot of practitioners that end up looking beyond just creating a functional chair.

From the outset, it was crucial that the talents we worked with were able to challenge typologies, because so many did not yet have a portfolio. Being more improvisational or open to trying new things out affords them the chance to establish their approach and point of view. This is especially true with young architects, who rarely have built projects under the belt yet. At that early stage, they’re still talking about ideas. At Volume Gallery, we like to think of ourselves as a kind of incubator, helping these creatives develop and formalize those concepts. We don’t go to their studios and say we want this or that finished piece. Instead, we say, “Is there something that you want to do that you feel that you can’t push right now?” Then we’ll look at what that proposal is and we go about seeing how we can partner to make that a reality.

**AN:** How did you cultivate your architect program? What do these practitioners bring to collectible design that others might not?

**CW:** If you look way back, furniture was always more expensive than art. The market has since shifted, but a lot of historic architects saw [furniture’s] value in accentuating a space or helping to create a cohesive environment. If you think of Frank Lloyd Wright, he kind of shifted from that too, creating furniture that could almost go anywhere. But in the present day, architects, unfortunately, have to execute the vision according to strict client demands. They don’t necessarily have a lot of opportunity—unless they have a patron—to take the risk and develop their own holistic projects. We see our partnership with architects as two-fold. On the one hand, we provide them with a platform to create works in a neutral environment [so that] their particular style or interests becomes apparent to potential patrons who want to invest in these living talents. This is the core of our mission. On the other hand, working at the scale of the gallery allows them to fail from time to time, which is central to any experimental practice. Obviously, when you have built architecture, you do not have a lot of flexibility to take risks. We push our people to such a point that their projects sometimes fail and don’t make it to the gallery. It can be nerve-racking, but there is also beauty in it. We push things so far sometimes that we can’t help but learn lessons. We keep our designers close and foster their careers, developing multiple solo shows over time. It’s a labor of love with very fruitful outcomes.

The gallery has an informal connection to the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Talk about how the institution’s culture of interdisciplinary experimentation corresponds with your own vision.

**CW:** Cranbrook is a huge resource for us. It’s almost like going back to the source. The school has a strong connection to 20th-century design, Harry Bertoia, and the Saarinens. One of the first things we did is go to their graduation show and discovered people like Ania Jaworska, Jonathan Muecke, and Nesci, whose innovative use of material immediately struck us as something new and exciting. The institution is all about studio practice and cross-pollination, which is a philosophy we share at Volume Gallery. Students in the 3D department creating design are encouraged to take classes in clay and metalworking. You experience critique from your peers. There’s an inherent understanding of craft and
Beach Find

Worrell Yeung brings an obscure Charles Gwathmey house into the present. By Samuel Medina
Some time in 2014, architects Max Worrell and Jejon Yeung got a call from friends who had been looking for a beach house in the Hamptons to buy. The couple, a financier and an artist, had stumbled across a compelling find: a spacious modernist home in Amagansett, New York, about a block from the ocean. Only, they hadn’t heard of the architect named on the listing and rang up Worrell and Yeung to ask for their opinion.

“They called us from the house and asked, ‘What do you think of Charles Gwathmey?’” recalled Worrell. “We chuckled and told them, ‘It depends which Charles Gwathmey you mean?’”

He and Yeung, partners in a Brooklyn-based architecture firm that bears their names, first met as graduate students at the Yale School of Architecture. There, they were steeped in the modernist tradition to which Gwathmey (class of ’62) was heir, partisan, and, eventually, wrecker. A few years out of school, Gwathmey made a splash with a house he designed for his parents, also in Amagansett. It inspired endless copies and permutations up and down the East Coast, done by architects who never seemed to tire of the formal games one can play with platonic solids. Least of all Gwathmey himself. He would return to that well time and again until he, like many of his generation, thinking themselves great wits and savvy businessmen, switched allegiance to postmodernism in the 1980s. The quality of Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects’ (and later Gwathmey Siegel Kaufman & Associates Architects’) output nosedived, never to recover.

It’s a familiar story. But Worrell and Yeung became intrigued on being told that the house in question dated from 1976—not quite peak Gwathmey, but well within the “safe” zone of his portfolio. The Haupt Residence, as it had been previously called, was in generally good shape and what upgrades were needed—for example, replacing the deteriorated outer cladding—weren’t outside the realm of feasibility. Blueprints shown to them by the son...
IN PRACTICE
of the original owners gave them the confidence to make the necessary interventions. It was a buy.

In contrast with Gwathmey’s debut—a fairly compact, cuboid dwelling—the Haupt Residence is less reticent about its footprint. Though well-received by the architectural press in its day, the 4,400-square-foot house never developed much of a reputation—unfair, as it has more than a handful of surprises to offer. The half-level section, where stepped ramps link the two main levels (plus a basement), is novel for a Gwathmey home. A living-room reveal at the base of the fireplace shows how mischievous the architect could be when he wasn’t groveling before bankers and art magnates. The pastel color scheme was well-considered, and handrail details that might seem arbitrary do, in fact, find their basis in the plan.

“He had a systematic approach to the detailing, and it gets played throughout. We followed that mantra with the renovation,” Worrell said. At the same time, there were certain elements that seemed to prefigure the postmodern malignancy to come. A capricious millwork piece over the fireplace and an obstructive kitchen built-in “felt editable,” Worrell recalled, and were removed. Also in the kitchen, outdated surfaces, such as the countertop laminate, were replaced with more durable stuff and new appliances—in matching white-oak tones—brought in. The terra-cotta flooring, laid out with an unfortunately wide grout, was ripped out for something more contemporary: an antibacterial tile, which the marketing materials say has a “concrete effect.”

When it came to the main bathroom upstairs, Worrell and Yeung were somewhat bolder. They overhauled the space, bringing in Italian tiles, an oversized bathtub, and new casework, which, it should be said, echoes the retained built-ins in the living room.

“It was preservationist in spirit, but not everything was meticulously restored,” Yeung said of the project parameters. “Someone who respects the architecture of that era wouldn’t necessarily come to the conclusion that we
The architects opened up the kitchen and replaced the laminate countertops with Corian. New built-ins matched to existing ones conceal a Sub-Zero refrigerator.

changed a lot of things. What they will notice is how fresh it all feels."

This past summer, the new owners, having decided to relocate to Hawaii, sold the house for $9.25 million. But for the architects, the experience brought deeper lessons. For Yeung, the protracted renovation (it was split into two phases) reinforced his conviction that a minimal yet purposive material palette can have just as much of an impact as form. Meanwhile, Worrell found that starting from a strong conceptual footing can also pay dividends. “We always try to start out with a strong idea that can inform even the most minute details. It helps to formalize decisions and keeps a strong aesthetic throughout,” he said. “It also keeps you from being overly original, and that’s a trope of modernism we still respect.”
Crucially, Worrell Yeung replaced the Atlantic White Cedar cladding on the house's exteriors. The firm also installed new Arcadia windows and doors.
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There’s no missing that yellow. A lemonish hue pervades the lounge spaces of two new dormitories at Bard College Berlin’s campus, applied to back walls and a coffee bar. Framed by green trim, the tint brightens up the rooms (which double as co-working areas), though it is far from the only chromatic flourish. Coral red seating—custom-designed by the building architects, the New York–based firm Civilian, and recalling the planar geometries of Gerrit Rietveld—adds a slightly earthy contrast. Turquoise curtains and plush light-blue lounge chairs with orange steel frames, also by Civilian, round out the color palette.

The architects have cited Berlin’s modernist tradition, particularly its varied manifestations in the leafy Pankow neighborhood, as inspiration. The well-handled brick exteriors of the five-story buildings, one clay red and the other creamy white, have a certain Expressionist character. Inside, every one of the 39 apartment units is outfitted with plywood flatpack furniture that evokes Donald Judd’s minimalist furnishings.

But it’s the ground-floor spaces that call the most attention to themselves. Linked by a grassy courtyard, the halls provide a tranquil yet stimulating environment for busy students. The coloration betrays the influence of Bruno Taut, another Berlin architect with a fine eye for mixing and matching. In particular, the lemon-and-lime combination flirts with a later time—chiefly, the Panton-esque reveries of the late 1960s and early ’70s. It’s a bit of the Amalfi coast by way of Fanta.
There’s an easy charm to the Nest, an early-childhood center in downtown Los Angeles. The local office of Perkins&Will has imbued a sense of play into every facet of its design, from the beachy colors on the exterior to the indelibly scaled built-ins that give the interior spaces definition.

Retooling a multipurpose room once used for church gatherings, the architects exposed the structure’s high ceilings and removed partition walls. They also opened up the facades on either side of a semi-enclosed courtyard, which had previously been marred by window grills. New window units and glazed doors were put in and the inner building envelope given a spruced-up color treatment.

Inside, spatial variety comes in two forms: the cabinetry, whose varying proportions accommodate toys as well as books and other educational supplies, and oversized felt curtains. The latter are fixed to semicircular tracks and can be pulled closed or retracted according to the needs of the moment (such as nap time). The individual curtain strips overlap slightly, giving the appearance of plumage—a not-so-incidental image, according to Perkins&Will designer Ashley Stoner. The architects’ aim, she said, was “to give children room to spread their wings and learn by exploring their imagination in a place of safety.”

This rubric of nurturing is evident throughout the project, up to and including its name. Affiliated with Dignity Health—California Hospital Medical Center, a nonprofit facility downtown, and the Hope Street Family Center, the Nest essentially offers free daycare to the children of the out-of-work and temporarily unhoused. Youngsters can move about freely inside and out on the playground, encountering learning cues at every turn.
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Tudor Extruder

Atelier Barda’s latest residential project strikes a sinister note—that is, until one ventures inside. By Adrian Madlener

At this suburban Montreal home, appearances deceive. Dating from the 1920s, the Tudor-style house presents a prim face to its neighbors, giving no indication as to what lurks behind. Walking past the house along the street, however, one can spot a dark protuberance extending from the gable roof. For such a quaint subdivision, where the homes adopt an eclectic array of architectural styles, the shadowy mass—in fact, a compact addition clad in charred wood siding and topped by a copper-shingled roof—gives off an almost eerie feeling.

Inside the 360-square-foot annex, the mood is light and airy, thanks to the high ceilings and white walls. It has only one designated function, accommodating a kitchen (complete with a monolithic terrazzo island) and dining area. But Kevin Botchar, principal of Atelier Barda, the local architecture firm behind the project, suggested it also functions at a rhetorical level. “The backyards of these homes have historically played a secondary role to their front yards and facades,” he explained. “In a sense, our approach...was a critique [of that convention].”

The scheme does away with this outdated spatial dichotomy, even as it preserves the historic charm of the interiors. If the parlor was once the locus of domestic activity, today it is the kitchen. The relocated cooking and eating areas, framed by a large opening overlooking the yard, thus give the once-moribund end of the house “a renewed purpose as a modern, casual space with garden views,” said Botchar.

The space is sparse enough to hold gatherings but still manages to be intimate, conducive to family meals and lounging. Mustard-yellow accent curtains are a theatrical touch, in line with the mysterious black exterior.
QUEEN MARY RESIDENCE
Earthen Bright

Dust’s Marfa Suite is a sprightly counterpoint to an existing modern adobe house.  By Aaron Seward

For all the qualities that make adobe an ideal building material for the Chihuahua Desert—it’s high thermal mass, low embodied carbon, and deep local history—it can be quite high maintenance. The owners of a modern adobe house designed by the architecture firm Rael San Fratello on the northwest fringe of Marfa, Texas, where the town dissolves into the desert, became more than a little nettled by the frequency at which they had to replace the plaster that kept their walls from dissolving in the rain.

When they commissioned Tucson, Arizona–based Dust Studio to design an addition, they requested a more robust material that would still be sympathetic to the local architectural idiom. They also wanted the addition to be bright and airy in the interior, in contrast to the dark enclosure of the main house. And, perhaps most importantly, they asked that the new building complement and support the indoor-outdoor living style promoted by the existing residence’s large dining patio and Piet Oudolf–like wild mesquite and sotol garden that seems an extension of the surrounding desert. As Dust co-founders Cade Manning Hayes and Jesus Robles quipped, “The driving concept of the design was ‘Don’t fuck it up!’”

The addition, which contains a master bedroom, bathroom, live/work lounge, and storage space, is 36 feet square and separated from the main house by as many feet. The primary material is stabilized earth blocks (CSEBs), which, like adobe, are made mostly from nonorganic subsoil and clay, plus a small quantity of Portland cement for stabilization. The blocks are mechanically compressed to 3,000 psi, increasing their compressive strength and reducing their volume by half. Dust chose 7½-inch CSEBs to make life easier for the family of masons who erected the structure, which also includes cast-in-place concrete footers, lintels, and coping. (The small company in Arizona that supplied the CSEBs also makes a 16-inch “widow maker” block.) Altogether, the walls are 18 inches thick.

While initially the idea was that the addition would be plastered to resemble the existing house, ultimately the decision was made to let the bricks remain on view, a choice that defines the character of both the inside and outside of the suite, as well as the dry-stack wall with steel doors that surrounds the property. Large windows and skylights admit ample daylight and allow views, most importantly of the Haystacks, twin mountains to the northwest. The wall where the live/work lounge gives way to a patio, for example, was set at an angle to open the view to these topographical features. A square, 4-foot skylight above the bed is equipped with a blackout shade and allows stargazing from beneath the comforter.

The other prominent material in the suite is oak millwork, fabricated by a carpenter in Tennessee who is known to the owners and installed by a local guy who goes by “Shimmy Jimmy,” with the help of the owners’ son, Laslo, who studied industrial design at a fancy East Coast college. Oak shelves, desk, wardrobe, and, perhaps most remarkably, solid sliding pocket doors in the masonry walls soften the material hardness of the building—yet another well-handled contrast in this poetic essay on sympathetic difference.
Compressed stabilized earth blocks define the interior and exterior of Dust’s Marfa Suite. The angled wall on the patio opens the view to distant mountains.
Casey Dunn

Top: Large Arcadia windows and Doors provide expansive views of the desert and sky. The oak built-ins were fabricated in Tennessee and installed by a local tradesman.

Above: A 4-foot-square skylight above the bed equipped with a blackout shade allows stargazing from the comfort of repose.
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Concrete is the second most prominent material in the suite, comprising floors (equipped with a radiant heating system), footers, sills, lintels, and coping.
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AN INTERIOR
TOP 50
ARCHITECTS
There is a lot new to AN Interior’s annual top 50 list, now in its fourth iteration. Nearly half of the collected architects and designers appear for the first time, and the scope has widened to include practices from all regions of the United States, as well as parts of Canada and Mexico. Meanwhile, the represented firms span the full range of experience, from promising upstarts to well-established offices. We find that mix to be not only compelling but also productive, contributing to a more inclusive vision of interior practice. We hope that you do, too.
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Architecture Research Office
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Atelier Barda
Montreal

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Atlanta

BLDGS principals Brian Bell (left) and David Yocum (right)

For this 600-square-foot cabin in the Bahamas, Brillhart Architecture designed operable walls to take advantage of crosswinds.
Deborah Berke Partners selected vintage Italian furnishings and artworks by artists like Joanna Pousette-Dart for a Manhattan townhouse fit-out.

**Brillhart Architecture**  
*Miami*

**Brooks + Scarpa**  
*Los Angeles and Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

**Charlap Hyman & Herrero**  
*New York and Los Angeles*

**Civilian**  
*New York*

**Dash Marshall**  
*New York and Detroit*

**Deborah Berke Partners**  
*New York*
Cardboard tubes and recycled paper countertops feature in Brooks + Scarpa’s design for Aesop Downtown LA.
Design, Bitches
Los Angeles

DUST
Tucson, Arizona

Faye + Walker Architecture
Austin, Texas

FUSTER + Architects
San Juan, Puerto Rico

GRT Architects
New York

The Tucson, Arizona–based DUST has made a name for itself in the region.

Faye + Walker Architecture makes extensive use of pine plywood in its projects.
GRT Architects brings a warm sophistication to commissions like Georgie, a refined take on the steakhouse.
The work of the San Juan, Puerto Rico–based FUSTER + Architects strategically frames—and sometimes occludes—the island's rolling landscapes.

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With a knack for assembling material palettes, IVY Studio always finds the right tone for its projects.

Lap Chi Kwong and Alison Von Glinow founded their namesake Chicago practice in 2017.

**OMA New York**  
*New York*

**Pérez Palacios Arquitectos Asociados**  
*Mexico City*

**Perron-Roettinger**  
*Los Angeles*

**Peterson Rich Office**  
*New York*
Low Design Office combines humble materials and regional vernaculars with a commitment to design equity and sustainability.
Based in Austin, Texas, Maxy Levy is one of the state's finest architects working today.
Perron & Roettinger's portfolio spans furniture, retail, even stage design. Founder Will Perron counts Kanye West as a friend.
The interiors of Snohetta’s buildings are Scandinavian in spirit but also forward-looking.
Utile Design
Boston

WHY Architecture
Los Angeles

Worrell Yeung
New York

WRNS Studio
Honolulu, New York, San Francisco, and Seattle

Boston firm Utile stands out for its engagement with public buildings and spaces.
Work Reworked

The nature of office work has drastically changed in the past year and a half. In retrospect, however, the jump to remote work now seems somewhat small. For some time before the pandemic, the look and feel of workplaces had been trending toward residential, out of a desire to replicate the comfort and easy charm of home. The by-product of this was less expected: self-isolating workers began missing the practicality of their office setups and sought to replicate it within their little pods. Manufacturers have adapted to the new times with myriad work solutions to service both in-person and remote scenarios. These flexible products—drawn from the lineups of Supersalone and NeoCon, among other events—facilitate hybrid working schedules and can accommodate any space, regardless of the setting. By Adrian Madlener
Desk Jockey

Suitable for any environment, these multifunctional workstations transition from the office to the home with ease. Adjustable, modular, and well-made, they can be reconfigured to ensure privacy or facilitate collaborative work as needed. By Adrian Madlener
In the Hot Seat

Built for comfort as well as style, these products are a far cry from the cumbersome, hard-back office chairs of yore. Each of them is a feat of good engineering, where ergonomics is married to color and texture. By Adrian Madlener
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By Adrian Madlener
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After a year and a half of postponements and cancellations, Salone del Mobile relaunched in early September, albeit in a slightly different guise. The leading furniture fair kicked off the fall design season with a dynamic offshoot that did away with the conventional trade-show format, swapping exhibitor booths for monolithic displays interspersed by trees and playful seating. Dubbed Supersalone, the retooled, pared-back expo was nonetheless robust in its offerings—especially remarkable, given how the event was developed in just three months. The Fuorisalone satellite exhibits, often the highlight of Milan Design Week, were consolidated in and around the city’s downtown; here, a slew of commercial and cultural players staged exuberant showcases and programs that provided youthful talents the opportunity to rub shoulders with established heritage brands. Taken together, the proceedings exceeded all expectations. After endless months of Zoom-based talks and presentations, Milan was a breath of fresh air.

In the following pages, AN Interior parses out three themes that guided this year’s fair. The prominent focus on Italian designers made sense, given the restrictions of the pandemic, which, lest we forget, is still ongoing. Perhaps for this reason, several manufacturers revisited their catalogues for classics to update. Which isn’t to say that new designs didn’t make an impact. They did, thanks, in large part, to bold colorways and patterns.

Sealing this year’s show was Hermès’s Contemplating Materials installation. The piece demonstrated the material strength and graphic quality of geometric textiles, which were used to frame small exhibits. The various rooms played host to meticulously crafted leather, metal, and stoneware home goods, including the Studio Mumbai–designed Sillage d’Hermès chair and the copper foil–enameled Sialk plate collection.
Talenti Italiani

A handful of figures—Patricia Urquiola, Piero Lissoni, and Rodolfo Dordoni among them—have defined Italian design for a generation. No surprise then that they were behind several of the product launches at Milan Design Week. Joining them, however, were a handful of newcomers, including artist Edoardo Piermattei, designer duo CARA\DAVIDE, and architect Pietro Franceschini, whose sometimes wily, sometimes immaculate wares formed an effective contrast to the old guard. Still, regardless of any divergence in form or function—Urquiola’s Nuez Lounge and Matias Sagaria’s Bondo bar cabinet may share an affinity for the retro, but Nichetto’s Chroma light couldn’t be further from Barovier & Toso’s signature Murano glass candelabra—the participants were united by national pride. Likewise, mainstay Italian brands like B&B Italia, Living Divani, Moroso, Foscarini, and Porro made their mark, ensuring that this year’s Salone del Mobile was as homegrown as you could get.

Bondo
Matias Sagaria for Honesta, Rawood
rawood.it/en

Nuez Lounge
Patricia Urquiola for Andreu World
andreuworld.com

Croma
Luca Nichetto for Lodes
lodes.com
Dagallà Collection
Edoardo Piermattei for CC Tapis
cc-tapis.com

Nile
Rodolfo Dordoni for Foscarini
foscarini.com

Vertigo
Barovier & Toso
barovier.com
Cult Classics

Even though Supersalone was far smaller than previous Salone iterations, it still lacked the time customarily given to planning high-profile exhibitions. A concern for working with what was at hand underpins the show. COVID-19 certainly impressed this lesson on the event organizers, but a number of brands followed suit and set out to improve on what wasn’t broken. Why start from scratch when the simple act of adding a new color, fitting, fixture, fabric, or sustainable substitution can make a world of difference (to say nothing of the economic benefits)? After all, the designs of Gio Ponti, Afra and Tobia Scarpa, Achille Castiglioni, and Verner Panton—several of them revolutionary in their day—continue to be plenty appealing.
Cuba Chair
Morten Gøttler for Carl Hansen & Son
carlhansen.com

Parentesi Suspension
Achille Castiglioni for Flos
flos.com

Round D 154.5
Gio Ponti for Molteni&C
molteni.it/en
Bold & Beautiful

Classics aside, the fair was full of fresh takes on geometry and color. Chunky, tubular shapes and gentle contours were popular, perhaps best captured in newcomer Raawii’s Omar ceramic vessels. Spectral carpets and vividly pigmented upholsteries distilled unlikely points of reference; Peter Saville’s Technicolour collection for Kvadrat said it all. But the most pleasing results combined both aspects, as with Hem’s lemon-drop yellow, doughnut-shaped Boa pouf, which is every bit as comfortable as it looks. Based in Sweden but with outposts in Western Europe and the United States, Hem is indicative of how far Scandinavian design has come. The Dutch and French are not far behind. Best in show at Milan was Hermès Home’s Contemplating Materials installation (on page 34), a mazelike mise-en-scène that used highly patterned textiles to great architectural effect.

Technicolour
Peter Saville for Kvadrat
kvadrat.dk/en

Boa Pouf
Sabine Marcelis for Hem
us.hem.com
Series 7
Carla Sozzani, Arne Jacobsen for Fritz Hansen
fritzhansen.com

Childhood Carpet
Rive Roshan for Moooi
moooi Carpets.com

Omar
Omar Sosa for Raawii
raawii.eu
Extended Family

The Chicago offices of the Swiss Consulate pull disparate influences into a cohesive, congenial whole. By Samuel Medina
Previous page: The “green core” of the Swiss Consulate’s new Chicago offices, located in the John Hancock Center, includes a kitchenette and high-top table and stools.

Above: The red reception desk alludes to the colors of the Swiss flag. Chrome-finished mirrors hide an IT closet.
When Simon Hartmann, a principal and founding partner of HHF Architects in Basel, Switzerland, was approached about designing the Chicago offices of the Swiss consulate, he already had his hands full. The commission, while prestigious, was modest and didn’t warrant the distraction. But rather than turn down the job, Hartmann suggested that HHF split the design work with a Chicago firm of its choosing.

“We were ecstatic to get the email about joining the project,” recalled Alison Von Glinow, who, with her husband, Lap Chi, founded Kwong Von Glinow Design Office in 2017. That same year, the couple had met Hartmann at the Chicago Architecture Biennial, to which HHF had contributed an installation. (They were further vetted by an HHF employee who once worked alongside Von Glinow and Chi at Herzog de Meuron in Basel.) “We thought they were cool and fresh,” said Hartmann, “so we thought, ‘Why not try to invent something together for a small project but with the necessary depth?’”

With such a small floor area to work with—just 1,500 square feet in the completed office, on the 38th floor of the John Hancock Center—the architects developed a narrative framework capable of guiding even the smallest detail, be it the white terrazzo flooring, flecked with red and green scintillae that reinforce the overall color scheme, or pendant lamps whose provenance can be traced to the Swiss architect Otto Kolb. An obscure figure, Kolb had lived in Chicago and taught at the Illinois Institute of Design but, apart from a sensational house he designed after returning to Switzerland later in life, built little. “He’s one of the crazy figures of Swiss architecture in this big ocean of boredom, where everyone [at the time] just wanted to do nice things,” said Hartmann, who wryly credits Kolb as the third collaborator in the project.

The Kolbian influence is mostly indirect, though it is hinted at throughout the consulate, which is roughly divided into three sections. An entry presided over by a vividly red reception desk admits personnel (numbering just five) and select visitors into a lounge space that also contains a kitchenette. Tall lattices partially delineate this social area from the very white workspaces and conference rooms, which are decorated with photographs by the German artist Veronika Kellndorfer of Villa Kolb’s terrariumlike living room. A similar feeling is invoked in the so-called “green core,” where plants proliferate and a darkly vernal marble finds its way onto countertops and backsplashes. The slatted, kale-hued screens are curved along their tops, another subtle cue to the architect’s gnomic geometries. A final reference is more direct—genealogical, in fact. For the office furnishings, Hartmann tracked down Kolb’s granddaughter Ginger Zalaba, who continues to produce limited runs of his seating and lighting designs. “We could have chosen Vitra or Knoll,” he explained, “but we thought it would be interesting
to go around the normal process of procurement for these things.”

Despite the project’s tiny footprint, the build-out was lengthy, partially interrupted by last year’s lockdown. “It spanned two births,” joked Von Glinow, referring to her and Chi’s growing family. Hartmann has yet to visit the finished office, relying on video conference software and 3D models to follow the construction process. But the experience only underscored his belief in collaboration. (He has worked with the artist Ai Weiwei and the architect Tatiana Bilbao, among other celebrated figures.) “As architects we have a natural interest to keep the circle of trust rather small,” he said. “You have to decide how many people you want to share credit with. Whose baby is it? I’m always more interested in bastards than the first-born.”
ARCHITECTUREFIRM renovates an Atlanta turn-of-the-century Craftsman house from head to toe. By Shane Reiner-Roth
A remnant fireplace from a dismantled chimney is one of a handful of compelling touches in this Atlanta revamping. The fireplace adds texture to one of the house's three bedrooms, while a salvaged hanging lamp adds color and character.

The house required a new roof, and so the renovation architect, Adam Ruffin of ARCHITECTUREFIRM, chose to vault the ceiling. For the living room, he helped the owner source Flor carpet tiles, a George Nelson coffee table, Eames side chairs, and Stephen Burks bookshelves, among other items.
Carie Davis, a one-time industrial designer and current investor, must have seen something in the hundred-year-old bungalow in Atlanta’s historic Grant Park neighborhood that she bought a few years ago. The compact Craftsman-style abode had been battered by time and the elements—including a fire—and was on the verge of collapse. But Davis’s design instinct tingled. She called up an old friend from school, the architect Adam Ruffin, for help salvaging the mess.

Together, they completely overhauled the property, first stabilizing it, then increasing the size by several hundred square feet. Little of the transformation is evident from the exterior, however, which is not to say changes weren’t made. The street-facing facade, perched several steps above the sidewalk behind a rolling garden, went from a smattering of earth tones to a uniform black that pleasantly contrasts the dense foliage. The large front porch, a signature Craftsman feature and a staple of southern living, received the same monochrome treatment in the round, as did the house’s three other exposures.

But the boldness of the renovation can only be appreciated from the inside. The airy, all-white interiors are marked by a generous sense of spaciousness, the result of targeted tear-downs. “We opened up one-half of the plan and took down walls between the living room, dining room, and kitchen, while leaving most of the other half in place,” explained Ruffin, a principal at the New York office of ARCHITECTUREFIRM. The kitchen, which was once a dark and cloistered utilitarian space, is now a marble-lined breezeway linking the living/dining room to a backyard patio.

By far the canniest play was removing the attic and vaulting the ceilings, which accounts for that spacious feeling. It also allowed Ruffin and his team to build a large and usable loft space underneath the new roof they had to put in. Skylights ensure an even level of brightness throughout the day. Lumber cross braces draw the eye upward, providing one of a handful of textural counterpoints found inside. “We could have buried them in Sheetrock or used a different structural detail,” said Ruffin of the roof supports, “but since we didn’t want to make the entire ceiling wood and knew it would be white, we preferred exposing them as natural wood.”

Three bedrooms and a storage closet are slotted beneath the gangway, which is supported by a ceiling framework that is left exposed in the rooms. The decision, said Ruffin, came from a desire to inscribe a “structural honesty” in the domestic architecture. Less honestly, Davis retained the two remnant ends of a dismantled chimney, wrapping both fireplaces in wood trim. In a project driven by logical, if inspired, choices, they are non sequiturs that nonetheless feel somehow essential.
Above: The furnishings are a mix of vintage finds and classic pieces from Design Within Reach, as well as new items from retailers such as Bludot. Expanded metal mesh railing fences off the loft space. Lumber crossbraces, left exposed for the textural quality they impart, float above.

Facing page: Muuto pendants hang in the kitchen, which is rounded out by a Hansgrohe faucet, an Elkay sink, Viking appliances, and carrara marble surfaces. These contrast the warm wood flooring, which ARCHITECTUREFIRM saved from the older house and had refinished.
Perfect Fit

Rafael de Cárdenas, Ltd.’s flagship for a Chinese menswear brand continues the firm’s excellence in retail design. By Jesse Dorris
Previous spread: The robust semimobile displays that run down the center of the JNBY’s Croquis flagship in Beijing were inspired by goalposts.

This page: A freestanding mushroom-like element at the back of the store conceals the fitting rooms. Lights embedded in the “cap” are programmable.
Before embarking on a career in architecture, Rafael de Cárdenas worked as a designer at Calvin Klein. He founded his New York firm in 2006 and has been at the cutting edge of retail design ever since. His interiors, spare in their glamour, seduce in ways similar to the merchandise they frame, while leaving enough space for customers to see how, with a careful acquisition or two, they might fit into the picture.

The same ambition is evident inside the new Beijing flagship de Cárdenas designed for JNBY’s menswear brand Croquis. The shop is hardly, as its name might imply, a rough sketch, but instead a minimal, flexible prototype for a label de Cárdenas began buying on trips to Hong Kong and Shanghai seven years ago. “Every time I went to Asia, I’d buy some [clothes]. So I began noodling around, asking people if they knew its founder, Li Lin. Turns out we’re both art collectors. We became friends.”

Not long after Lin secured an enviable space in Beijing’s fashionable Sanlitun neighborhood, just opposite Kengo Kuma’s Opposite House Hotel, she tapped de Cárdenas for the fit-out. “Early on, we had the idea of these goalposts,” he recalled, in reference to the five displays that run down the center of the shop. The stolid oak posts anchor movable aluminum-framed cabinets, which can be rotated a full 360 degrees. “You can refigure them to give you a straight shot through the store or block off parts to create different microspaces,” de Cárdenas said.

Backs of frosted glass create what he calls “ghosted images of the clothes.” To display the rest of the SKUs, he convinced Lin to run a long railing along the backwall; it turns a corner and terminates by a second entrance bay populated with mannequins. Pushing much of the merchandise to the perimeter keeps the floorplan clutter free, resulting in “a sense of cleanliness,” de Cárdenas said. Alternating walls of satin mirror and hand-troweled plaster and polished concrete floors reinforce that impression, though it’s far from totalizing. The designer points to the elegant custom display tables positioned along the glazed storefront and made from folded copper sheets. “The copper is untreated, so they get fingerprints all over them,” he noted approvingly.

De Cárdenas is known for his tasteful interpretations of the industrial. At Croquis, that impulse comes through in the anodized aluminum scrim drop ceiling, which conceals the building systems and provides an anchoring for an array of downlights. But the brightest idea appears at the back of the store, where a fiberglass “mushroom” sprouts from a vivid pool of marigold carpeting. The feature element, which doubles as a display for footwear and a shell for fitting rooms, sounds a playful note in a design characterized by hard edges. Lights in the mushroom’s lanternlike cap shift in intensity and hue throughout the selling day. Like the rest of the shop, it’s a mood.
Converting an old military shed for cultural use, Signal Architecture + Research recovered a century’s worth of the building’s—and site’s—history.

By Jesse Dorris
Previous spread: Three ex-military sheds in Port Townsend, Washington, are being adapted for use as an arts and technology complex. The first of these, Building 305, was completed earlier this year. The original cedar siding was patched and repainted, and the double-hung windows and wood doors restored.

Above: The reuse project was overseen by the Seattle-based firm Signal Architecture + Research, whose design preserves original surfaces and features of the 125-year-old building.
Perched on the northeast tip of the Olympic Peninsula and kept surprisingly dry—as Pacific Northwest standards go, anyway—by the Olympic Mountains’ rain shadow, the city of Port Townsend, Washington, has long attracted attention. The S’Klallam and Chimacum peoples found a clamming beach there and set up camps, well before white settlers arrived and seized the land for state and federal use. In 1896, as ornate Victorian houses began dotting the area, the United States Congress established three forts in the area to protect Puget Sound from naval attack, including the 400-acre Fort Worden. The military built a quartermaster’s house at the fort before erecting 600 other permanent and temporary structures, but neither the compound nor its neighbors—together they were given the moniker “Triangle of Fire”—ever saw combat. After decades of being used as a storage site, Fort Worden was made a state park in 1973. Today, its buildings embrace yet another function, thanks to an extensive adaptive reuse program headed up by Seattle’s Signal Architecture + Research.

“The Quartermaster’s House was the toolbox for every other building on site,” said Signal principal Mark Johnson. Or perhaps a set of architectural marching orders: the house, also known as Building 305, has a commanding presence, with a flagstone foundation, masonry piers, and gabled roofline. Signal’s plan, begun in 2015 in coordination with the Fort Worden Public Development Authority and Washington State Park, calls for renovating three of ten landmarked structures into a creative hub called Maker’s Square. Instead of military defense, the $13 million complex will spark collaboration among artists in the visual, performance, design, and even culinary fields.

Signal began as the military did, with the Quartermaster’s House. The 19,000-square-foot Building 305, which until recently functioned as a shed, shows clear signs of new life. On the outside, the architects touched-up the white cladding and green skirting boards, added new windows and doors, and installed a luxuriant, ADA-compliant entrance stair that doubles as spillover space during events. Studios for working with clay, watercolors, and large-scale sculptures are grouped in the center of the ground floor, bookended by two double-height halls reserved for lectures and exhibitions. Upstairs, a pair of writers’ studios and a small gallery occupy parts of what was previously a dim, stuffy attic. The design team worked with Arup’s acoustic department to convert the basement into performance and broadcast studios for local radio station KPTZ. Plywood walls throughout offer flexibility for resident artists to use and remove as imagination dictates. While installing the necessary wiring and mechanical systems, Johnson said, his team strove to keep everything up to date and up to code without leaving
IN FOCUS

Above: The architects removed the north and south wings of the attic to create double-height galleries that bookend a core of ground-floor studios. A new steel frame buttresses century-old timbers.

Facing page: An ethic of salvaging prevailed. For example, Signal repurposed the wood joists of the attic floors for a new entry stair and deck. Elsewhere, the firm retained and sealed weathered surfaces, such as maple floors and sections of wall paint.
the building’s character behind. The architects inserted a new steel frame to augment the original timber structure and refurbished a gorgeous hand-crank elevator. A spirit of resourcefulness pervades the project: salvaged beadboard was used to repair wall and ceiling surfaces, while the attic’s old-growth Douglas fir floor joists were carefully repurposed into stair treads and risers. In contrast to the pleasant exterior, the interiors evince a piebald character, reveling in an aesthetic of mixing and matching. Traces of decades-old paint lend a ghostly aura. Maple floors show imprints of a century of service. “Why not clean and seal them,” Johnson said, “instead of stripping all that life away?”

Less desirable, but no less essential, signs of life gave the neighboring 2,200-square-foot Building 308 its nickname. “The Porcelain Palace” was used to store the Parks Department’s decommissioned toilets and sinks; before that, it was a stable with a dirt floor. “It required all new insulation, a new infrastructure,” Johnson said, “which was a challenge, because when you insulate a wood frame building that’s been dry and breathing, you have to seal it up and carefully create venting. It’s quite a bit of technical surgery on what could be considered a not very technical building.” Meanwhile, the slate roof “weathered like an old guitar that had been played for 100 years. It showed the marks of time but was still completely functional.”

As is the 3,000-square-foot Building 324. “That one has a really interesting typology,” Johnson said. “It’s like a centipede, a barn floating 3 feet above the grassy meadow.” Both stand ready for conscription into a peaceful, productive future. Signal hopes to eventually enlist the remaining seven historical buildings into service, too. “They were workhorse buildings,” Johnson said. “And now they are ready to do more work.”
Large Sugatsune doors with concealed hinges separate the studios from corridors. Hydronic radiators from Runtal heat the building.
Resources

Swiss Consulate in Chicago

Zalaba Design
zalaba.com

Glen Park House

Benjamin Moore
benjaminmoore.com
Bludot
bludot.com
Bosch
bosch.com
Daltile
daltile.com
Design Within Reach
dwr.com
Elkay
elkay.com
Flor
flor.com
Hansgrohe
hansgrohe-usa.com
Muuto
muuto.com
Velux
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Stone Source
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Sub-Zero
subzero-wolf.com

Marfa Suite

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Ann Sacks Tile
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Mechoshade
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en.vola.com

Queen Mary Residence

Agglotech
agglotech.com
Alumilex
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Fasem
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Foraine
foraine.atelierbarda.com
Ikea
ikea.com

Building 305

Big Ass Fans
bigassfans.com
Permalac
permalac.com
Runtal
runtalnorthamerica.com
Sugatsune
sugatsune.com

James Florio
Comic Treatment

Perspectival dodges, shifts, and reveals abound in *Chicago Comics: 1960s to Now*. By Zach Mortice
The parallels between architecture and comics have not gone unremarked upon. There is, of course, a shared proclivity for world-building, as well as a reliance on grid, contour, line. But there’s one other point of commonality: both mediums tend to suffer when transplanted to the gallery context.

That Chicago Comics: 1960 to Now, open at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago through October 3, manages to avoid this fate is thanks, in large part, to the exhibition design by Chicago- and New Orleans–based architecture firm Norman Kelley. Using the subtlest applications of color and depth, architects Carrie Norman and Thomas Kelley have wrangled curator Dan Nadel’s kaleidoscopic vision into a joyful, propulsive, yet easily navigable show.

There are many moments of suspense and surprise. One particularly inspired move occurs at the exhibition’s beginning, where a series of yellow, green, red, and blue thresholds are placed on an axial enfilade. Apertures punched into each display wall alternately reveal and obscure works while preventing visitors from passing all the way through. The galleries come together like interlocking puzzle pieces to tease the next reveal, and the architects deploy them at key points in the show’s chronology.

Chicago Comics is peopled with outsiders—women and Black artists, but also broke-yet-scrappy art school kids—who found the shores of Lake Michigan a conducive place for their work. The material is diverse; in addition to comics strips, graphic novels, and zines, there are dioramas, installations, and memorabilia. Nadel frames the subject matter as a critical practice, one driven by a populist impulse to fuse elements of commercial comics like Dick Tracy with those of the counterculture. Indeed, antiauthoritarian bellicosity pervades the early galleries, where every character looks like a Saturday morning cartoon Abbie Hoffman. (In the case of Conspiracy Capers, art mirrored life; local scene lynchpins Skip Williamson and Jay Lynch created the one-and-done comic with the sole intention of using the proceeds to cover the attorney fees for the Chicago Seven.) There’s a sharp political edge to the strips from this period, even if they are laden with the sort of daredevil obscenity and goofy nihilism that seems pro-forma for ‘60s radicalism today.

In the galleries devoted to alt-weeklies and zines, which began overtaking comic books in the 1980s, there is a shift toward moody, often meta, interiority. There are fewer portly, cloven-hoofed Chicago police officers and chain-breaking heroes like Tom Floyd’s Blackman (“Soul
Wonder of the World!”); in their place rise a regiment of college dropouts creating for an audience that never arrives. By the time Daniel Clowes’s *Art School Confidential* hits stands in 1991, whatever energy remained from the counterculture had been redirected into cultural production powered by privilege-washing scammers trying one more time to pull off the “tampon-in-a-teacup trick.”

Moving into the aughts, the subject matter quiets to match the literary heft of the ascendant graphic novel. Norman Kelley’s subdued color scheme in these stretches of the exhibition mirrors this transition. Gray, beigeish orange, and light blue set the mood for works like Ivan Brunetti’s *Aesthetics: A Memoir*, which catalogues spiraling meditations on mortality prompted by a troublesome visit to the dentist.

In the best moments, the exhibition design puts these disparate stories into a kind of dialogue. Molly Colleen O’Connell’s *Extra Extra Extra* is an architecture-scaled bit of metafiction in which a comic book stand is staffed by a grotesque blue alligator. The piece brings the narrative up to the present, and from this vantage point, visitors realize the visual axis encountered at the start goes both ways. The telescoping, color-coded thresholds permit views back to the very first gallery, where from a wall-sized panel, Dick Tracy “gazes” onto O’Connell’s hallucinogenic tableaux and surmises, “Today I’ve seen everything.” It’s hard to argue the point.

The exuberant coloration returns in the concluding gallery, where works like Edie Fake’s *Memory Palaces* (2014) signal their investment in political and sociological critique. The building blocks of Fake’s palazzi are in fact fragments—quirky historicist details drawn from non-existent places and spaces where members of Chicago’s queer community once gathered. Fake manipulates these art deco lines, crystal chandelier teardrops, and stained-glass arabesques into architectural codes decipherable only to a dissident clique already in the know.

Of the featured artists, Chris Ware most explicitly engages with architecture, and it’s not at all an accident that he enjoys pride of place in the exhibition. In his work, buildings become stage sets for interior lives, nonneutral places where people think and feel. And because Ware is a longtime Chicago resident, shabby-but-lovable three-flats and gabled roofs—unmistakably “Chicago” to design partisans—feature heavily. Unexpectedly, then, *Chicago Comics* blows up the cozy, if melancholy, cohesion that structures the comics, scattering fragments everywhere. Warian motifs are enlarged and collaged into a

Facing page: The show features comics and artifacts by dozens of artists, including Molly Colleen O’Connell (top, see background) and Ivan Brunetti (bottom).

Above: At certain parts of the exhibition, galleries are aligned on an axial enfilade, simulating the experience of flipping through a comic book.
kind of wallpaper, while vitrines display wood sculpture of indistinct representation. It’s a jarring, and then sublime, presentation of Ware’s more recognizable style, offering a madcap peek-behind-the-scenes of his creative process. The pure density of objects and images in this gallery—drawings scaling the walls and wonky sculpture ogling you with bug-eyed inanity—makes it the show’s most frenzied experience.

But it could have easily faltered were it not for Norman Kelley’s design scheme of layered galleries and perspective shifts and reveals. Some visitors may come away from Chicago Comics with a familiar feeling—that of digging into a heap of comics, their varied contents splayed out, beckoning one to new worlds.
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Register for your complimentary pass with promotional code ANICFF
A new exhibition at the Canadian Centre for Architecture reveals what floor coverings can tell us about late capitalism. By Samuel Medina

Magic Carpet
To a certain stripe of observer, it is impossible to contemplate the serried, involuted vistas of a John Portman hotel lobby without recalling the theorist Frederick Jameson words on the subject. Analyzing the interiors of Portman’s Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, Jameson identified the logic of late capitalism at work. The airless atrium was all surfaces that replicated and contradicted one another, producing within people (or as architects like to call them, “users”) feelings of helplessness and confusion. Here was an architecture of control, but perhaps also one of lobotomy.

The theme is elaborated upon in the Canadian Centre for Architecture’s (CCA) latest exhibition, *The Design of Carpets That Design Us*. Curator Dan Handel extends Jameson’s insight and attempts to show how this architectural pathology—which first emerged in the urban centers of the advanced economies—has expanded across the globe. The twist, of course, is that Handel chooses to illustrate the point solely with recourse to floor coverings. It’s a more capacious conceit than one might guess. Handel has dug up plenty of fodder to exhibit at the CCA, including carpet designs by Peter Eisenman and a few other recognizable names. But by and large, architects long ago ceded this ground to others, Handel suggests, and to underscore the point, he made sure to incorporate the perspectives of manufacturers, hotel and casino operators, and other actors. In a recent interview, he described the approach as a “Rashomon narrative” that allows for “the coexistence of different perspectives that are basically incongruent.”

This is clever if a bit too involved. More impactful are Assaf Evron’s photographs of signature Portman lobbies, including those at the Hyatt Regency O’Hare in Chicago and the Marriott Marquis, Atlanta. The latter features resplendent carpeting with interlocking circles that seem to unlock the truth of … something. The design has even inspired, Q-anon–style, an online Cult of the Marriott Carpet, which might either alarm or tickle Jameson, who, after all, has a humorous side. Buried in his 1991 tome on postmodernism is the following observation: “[T]he very real accomplishments of the postmodernist architects are comparable to late-night reefer munchies, substitutes rather than the thing itself.” Carpets, Handel might agree, function in just that same way.
Top: Interior of the Marriott Marquis, Atlanta

Bottom: Interior of the Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Chicago
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