In early April, A. Zahner Company finished a 6,500-square-feet expansion of its manufacturing facility in Kansas City, Missouri. Begun in January 2010, the project was delayed in part because Zahner, which used its own labor, continued on page 4.
In spite of what some readers might believe, *The Architect’s Newspaper* is not a partisan organ. What we are, however, are unapologetic urbanists. We believe in the economic and cultural power—and necessity—of cities. And so, it is with mixed feelings that we weigh in on the highs and lows of recent developments in the nation’s proposed High Speed Rail (HSR) network. The governors of Florida, Ohio, and Wisconsin have all abandoned plans—and federal funding pledges—for portions of that network, casting aside years of work, millions of dollars in studies, and, often, strong local support, in the name of fiscal conservatism.

Even a moment’s investigation shows that such claims by these Republican—and Tea Party-backed—governors lack seriousness. All three sought to divert their funding to road and bridge projects rather than return it outright to the feds making their protestations on behalf of budgetary discipline ring hollow. Further, their actions betray a fundamental anti-urban bias that ignores climate change, runaway energy costs, and the demands of economic strength and diversity.

Thankfully, the Federal Department of Transportation rejected all schemes to redirect funds to roads and recommitted them to HSR projects elsewhere, so the story is not so universally bleak. Illinois is reaping the benefits of the Wisconsin and Florida governors’ short-sightedness. Late last year, after Wisconsin rejected their federal funding, Illinois picked up a significant portion, $42 million, from the pool of money that Florida’s governor rebuffed, to continue improvements to the planned Chicago-to-St. Louis HSR line (The importance of this line as a transportation alternative was underscored by the recent tornado that devastated the St. Louis airport).

It is especially heartening because the funding boosts were the result of a bipartisan coalition of officials at the federal and state levels, including Illinois Governor Pat Quinn (D), Senator’s Mark Kirk (R) and Dick Durbin (D), and federal Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, a Republican who crossed the aisle to work for the Democratic administration.

Planning for and building infrastructure takes long-term vision and a commitment to a politics of consensus rather than narrow self-interest. Illinois is lucky to have elected officials who, in some areas at least, are putting the state’s interests before their own. It’s a quality that has become far too scarce in contemporary politics. While it’s a shame that the gains in Illinois had to come at the expense of others that have been the subject of so much ridicule, it is a lesson that we would do well to remember.

In the wake of the 1950s, there were complaints that the federal government’s building programs were far too slow to come to fruition. The architects’ magazine *The Architect* ran a lengthy article in 1952 by Leo Steinberg, who showed that even the most ambitious plans had to include long timeframes, often decades long, because of the complexity of the projects involved and the need to wait for the necessary funding to come through. Even a moment’s investigation shows that such claims by these Republican—and Tea Party-backed—governors lack seriousness. All three sought to divert their funding to road and bridge projects rather than return it outright to the feds making their protestations on behalf of budgetary discipline ring hollow. Further, their actions betray a fundamental anti-urban bias that ignores climate change, runaway energy costs, and the demands of economic strength and diversity.

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REPRIEVE
PRENTICE
REUSE PLAN TO NORTHWESTERN
LANDMARKS ILLINOIS SUGGESTS
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Richter of Perkins + Will were there, hopefully sourcing tile for new projects
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at the entrance. Whoops!

ARTISTS ARE SO OVER ARCHITECTURE
Eavesdrop would like to proudly report that we did not eat pizza from the
garbage at Art Chicago as reported last year. Kthnxbai! But, seriously, the opening night and party was a huge success (if judging the attendance and
garbage at the event). The outcomes of the event were three shorts, none of which were short on personality. The third told the dramatic
preservation story of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown’s Lieb House,
which was directed by their son, James. We were about to throw our man-bag over our shoulder and b-line to the wine reception when the young Venturi appeared out from nowhere—behind a Wizard of Oz-like curtain—to answer questions. It was well worth the deferred
wine buzz. James, who was actually quite lovely, if not a bit eccentric like
his folks, lobbed a big ol’ insult at SOM. There was quite a bit of squirming shifting
in the room as people cast their gaze to see who might be in attendance.
Someone politely reminded him Chicago is the belly of the SOM beast.

BLURRING THE FINE LINE
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With a myriad of recent openings, Division Street is well on its way to
matching the fervor of Bucktown. The addition of Caffe Streets provides
a well-designed social hub for the neighborhood. And their version of
social means no wifi. Owner Darko Arandjelovic hired Brent Norsman to
design the space and, for inspiration, took him on a tour of Chicago coffee
shops that he respects. The outcome of their client/designer collaboration
is a space that matches the organic and scientific processes of making
coffee with its artistic outcome. Norsman organized the space into a slick,
bamboo plywood paneled seating area and a more science lab-like barista
station, each distinct, but symbiotic in their roles.

Bamboo paneled walls, communal tables, benches and stools, and stainless
steel wall-mounted planters define the space. Bundles of reflective filament
bulbs up-light the seating area, while four retrofitted, industrial street lamps
cast their glow over the baristas. A solitary large-scale light box adorns
the wall showcasing an aerial view of the neighborhood’s iconic 6-corners
intersection. But the real showstopper is the ceiling, a topographical layering
of bamboo that invokes the mixing of coffee and cream.

EAVESDROP > RYAN LAFOLLETTE

With the stay of execution for Prentice
Hospital extended through the end of June,
Landmarks Illinois released a reuse study for the threatened clover-like structure
designed in 1974 by Bertrand Goldberg. Considered by many to be a hallmark
of sculptural modernism, the building sits
within a research corridor of Northwestern University, the building’s owner.
Northwestern says it needs the space to
expand and would like to double the space, an amount allowed by zoning.
Three architects worked pro bono on the reuse study, but out of concern for offending
Northwestern, a potential client, too did not want to discuss the project. The third, Vinci/ Hamp, specializes in historic preservation.
Jim Peters, president of Landmarks Illinois said that the building has about
350,000 square feet of space, though the group is unsure how much is actually usable. He added that the unique cantilever supports an open floor plan that could work well for laboratory uses. The study
also explored office and residential uses, uses that the University said do not fit
its needs. Other options include shaving off a non-original fifth floor addition from
the building’s base and replacing it with a green roof that would nicely accentuate
the thrust of the cantilevered quatrefoil.
The reuse plan also suggests replacing dark glass with a translucent wrap curtain wall.
Peters said that the building provides visual relief on a corridor dominated by big
box architecture. And while architects think of the building as a landmark, “It’s not landmarked,” said Al Cubbage, vice
president of university relations. Cubbage pointed out that the university has a
“stellar record” of adaptive reuse and
modernization of their buildings and noted that Northwestern spent $20 million to
restore Harris Hall, considered one of the most iconic buildings on campus. “I don’t know enough about the [landmarking]
process,” he said. “But we’re looking
to fulfill our mission, which is providing research and education. We’ll certainly
take a good look at their material, but we’re trying to maximize the use of the land in
that area, which is limited.”

TOM STEOFLER

LANDMARKS ILLINOIS SUGGESTS REUSE PLAN TO NORTHWESTERN
PRENTICE REPRIEVE
L'EGGO MY EGO
The Graham Foundation hosted an evening of short films that acted as a pre-
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Gehry. Enough said (eye roll). The second was a lovely little piece on Glenn
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Second place entry.

FLINT SPARK continued from front page
condemned and, he hoped, demolished. After years in court, Flint homeowners were soaked last year with an additional average tax of $130 for acquisition of the building and legal fees. Previously Genesee Towers was disliked and considered an eyesore. Afterward it was bitterly hated.

This past September, the 40-member strong AIA Flint launched a competition to save the structurally sound 1968 high-rise condominium. Called Ballpark the renovation—"the question is the financial dimension of an actual redevelopment project."

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TACKLING A WATERFRONT continued from front page spearheaded by the Cleveland Browns football franchise hopes to capitalize on their name recognition to lure development to the area around its waterfront stadium.

In a new partnership with the City of Cleveland, neighboring properties, and the Greater Cleveland Partnership, the Browns have asked Boston-based Elkus Manfredi Architects to prepare concept plans for 30 to 35 acres of city-owned land predominantly used by the Port of Cleveland. The initial concept called the Lakefront District proposes a mixed-use neighborhood to the north of the Browns’ stadium and infilled around existing institutions including the Great Lakes Science Center and the I.M. Pei-designed Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

“We’re hoping these concepts will act as a catalyst for mobilizing private interest in the land,” said Chris Warren, Chief of Regional Development for the City of Cleveland. The Browns plan to use the concepts to convince private developers to build a mix of retail, residential, recreational, and entertainment uses at the site.

A series of new public spaces is also proposed in the lakefront concept. New and existing development will be organized around a green quad and pedestrian walkways. “We will be insisting upon the public’s access to the waterfront including lakefront promenades and public spaces,” said Warren.

Once private interest is secured, developers will then bring in their own design teams for individual projects. “The concepts we have presented are just that, concepts,” said Mike Holmgren, president of the Cleveland Browns, in a statement. “They will evolve into specific plans as actual development opportunities arise.”

Among the Browns’ goals is to foster a sense of connectivity to the surrounding city. Severed from downtown by a rail yard and an Interstate highway, challenges also include negotiating a complex topography. “The geography does create challenges. Cleveland isn’t a city on a beach, it’s a city on a bluff,” said Terry Schwarz, director of the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative.

Adding to the difficulty, the stadium target area is flanked by a busy port and a small regional airport at either side. Included in the initial concept is a 1,000-car parking garage straddling the rail yards with a pedestrian bridge connecting Cleveland’s civic center with the stadium.

Schwarz said a waterfront light rail line, predominantly used for Browns games, will also tie the Lakefront District to surrounding neighborhoods.

Now with a concept in hand, Warren says the city will be working with the Browns to refine the plan and move it forward. Still, the district hinges on private development taking a chance on Cleveland’s lakefront. “We are not developers; we are in the football business,” said Holmgren in a statement. “We saw our role, as much as anything, as a catalyst, and maybe the group that can bring people together and encourage other investors.”

Proponents point to billions of dollars currently being invested in downtown Cleveland including a large medical mart and convention center atop the bluff. “With development happening nearby, the timing is good,” said Schwarz. “With a declining population, the question is to what extent can Cleveland support large-scale development.”

BRANDEN KLAYKO

WHOLE FOODS TO THE RESCUE

The Village Center in Hyde Park looks like it’ll be moving forward now that Whole Foods has agreed to lease 30,000 square feet and become the anchor tenant for the Studio Gang designed development. The developer, Antheus, has yet to decide on whether the 22-story tower will go condo or rental.

An additional 10,000 square feet devoted to smaller retail tenants should help make the village feel more like, well, a village.

GOEKEN GOES NATIONAL

Brian Goeken is leaving the Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning to become Chief of the Technical Preservation Services, a post that will allow him to leverage $4 billion a year in private investment toward historic preservation at the National Park Service. Needless to say, the new post is a much bigger platform. In Chicago, Goeken oversaw 199 designations; since 1976, the federal tax credit program has helped create and restore more than 425,000 housing units and save more than 37,000 historic properties.

SALVAGING STADIUMS

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In Detail>
The Joe and Rika Mansueto Library, University of Chicago

For the most part these days, when universities with major collections of research materials run out of room at their library facilities they move the books, and maps, and folios, and other materials to off-campus storage warehouses. Scholars can still use the material, of course, it just takes a bit of time between request and retrieval. When the University of Chicago found its Regenstein and retrieval. When the University of Chicago found its Regenstein system (ASRS), it recoiled at the thought of Chicago finding its Regenstein and retrieval. When the University of Chicago takes a bit of time between request and retrieval, of course, it just do this, the architects proposed burying the storage function underground since it did not call for daylight and in fact is better without it. The reading room, circulation desk, and preservation department, on the other hand, they housed on a single floor at ground level covered by an oval glass clad grid shell dome.

Mansueto is actually quite simple. It all sounds rather complex, and the building’s glassy swell has a futuristic appearance, but in design and construction Mansueto is actually quite simple. The cavernous underground storage room was prepared with slurry walls, a process of building a foundation wall in which a trench is dug in the earth, then concrete is pumped in, displacing the slurry and creating, after a period of drying, the wall. These slurry walls were done in contiguous sections until the oval of the storage room was complete. After that the earth in the center of the ring was excavated, the walls secured with post-tensioned anchors, and, voila, the storage room was born.

There are benefits and pitfalls to storing archival materials underground. It is cool and dark down there (both good), but it is also damp (bad). And one of the quirks of slurry walls is that, unlike other methods of concrete foundation wall construction, they cannot be sealed against water intrusion. To keep moisture levels in the storage room within acceptable levels, the architects added another wall within the slurry wall, leaving a gap between the two that forms a sort of rain screen system. Any water that seeps through the concrete is captured in a trough and allowed either to evaporate or is sucked out with sump pumps. Meanwhile, the space within the inner wall is kept at ideal temperature and moisture levels by the mechanical system.

The grid shell structure was designed in collaboration with Werner Sobek, a German architect and engineer who has made something of a specialty of this system and who works regularly with Murphy/Jahn. It is made up of 6-inch diameter steel pipe laid out in a 6-foot by 6-foot grid and anchored to a concrete ring foundation. Posts extending up from the intersections of the pipe support anchors that accept the glass panels—high-performance low-e coated insulated glass units. With the exception of a ring of clear glass at the base of the dome that allows unobstructed views out to the campus, the cladding is treated with a 57 percent pattern of ceramic frit. The fritting will help the enclosure reject 73 percent of solar heat gain while admitting 50 percent of visible light. It is also applied in two colors: black facing up, which makes it less visible from the outside, and light grey facing in, which serves as a reflective surface for uplighting incorporated into the air circulation towers that sprinkle the interior.

Aaron Seward
The Architect's Newspaper introduces a new, local online resource guide for the design community, allowing users to search their city for the products and services they need.

Contact Lynne Rowan for information
Email: lrowan@archpaper.com
Phone: 212.966.0630

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The Miller House in Columbus, Indiana is famed as the collaborative achievement of three great design talents of the 20th century. Open to the public for the first time, Alan G. Brake steps inside to see how it has endured.

MID-CENTURY TIME CAPSULE

An invitation to the Miller House in Columbus, Indiana was something that architects coveted. Now the public can see what all the fuss was about. Following the death of Mrs. J. Irwin Miller in 2008, the Miller family donated the time capsule of a house, along with a partial endowment, to the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA), giving public access to this master work of modernist residential architecture designed by Eero Saarinen, with gardens by Dan Kiley, and interior design by Alexander Girard.

The house commissioned in 1953 by J. Irwin Miller, industrialist and head of the Cummins Corporation, is now being operated in partnership with the Columbus Visitors Center, known for their informative architectural tours of the town’s more than 70 modern and contemporary buildings and landscapes. (In 1954, Miller offered to pay the architectural fees on all the town’s public buildings, provided the institutions selected designers from a preapproved list.)

The Miller House will open for two 13-person tours per day. Modeled on the now public Philip Johnson Glass House in Connecticut, tours depart from the Visitor’s Center in Downtown Columbus and arrive at the house by a small shuttle bus. Pull through the gates—aided by the IMA to appease neighborhood concerns—through the Kiley-designed crenelated arborvitae hedge and you enter a serene 13-acre environment where landscape design, architecture, and interior design combine to create a modernist villa that balanced grandeur with domestic comforts and an active family environment.

A driveway with geometric pavers, flanked by a formal grid of apple trees, leads past a staggered translucent glass and white painted metal screen (echoing the hedge) set in a flowerbed toward the entrance of the house. The strong horizontal line of the house’s white-painted steel double cornice dominates the composition. The cantilevered porch shelters four facades—all of them roughly equal in importance—of glass window walls in steel frames, alternating with dark slab-panels of Virginia slate with inset white columns at the corners. A grid of 16 columns supports the roof, which is sliced through with skylights allowing filtered natural light all through the house.

The four corners of the house are divided into distinct functional zones: one is a den; one is a children’s wing with four dormitory-style bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a playroom (apparently following Scandinavian precedents); the third is the master suite, with a bedroom, sitting area, small office, two dressing rooms, and two bathrooms; the fourth corner includes the kitchen, powder room, coat closets, and other service areas. This highly rational plan allowed the family to entertain, raise five children, and find solitude or togetherness. The famous living room conversation pit was the site of both after dinner coffee and raucous pillow fights.

Through the glass front entrance, much like a storefront door, the visitor enters a serene foyer with white travertine floors, white marble...
walls, with an off-white upholstered Eames compact sofa placed against the right wall. A panel of a textured wall covering separates the space from the living areas beyond. Immediately, it is evident how carefully the designers calibrated circulation sequences, managed views, and chose rich materials and warm decorative objects to create the effects they desired. Saarinen brought Girard in at the very beginning of the design process (Kiley became involved somewhat later), and the two worked in tandem. Girard channeled Saarinen’s Scandinavian love of craft and color—via Mexican cottons and folk art figurines—leaving Saarinen to mine high modernism.

Past the wall panel, the visitor enters the living room, with the pair of seating areas made famous by Ezra Stoller’s photographs: one on grade, arranged around the cylindrical tube chimney and terrazzo fire pit; the other, a sunken conversation pit, outfitted with a riot of colorful, patterned pillows by Girard. The quality of
The International Style. The complete departure from the austerity of architecture with warm, unexpected—-even occasionally manic—-decoration. But one never overwhelms the other. Among Kiley, Saarinen, and Girard, it is the interior designer’s work that was the most compromised in the process of turning the house over to the museum for public viewing. The family removed the house’s art collection—which included blue chip Impressionist and Modern paintings—along with a significant portion of its best furniture and objects. His spirit, though, remains. Girard and Mrs. Miller shared a love of collecting folk art, and the family maintained a relationship with Kiley, Girard, and Kevin Roche, following Saarinen’s early death, and consulted with them on changes to the decor, grounds, and maintenance of the house in the decades that followed.

On the wall behind the fireplace, a colorful storage wall runs the length of the room. Housing hundreds of books and objects, the unit includes handsome rosewood doors and white laminate and glass shelves backed with a variety of colored and textured papers, all selected by Girard. The large, colorful composition becomes a sort of visual landscape that counterbalances the views out to the gardens through the floor to ceiling sliding doors. According to Bradley Brooks, director of historic resources for the IMA, Saarinen sink the conversation pit to keep the garden view unobstructed. Off the living room, through a gauzy Indian print curtain, a large round table with a fixed terrazzo pedestal dominates the dining room. A fountain at the center of the table was frequently filled with flowers or a whimsical Girard-designed candelabra. An Italian colored glass chandelier hangs overhead. The custom table became the basis for the Saarinen pedestal tables and Tulip chairs (the table was originally surrounded by Eames chairs with Eiffel Tower bases, but the Millers later replaced them with Tulip chairs).

The house served as a crucible for innovative industrial design. Girard and Saarinen worked closely together and with the Millers, who were becoming well versed in modern design, as well as collaborated directly with Charles Eames on furnishings. According to Brooks, the Eames Aluminum Group was originally designed with outdoor furniture for the house in mind, and the Millers asked Saarinen to request a custom Eames compact sofa with a brass plated frame, fearing the standard model wasn’t handsome enough when viewed from behind. Brooks and the IMA rank the Miller House among the top four modern houses in the country, along with the Glass House, the Farnsworth House, and the Eames House. While all the houses were completed within a ten-year period, the comparison with those acknowledged modern icons only goes so far. The 7,000 square foot Miller house, with seven bedrooms (including a guest room and a servant’s room) is a sumptuous villa for a small town patron of art, architecture, and industry. It is also a family house, where children were raised and the owners lived for nearly 50 years. Its atmosphere is worlds away from the chilly, high-art glamour of the Farnsworth and Glass Houses. Filled with cheery mid-century classic furniture, it is also something of a period piece.

Columbus, Indiana is known for its quotidian modernism, where schools, firehouses, churches, and parks are well designed and also accessible. The luxurious modernism of the Miller House was a private reserve where every detail was considered but only the family and their guests could experience it. Now open to all, it is a fascinating counterpart to the everyday modernism that defines the town. The last of the Miller children has decamped for a job in New York, and the house has the slightly forlorn look so common to house museums. But the architecture program the family started is alive and well. Three new buildings by William Rawn, Cesar Pelli, and Koetter, Kim & Associates will be completed or break ground this year. The patrons may be gone, but the town remains their true legacy.

ALAN G. BRAKE IS AN’S MIDWEST EDITOR.
Hardworking Beauty

The Museum of Contemporary Photography, housed by Chicago’s Columbia College, has just opened the doors of Public Works, a comprehensive and diverse showing of built infrastructure captured by mid-20th century to contemporary photographers. If you ever wondered what Hoover Dam Bypass looked like mid-construction, this is the place to see it in striking detail.

The show begins with extremes, kicking off with Armin Linke’s photographs of vast infrastructural projects at all ends of the world. For example, the Cosmodrome in Baikonur, Kazakhstan is the first and still the largest operational space complex, leased by Kazakhstan to Russia until 2050. Though in reality the Cosmodrome is a bustling spaceport with an active launch schedule, it appears otherwise in Linke’s photograph—more like a bizarre relic of a time gone by, left untouched. In stark contrast is another Linke piece, a photograph of the Grande Dixence Dam in Switzerland, the tallest gravity dam in the world. The dam creates its own stunning landscape that looks almost natural: an extremely still mountain lake has pooled behind its concrete wall, with winding trails leading up the mountain to its edge. Next, comes an image of the 2001 Maha Kumbha Mela, a massive Hindu pilgrimage that takes place only once every 144 years. In the photograph, a sea of pilgrims flood the network of temporary pontoon bridges built over the Ganges river in Allahabad especially for the event. With 60 million in attendance, the 2001 gathering was the largest in recorded history. Linke’s images set a tone for the show: that infrastructure, despite its often massive proportions, is human. The motivations behind its construction may be spiritual as much as logistical, and it can be occupied at the scale of the human body even while it creates marks as large as the landscape. The Cosmodrome is a point of exit from the earth; the pontoon bridges serve primarily a religious purpose; and the Grand Dixence hydroelectric dam impacts domestic life as much as it does the scenery.

The potentially damaging effects of infrastructure on both land and culture are also addressed. Images like Alejandro Cartagena’s Suburbia Mexicana series depict how fast growth, with little consideration for urban planning or resource allocation, results in the drying up of rivers in the otherwise scenic landscapes of Monterrey, Mexico. With a similar documentary spirit, Sze Tsung Leong’s capturing of Ciqikou in Chongquing, part of the History Images series, depicts the clashing of an old culture with the new infrastructure of China’s rapid economic boom. In it, temples and gardens sit atop concrete platforms that buildings are sometimes in shadow, sometimes obscured by blurs of people running through monsoon rains, water streaming over the lens. But the buildings must be talked about. Look at what has happened to them. They are no longer those clean, masterful drawings. These “pure” modernist spaces of Brasilia and Chandigarh have been tamed, pleasantly overtaken by fifty and sixty years, respectively, of clever, ever-adaptable human occupation. Baan’s photographs document the accumulation of use over time. It is interesting to witness how these cities have embraced and activated certain spaces, while seemingly discarding others as background to be overgrown or, say, turned into storage. At turns, these photographs evoke a sense of nostalgic abandonment, only later to confront our gaze with the density and noise of messy, informal occupation, which is, after all, the most striking aspect of these photographs. Then there is the comfortable middle ground where the program has been fulfilled—somewhat. The school is a school. The library, a library. I showed the book to an architect friend of mine. “They seem a little dark,” he said of the images. I took another look. He was right. I thought it might be the paper it was printed on. But no, there is something intentional here. Baan would not be so careless...
look more like the interstate of your nightmares than public meeting places. While Cartegena’s images are unmistakably critical, Leong seems intent only on capturing a still frame of an intense transition.

An unexpected favorite is Greta Pratt’s Washington Crossing the Delaware, where local Pennsylvanians reenact the famous crossing by dressing up in revolutionary garb and marching across the bridge named after the same event, rather than clambering into boats and rowing across the river’s breadth. The show largely towards the early United States and undermining some of the more bizarre, contemporary pieces. Even so, among these, Berenice Abbott’s The O-Line, Pier 11, East River, 1930 is a stunning reminder that ports with passenger ships used to be as much a part of our international infrastructure as airports and their fleets of airplanes are now. LISA SMITH IS A CHICAGO-BASED WRITER AND DESIGNER.

An interior at Chandigarh.
Valerie DeKeyser wanted to lend lighting more texture by lining the interior of rolled steel shades with unexpected materials such as horsehair, peacock pelts, or (shown here) a luxe-looking sable made from magnetized iron filings mixed with powered sugar.

For Nathan D. Paoletta, a meltdown created aesthetic richness. Using a drip casting process, he “de- and re-materialized” twenty dollars worth of nickels and quarters and a stack of CDs (shown here) into artful and intriguingly abstract dishes.

Lee Won Joon made a high tech “crystal” chandelier by wiring together custom-made circuit boards with sugar encrusted LEDs. Plugged in, the crystalized sugar-coated sensors light up. For Joon, it was an exercise in materializing ideas about sweetness and light, literally.

Lauren Mosakowski calls her cast iron, porcelain and rubber vessels, “Cage & Contain.” Useless when the bars are in caged mode, the container is solid tight when slip closed. The project draws, Mosakowski said, on “the mystery of iron barriers to create objects that have an undisclosed past and seem to be hiding some alternate possibility” or a beverage.

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THE CHALLENGE OF MAKING IT

Students from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago may have been far from their studios when they presented projects in Milan last month, but they were clearly very much in their element amidst the avant-garde designs on show at the annual international furniture fair.

Following an intensive two semester design studio, led by SAIC professors Helen Maria Nugent and Jim TerMeer, 15 students presented the installation Loaded at the most au courant exhibition space of them all, Spazio Rossana Orlandi, a carefully curated gallery of new talent tending to the experimental and the highly crafted. The students were challenged to find unexplored potential in the marriage of iron and sugar—materials with historically charged meanings of their own. And they did not disappoint as a sampling here of designs shows. JULIE V. IOVINE

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