Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA have been named the 2010 Pritzker Prize Laureates, architecture's highest honor. Partners for more than 15 years, the pair have designed singularly refined houses, museums, and educational buildings in their native Japan and around the world. Among their best-known works are the O-Museum in Nagano, Japan; the Toledo Museum of Art’s Glass Pavilion in Ohio; the New Museum in New York; and the just completed Rolex Learning Center in Lausanne, Switzerland.

“They explore like few others the phenomenal properties of continuous space, lightness, transparency, and materiality to create a subtle synthesis. Sejima and Nishizawa’s architecture stands in direct contrast with...”

The town of Columbus, Indiana, with its rich history and commitment to modernist design, has lost one of its important architecture patrons, the Irwin Union Bank and Trust Company. The banking institution failed last year, its assets seized and sold to First Financial Bank of Cincinnati, Ohio. Among those assets are a handful of branches and corporate offices.

SEJIMA AND NISHIZAWA SHARE PRITZKER

The economic downturn is reshaping American museum expansions. Recently, two well-known museums have cancelled plans by internationally known firms and commissioned more modest projects by local firms, while a third high-profile addition remains on hold.

The Architect’s Newspaper has learned that after commissioning a masterplan and addition by Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates (TWBTA), the Columbus Museum of Art (CMA) has discontinued their services and is moving ahead with a scaled-back addition by Columbus, OH–based DesignGroup, which had been the architect of record on the project. “The original plan was for Tod and Billie to do all the work. But with the economy being what it is, we needed to find a way to make it more cost-effective,”

continued on page 2

The Cincinnati Art Museum.

A branch for Irwin Union by Deborah Berke.

DESPITE STRONG ARCHITECTURE, INDIANA BANK COLLAPSES

NOT TOO BIG TO FAIL

MUSEUMS GET GOING WITH HOMEGROWN TALENT

LOCAL TRUMPS GLOBAL

Three Midwest Cities with a Plan. See page 15

THREE MIDWEST CITIES WITH A PLAN. SEE PAGE 15

BILLINGS SHOW UNEXPECTED STRENGTH IN REGION

MIDWEST MOTORS ON

Architects have had an especially difficult time during the recession, but recently there are some bright spots out there for the profession, perhaps none more so than in the Midwest region, which according to the AIA Architecture Billings Index shows the strongest signs of leading a recovery for the industry in the country. Midwest firms have posted improving billings for nine consecutive months—the only region to do so—and are currently the...”

continued on page 2

The Clintonvile Art Museum.

The Clintonvile Art Museum.

A branch for Irwin Union by Deborah Berke.
WARDING OFF WALMART

The Ryerson Steel site in Pullman.

From its humble beginnings in 1960s
Arkansas, Walmart has become a retail
upstart with more than 4,300
outlets now stretching from Calais,
ME to Lhuae, HI. While the familiar big
box store seems to pop up every few
miles, the corporation has yet to crack a
handful of major urban centers, including
New York and Los Angeles. Another holdout is the Windy City,
but that could change thanks to a
planned mixed-use development on
the Far South Side. Even though more
than a dozen Walmarts ring Chicago,
only one is within city limits, and that was built only after political wrangling
and union opposition. In the Chatham
section on the South Side, Walmart has
pursued five other locations, and the
backlash, buoyed by union opposition,
has only intensified.

According to a recently published study by the Environmental Protection
Agency (EPA), the American landscape has undergone a transformation
over the last 20 years. The report, titled Residential Construction Trends
in America’s Metropolitan Regions, looked at construction data in urban
and core suburban areas versus suburban and exurban zones: “In roughly
half of the metropolitan areas examined, urban core communities dra-
matically increased their share of new residential building permits…This
acceleration of residential construction in urban neighborhoods repre-

RESULTS

The data quantifies what many of us have known for years, that more
compact, urban living has become an attractive option for people from
all walks of life. Americans are learning to be city dwellers again. While
suburbia has not gone away or even out of style—it continues to be an
attractive place for many, especially for families—its stature as the ideal
setting for American life has been effectively challenged. Smart-growth
advocates, including New Urbanists, have pushed for zoning codes to
be rewritten to allow for mixed-use, higher-density development.
Transportation activists have pushed for improved conditions for
pedestrians and cyclists, along with better public transit. Preservationists
have helped to save buildings and neighborhoods that are now valuable
generator. Developers/architects have built contemporary
townhouses and multifamily buildings in transitional neighborhoods,
attraction the young and upwardly mobile to areas that had been in
decline. Architects, planners, and civic officials have been working tirelessly
to change mindsets. The EPA report notes a 2009 study by the Urban
Land Institute that cites onerous or arbitrary parking requirements as a
persistent obstruction to more dense development.

Chicago’s numbers in particular show a remarkable uptick in urban
construction. Between 1990 and 1995, central city permits represented
only seven percent of building permits issued in the metropolitan region.
By 2008, that figure had climbed to 45 percent, the third highest in the
nation behind New York and San Diego. Suburban and exurban shares
are declining and will soon be surpassed by permits in the city of Chicago.
Many will point to the glut of unsold condos downtown as a sign that this
trend will go far in the recent real estate boom. Still, last month’s sales
figures show a thaw in Chicago home and condo sales, while other build-
ing permits are performing well as rentals. The unsold units will be absorbed
into the market within the next year or two, and architects tell us new
multifamily projects are beginning to come back online.

The Obama administration has signaled it understands this and is
quietly advancing a series of policies that should strengthen and improve
both urban and suburban areas, including investments in intercity high-
speed rail and the Growth Implementation Assistance grants (see
text, page six). These initiatives are laying the important groundwork for
continued urban growth as we emerge from the recession.

NEWS

In recent months, aldermen favoring
Walmarts in their wards have turned to
the recession to bolster arguments about
new jobs and development
in underserved neighborhoods. Meanwhile,
unions and community
groups continue to counter that the
delaying of work offered by Walmart
is worse than no jobs at all.

“This goes beyond just quality
of life and union jobs but when we
want Chicago to be what the city is
about,” said Marina Faz-Huppert, leg-
islative and political director for Local
881 of the United Food and
Commercial Workers International Union,
one of Walmart’s main opponents nationwide.

According to observers, Walmart is
most interested in a location at West
83rd Street and Stewart Avenue, in
the Chatham section on the South Side.

Howard Brooks, the alderman in the
local ward, has come to support the
project after initial resistance. “I was
skeptical six years ago, when Walmart
first showed up, but everyone told us
to wait, which I did,” Brooks said.

“We’ve gone to everyone, Kmart,
Walgreens, you name it. Nobody’s been
interested but Walmart.”

Brooks had agreed in the past that
Walmart jobs might not be the most
secure, but he argues, at least they
exist. Besides, without a commercial
pioneer it is difficult to attract other
stores. “We had the first Best Buy
in any African American community in
the country, and now they’ve got one in
Compton and in Harlem,” he said.

“We’re creating opportunities
across the country.”

Meanwhile, neighboring
Alderman Fredricka Lyte vociferously opposes the development. “I have an old,
established African American
middle-class community that has worked hard
to get where they are through very long
times to support

during which the banks
were making loans.

Some, however, continue to struggle.
“Times aren’t good here,” said Rae Dunke,
executive director of AIA Detroit. “Michigan
has probably been the hardest hit of any
architects in the country. That said, even
we’re seeing work pick up, though it’s mostly
out-of-town or on hold because the banks
won’t lend.”

While signs are pointing upward for
Midwest firms, hiring remains tentative, when
it is taking place. “Since August, around
Chicago, there’s been a gradual movement
upwards in hiring,” Street said. “This
times it’s a different kind of hiring, very strategic,
very surgical.”

MIDWEST MOTORS continued on front page

The NEW OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

CLOSEST TO REACHING POSITIVE TERRITORY

In February, Midwest firms recorded
billings of 49.4, an increase of 1.4 points
from January and a marked improvement
from 37.2 last May, when the Midwest
was the worst-performing of the four regions
tracked by the AIA. By comparison, the
national billings index has been far more
uneven, rising to 44.8 in February from 42.5
in January and 45.4 in December, continuing
a trend of instability in the mid-40s stretching
back to last summer. (A reading above 50
means billings are rising, below means they are
falling.)

“Regionally, I would have guessed the
South would have carried us out of the
recession, with its oil and agricultural
commodities,” said AIA Chief Economist Kermit
Baker. By his assessment, the key to the
Midwest’s success has been improving
manufacturing, the region’s
economic heart. “People are increasingly
looking domestically for work,” Baker said,
and exports are also on the rise. This
does not mean architects are building new
factories—according to the AIA, the
commercial/industrial sector is the worst right
now, at 43.2—but it is bringing an infusion of
much-needed resources that is creating
other opportunities in the region.

Walter Street III, president of the AIA
Chicago chapter, believes it is the region’s
economic diversity that has helped it weather
the storm. “The Midwest tends to be a more
conservative business environment,” he said.

“All segments of the economy have gone
down the toilet at the same time. That said,
our diversity has allowed us to be more flexi-
ble and adapt to those who are doing well.”

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MATT CHABAN
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UIC’S BRIDGE-TO-HAPPY-HOUR

Students of the University of Illinois Chicago School of Architecture were given an interesting opportunity to earn some extra design cred: a competition to design a bar for the year-end show. The bar will be located in the vacant skywalk that leads to nowhere, a remnant of the original campus design. Apparently, the jury includes the director of the Graham Foundation, Sarah Herda. Smart competitors should figure out her beverage of choice. She seems like a Manhattan drinker. In any case, let’s just hope it’s capped off at the end or—better yet—that the winning design will include a super slide.

DIAMONDS AND PEARLS

The cocktail reception for the Driehaus Prize, celebrating classical architecture and traditional urbanism, was held in the hoity-toity vaulted Great Room at the top of the University Club, a setting fit for a classicist or anyone wishing to recreate scenes from Dead Poets Society. The Triß Blair Kamin was there for a minute, along with oodles of Notre Dame students and recent grads sporting ill-fitting suits, engagement rings large and small, and strings of pearls. Definitely not a Jil Sander crowd. This year’s recipient, Rafael Manzano Martos, took the stage to say some remarks, but most guests seemed to be oohing and ahhing over the fantastic views of Renzo Piano’s Modern Wing. Piano is the modernist even classicists love, secretly!

AND THE WINNER IS...

The School of the Art Institute is hiring a new Designed Objects professor (that’s SAICspeech for Industrial Design). The pool of candidates has been narrowed down to four, says an inside source: two locals, a New Yorker, and someone from the United Kingdom. Hmmm, wasn’t New York Times/International Herald Tribune’s British-born design scribe Alice Rawsthorn in town a couple of weeks ago? Anywho, let’s hope it’s someone good. The program has definitely had an impact beyond the walls of the school. Chicago’s an architecture town, but it’s great to see the other design disciplines getting their due.

BITTER DESIGN BETTY

Speaking of the other design disciplines, the AIGA is hosting Chicago Design Week beginning May 17, kicking off a packed schedule of walks and talks with the likes of designers Art Chantry and Bob Faust, plus studio tours with Gravity Tank, Studio Lab, winterbureau, Sonnenzimmer, and others. But they “pretty much left out anyone that’s not doing graphic design,” said one jilted designer. Whooops, hurt feelings! But more important, couldn’t an interior designer or landscape architect lend some of the type talk?

SUPER SANAA continued from front page

the bombastic and rhetorical,” the jury said in its citation. “Instead, they seek the essential qualities of architecture that result in a much-appreciated straightforwardness, economy of means, and restraint in their work.”

In the New Yorker, Paul Goldberger wrote of the New Museum, “the building is original, but doesn’t strain to reinvent the idea of a museum. Sejima and Nishizawa have a way of combining intensity with understatement.” In each of their projects, SANAA seems to start from scratch, investigating new forms and materials, and employing innovative spatial, surface, and programmatic elements.

In an interview with Victoria Newhouse for Architect magazine, Sejima said that SANAA’s Glass Pavilion at the Toledo Museum of Art “show a different kind of relationship between spaces. Everyone can see the relationship between different functions and different spaces.”

In terms of Pritzker politics, the recognition of SANAA’s two partners somewhat blunts two criticisms that have trailed the prize: the absence of female laureates—with the exception of Zaha Hadid in 2004—and the omission of co-recognition for Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi in 1991. Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, laureates in 2001, are the only other partnership in which both principals have been honored.

The members of the jury, chaired by Lord Bob Faust, include Alexander Aravena, Rolf Fehlbaum, Carlos Jimenez, Juhani Pallasmaa, Renzo Piano, Karen Stein, and Executive Director Martha Thorne. Sponsored by the Chicago-based Hyatt Foundation, the Pritzker Prize comes with a $100,000 prize and a medal based on a design by Louis Sullivan.

ALAN G. BRAKE
FOUR NEW GRANT AREAS, INCLUDING LOUISVILLE, PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

A branch designed by Carlos Jimenez in Seymour, Indiana.

Sustainable urban patterns. It is one of four grants aiming to implement smart growth policies, and will include improving environmental impacts of development, increasing quality of life, and promoting alternative transportation options. According to Louisville officials, the grant study area “presents a suburban context where a ‘business as usual’ pattern of growth threatens the community’s quality of life and long-term livability.”

Las Cruces, NM seeks to stimulate a depressed commercial corridor while preserving existing community services; Montgomery County, MD is implementing a new Climate Protection Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through land-use decisions; and the state of California is developing a framework for helping municipalities determine strategies for implementing smart growth and sustainable practices.

As part of the SGIA grant, Louisville will be studying a suburban corridor adjacent to a planned 4,000-acre series of parks along the Floyds Fork stream watershed, expected to spur development. The city wants to “create a more vibrant center where walking, bicycling, and public transportation are real options for residents.”

Smart growth strategies will be developed in accordance with Louisville’s Cornerstone 2020 comprehensive plan by using tools such as form-based codes. Ken Baker said the city is addressing a “need to shift the emphasis of suburban development in this community from an auto-dependent to a multimodal-oriented design.”

Officials with Planning & Design Services have been working with federal agencies on scoping the project site and goals for the nearly 2,000-acre study area. The team is preparing to bring in a consultant and will hold a series of charrettes this summer to engage residents and stakeholders.

Suburban Louisville, Kentucky is headed back to the drawing boards. Low-density development on the city’s fringe is the target of a federal grant aiming to implement smart growth strategies in an effort to create compact centers and a sustainable urban pattern. It is one of four projects from a pool of over 100 applicants that were awarded Smart Growth Implementation Assistance (SGIA) grants in 2009, the first year the departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development joined the Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate technical assistance. Through the Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the three agencies will offer support to local governments seeking to implement smart growth policies, and will include improving environmental impacts of development, increasing quality of life, and promoting alternative transportation options.

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Baker said there’s a “definite public participation process to come.” One key component of the grant is the education of the general public about smart growth principles. Once complete, a planned development district drawing on the local context will be established and implemented under the Louisville Metro Planning Commission. Louisville hopes to conserve farmland by implementing compact growth patterns, protect the local watershed by mitigating sanitary sewer overflow, retrofit the current arterial road structure to create safe pedestrian infrastructure, address center design at the site of a highway interchange, and improve local air quality by reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Baker said the process is “about a different way of development that improves the neighborhood’s quality of life.” Smart growth provides more options for residents to safely get around, where today the community must rely solely on automobile transport. Planners Connie Ewing added that it’s as easy as “actually having sidewalks so you can get to your destination.”

Even while Louisville prepares to transform the suburban corridor into a walkable center, several pending projects are moving forward. Before the new strategy was established, Baker said there is little the city can do in the short term to halt development, but believes the study can still make a significant impact. Baker said the city will be able to redesign the street network to promote walkability and influence future projects when the plan is complete. “The goal is to lay the framework for a regional center—a new suburban paradigm that is pedestrian- and transit-oriented,” he said. “We’re creating a compact, mixed-use center.”

BRANDEN KLAYKO
Bruce Graham and I met in 1957 when I was first employed in the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. I had been hired as a junior designer on the Air Force Academy under the direction of the partner-in-charge of the project, Walter A. Netsch, Jr. When the firm consolidated in the Inland Steel Building in 1958 and Bruce was made partner-in-charge-of-design, he laid off the entire Air Force Academy design team. I was the sole exception, the runt of the litter, which in practical terms meant that my salary was less than others whose employment he had terminated.

Working under Bruce in SOM's design room could have become my post-graduate experience, only I didn't have any degree whatsoever in architecture at the time. But in any case, working for Bruce was an invaluable learning experience. His reputation as "a tough guy" was only partially true. If you had the courage of your convictions and the strength to back them up with cogent argumentation, Bruce would hear you out, and if he concurred with your assessment, you could hold the day. If not, you hunkered down and did as bidden. I understood his approach to decision-making very clearly. We shared similar tours of duty in "Navy Air," which meant that someone who outranked you told you what to do and someone you outranked did your bidding. Bruce was five years my senior, and that said it all. One didn't work with Bruce. One worked for him. Nonetheless, as time went by and we parted ways, our relationship alternatively waxed hot and cold. I saw him for what he was—a force to be reckoned with. With all due respect to SOM's world-renowned structural engineer and my old friend Fazlur Rahman Khan, it was Bruce's determinism that caused the Hancock and the Sears (now Willis) towers to transpire. Bruce's will was not to be forsaken. He was an extraordinarily gifted architect. His building for the First Wisconsin bank in Madison was superb. So too was his BMA office tower in Kansas City, and those three fabulously designed black towers on the West Bank of the Chicago River. When at one with his muse, he was nonpareil. But I will always remember with great admiration and gratitude his astonishing ability to forgive bad debts and move on. Until Dr. Khan's untimely death in 1982 at age 51, Bruce and I had what can be best described as a checkered relationship. But when faced with losing a mutual dear friend and a brilliant colleague, both Bruce and I gave up the ghost and from that point forward we joined hands as professional collaborators.

Our collaborative work on the Central Area Plan for Chicago's Central Area Committee, our unrealized efforts on the Centennial of the 1893 Columbian Exposition, our joint efforts on London's King's Cross-St. Pancras Station mixed-use proposal are the tip of an iceberg. Passing the baton is the better part of valor when contending with younger colleagues, and Bruce excelled at that. He was always open to ideas other than his own. I'm not saying that he always took kindly to criticism, but as he confessed to me while walking back to Inland Steel in 1958, "architecture is not for pussycats." I took that to mean that one's backbone would always be tested, since inertia often lies in wait to defer, delay, or defeat one's mission. His passing is a great loss for architecture generally and for Chicago specifically. He was a role model for those of us who could stand the heat when too close to him. An architect's passing is measured by what he or she leaves behind, and they're not always buildings that are there to inspire us, but behavior as well.

The last time I saw Bruce was when he returned to Chicago in the summer of 2007. His Alzheimer's disease was quite advanced by that time, but when he saw me he broke down and cried, for he had forgotten how much he had hated me; he only remembered how much he cared about me, and so we both shed a few tears.

STANLEY TIGERMAN IS A PRINCIPAL AT TIGERMAN MCCURRY ARCHITECTS AND A COFOUNDER OF ARCHWORKS.
When Chris Lange, Michael Hart, and Jim Scott left their downtown Minneapolis ad agencies six years ago to start their own, they made a calculated move to set themselves apart. They established their firm mono in a former photo studio in the hip Uptown neighborhood. And, Lange said, they vowed to break down barriers and bring everyone—writers, designers, social media experts, account directors, media experts, and MAC artists—to the creative process.

Four years and 30-plus employees later, the firm expanded to the vacant second floor of a 1921 Ford dealership. There, in space as raw as it gets, Lange and Minneapolis architect Charlie Lazor designed a workplace that fosters what mono does best: brainstorming creative campaigns for clients such as Apple, Harvard Business School, Herman Miller, and Minneapolis’ own Blu Dot, a furniture company co-founded by Lazor.

Within the white-painted brick walls, high wood-beam ceilings, and oil- and paint-splattered concrete floors (the space once housed a screen-printing business), they layered the space rather than carving it up. The wall-to-wall openness spics the imagination. On the busy Hennepin Avenue sidewalk, a bright enameled blue door recessed within the original masonry arch sets the tone: It doesn’t reach out and grab you; it invites you in. A new glass curtain wall is pushed back four feet from the building facade, clearly revealing old and new. Inside, a black, perforated-metal stair leads up through the exposed foot-and-a-half concrete floor to the landing-like reception area.

From there, the whole 10,500-square-foot floor is visible. “They have all the usual stuff—work stations, fax machines, production areas,” said Lazor, who now focuses on his architecture firm Lazor Office and the modular Flat Pak house that is its signature. “What’s unusual is their open, democratic way of working. To do that you need open, democratic spaces."

To that end, the center of the space is a large piazza defined by frosted glass walls that double as pin-up boards for the firm’s client work. Here, under a 16-by-16-foot light well, is where groups brainstorm a campaign, the whole crew celebrates a job well done, employees send off faxes, fetch coffee, cook, and eat lunch. It’s both porous workspace and social center, Lazor said. Lange added, “The architecture forces you to interact with the work on the wall.”

The equally porous individual work areas are arranged in the next layer around the piazza: a row of Knoll table desks is interspersed with a series of intriguing, cocoon-like pods made of synthetic mesh hung on aluminum rods. Lange said the charming Knoll A-3 pods “offer some visual privacy but I can still hear what’s going on.” Data and electricity are delivered in umbilical cords that drop down from an open trough.

The next layer houses the functions that need to be enclosed—bathrooms, storage areas, and “getaway boxes”—small rooms for quiet thinking or private calls furnished simply with Blu Dot Couchoids and a phone. Glass-walled conference rooms line the building’s front windows. A library, media room, and production area are tucked in back. Both solid walls and black steel frames for glass walls stop at seven feet, creating a datum line that orders the space and ensures visual contact with the outside.

Throughout, “process blue” touches—on graphic signs, an angled leftover I-beam, almost primitive wood barn doors—punch up the white-walled aesthetic.

The idea of an open office is hardly groundbreaking. What’s brilliant about mono’s is the concept’s complete expression. It’s clear what’s old and new. The space is ordered, symmetrical—a canvas for human activity. Classic Knoll, Herman Miller, and Blu Dot chairs, tables, and storage add color and texture. Here creative minds can flourish.

LINDA MACK
MIES’ LAST BUILDING MAKES IT ONTO NATIONAL HONOR ROLL

On an irregular site that he disparaged as "almost non-existent" in 1968, Mies van der Rohe designed his last building, One IBM Plaza. Last month, the 52-story tower located in downtown Chicago and completed in 1972 was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The designation is notable in that it comes 12 years before the usual 50-year trigger for National Register significance to be considered. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency announced the listing of the building on March 26, citing "its exceptional importance in the area of architecture as one of Chicago's premier examples of the modern movement style of architecture and the work of a nationally significant architect." In 2008, the IBM building was designated a Chicago Landmark. The most recent honor comes with no obligations to its owners to maintain the building as is, although major alterations would probably prompt its removal from the National Register. Three other buildings in Chicago by the architect have already been designated, including the twin towers on Lake Shore Drive, listed in 1980, and Crown Hall, landmarked in 2001, at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Final plans for the IBM building were completed by Mies, then 83, and his office in July 1969; he died on August 19. The second-tallest structure by the architect and the third-tallest building in Chicago at the time of its completion, the IBM building incorporates many of Mies’ signature moves, while also featuring advanced technological refinements initiated by the client, IBM, then at the height of its power as a computer technology innovator. The architect worked with firm partner Bruno Conterato on the project, and Conterato saw it through to completion. Mies placed the building on the north end of the site, orienting it toward Bertrand Goldberg’s rippling Marina City towers to the west and the Sun Times building (now demolished) to the east. The curtain wall is composed of steel-framed anodized-bronze tinted aluminum and bronze glass in a grid of vertical rectangles so regular that they do not vary even when spaces within are double-height. Square structural columns are clearly expressed, stressing verticality, though recessed throughout the curtain wall and exposed at the base. The material finishes in the lobby are typically Miesian in quality. Polished pink, black, and tan granite floors extend from inside to a loggia plaza created by the inset lobby. Walls are made of grain-cut and matched travertine slabs to enhance the impression of a single continuous piece of marble. The ceiling of pink glass mosaic is 26 feet above, lending the space a monumental quality that the architect believed essential to complementing the building’s overall scale.

No less impressive is the engineering for the building, developed in association with C. F. Murphy in order to accommodate the technological needs of IBM’s enormous computers, including temperature and humidity control. Other innovations range from radiant cooling and computer-controlled elevators to a plastic thermal barrier for preventing heat loss through the glass curtain wall. Soon after completion, the building was awarded the Federal Energy Commission’s first Midwest Excellence Award for Energy Conservation. The building represented a culminating moment in IBM’s rise and it was the largest building the corporation had yet built. Today, however, IBM is no longer a presence in the building, now more commonly known by its address, 330 North Wabash Avenue. In 2006, its current owners, the Lightstone Group, briefly flirted with turning part of it into condominiums, and instead of The Sun Times, its neighbor is now Trump International Hotel and Tower. While it is rarely considered in the same breath as Mies monuments such as Crown Hall, the Seagram Building, or the Farnsworth House, the IBM building remains a singular structure emblematic of a singular talent at a singular time—well worth listing by the National Register.

JULIE V. IOVINE

NATURAL SELECTION

On an irregular site that he disparaged as "almost non-existent" in 1968, Mies van der Rohe designed his last building, One IBM Plaza. Last month, the 52-story tower located in downtown Chicago and completed in 1972 was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The designation is notable in that it comes 12 years before the usual 50-year trigger for National Register significance to be considered. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency announced the listing of the building on March 26, citing "its exceptional importance in the area of architecture as one of Chicago’s premier examples of the modern movement style of architecture and the work of a nationally significant architect." In 2008, the IBM building was designated a Chicago Landmark. The most recent honor comes with no obligations to its owners to maintain the building as is, although major alterations would probably prompt its removal from the National Register. Three other buildings in Chicago by the architect have already been designated, including the twin towers on Lake Shore Drive, listed in 1980, and Crown Hall, landmarked in 2001, at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Final plans for the IBM building were completed by Mies, then 83, and his office in July 1969; he died on August 19. The second-tallest structure by the architect and the third-tallest building in Chicago at the time of its completion, the IBM building incorporates many of Mies’ signature moves, while also featuring advanced technological refinements initiated by the client, IBM, then at the height of its power as a computer technology innovator. The architect worked with firm partner Bruno Conterato on the project, and Conterato saw it through to completion. Mies placed the building on the north end of the site, orienting it toward Bertrand Goldberg’s rippling Marina City towers to the west and the Sun Times building (now demolished) to the east. The curtain wall is composed of steel-framed anodized-bronze tinted aluminum and bronze glass in a grid of vertical rectangles so regular that they do not vary even when spaces within are double-height. Square structural columns are clearly expressed, stressing verticality, though recessed throughout the curtain wall and exposed at the base. The material finishes in the lobby are typically Miesian in quality. Polished pink, black, and tan granite floors extend from inside to a loggia plaza created by the inset lobby. Walls are made of grain-cut and matched travertine slabs to enhance the impression of a single continuous piece of marble. The ceiling of pink glass mosaic is 26 feet above, lending the space a monumental quality that the architect believed essential to complementing the building’s overall scale.

No less impressive is the engineering for the building, developed in association with C. F. Murphy in order to accommodate the technological needs of IBM’s enormous computers, including temperature and humidity control. Other innovations range from radiant cooling and computer-controlled elevators to a plastic thermal barrier for preventing heat loss through the glass curtain wall. Soon after completion, the building was awarded the Federal Energy Commission’s first Midwest Excellence Award for Energy Conservation. The building represented a culminating moment in IBM’s rise and it was the largest building the corporation had yet built. Today, however, IBM is no longer a presence in the building, now more commonly known by its address, 330 North Wabash Avenue. In 2006, its current owners, the Lightstone Group, briefly flirted with turning part of it into condominiums, and instead of The Sun Times, its neighbor is now Trump International Hotel and Tower. While it is rarely considered in the same breath as Mies monuments such as Crown Hall, the Seagram Building, or the Farnsworth House, the IBM building remains a singular structure emblematic of a singular talent at a singular time—well worth listing by the National Register.

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THE SLIDING DOOR COMPANY
The most ambitious sustainable project in the world right now is probably the Norman Foster–masterplanned Masdar City, which is currently under construction in the desert outside of Abu Dhabi. This two-square-mile walled company town of 50,000 residents and 1,500 businesses is being built for the research of alternative energy. No cars will be allowed within its frontiers, it will use no conventional sources for power, and it endeavors to produce no carbon, solid, or liquid waste. The crown jewel of this model for the future is the Masdar Headquarters, a seven-story, 302,000-square-foot mixed-use facility designed by Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture of Chicago. A fusion of contemporary science and indigenous architectural vernacular, the Masdar HQ combines Arabic wind towers and sun screens with passive design concepts such as solar alignment and thermal mass, and active technologies like photovoltaic panels and geothermal wells, to create an energy-positive structure in the desert; the overarching canopy creates a microclimate on the roof garden of cool breezes and dappled light; 11 cone-shaped columns break up the floor plate, providing daylight and ventilation.

The cones themselves penetrate through the building’s poured-in-place concrete structure to the unenclosed ground level—like holes punched in a domino—where they create open-air courtyards landscaped with local vegetation. The architects spent ample time studying the shape of these elements to find a form that would both optimize daylight and ventilation. The tops of the cones face into the wind, creating a negative pressure condition that draws hot air up and out. This stack effect is aided by the 45-degree angles of the circulation corridors that access the courtyards, which promote air to move up in a vortex pattern. (Ninety-degree angled openings would encourage air to move straight through at ground level.) The architects’ projections indicate 15-degree cooler temperatures in the courtyards than outside the building.

The cones help to manage the scale of the building by breaking up the office floors. These apertures in the plan bring natural light into the center of what would otherwise be a deep and dark floor plate, mitigating the need for electric light during the day. The cones, which are all lined with operable glass windows ideal for cross ventilation, feature bell-shaped curves that prevent the sun’s rays from impacting them head-on. The oblique angle lowers heat loading on the building and makes for indirect light without glare on the interior.

The HQ’s most striking architectural feature is its overarching canopy supported atop 11 cone-shaped columns, all framed in a dramatically trellised steel structure. The undulating form of the 11-inch-diameter tube steel assembly, which was designed with structural engineering firm Thornton Tomasetti, creates cantilevers of as much as 180 feet that reach out to shelter every inch of the building below. The canopy hosts a massive array of photovoltaic panels and solar thermal collectors, and also provides shading and dappled light to the HQ and its opulent roof gardens.

The angle of incidence to the sun was also studied carefully for the exterior wall. Masdar’s masterplan calls for concrete block walls with 20 percent openings to save on energy, it also set the headquarters 37 degrees off an east-to-west orientation, which is not the most optimal alignment to the sun. The architects took it upon themselves to correct the masterplan by designing a sawtooth curtain wall that faces vision glass away from the sun to true north and south, while facing east and west with thin-film, building-integrated photovoltaic panels. This system allowed them to push the exterior wall to 24 percent open while still meeting Masdar’s stringent energy demands. The windows are all low-e coated, high-density insulated glass units; some panels feature a 30 percent frit to cut down on glare. These shading and orientation strategies reduced heat loading on the building from the sun to negligible levels, leaving the people and computers inside as the most serious concern in terms of raising energy demand from cooling. This demand is mitigated by geothermal wells drilled with the building’s piers, which greatly increase the efficiency of the HVAC, as does a heat exchange exhaust system. The architects thought hard about the comfort of the occupants, and studied temperature levels while keeping both native dress and suits and ties in mind. Working with Environmental Systems Design of Chicago, they devised an under-floor air delivery system that comes with an integrated system of 24-square-inch tiles and vents that can be shifted around to pump air where it is needed, increasing the quality of the air and reducing the amount of power it takes to move it. Masdar selected Smith + Gill’s design in an international competition that included 159 other participants, in part because of their modesty and thoroughness. The HQ solar array is expected to generate 17 percent of the building’s energy at 13 percent efficiency. Other proposals set the efficiency ratings of their solar equipment at 20 percent. When the Masdar committee asked Smith + Gill about their humble calculations, the architects explained that they had accounted for dust covering the panels much of the time and a product decay rate of 1 percent per year. When the committee went back and quizzed the other teams, they realized that no one else had accounted for these factors.

"That honesty had a lot to do with why we won," explained Gordon Gill. "If you look at the competition entry and the building today, they’re almost the same. We were lucky to do our homework well."
NEW DETROIT MAYOR OUTLINES UNPRECEDENTED RELOCATION PLAN

SHRINK TO GROW

In terms of urban decline, Detroit has experienced it longer, harder, and faster than any other city in the country. From its peak in the 1950s at the height of the highway boom, Detroit has lost nearly half its population, falling from 1.85 million then to barely 900,000 in 2008. As the city’s tax base fled to the suburbs and beyond, its politicians have grown venal and corrupt, culminating with the ouster last year of Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick for corruption with the assistance of an aide, among other offenses.

His replacement David Bing has vowed to fix the sprawling, 140-square-mile urban area, and on March 24 he proposed an unprecedented anti-controversial plan to condense the city. While specifics remain unpublished, the thrust would be to concentrate resources in certain neighborhoods while allowing others to grow fallow as open space, sites for future development and possibly even urban agriculture. The hope is to create a network of villages within a vibrant city.

“The harsh reality is that some areas are no longer viable neighborhoods, with the population loss and financial situation our city faces,” Bing said in a radio interview that there would be “winners and losers,” though he also stressed the need to offer incentives to get people to move. “If we don’t do it, we know this whole city is going to go down,” said Bing of the city’s plan. “I’m hopeful people will understand that.” The comments created a stir, particularly from Bing’s political opponents, but criticism has been limited, both because no specific areas have been targeted and also because there seems to be a willingness, even a desperate need, to see what happens. Glen LeRoy, dean of the College of Architecture and Design at Lawrence Tech in nearby Southfield, believes Detroiters are finally prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to save their city. “Sometimes you have to hit rock bottom before people will buy the vision,” he said. “I think we’ve reached a point where people are willing to try anything.”

The first major piece of the initiative is a plan to demolish 3,000 of the city’s most dangerous abandoned structures this year and a total of 10,000 by 2013. This effort is being supported by a $20 million Neighborhood Stabilization Grant from the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) department, though it will only address a fraction of the city’s thousands of derelict buildings.

The bigger challenge will be deciding what to do with the houses that are still occupied in areas to be abandoned. In February, Bing acknowledged in a radio interview there will be “necessitates it as well—call a shrinkage plan is serious about.”

The public sector has taken interest, too, beginning with a $125 million light rail system, seen as a key to Detroit’s new hub-and-spoke approach. “That’s right,” said Raymond Cekauskas, president of AIA Detroit, “we’re investing in mass transit in Detroit. It shows the new thinking this administration is serious about.”

But the key ingredient may be an essential mix of hope and faith. “There are little pockets of urban idealists that still live in the city, and there are more coming—artists, planners, people from New York and Europe and all over,” Cekauskas said. “This is a fascinating, exciting place. It’s also why people are tired of being criticized. We’re going to make a stand here. We’re going to make it work.”

Above: Looking downtown from a typically derelict neighborhood; Below: One of thousands of abandoned houses. Some areas are no longer viable neighborhoods, with the population loss and financial situation our city faces. The hope is to create a network of villages within a vibrant city. The first major piece of the initiative is a plan to demolish 3,000 of the city’s most dangerous abandoned structures this year and a total of 10,000 by 2013. This effort is being supported by a $20 million Neighborhood Stabilization Grant from the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) department, though it will only address a fraction of the city’s thousands of derelict buildings. The bigger challenge will be deciding what to do with the houses that are still occupied in areas to be abandoned. In February, Bing acknowledged in a radio interview that there would be “winners and losers,” though he also stressed the need to offer incentives to get people to move. “If we don’t do it, we know this whole city is going to go down,” said Bing of the city’s plan. “I’m hopeful people will understand that.” The comments created a stir, particularly from Bing’s political opponents, but criticism has been limited, both because no specific areas have been targeted and also because there seems to be a willingness, even a desperate need, to see what happens. Glen LeRoy, dean of the College of Architecture and Design at Lawrence Tech in nearby Southfield, believes Detroiters are finally prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to save their city. “Sometimes you have to hit rock bottom before people will buy the vision,” he said. “I think we’ve reached a point where people are willing to try anything.”

Part of the challenge facing what everyone refuses to call a shrinkage plan is what necessitates it as well—a lack of resources. Fortunately, the city has a strong philanthropic
NEW TWISTS ON OLD FAVORITES GIVE A BOOST TO KITCHENS AND BATHS.

BY JENNIFER K. GORSCHE

1 AXOR CITTERIO PREP KITCHEN FAUCET
HANSGROHE

The new piece in Antonio Citterio’s line for Hansgrohe is a single-handle faucet with a shorter spout and lower height, fitting into small kitchen prep areas while still coordinating with the collection’s larger faucets. Like other Hansgrohe products, the faucet complies with new low-lead legislation for plumbing fixtures. www.hansgrohe-usa.com

2 WINGS TAP
BOFFI

Designed by Mario Tessarollo, Boffi’s Wings tap is wall-mounted on a horizontal plate with integrated handles and a slender spout. Available in brushed stainless steel, the tap has a matching bathtub set with single or double shower plates that affix to the ceiling. www.boffi.com

3 PURE WHITE QUARTZITE
CAESARSTONE

Last month CaesarStone announced its newest quartz surface, a bright white top cut from a Doric column, the Jovian faucet suite is one of eight Fluid collections with themes based on nature, art, and architecture. The faucet can be fitted with a low-flow aerator for a rate of 1.5 gallons-per-minute, earning it a WaterSense product certification. www.caesarstoneus.com

4 JOVIAN FLUID
ANTOLINI

Antolini has recently introduced its Signature Stone Collection, one of the world’s first “branded” stones that will allow consumers to know exactly where and how their stone was quarried. The collection includes a range of granites and quartzites and is now available across the U.S. and Canada. www.antoliniusa.com

5 FRAPPUCCINO QUARTZITE
WATERWORKS

Waterworks’ Aqualinea floor and wall mosaics come in a variety of scalable patterns cut by water jet for ultra-precise edges, curves, and circles. Contrasting colors or finishes can add more texture to the Strata pattern, which is highlighted in the interior design of the company’s new flagship Manhattan store. www.waterworks.com

6 AQUALINA STRATA
WATERWORKS

Concreteworks East has developed a new process to create concrete with realistic wood grain patterns. The technique can be used to create customized wall panels, countertops, tabletops, and fire-place elements. The surface is available in a wide range of custom applications and colors as well. www.concreteworks.com

7 WOOD GRAIN CONCRETE
TECHLAB ITALIA

TechLab Italia’s Top Bimaterico combines stainless steel with molded DuPont Corian in a seamless kitchen surface available in three layouts—L-shaped, linear, and island— with a customizable range of steel shapes, sinks, and countertops. The top will debut in April at Eurocucina, part of the International Furniture Fair in Milan. www.techlabitalia.com

8 TOP BIMATERICO
TECHLAB ITALIA

The new Vogue series from Novabell features neutral-colored tiles and complementary lists for bathroom walls. Pictured is the 5-by-61-inch City Snow listel, which along with the rest of the series can be matched with the company’s Play or Soft Look flooring series. www.novabell.com

9 VOGUE NOVABELL SPA

The Vogue series from Novabell features neutral-colored tiles and complementary lists for bathroom walls. Pictured is the 5-by-61-inch City Snow listel, which along with the rest of the series can be matched with the company’s Play or Soft Look flooring series. www.novabell.com

GET FRESH
ANNA IMPOSSES GLOBAL continued from front page said Nannette Maciejunes, executive director of the CMA. Maciejunes commends the planning work that TWBTA did on the project, and considers DesignGroup’s work a “refinement” of TWBTA’s design. “It’s not only to be cost-effective, it’s about developing local talent,” Maciejunes said. “It’s about keeping those dollars in our community.”

“I feel unhappy not to do the project, but I’m happy that DesignGroup is taking it over,” Billie Tsien told AN. “Life is too short for hard feelings, and I like those guys.” Tsien feels that DesignGroup’s work will be its own. “So much of our architectural persona is dependent on detailing and execution,” she said.

In addition, Tsien believes the landscape for commissioning new cultural buildings has changed, and now all elements of a project are more likely to be scrutinized by a broader spectrum of stakeholders. “The discipline becomes tauter,” she said.

In late March, the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT announced a renovation by local architects SmithEdward. They had previously canceled a $50 million addition by UNStudio. The museum is housed in a string of five buildings, and the project will include interior improvements, new roofs, and facade repairs, as well as reorganized mechanical systems and a reopening of sealed-off areas, netting the museum 8,000 square feet of additional gallery space. “Our main concern was less about design than about finding a firm that excelled at preservation and engineering,” said Susan Talbot, Wadsworth’s director.

Talbot believes the renovation will celebrate the institution’s history as the country’s oldest continuously operated art museum, reinforcing its core mission. “What I hear are the woes of colleagues who have invested hundreds of millions of dollars for massive expansions, and how difficult it can be to run, support, and maintain them,” she said. The Wadsworth’s renovation is budgeted at a mere $16 million, all of which has been raised.

At the Cincinnati Art Museum, a planned addition by the Dutch firm Neutelings Riedijk has been put on hold, while a more modest renovation of an existing building proceeds. “We are currently taking a breather from our institutional campaign. We are proceeding with raising funds for renovation of the Art Academy building, a structure we inherited several years ago,” Aaron Betsky, director of Cincinnati Art Museum, wrote in an email. “We hope to transform this into office and public space, freeing up significant areas within our existing building for education and exhibitions.” Betsky said Neutelings Riedijk never wanted to work on this portion of the project, and much of the funding for that phase is already in hand. “We have so far received a pledge of $2 million for this, as well as $1.5 million of State Capital allocations, and are pursuing additional funding.”

The last five families moved out of the Harold Ickes Homes in late March, one of the complexes that used to stretch from Cermak to 25th Street, including the notorious Robert Taylor Homes. Designed by SOM and completed in 1955, Ickes Homes once housed 1,000 families. The homes will be demolished and replaced with lowrise mixed-income housing. Dozens of other low-income towers have met the same fate as part of the Chicago Housing Authority’s 2000 “Plan for Transformation.”

GANG GOES RETRO
On the heels of their much-praised Aqua tower, Studio Gang is taking on the renovation and conversion of the historic Shoreland Hotel in Hyde Park into rental apartments, retail, and event spaces. The building, which was most recently used as student housing by the University of Chicago, is in rough shape. Some of the once opulent interiors are intact, but others have been gutted or badly damaged, which could offer some interesting opportunities.

CONCRETE POETRY
On April 21, the Poetry Foundation will celebrate the groundbreaking of its new headquarters, library, and auditorium in River North, designed by John Ronan Architects. The Foundation received a $200 million gift in 2002 from the pharmaceuticals heiress Ruth Lilly. The building has not been without controversy, however. Nearly half of the Foundation’s trustees resigned over various expenditures, including its $25 million price tag.

PUMP IT UP
 Legendary hotelier Ian Schrager closed the deal to buy the Ambassador East Hotel, home to the legendary Pump Room restaurant. “It will still be the Pump Room and the Ambassador East, only better,” Schrager told Crain’s. “We’re going to use our good design and our creative ideas and unique approach to pull off something very special.” No word yet if there is an architect or designer attached to the project.

POPULARITY CONTEST
Alderman Joe Moore, who represents the 49th Ward, including Edgewater and Rogers Park, is allowing his constituents to vote on which projects will receive funding from his $1.3 million discretionary budget. This experiment in “participatory democracy” includes capital projects like street lighting, benches, playgrounds, public art, and transit improvements. Voting will be held on April 10 (check archpaper.com for the results).

MIXED-INCOME MISSION
The last five families moved out of the Harold Ickes Homes in late March, one of the complexes that used to stretch from Cermak to 25th Street, including the notorious Robert Taylor Homes. Designed by SOM and completed in 1955, Ickes Homes once housed 1,000 families. The homes will be demolished and replaced with lowrise mixed-income housing. Dozens of other low-income towers have met the same fate as part of the Chicago Housing Authority’s 2000 “Plan for Transformation.”
Des Moines has long been a hub for insurance industry giants and presidential politics, and with those powerhouses comes a certain commitment to embodying a model American city. “Des Moines is very proud of being connected globally, so they take time and effort to understand what’s going on,” said Ignacio Bunster, a principal of Philadelphia-based Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT). The firm is leading the city’s enlightened push to reclaim its Des Moines River waterfront and unite the downtown neighborhoods that had been part of the City Beautiful movement but undergone a postindustrial decline through the 1980s.

Like the city’s new Pappajohn sculpture garden, completed in 2009 thanks to the namesake family’s $25 million donation to the Des Moines Arts Center, the waterfront plan was set in motion by a private benefactor. In 2004, the Principal Financial Group pledged $40 million for a 1.2-mile waterfront pedestrian loop called the Principal Riverwalk, but in subsequent years has given more than twice that amount and has recruited many other private sponsors in addition to securing heavy public funding. “The Riverwalk is one of the largest civic improvement projects the city is going to have, ever,” said Paul Mankins, a principal of Des Moines–based Substance Architecture, the firm chosen by WRT to design a riverfront pavilion and municipal pump station.

Though sometimes referred to as the redheaded stepchild of the Riverwalk plan, the pump station symbolizes the city’s evolving thinking about its urban planning. “A pump station in Des Moines is normally a bunch of gears surrounded by a concrete block wall,” said Mankins. But in 2008 when the city experienced what he describes as “the second 500-year flood in 15 years,” it got serious about integrating a pump house into the aesthetic of the Riverwalk. Now it will sit as a folded-up foil to Substance’s cafe kiosk, an angular zinc-louvered and glass structure in WRT’s Court Avenue Plaza. (It is probably the only project in the country in which the Army Corps of Engineers and sculptor Jun Kaneko, who will create a cast glass mural for the station’s exterior, will both participate.)

Another project that gives a glimpse of the city’s aspirations is the DART (Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority) Transit Hub at the southern edge of the
central business district. Substance is designing the transit facility to replace the aging pedestrian transit mall, a failed relic of the 1970s. The building’s sloped green roof will rise out of the grassy triangle in front of it, forming a new gateway to the downtown and creating a site for light rail in the future.

Like the Court Avenue Plaza projects, the DART station is going forward thanks to federal funds available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. “When they started talking about shovel-ready projects, these are the two that came to my mind,” said Mankins. “Literally, the construction documents had been done for two years.”

It may be breaking more ground on the back of the stimulus, but much of Des Moines’ strength lies in what it already has invested—nearly $2.8 billion on downtown development in the last ten years. In some ways, the Riverwalk is one of the last pieces of the city’s grand urban development scheme, based on a 1989 Vision Plan by New York firm Agrest and Gandelsonas, and their Vision Plan 2 completed in 2007. The riverfront development will connect the city with Central Iowa’s 300 miles of wilderness trails, in addition to bringing still more international artists and architects to the stage. San Diego-based firm Safdie Rabines has already turned one of the city’s oldest railroad bridges into a pedestrian walkway at the southern boundary of the Riverwalk, and Arup has completed a swooping single-arch span at the trail’s northern end, with separate paths for joggers and bicyclists. Taking a cue from the riverfront development, the World Food Prize Foundation, founded in 1986 and akin to a Nobel Peace Prize for hunger relief, will occupy the century-old Des Moines Public Library building, left vacant when the library moved to a new space by David Chipperfield completed in 2006. The Prize’s new Hall of Laureates is being designed by Gensler, and will tie into the Riverwalk with an oval garden pathway designed by Chicago-based Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects.

Even though the Riverwalk project will not be completed until late 2011 or early 2012, the riverfront already draws 20,000-strong crowds for the city’s weekly farmers market and more than 250,000 attendees to its annual arts festival. Next year, the National Trust for Historic Preservation will hold its 2011 National Main Streets Conference in Des Moines, highlighting the city’s success as a model for commercial district revitalization. The event will no doubt showcase the Riverwalk plan, as well as the many obstacles that must be overcome for cities like Des Moines to continue moving forward responsibly. For its part, Principal Financial Group has exemplified a global trend where major employers help their cities compete for residents’ loyalty. “Principal, in terms of how they express themselves architecturally, are the most advanced in Des Moines,” said Bunster of the group’s effect on the city. As a symbol of that corporate-cum-community collaborative spirit, WRT has designed a plan in which citizens would buy sandbag-shaped stones that will make up the river’s floodwalls. “Everybody is pitching in to make this happen,” he said. “It is almost like the raising of the barn by the town.”
Were it not for a smattering of crumbling, century-old industrial buildings mixed in with the new developments downtown, it would be easy to forget that Grand Rapids is in the Rust Belt. Years of strong private investment and generous philanthropy from a few prominent local families, combined with a history of artistic innovation, have kept the Western Michigan city thriving even as the rest of the state struggles.

A major focus of private funds recently has been Grand Rapids’ health care industry, the city’s largest sector both in dollars and square footage. The city’s “Medical Mile” hosts three major medical centers—Spectrum Health, Saint Mary’s Health Care, and the Mary Freebed Rehabilitation Hospital—all of which have undertaken significant building projects in the last few years. Funded by the DeVos family, founders of the Amway Corporation, the Helen DeVos Children’s hospital is building a new home scheduled for completion in 2011, and in February the Van Andel family–funded Van Andel Research Institute opened a $230 million addition designed by Rafael Viñoly.

The medical sector has helped support the residential and artistic neighborhoods in the city with a steady influx of hospital, research and support staff. "The development of downtown with art installations ranging from oil paintings to performance pieces. From September 23 to October 8, the public was able to tour the entries and vote for their favorite. Turnout was extraordinary, said ArtPrize executive director Bill Holsinger-Robinson, estimating that the festival drew a total of 200,000 people over two weeks. "On the first weekend, there were so many people who drove into the city that most of the restaurants ended up running out of food," he recalled.

The rapids that gave the city its name were dammed up in the 19th century and used as a source of power for the furniture factories that put Grand Rapids on the map as the “furniture capital of the world” in the early 20th century. Although furniture companies Steelcase, Herman Miller, and Hayworth are no longer the defining features of Grand Rapids’ economy, the Grand River is still channelized, its 17-foot grade difference mediated by a series of dams along its one-mile length. But the rapids may yet return. In 2009, a nonprofit organization called Grand Rapids Whitewater was formed to advocate for modifying the dams to allow recreational kayaking and canoeing straight through downtown. The city responded enthusiastically, commissioning a planning study to determine how such a change could be engineered. City officials view the plan as a key next step in coaxing the flowering of Grand Rapids’ downtown public life, said Jay Fowler, director of the Downtown Development Authority. "This would be not just for the people who kayak or canoe, but also fun for the people watching them," Fowler said. “Urban revitalization isn’t just about big projects like an arena or medical school, but the small things that make our city special.”
In the face of decades of population decline—some of the most dramatic in the nation—St. Louis is now witnessing a significant turnaround, at least downtown. According to figures from the mayor’s office, 10,000 units of housing have been built downtown and 70 (out of 76) vacant historic buildings have been renovated and reoccupied. Perhaps no project has done more for the city’s self-image than a new two-block sculpture park, known as CityGarden. Completed last summer, the park has been instrumental in drawing families and visitors back downtown. Civic boosters hope the project is just the tip of the iceberg, and are planning to revamp downtown’s other major public spaces, including the 17-block Gateway Mall (CityGarden is a two-block section of the Mall) and the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, home to the iconic Saarinen Arch. Improving these landscapes is considered essential to downtown’s continuing recovery. Financed entirely with private money from the Gateway Foundation, a local nonprofit that supports capital improvements in St. Louis, CityGarden’s transformation was both physical and cultural. “From what I could tell, it was mostly used as a place for nearby office workers to smoke,” said Warren Byrd, principal of the Charlottesville, VA–based landscape architecture firm Nelson Byrd Woltz that designed CityGarden. “Our marching orders were to produce something that was both visionary and practical,” Byrd said. “There were also very specific requirements that reflected the climate of St. Louis, lots of shade and water features.” Byrd’s firm took the site, which was “essentially a blank slate,” and created a dense composition of plantings, art, and other features, which will be maintained by the foundation. The garden’s 24 sculptures, including works by Keith Haring, Mark Di Suvero, and Martin Puryear, are set amid curved paths, benches, lawns, and fountains. It has become a magnet, especially for families with children. While Byrd and his colleagues were transforming two long blocks on the Mall, the Gateway Foundation was funding a new masterplan for the rest of the Mall by New York–based Thomas Balsley Associates and Urban Strategies. That plan calls for the linear park to be reconceived as a series of distinctly programmed “rooms.” “The term we use a lot is that we want to ‘activate’ these spaces,” said Barbara Geisman, the city’s deputy mayor for economic development. “The Mall has acted like a boundary between one side of downtown and the other, and we want it to become a connector.” Last summer, the masterplan was adopted by the city, and in March the mayor appointed a high-profile advisory board of civic leaders and philanthropists to begin its implementation. “The wonderful thing is that CityGarden has set the bar so high,” Geisman said. The board will also advise if the remaining sections of the Mall should be given to different designers or built out by one firm. “There have been a lot of plans in St. Louis that haven’t gone anywhere. One of the things that CityGarden convinced people of was the value of implementing pieces of a larger vision,” Byrd said. The St. Louis Arch is visible at the eastern end of the Mall, and the Arch grounds sit roughly perpendicular to the Mall. While the Arch grounds, bordered by highways and the river. The National Park Service is sponsoring an international competition to redesign the 91-acre area surrounding the original Arch grounds (designed by and now part of the landmarked site), to better connect it with the city. Nelson Byrd Woltz is a part of the nine teams competing for the job, which includes the city, the National Park Service, the federal Department of Transportation, and the Army Corps of Engineers among its stakeholders. “That’s the great challenge. It’s not a single client. So whoever wins, they’re going to have to put a lot of stock in that scheme,” Byrd said. The competing teams are an eye-opening Who’s Who in architecture, landscape, and engineering. Four finalists will be selected this month, and a winner in September. Among the most contentious issues these teams face is how to respond to I-70, an elevated and trenches highway that divides the Arch grounds from downtown. A civic coalition called City to River is advocating for the highway’s removal in favor of an on-grade boulevard. An editorial in The St. Louis Post-Dispatch recently also advocated that the teams plan for its removal, and the competition includes the highway as an area for consideration. Geisman describes the recession as a “hiccup” in the course of downtown’s turnaround. She points to two other major mixed-use projects that will be moving ahead in the next 60 days. “These public spaces create lasting attractions for residents and visitors,” she said. “They make downtown a more dynamic environment for development opportunities.” And they just might save the city.
DIARY

www.mam.org
700 North Museum Dr.
Philip-Lorca diCorcia
Artist Talk:

THURSDAY 22 LECTURE
Edith Ackermann
What’s To Be Learned from Kids?
Walker Art Center
1750 Hennepin Ave.,
Minneapolis
www.walkerart.org

SATURDAY 22 LECTURE
Jeppe Hein
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
www.imamuseum.org

SATURDAY 21 EXHIBITION OPENING
A Little Fish Story
5200 Woodward Ave.
1500 to Present
The European in African Art,
www.nelson-atkins.org
Kansas City
4525 Oak St.
The Nelson-Atkins
European Chinoiserie
The Art and Visual Culture of
Christopher Johns
LECTURE
953 Eden Park Dr., Cincinnati
Cincinnati Art Museum
WITH THE KIDS
St. Louis
3750 Washington Blvd.
Museum St. Louis
6:00 p.m.
www.imamuseum.org
Indianapolis Museum of Art
EXHIBITION OPENING
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
www.imamuseum.org
Indianapolis Museum of Art
THURSDAY 8 LECTURE
Joe D. Horse Capture
Art to Wear: Plains Indian
Decorated Garments
3:30 p.m.
Cleveland Museum of Art
1150 East Blvd., Cleveland
www.clevelandart.org

SATURDAY 15 LECTURE
Lorna Simpson
1:00 p.m.
Walker Art Center
1750 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
www.walkerart.org

THURSDAY 6 LECTURE
Kristine Stiles
World Trends &
Contemporary Art
2:00 p.m.
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
2400 3rd Ave. South
Minneapolis
www.artsmia.org

SATURDAY 26 LECTURE
Sandy James Marshall
Lazy Shadows
8:15 West Newport Ave.
Chicago
www.golden-gallery.org

tp://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org
Cincinnati Art Museum
953 Eden Park Dr., Cincinnati
MARTIN PURYEAR PRINTS
953 Eden Park Drive, Cincinnati
COURTESY SAATCHI GALLERY, LONDON
SATURDAY 5 LECTURE
Gestalt Gardening with Felder Rushing
7:00 p.m.
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
www.imamuseum.org

MAY
SATURDAY 3 LECTURE
Mark Bradford and
Aminah Robinson
7:00 p.m.
Walker Center for the Arts
1871 North High St.
Columbus
www.wsxarta.org

APRIL
WEDNESDAY 14 EXHIBITION OPENING
Chicago: Lost and Found
Art Institute of Chicago
111 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
www.artic.edu

FRIDAY 16 EXHIBITION OPENINGS
In a Paperweight
Tony Wight Gallery
845 West Washington Blvd.
Chicago
www.tonywightgallery.com

Diary

Almost cartographic in character, the wall-sized canvases of artist Mark Bradford explore urban environments with visual complexity. Arranged in swirling and sprawling map-like patterns, his collages are forceful commentaries on the class-, race-, and gender-based economies that structure contemporary America. Incorporated in the pixilated abstractions are remnants scavenged from the streets of the South Central Los Angeles neighborhood where Bradford lived as a child and continues to maintain his studio. These culled bits, bits of billboards, graffiti stencils, signs, and hairdresser’s permanent end papers comprise The Devil is beating his wife (2003, above). This scienic collage is one of more than 50 works in various media on show at the Wexner Center, giving the first major survey of the artist’s recent work. Last fall, these dazzling reflections on society helped win Bradford the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship. Among his new works is an installation on the history of the black community in Los Angeles. Examining the early 1980s to the present, it includes cultural references to the rise of HIV, gangsta rap, and mega-churches.

SATURDAY 16 EXHIBITION OPENING
Prints and H.C. Westermann:
See America First
Art Institute of Chicago
111 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
www.artic.edu

WITH THE KIDS
Artist Demonstration:
Cedric Tai
12:00 p.m.
Detroit Institute of the Arts
5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit
www.dia.org

THURSDAY 20 LECTURE
Planet Indy: The Not So Big
House with Sarah Susanka
7:00 p.m.
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
www.imamuseum.org

SUNDAY 30 EXHIBITION OPENINGS
American Quilts from the
Wexner Center Collection
Milwaukee Art Museum
700 North Museum Dr.
Milwaukee
www.mam.org

SATURDAY 15 EXHIBITION OPENING
Construction
Architecture under
Stanley Greenberg:
Wexner Center Galleries
Saturday-Sunday, March 19-20
953 Eden Park Drive, Cincinnati
COURTESY CINCINNATI ART MUSEUM

FRIDAY 7 EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Danny Lyon
The Bikeriders
4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines
www.desmoinesartcenter.org

SATURDAY 8 EXHIBITION OPENING
The Thirty-Six Views of
Mt. Fuji, Part 9
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
www.imamuseum.org

THURSDAY 5 LECTURE
The Art of Connection
Rymer Gallery
The Art of the Vessel
Basins, Baskets, and Bowls:
Women Explore the Vessel
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
2400 3rd Ave. South
Minneapolis
www.artsmia.org

JUNE
SUNDAY 30 WITH THE KIDS
Color Me Contemporary
3:00 p.m.
Cincinnati Art Museum
953 Eden Park Dr., Cincinnati
www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org

SATURDAY 5 LECTURE
Giovanni Cardinal Jajolo
The American Museums
2:00 p.m.
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
2400 3rd Ave. South
Minneapolis
www.artsmia.org

FRIDAY 7 EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Jippe Hein
Indianapolis Museum of Art
4000 Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis
www.imamuseum.org

THURSDAY 27 EXHIBITION OPENINGS
In a Paperweight
Tony Wight Gallery
845 West Washington Blvd.
Chicago
www.tonywightgallery.com

SATURDAY 1 Exhibition
Global Positioning: 1,600
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
2400 3rd Ave. South
Minneapolis
www.artsmia.org

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THE MCA COLLECTION
March 19–June 13
Walker Art Center
1750 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
www.walkerart.org

SATURDAY 5 EXHIBITION OPENINGS
Roi Horne
Shanley Greer:
Architecture under
Construction
Art Institute of Chicago
111 South Michigan Ave.
Chicago
www.artic.edu

Sunday 23 LECTURE
Artist Talk
Philip-Lorca diCorcia
6:15 p.m.
Milwaukee Art Museum
700 North Museum Dr.
Milwaukee
www.mam.org

ART IN THE NEWS
Through African Eyes: The
European in African Art,
1500 to Present
Detroit Institute of the Arts
5200 Woodward Ave.
Detroit
www.dia.org

SATURDAY 13 LECTURE
Lorna Simpson
7:00 p.m.
Walker Art Center
1750 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
www.walkerart.org

Mathew Gates
Dry Bones and Other
Parables from the North
Bronx David Gallery
3721 Washington Blvd.
St. Louis
www.davidandgavigallery.com

MAY
SATURDAY 3 LECTURE
Mark Bradford and
Aminah Robinson
7:00 p.m.
Walker Center for the Arts
1871 North High St.
Columbus
www.wsxarta.org

SUNDAY 23 LECTURE
Philomena deCordova
6:15 p.m.
Milwaukee Art Museum
700 North Museum Dr.
Milwaukee
www.mam.org

Washington, D.C.—born artist Mark Puryear’s sculptures are known for their slender lines, wooden beams, or metal tubes that shape open space into the suggestion of a three-dimensional form. So it’s unsurprising that his style translates naturally into the line-based medium of two-dimensional printmaking. A current show at the Cincinnati Art Museum exhibits Puryear’s little-known prints, with 23 spare, minimalist drypoints and etchings produced over the last decade, along with a book for which he did the scratchings of an ancient people trying to communicate something now lost to time.
paint by numbers

the architect's newspaper April 14, 2010

painting, and architecture. Le Corbusier’s collection for the Salubra Company (1931), composed of color “keyboards,” wallpaper samples, and a brief explanation, is the artifact from which the issues regarding form, color, volume, contrast, and beauty extend. The theories of Purism projected by Le Corbusier (under his actual name, Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) and Amédée Ozanfant in L’Esprit Nouveau offer insight into the architectural application of a system fundamentally associated with a style of painting that formalized Cubism in combining it with the French tradition of grand painting. With Le Corbusier’s development of the free floor plan, the relationship between painting and architecture, de Heer asserts, becomes more complicated. The organization of the book is codified through the use of color. The cover exhibits a cutaway section looking into a painted loggia from Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation in Marseille (1951). The image represents colored surfaces existing on the boundary between interior and exterior in a semi-enclosed space. Le Corbusier’s theory of polychromy is often restricted to the interior and directly tied to standing points along the “promenade architectural.” With this choice of image, de Heer clearly acknowledges the architectonic polychromy. And they are expanded by Le Corbusier into a process of assignment post-construction, when the interior “layout of forms” can be studied on site, evaluated, and corrected as required through the ranking of colors. The range of applied colors is ultimately sibling to red and blue (and subordinate to white), two colors that form an eternal dialectic in the Purist poetics of architectonic polychromy. De Heer’s graphic layout of the book is partially derived from the logic of the Salubra collection of acceptable palettes designed to aid and limit the client’s selection. Pages within each chapter are color-coded across the gutter of each spread. Even the colored end papers recall the Salubra values. Graphics aside, the appendices contain a catalog of essential items that include a list of pseudonyms, variant paintings with corresponding thumbnails, a selection of drawings of realized projects related to the subject of architectonic polychromy, and fragments from central texts written by Jeanneret and Ozanfant.

The chapters themselves are steeped in scholarship and concisely summarized. While all of them contribute to de Heer’s ultimate purpose—to establish a philosophy of Purism, then illustrate how the paintings of Jeanneret inform the architectural development of Le Corbusier in the context of legitimizing color—Chapter 2, “Disegno and Experimental Aesthetics,” provides the overarching ideological framework. This chapter concerns Jeanneret and Ozanfant’s insistence on the relevance of proportion, light-dark relations, and the economic use of color in painting. To say that color is always subordinate to form for Le Corbusier is a misconception. It is clear that de Heer wants us to realize that color is used subjectively in Le Corbusier’s early projects to classify, rectify, intensify, weaken, or provide an accent to the composition of the interior, which is delineated by the wall. In spite of this, Le Corbusier’s development of the “Five Points” scheme liberates wall from plan, so the sectional qualities of a building’s primary volumes precipitate a “mathematical” apprehension of beauty that no longer needs color to harmonize it. The book is given

Shulman’s Modern Midwest

Julius Shulman: Chicago Mid-Century Modernism
By Gary Gand
Rizzoli, $60.00

The Chicago area has such an abundance of architectural treasures that it’s easy for locals to feel smug about it all. This also makes it easy for us to shortchange other important design gems, especially those that are usually unseen by visitors. Case Study architect Pierre Koenig reportedly once remarked, “There’s no midcentury modernism in Chicago.” Julius Shulman: Chicago Mid-Century Modernism goes a long way toward proving him wrong. Koenig’s comment actually appears to have been the factor that motivated author Gary Gand to put the project together. While the book is a fitting tribute to the photography of the great Julius Shulman, who died last year, it’s equally significant as a document of the rich local legacy of midcentury design and a growing grassroots movement to save it from replacement by the onslaught of starter castles and piccoli palazzi.

Although extensive attention to Le Corbusier’s use of color has been explored since the early 1980s, a practical analysis of source texts concerning the architect’s application of a theory of color has only now been summarized. Jan de Heer’s The Architectonic Colour: Polychromy in the Purist Architecture of Le Corbusier uncovers the origins of Le Corbusier’s mystical system, and examines the architect’s speculations on polychromy as they appear in writing, painting, and architecture. Le Corbusier’s development of the free floor plan, so the sectional qualities of a building’s primary volumes precipitate a “mathematical” apprehension of beauty that no longer needs color to harmonize it, is codified through the use of color. The terms of the system are introduced through a philosophy of form and color that opposes dark relations, and the economic use of color in painting. To say that color is always subordinate to form for Le Corbusier is a misconception. It is clear that de Heer wants us to realize that color is used subjectively in Le Corbusier’s early projects to classify, rectify, intensify, weaken, or provide an accent to the composition of the interior, which is delineated by the wall. In spite of this, Le Corbusier’s development of the “Five Points” scheme liberates wall from plan, so the sectional qualities of a building’s primary volumes precipitate a “mathematical” apprehension of beauty that no longer needs color to harmonize it.
Shulman was one of the greatest architectural photographers of the 20th century. His 1962 Case Study #22—a night shot of a glass pavilion cantilevered high above the Sunset Strip, offering a glimpse of the residents within and the lights of the Los Angeles grid beyond—telegraphs all the tantalizing glamour, drama, and excitement that the “California lifestyle” promised. It also may be the most recognized architectural photograph of the century.

Gary Gand, by trade a sound engineer and musician, is a serious design wonk. He and his wife Joan started collecting midcentury ceramics and glass in the 1970s, which ultimately culminated in their purchase of a 1955 house designed by Alexander House in the midcentury movement. Gand breaks down the featured houses, all of which are owned today by members of the CBB group, by designer. Some of them are from architects with international reputations: Bertrand Goldberg, most famous for Chicago’s corncob-like Marina City; the Keck brothers; and Harry Weese, noted for his “anti-Miesian” triangular, poured-concrete Metropolitan Correctional Center. But the book’s real contribution to the architectural canon is the exposure it provides for Chicago only once in the 1970s to photograph Edward Durrell Stone’s Standard Oil building.

Gand’s fervor for the unique local quality of the architecture and “under-built” to current zoning allowances, unprotected by anything resembling landmarks legislation. Gary Gand thought someone had to document the best ones, and in 2007 convinced Shulman, who was still remarkably robust and active in his late 90s (working with photographer Jürgen Nogali), to do the job. Before shooting these photos, Shulman had been to Chicago only once in the 1970s to photograph Edward Durrell Stone’s Standard Oil building.

For obvious reasons, most photography of residential architecture focuses on the furnishings. Although many of the residences in this book are attractively decorated, several have fallen victim to “updates” over the years, incongruous flooring and lighting usually, or in the case of Harry Weese’s own house, painting all the interior cedar paneling white. Most would never measure up to the typical shelter magazine or coffee-table book editor’s standards without a photo stylist’s extreme intervention.

But Shulman’s genius for composition and perspective makes you truly see the architecture—and most spectacularly shows off its integration with the landscape. The bulk of the projects were shot in the lush, green, Midwestern late summer, and several wonderful images feature Shulman’s gift for lighting, allowing you to see interiors from exterior shots.

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Julius Shulman: Chicago Mid-Century Modernism offers a fine look at an underappreciated design tradition, and—if CBB members have their way—may spark the next important movement in historic preservation.

Chicago-based writer Philip Berger is a frequent contributor to A+.

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Click 318
From the newly published Plans of Chicago (Architects Research Foundation, $45.00) by R. Samuel Roche and Aric Lasher, these composite plans aim to both contextualize and build upon the 1909 Burnham and Bennett plan. Along with deep analysis and an impressive marshaling of historical source material, the authors have filled their book chock-full with fascinating images for cartography-loving designers and planners. At left, the composite plan, for example, compiles proposed improvements to the central city from Burnham and Bennett stacked with later ideas for the intermediate fabric of the city and the periphery along the Eisenhower Expressway by Ludwig Hilberseimer. The authors write, “as Burnham and Bennett pointed out, circulation routes are both the major connections between core and periphery and the primary means of relating them to a large whole.” Above, the satellite overlay view of Chicago shows the area the authors propose for improvements, and their relationship to the Axis of Chicago in the 1909 plan, seen here as the straight line, as well as the jagged line of the Eisenhower Expressway. The image below shows the subdivision of land into grids of varying size. The dot at the center is the Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park, and the inscribed circle has a radius of approximately 18 miles. “Since all these plans conform to Chicago’s existing street grid,” they write, “they can all be accommodated within its radial pattern of increasingly large squares.” Plans of Chicago proposes a new metropolitan plan based on the work of earlier thinkers, a cumulative approach that mirrors the growth of the city over the generations, and yields surprisingly fresh insight.
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