

# THE MIDWEST ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER

10 12.14.2011

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NOW THAT BIM HAS BEEN AROUND  
FOR A WHILE, ARCHITECTS ARE  
FIGURING OUT WHAT ELSE IT CAN DO.  
SEE PAGES 12-15

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IN VENICE**

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MASSIVE PARKS SYSTEM TAKES  
SHAPE IN LOUISVILLE

## A GREENER EDGE

Like most cities, growth in Louisville, KY continues to push out to the city's suburban fringe, eating up undeveloped land surrounding the city. Recognizing the pristine farms and woodlands that would otherwise be developed into ubiquitous suburban housing tracts, a group of civic and business leaders headed up by Dan Jones organized the non-profit 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parks in 2005 to undertake one of the nation's largest new park projects to protect over 3,700 acres of prime land along a winding watershed. The so-called Parklands of Floyds Fork will encompass four large, distinct parks—each named for a tributary to the waterway—designed **continued on page 5**

## FACADE LIFT

Sometimes ordinary facades conceal complex histories. Such is the case with the nondescript looking building occupied by Columbia College next to the Spertus Institute on South Michigan Avenue. The midcentury facade replaced the building's eclectic original, which was designed in 1913, and now that that facade is failing Gensler has devised **continued on page 3**

## POLISHING A GEM

The new addition to the Cranbrook Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills, MI does not add new galleries, lobbies, or grand entrances. But to call it simply "storage space" would demean the complicated inner workings of a building that allows the historic museum to operate as Eliel and Eero Saarinen intended when it was completed in 1942. Closed during the last two and a half years of renovations, the original 45,000-square-foot Saarinen

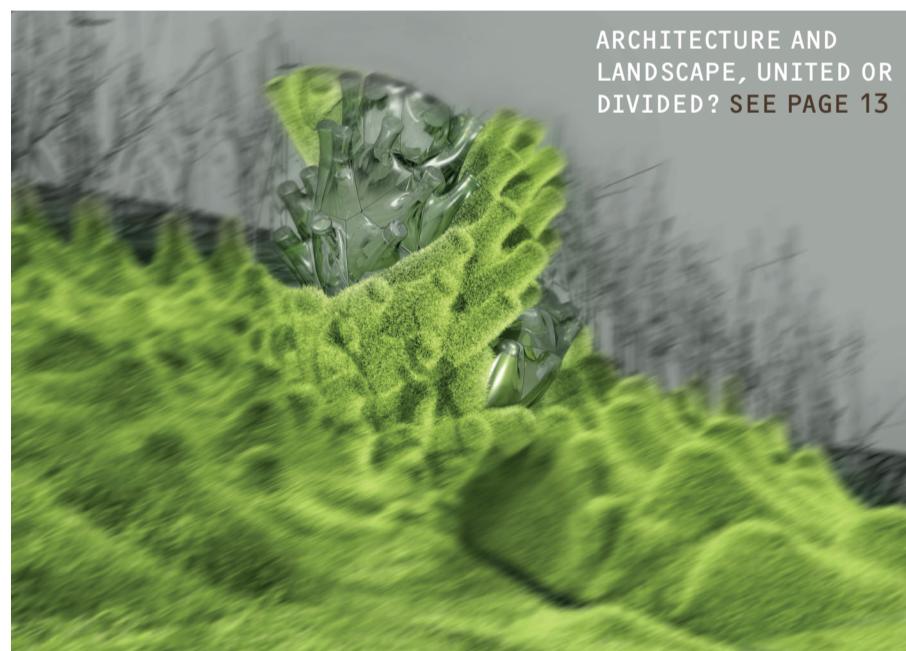
structure is now fully restored and reopened to the public. The new space amounts to a very sophisticated warehouse to expertly house the extensive art collection which includes paintings, sculpture, furniture, works on paper, and architectural models.

This isn't the building's first add-on (Raphael Moneo designed the Studio Building, completed in 2002) but it is the most substantial at **continued on page 4**

ARCHITECTURE AND  
LANDSCAPE, UNITED OR  
DIVIDED? SEE PAGE 13

New York, NY 10007  
21 Murray St., 5th Floor  
The Architect's Newspaper

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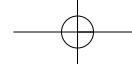


## Booster Shot

As Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood continues to evolve, residents are experiencing a kind of tension unfamiliar in its recent history: conflicting opinions over the appropriate design of new buildings. The topic of debate is Mercer Commons, a proposed \$54 million mixed-use development by the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp. (3CDC), which received unanimous approval from the Cincinnati Planning Commission on November 18. The protracted review process, however, has raised questions about new development in one of the region's most historic neighborhoods.

Jointly designed by Cincinnati's City Studios and **continued on page 2**

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**PEAVEY PUSHBACK**

Regarding the article "Parsing Peavey," (MW 09\_11.11.2011) the term "alter" seems very benign and might be a tactical way to soften, say, discussion of what's done to characters in the recent Almodovar film, *The Skin I Live In*, and *Boxing Helena* and soon enough to Peavey Plaza in Minneapolis. In fact, what we see in those films, and what lies ahead for Peavey, is gross disfigurement. But that seems to be part of a larger pattern since facts and

public process were also grossly disfigured in the past year as the City of Minneapolis determined Peavey's future. One of the grossly disfigured facts that constantly reappears can be found in a quote at the end of the article: "The old plaza was not designed for programming or for interaction."

Politely put, that is categorically untrue. As Peavey's landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg has emphatically stated, the Plaza was most definitely designed for programming and interaction. That was part of

the project's initial mission. Trotting out butchered and grossly disfigured facts and repeating them ad nauseum does not make them true. Saying the proposed re-design of Peavey Plaza "alters" Friedberg's original design does a disservice to Mr. Friedberg and encourages similar obfuscation in discussing other extant and future revitalization projects.

CHARLES A. BIRNBAUM  
PRESIDENT  
THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION

**TIME PASSING, TEMPERATURES RISING**

With constant news of economic uncertainty at home and abroad and ever escalating levels of absurdist political theater gripping state and federal governments, one hair-raising piece of news should not get lost in the din. A new report by Global Carbon Project released in early December shows the largest spike in carbon emissions in a single year since the Industrial Revolution. Dangerous, dirty emission rates climbed nearly six percent, reversing a slight dip the previous year, which had been attributed to the economic downturn.

The implications of this news are hard to overstate. Without a drastic rethinking of energy use, transportation, and settlement patterns, we face devastatingly severe weather and other destructive consequences of climate change in coming decades.

For those of us tracking sustainable design and smart growth the news is at once demoralizing and cause for some head scratching. In the decade since Chicago's City Hall Green Roof opened—a powerful symbol of urban sustainability that signaled a new compatibility between city governments and green design agendas—countless green projects, retrofits, and tools have been deployed across the country and around the world. Technologies and theories have moved from the fringe of the green design world to the mainstream, or at least much closer to it: compact fluorescents, LEDs, green roofs, white roofs, photovoltaics, geothermal systems, hybrid cars, car sharing, bike sharing, smart growth, New Urbanism, Landscape Urbanism, soft infrastructure, the list goes on and on from small scale to region-wide interventions. While the spreading of these tools and technologies is heartening—and shows a degree of willingness among the general public to accept change—one has to ask if these kinds of modest steps are meaningful at all. And is there honest discourse about the degree of change needed to mitigate the crisis?

While China recently surpassed the U.S. as the single largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the U.S. still holds the lead per capita—by a long shot. That we use—and waste—so much energy should be of no surprise, given the energy intensive landscape we built following the Second World War. Naysayers argue that for every hybrid car or compact fluorescent U.S. consumers purchase, the effect is eliminated by a Chinese consumer buying his or her first car. While this acknowledges the reality that carbon emissions are hazardous regardless of their country of origin, it also ducks the West's responsibility for the century of pollution that created the current crisis. The U.S. has so much room for improvement that we can still make a very significant impact on our emissions. This will give us greater credibility when making the case to the Developing World to not repeat our mistakes.

This won't happen without noisy calls for action and bold leadership. These consumer-based scenarios, and local and state level initiatives are no substitute for bold government-led standards and incentives at the Federal level. We must stop fiddling at the margins while the planet burns. **ALAN G. BRAKE**



COURTESY 3CDC

Mercer Commons proposal for a historic district in Cincinnati.

**BOOSTER SHOT** continued from front page  
Cleveland's City Architecture, the 3-acre Mercer Commons is expected to nearly double the amount of rehabilitated space in Over-the-Rhine. Bounded by Vine Street to the west, Walnut Street to the east, East 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, and East 13<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, the project rehabilitates 19 historic buildings and fills 26 vacant parcels with a range of building types. New townhouses line Mercer Street, and three new buildings mix apartments, condos, and retail space—including major retail frontage along Vine Street.

In fact, the mixed-use building along Vine Street was a sticking point in the approval process. The Cincinnati Historic Conservation Board, an advisory committee charged with protecting "historically or architecturally significant structures, sites or districts," twice rejected 3CDC's plans on the grounds that some of the proposed buildings fail to satisfy building guidelines in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. Given a short timeframe to meet financing deadlines, 3CDC made the controversial decision to take its plans directly to the Cincinnati Planning Commission. The plan was approved in a 6-0 vote, with the provision that 3CDC make minor revisions to the Vine Street building.

Asked about the decision to appeal directly to the Planning Commission, Chad Munitz, 3CDC's executive vice president of development and operations, said, "We think it was a good give and take, and we're proud of what we did in terms of design and working with the community. We feel we achieved an appropriate design for a new building in a historic district." He added that 3CDC had the Historic Conservation Board's approval for the majority of the project, and that the only point of contention was the building on Vine Street. While approval technically is provisional until minor changes to the Vine Street building are presented, Munitz explained, "The Planning Commission was very specific about the changes required for the Vine Street building. They include a revised roofline, a different storefront system, and vertically-proportioned windows." Following final presentations, 3CDC expects to bid the project in the first quarter of 2012.

Discussion and disagreement about the most appropriate mode of new inner-city construction might be considered a good problem for Cincinnati to have—especially in a neighborhood long defined by its abandoned buildings. With demographic trends favoring cities after decades of decline, and approaches to housing design and construction more diverse than ever, it's a debate that likely will remain unsettled for a long time to come. **TRAVIS R. EBY**

## MENAGE A TROIS NOT

Short marriages have been in the news a lot lately. They say money is one of the biggest stressors in many unions. Still we were surprised to hear about the break-up of the new-ish firm **Brininstool Kerwin and Lynch**. As the economy was tanking longtime partners **David Brininstool** and **Brad Lynch**—known for their high-design, boutique practice—teamed up with former **SOM** principal **Thomas Kerwin**—known for large international projects—in an effort to tap into new markets abroad. Apparently, all has not gone according to plan. According to a statement from Kerwin, Brininstool and Lynch have gone back to practicing together, as Brininstool + Lynch, while Kerwin is moving ahead with his own firm now called just **BKL** (Sounds like there was letterhead). Kerwin is keeping the firms current large project, a 40-story tower on the edge of Lake Shore East for **Magellan Development**. Eavesdrop reached out to Lynch for his side of events, but as of press time, he has not responded, giving Kerwin the last word for now.

## DUELING ART FAIRS

After leaving Merchandise Mart Properties where he ran the dwindling Art Chicago fair, **Tony Karman** is launching a new art fair called **Expo Chicago** at Navy Pier to premier next September. He's enlisted **Jeanne Gang** to design the temporary galleries in the exhibition hall. The Mart hasn't thrown in the towel though. They have re-launched the Mart show as **Next Art**, blending emerging artists with more established ones, and organized by new director **Staci Boris**; it is planned for April. The two shows will have vastly different atmospheres, with **Expo Chicago** set in the soaring spaces of Navy Pier's exhibition hall, which boasts 55-foot ceilings, compared to the Mart's cramped 11-foot ceiling height. Eavesdrop loves ambition, but we have to wonder, will Chicago be able to support two shows? Will either be first rate?

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The 1913 facade.

COURTESY GENSLER  
building's original drawings and then scanned them to help create a ghost of the historic facade that will be digitally printed on the new curtain wall. The design recently received approval from the Commission on Chicago Landmarks.

Also part of the context was Krueck + Sexton's distinctive folded facade for the Spertus next door. "The budget is very tight, so we couldn't do something like what Krueck + Sexton did," said Elva Rubio, the project's principal architect, referring to the Institute's bold, contemporary facade which also received Commission approval. "We wanted to create a contemporary response that also referenced the past."

The resulting facade is designed to be as clean and as minimal as possible. "The graphic will give it a sense of place," she said. Gensler has worked on dozens of projects for Columbia, and previously renovated the entire interior of the Michigan Avenue building. "We've been helping them build an urban identity," she said. **AGB**

The architects located the

**FACADE LIFT** continued from front page a solution that addresses the building's history as well as its contemporary context.

Acknowledging the Michigan Avenue streetwall, a historic district with design review guidelines became the guiding principles of the design. The site, and much



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Filling 18 floors of the Studio Gang-designed Aqua Tower, the new Radisson Blu hotel includes 334 rooms, ranging from smaller rooms to suites, designed by Lundwall Architects of Sweden. Rooms come in two styles, one with warmer more clubby finishes, the other neutral and modern. British designer Jim Hamilton of Graven Images designed the hotel's public areas. His vivid design includes a faceted reception desk of backlit glass volumes against a dark brown wall slashed with diagonals of light. Extra high wing back chairs upholstered in deep velvet provide seating in the lobby space. A long brass screen divides the lobby from the restaurant, Fellini, which boasts a bar of metallic blocks that wrap up into a band on the ceiling. Booths and stools are upholstered in cool gray, contrasting with more eye-catching elements like patterned mosaic floors and lounge tables with up-lights integrated in the tabletops. The Ballroom's 20-foot high windows overlook the Park at Lakeshore East. **AGB**

## THE WORLD'S SLIMMEST SIGHTLINES.



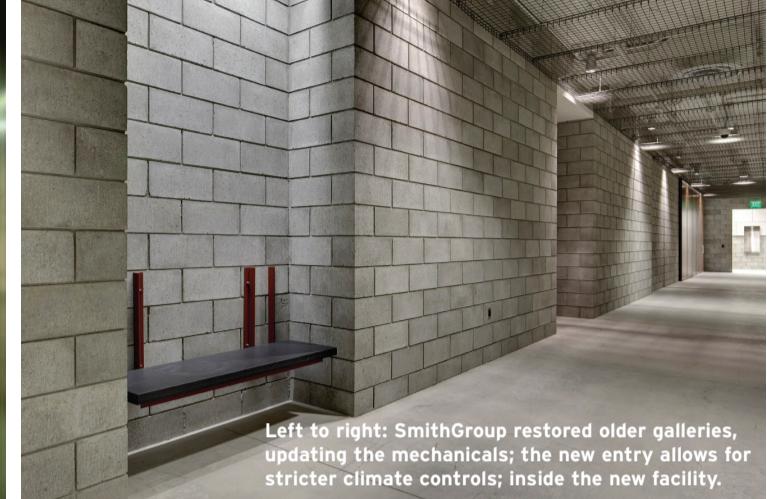
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Left to right: SmithGroup restored older galleries, updating the mechanicals; the new entry allows for stricter climate controls; inside the new facility.

JIM HAEFNER

**POLISHING A GEM** continued from front page 31,000 square feet. Designed by Detroit-based SmithGroup, the Collections Wing gives the Art Museum a more sophisticated way to store pieces not on view in the gallery so that educational tour groups have better access to the archives. Elements used include glass walls allowing views into the ceramics collection, sliding metal panels for paintings, and a classroom for meeting in the midst of it all. The two buildings connect only underground, below an exterior staircase designed by the Saarinens. A metal, vault-like door slides back to reveal the new wing,

a space that mixes the simplicity of concrete block walls and exposed-duct ceilings with grand features like a sliding wood door made of Sapele, a reddish wood very similar to mahogany.

Paul Urbanek, a principal designer, explained that the goal was to renovate the historic gallery in a way that did not signal change. For instance, the firm restored the coffered lighting system that had not been used since the 70s to work the way that the Saarinens intended. Urbanek observed how forward-thinking this element had been in its time. Daylighting became popular in museum design after Saarinen

experimented with the diffused light that gives the ambient effect of skylights. SmithGroup also brought the building up to current museum climate standards.

Working within the building taught Urbanek to appreciate the genius of its design in new ways, such as the elegant use of interior volume and of wall framing that protects the art from shifts in temperature and moisture. One room of the gallery features the work of Sol LeWitt, painted onto four walls as a loan to Cranbrook (the museum must agree to paint over it after the loan ends). It took eight workers 21 days to paint the swirling

shapes in preparation for the November 11 opening. Also currently on view is a grand model of Eero Saarinen's design for Dulles airport in Chantilly, VA, outside Washington D.C.

Eero Saarinen's lasting contributions to the bucolic Cranbrook campus includes his 1930 home and the Kingswood School for Girls that opened in 1931; the last piece was the museum and adjacent library buildings. As Reed Kroloff, director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, explains, "Eero Saarinen's DNA is here. The campus reveals his brilliance as a planner, how he was able to operate at all scales of

design with equal fluidity. That was not so with Eero. There is no other place in the U.S. where you can see one architect working through a campus from the picturesque and heroic to a more modern and modest style."

As Paul Goldberger wrote in the *New York Times* in 1984, Cranbrook has long been compared to Germany's Bauhaus as both were created to encourage 20th-century design while breaking down barriers between disciplines. However, he concluded, "Eero Saarinen's campus itself became Cranbrook's greatest legacy."

SARAH F. COX



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**PUBLIC REALM TO BE TOPIC A AT BIENNALE**

## Chipperfield Takes Venice

Political tensions have stalled preparations for the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale, as the event still has no officially appointed curator. Though it is generally accepted that British architect David Chipperfield, who won the Mies van der Rohe Prize for his Neues Museum in Berlin in June, will take up the post, he wrote a letter to *Building Design* in late November denying his involvement.

Earlier this year Chipperfield was reported as the favorite from a list including Spanish architect Eduardo Souto de Moura, but his disapproval of the proposed appointment of Giulio Malagari, an Italian food

importer and friend of Silvio Berlusconi, as Biennale director, usurping Paolo Baratta from his long-held post, stalled his commitment and threw the Biennale into a state of uncertainty. The divisive atmosphere dissipated with the Italian prime minister's resignation in November.

Seemingly at odds with his architecture, which is often sober and austere but also profoundly contextual, the London-based designer doesn't shy away from wily politics: in 2006, on receiving the RIBA Stirling Prize, he denounced the British system of procurement as "a dysfunctional relationship between client and architect." Vicky Richardson, Director of Architecture, Fashion and Design at the British Council said: "Chipperfield has always emphasized the role of the architect as a public intellectual. He has been a brave critic and does not shy away from controversy or from confronting difficult issues." If appointed, Chipperfield will be the third Brit to curate the Architecture Biennale in the past six festivals, following Deyan Sudjic, currently director of London's Design Museum, in 2002, and Ricky Burdett, Professor of Urban Studies

at the London School of Economics in 2006. All three were roommates in the 80s at the fledgling Blueprint magazine and 9H gallery office. Though Chipperfield lacks the accoutrements that are the stuff of current-day starchitects, his contribution to the international architecture scene is undeniable.

Chipperfield's long-standing concern for historical context and specificity—evident in projects from the Neues Museum to the Stirling Prize-winning Museum of Modern Literature in Germany—will likely take the festival in a wholly different direction from last year's theme *People Meet in Architecture*, by Japanese architect Kazuyo Sejima of SANAA. "My guess is that his important contribution to the biennale will not be to bring a particular aesthetic," said Richardson, "but to take a more profound look at the relationship between architecture and the public."

Meanwhile, in New York, the Institute for Urban Design has announced that it will be representing the United States at the biennale with a theme complementary to Chipperfield's own austere activism, called tactical urbanism.

Gwen Webber



COURTESY KRUECK + SEXTON

## UNVEILED

### FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING

Since the Oklahoma City bombing, most Federal buildings have been barricaded with bollards, boulders, and yards and yards of hardscape. A new design for a Federal Office Building, designed by Chicago's Krueck + Sexton, takes a different tact, emphasizing architectural lightness with a building set in the soft, marsh landscape of the Florida Everglades.

The six and seven story, roughly 375,000-square-foot building—two bars linked by a bridge—sits on a 20 acre-site, formerly a gravel-filled lot, which will be restored to a natural, wetland condition. This landscape strategy, developed with the local landscape architects Curtis + Rogers, serves many functions, while also creating a beautiful backdrop for the machine white building: habitat creation, storm water management, cooling

for building mechanicals, as well as security. Enclosed by invisible ha-has, the soft terrain will also create a substantial buffer around the building. "We set out to create a high performance, contemporary building, set in this remarkable Everglades landscape," said Mark Sexton, a principal at Krueck + Sexton.

The building itself, actually two 60-foot-wide, 400-foot-long buildings with curved and faceted glass facades, looks fragile, but it is engineered to withstand the region's powerful hurricanes. An adjacent service building and 700-car parking structure topped with a solar array, will keep more than half of the site open space, and additional photovoltaics could be added to the office building. The GSA hopes the building will be net zero by 2030. **AGB**

Architect: Krueck + Sexton  
Location: Miramar, Florida  
Client: GSA  
Completion: 2014

**A GREENER EDGE**

**continued from front page**  
by Philadelphia-based landscape architects WRT, formerly Wallace Roberts & Todd.

Building off a rich parks legacy in Louisville that brought about three large parks and dozens of smaller projects a century earlier by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and his successors, The Parklands hopes to redefine the fringe conditions of a growing city. "This park is similarly developed on the fringe as were the Olmsted parks," said WRT Principal Ignacio Bunster-Ossa. Since then, the area surrounding Olmsted's parks has filled in. "Where will Louisville be in 100 years?"

Construction began this May, and the \$113 million project's first phase, the 616-acre Beckley Creek Park, includes plans for a 23-acre tree-lined "egg lawn" and an axial tree-lined promenade providing structure to woodlands, meadows, wetlands, and recreational fields. "The Fork is a wonderful meandering feature, but the valley itself doesn't have dramatic power in and of itself," said Bunster-Ossa. "We had to create a series of places that are distinctive to reveal the drama of the landscape."

The promenade forms a rigid line across the rolling landscape to reveal the subtleties of the landscape's changing contours. Angular pavilions and auxiliary structures designed by local architecture firm Bravura are distributed throughout the park. The first phase will be completed in 2013, and following phases will be complete in 2015.

Floyds Fork is a narrow stream in a very wide flood plain, but the site's topography can vary up to 200 feet in height as the fork slices through steep hills and limestone cliffs. While this creates challenges for park management, it also means that much of the land surrounding the park is unbuildable under current codes.

With a perimeter of nearly 50 miles, the park will undoubtedly spur increased suburban development, but 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parks incorporated their masterplan into Louisville's comprehensive plan, Cornerstone 2020, distinguishing design guidelines for the area. Structures built along the park's perimeter roads must face the park and street trees must be incorporated into the design, among other requirements. "A city has both a core and an edge," Jones said. "You can't ignore the edge condition."

**Aerial view of the Egg Lawn at Beckley Creek Park. Below: Silo Adventure Center at Turkey Run Park.**

The Parklands' operations and maintenance will be funded by a private endowment that is looking beyond traditional investments in stocks and bonds. The endowment acquired three ailing, partially developed, adjacent subdivisions—ranging from 30 to 600 acres—during the economic downturn and plans to adapt their designs to create a model subdivision that will take into account aesthetics, connectivity, density, and environmental protection.

"We are interested in exploring what a model subdivision means," Jones said. "We would like to find ways to create neighborhoods that are beautiful and done in a way that's sensitive to the landscape." No firm design guidelines have yet been established, but Jones hopes both the park and the model subdivisions will guide future growth in the area.

"We have a big concern about how the city grows around The Parklands," Jones said. "This project gives Louisville an opportunity to do planning at the city's edge." **BRANDEN KLAYKO**



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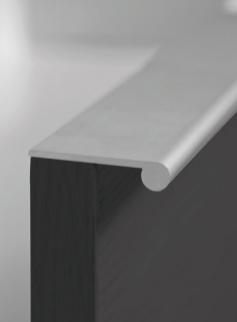
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**Continuous drawer pulls**

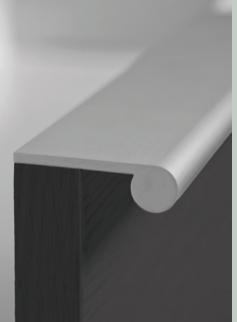
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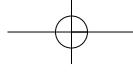


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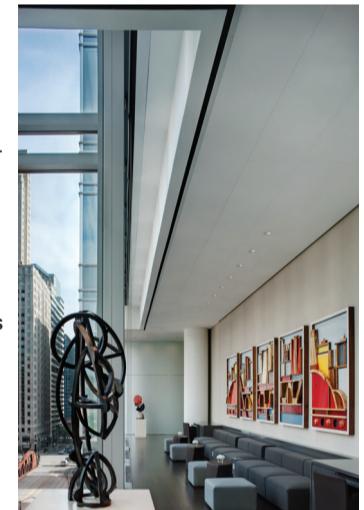
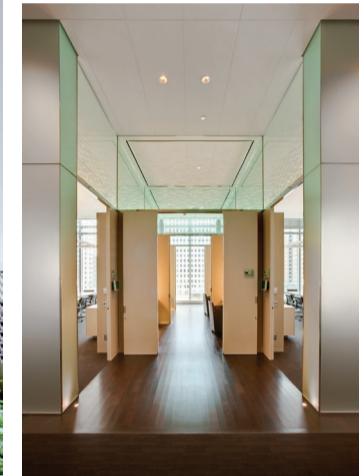


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Clockwise from top left: The conference center's reception area also doubles as an event space; the conference center overlooks a terrace; offices are restrained but light-filled; the offices have commissioned contemporary art; an employee cafe; a typical private office.

Though River North is now seen by many as a desirable, mixed-used extension of downtown, the idea of building a major new Class-A office space seemed far-fetched even a decade ago. Today, the northern side of the Chicago River is home to one of the city's most refined offices, the 680,000-square-foot headquarters of the law firm Kirkland & Ellis, located in a 60-story tower designed by Pickard Chilton. With interiors by SOM, Kirkland & Ellis has an atmosphere of tailored elegance that is geared to attract younger workers while also conveying a sense of understated luxury suited to senior partners and their well-heeled clients.

Located along the Riverwalk, the offices have a two-story terrace at the river level, one open to the public with a café and white table cloth restaurant, and one

above for the firm. The connection to the river and views of the Loop are emphasized with additional terraces at the sixth and 24<sup>th</sup> floors. SOM placed public and communal spaces on these levels as well, including a sixth floor conference center—also used for firm parties—and an additional café on the 24<sup>th</sup>. "The uniqueness of the site was very important to the firm, as was the idea of having a social space along the river," said Jaime Velez, director of interiors at SOM.

Velez said the firm wanted a highly functional space with a restrained elegance. After a long investigation into the firm's culture and goals, Velez and his team looked at the design of high performance, subtly luxurious spaces, like sail boats, for inspiration. The reception area for the conference center

emphasizes this high efficiency approach, with many elements doing double duty. The curved Corian reception desk also serves as a bar during firm functions. Lounge seating can be easily removed for larger events. Fourteen-foot floor to ceiling motorized wall panels rotate to open an adjacent conference room up to the lobby. "Many law offices use rich materials to convey luxury," said Velez. "We emphasized height and views." Carefully edited signature elements keep the space from feeling too austere. A custom light installation hangs overhead, and the windows overlooking the terrace are edged with live plants on both the interior and exterior.

The offices have very clean lines and neutral colors. "We designed the firm's old offices in 1974, and it still looked good 35

years later," he said. "They wanted something equally timeless for the new space." Low partitions and clerestories allow natural light deep into the floor plates. All the partner offices are outfitted with furniture from Unifor, and, working with SOM, equity partners were able to choose from a wide variety of pieces from the line to customize their offices.

The offices also feature a series of commissioned artwork organized by the well-known Chicago gallerist Linda Warren. In all, SOM has created a space that is both serene and social, which is as close to a balanced work environment as many workaholic attorneys are ever likely to find.

## AGB

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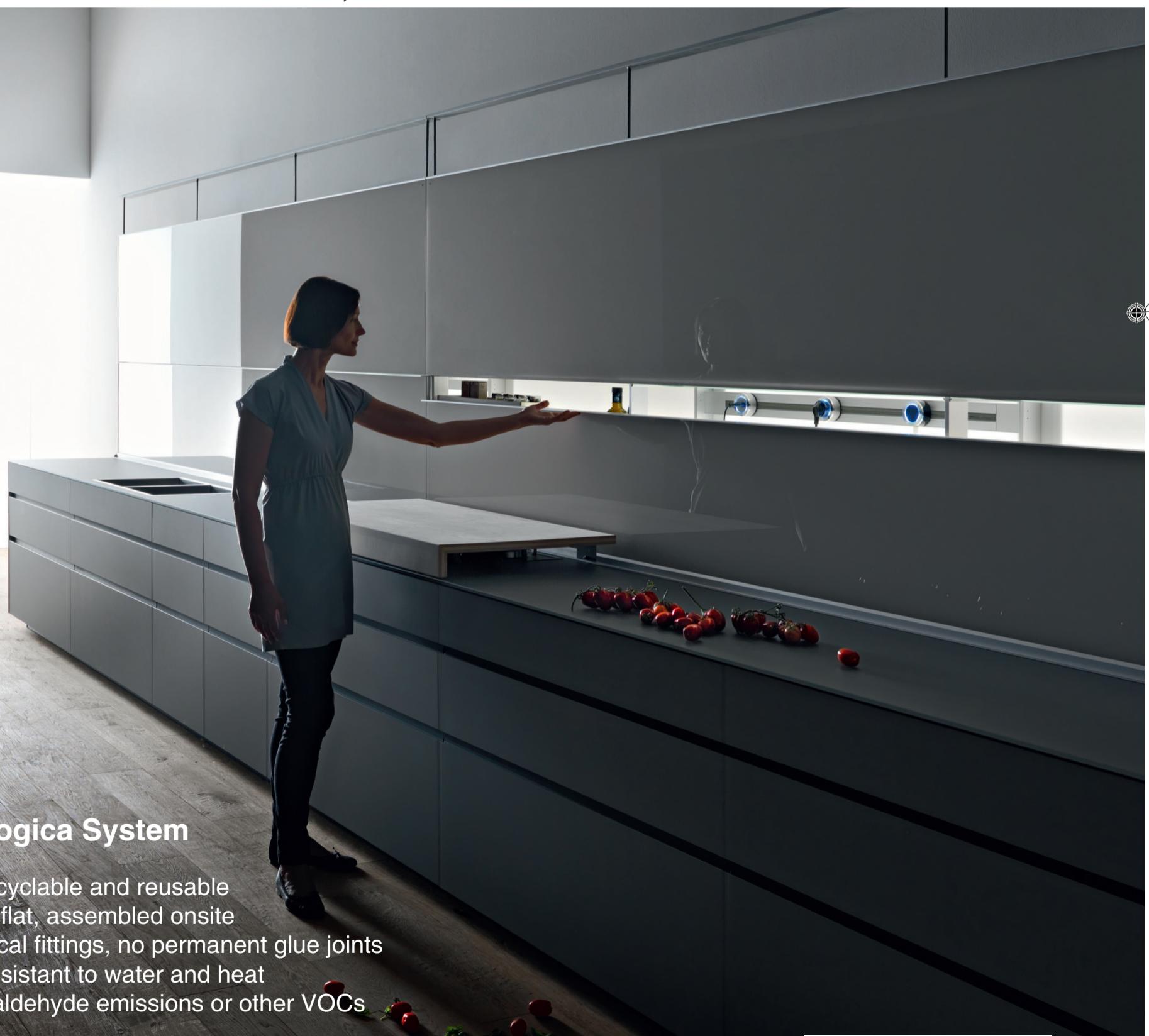
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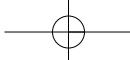
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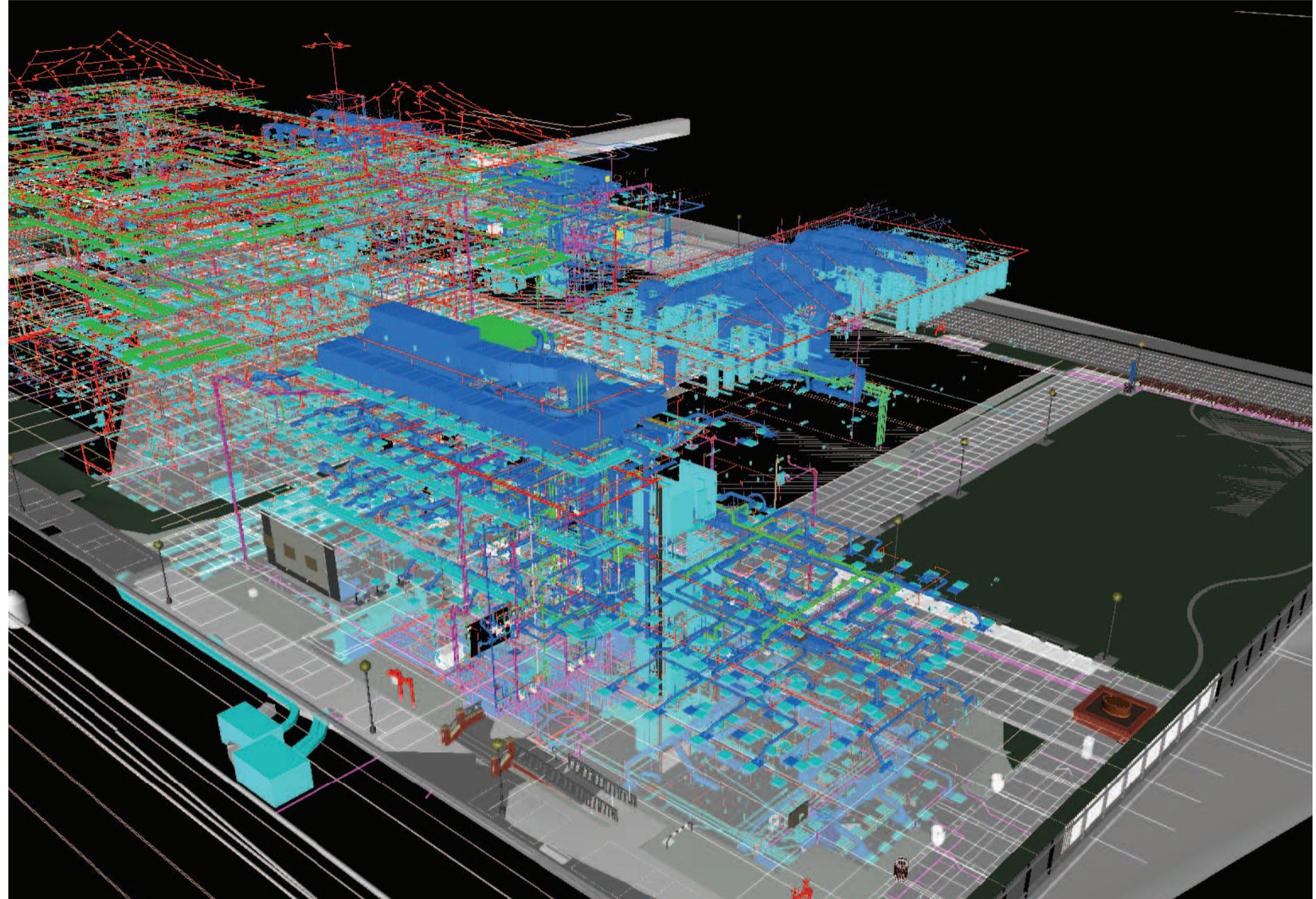
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER DECEMBER 14, 2011



COURTESY UGC

# A CLICK AWAY

ARCHITECTS KNOW THAT BUILDING INFORMATION MODELING IS CHANGING THE WAY THAT BUILDINGS ARE DESIGNED, CONSTRUCTED, AND MANAGED POST-OCCUPANCY—BUT ARE THEY REALLY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HOW MUCH IT CAN DO? AARON SEWARD CONSIDERS THREE PROJECTS AT THE FOREFRONT OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE.



COURTESY USC

A designer stares at a 3-D model on a computer screen that depicts what looks like a negative of an exposed root system. In reality, it's the interior of a new museum, and it needs a structure to support its organic form, which will be rendered entirely in cast stone. With a single mouse click, the designer sets the software to work, rationalizing and analyzing a steel framework.

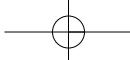
Elsewhere, an architect is biding his time in an airport lounge and is curious about the status of a batch of cladding panels for a project currently under construction half a world away. Taking out his smart phone, he punches up an app that streams real-time updates and even provides a 3-D representation of the project showing all of the panels that have been installed to date.

These are not science fiction scenarios but real life tales of how the architectural profession is changing as Building Information Modeling, better known by its acronym, BIM, grows ever more sophisticated across an expanding array of applications. The first thing that anyone familiar with the subject will tell you about BIM is that it's not a software, or a

technology, but a process—a way of conceiving and executing architecture at the heart of which is a three dimensional, information-rich digital model. That much is well known, but over the past decade, this process has accelerated exponentially as everyone from design professionals, to contractors, to facilities managers are exploring even newer ways to put the tools of BIM to work, forcing software companies to come out with ever more specialized products to further enable their user's needs.

"If you look at the historical arch of how this thing has unfolded, it's pretty legible," said Phil Bernstein, vice president of industry strategy and relations at Autodesk. "Nicholas Negroponte once said that the adoption of technology follows distinct phases. The first use of a new technology is to repeat a process you were doing before. In this case, BIM was originally in service of productivity and more accurate drawings. In the last stage, technology transforms the underlying processes into something new. Now we're in that last, transformative stage."

Today a project can be designed,



**Opposite page, left:** BIM processes were used in every aspect in the design and construction of USC's School of Cinematic Arts. The integration was so thorough that the design team was able to deliver the client an information-rich 3-D model of the building specially designed for the use of facilities management.

**Opposite page, below:** The school's Spanish mission stylings belie the 21st century technology that underpins the project.

**Below and right:** SHoP Construction has developed an iPhone app to track progress on fabrication and installation for Atlantic Yards.



COURTESY SHoP

**sh p CONSTRUCTION**

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engineered, coordinated, sequenced, detailed, constructed, and managed post-occupancy through one integrated approach. Information from BIM models can be entered directly into sophisticated CNC milling machines for flawless fabrication. They can control earth-moving machines to landscape a site from uploaded GPS information. BIM has generated greater efficiency in project delivery by preventing clashes that previously had to be worked out on site, often stressfully with lots of room for human error. It has also put more control in the hands of architects by giving them an easy-to-understand model that increases the ease and level of communication with clients and subcontractors wary about difficult conditions.

This latter was certainly the case with Trahan Architect's Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Regional History Museum in Natchitoches. The 28,000-square-foot project's interior responds to the swampy geography surrounding the Red River Valley with a fluidly flowing form rendered in cast stone panels. "We felt like if we were going to do something that unique and different that we had better fully understand the integration of systems and components," said Brad McWhirter of Trahan. "A BIM model was an absolute necessity from the owner's perspective to eliminate the concerns someone might have if they are used to looking at 2-D sets of drawings. It also helped during bidding, so subs couldn't say that what we wanted to do was impossible."

Trahan and its design team worked with two outside BIM consulting firms, Case Building + Technology, which handled overall project coordination as well as the fabrication of the stone panels, and Method Design, which worked with the structural engineer to detail the highly complex system that supports the panels.

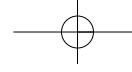
Both consultants explained that

without BIM, the project would not have been possible, at least not within its current time frame (the design schedule was 20 months) and budget of \$12.6 million. "In this project, the sheer complexity of geometry requires 3-D," said Case partner, Federico Negro. "There are more than 1,000 panels, all of them different, and there are four to 15 connections per panel, shooting out in all different angles. If you don't have a good way to find objects, get to them quickly, and understand how relationships work, then you don't have a way to manage the design. You can't draw an elevation of this skin. It's never orthogonal."

The geometrical form-finding capabilities of certain BIM software make it easy to develop and rationalize complex shapes. It also makes it easier to guide those forms through fabrication and construction. Case took Trahan's Maya and Rhino design files and used Digital Project to panelize the geometry. Once the panelization was complete, the structural engineers got their turn at the model, using Rhino and Grasshopper to do structural form finding and analysis, and to design the connections. The software's parametric modeling capabilities allowed Method Design to find 80 percent of the project's load paths and connection points with the click of a button, leaving the remainder to be puzzled out manually. Doing that work by hand in 2-D drawings would have taken enough man-hours to make the project unfeasible. "The technology allows you to minimize the thinking you have to do," said Reese Campbell of Method. "All of the steel goes through a series of algorithms that read the connections, rationalize intersections, and conduct structural analysis." After the structural work was done, the model went back to Case, which took the panels—now outfitted with fully detailed connections—and sent them out for automated fabrication. The BIM model also helped during installation. Method printed out

a 72-page connection catalogue that construction workers used on site to understand how each panel connects to the steel structure.

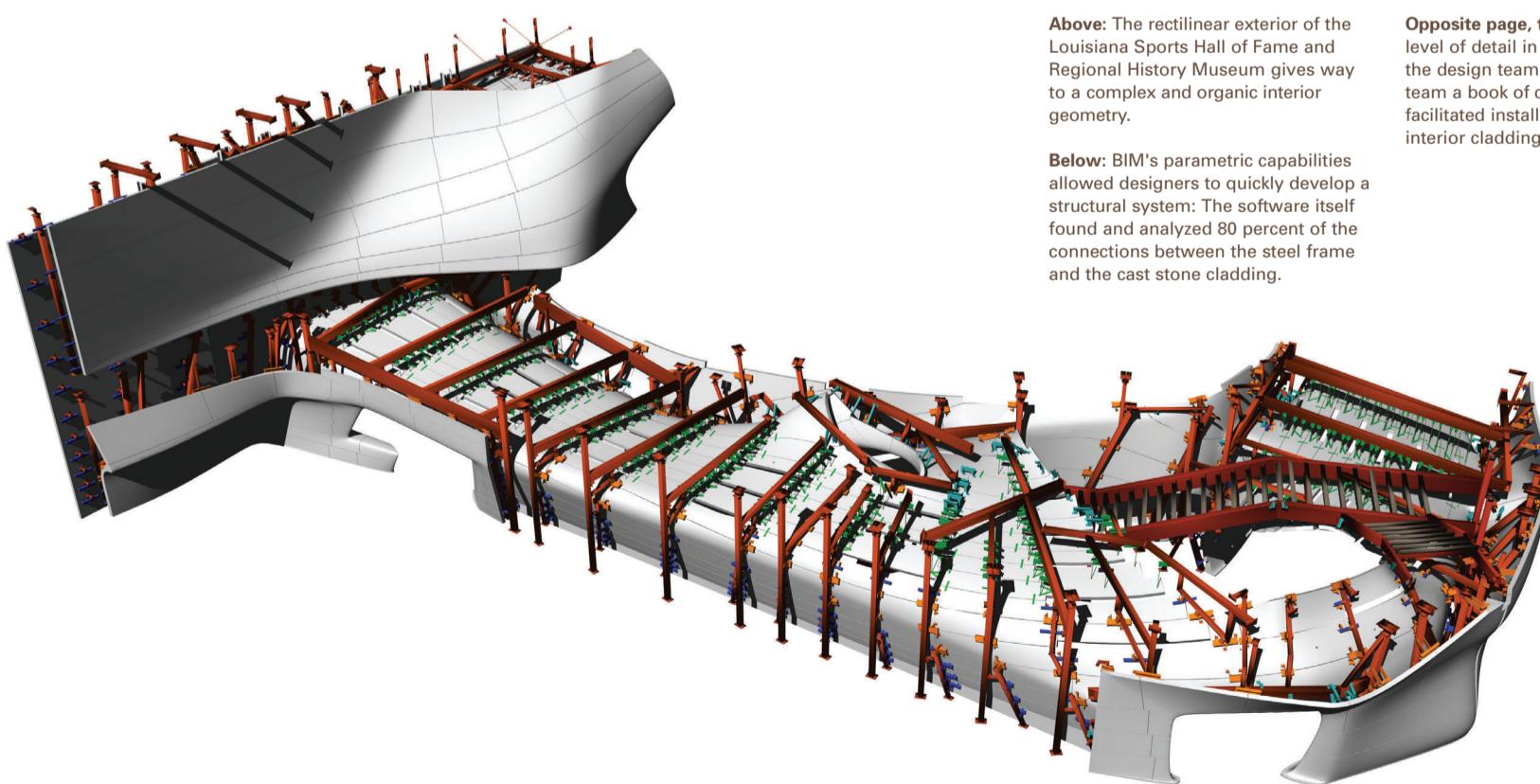
In addition to providing tools for designers who want to create projects of great geometrical complexity, BIM is helping the profession keep track of a project's budget. SHoP Architects, who has been working with BIM since its very first project, an environment for P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in New York, used the process to address both form and finance at the Barclay's Center in Brooklyn. "When we were developing the facade design for the arena, we used BIM processes to understand the geometry and the material, how each material fed into the cost matrix, and to share information with the client and the facade manufacturers," said Jonathan Mallie of SHoP. **continued on page 10**



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER DECEMBER 14, 2011



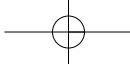
COURTESY TRAHAN



**Above:** The rectilinear exterior of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Regional History Museum gives way to a complex and organic interior geometry.

**Below:** BIM's parametric capabilities allowed designers to quickly develop a structural system: The software itself found and analyzed 80 percent of the connections between the steel frame and the cast stone cladding.

**Opposite page, top to bottom:** The high level of detail in the BIM model allowed the design team to give the construction team a book of connection details that facilitated installation of the exterior and interior cladding system.



**A CLICK AWAY** continued from page 9  
“During the design phase the real key for us was to manage the form and link it to a definable budget.”

SHoP worked with Rhino and CATIA during initial form finding, then with CATIA to link the design of the facade’s panels to seamlessly flow into fabrication. Once the form was found, the model was brought back into Revit for the coordination of the base building structure, the HVAC, and MEP.

SHoP chose weathered steel panels for the exterior, and developed an iPhone application that allowed the architects and the client to track the weathering process of the panels, as well as their installation. “Having the technology enables us to push design further,” said Mallie. “It takes a lot of ambiguity and gets it out of the way, and because it’s a model, it’s something people can see, and we can get everyone on the same page.”

It would be a mistake, however, to think of BIM as merely enabling unconventional form-making. While advanced geometric modeling tools like Rhino and CATIA get a lot of attention for the designs that they are used to produce, 3-D modeling software within the BIM process is more often used and valued for the sheer level of information (and thus the high degree of detail) that can be programmed into models. At the University of Southern California’s new School of Cinematic Arts Complex, the potentialities of these models have not only been used for the design and construction of the three-phase project, but also are being used for post-completion management of the building.

The university’s approach is unusual for academia according to Ray Kahl of Urban Design Group (UDG), the architect on the project: “Their facilities and capital development people work together. You rarely see that. When that happens you get a situation where you can justify what may not be the lowest upfront cost for a project but will be lower over the lifecycle of the building.”

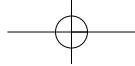
UDG delivered a model for the arts school embedded with all of the data points necessary for the university’s facilities group to maintain the structure, including data relating to materials, machine names, and model numbers. While the model is replete with information for building management, it allows the facilities team to develop personas that filter the data to only show information that applies to certain functions, such as cleaning, or repairs. The architects also worked with Honeywell to integrate the BIM model with a building monitor system that gives facilities managers a visual representation of the building showing every room, whether the lights are on or not, and what the temperature is at

different times of day. The feature has led to 20 percent greater efficiency in the building’s energy usage than originally expected.

While BIM has yet to become the industry standard for project delivery—in part because it’s still too expensive for smaller firms to use—its influence is growing with each success story. The process is still evolving as players compete with Darwinian energy to see what works best and fastest. Software companies in particular are trying to figure out what complementary systems will prove most advantageous. “People are saying, I can use BIM to look at different business models of how I deliver my project, I can use it to drive digital fabrication, I can use it to help me take on a much stronger sustainability agenda,” said Bernstein. “It’s in the process of changing roles and relationships.” Architects are still discovering the implications of these different uses and the transformative effect it may have on the profession. Bernstein continued, “I believe in ten years people will be working in fundamentally different ways than they are now.” And clearly those who best anticipate the range of transformations possible will be in the best position to control the new shape of building.

**NEW YORK-BASED WRITER AARON SEWARD IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.**

COURTESY TRAHAN



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER DECEMBER 14, 2011



Höweler + Yoon Architects and Squared Design Lab's Eco-Pod (2009).

(and some fifteen years after Charles Waldheim coined the term "Landscape Urbanism") marks the publication of two such volumes, Diana Balmori and Joel Sanders' trim, glossy *Groundwork: Between Landscape and Architecture*, and *Landform Building*, a fat block of texts and photographic images born out of Princeton University's 2009 conference of the same name, edited by Stan Allen and Marc McQuade.

Balmori and Sanders introduce their subject matter through a pair of essays, the first, a well-researched historical framework laid out by Sanders, and the second Balmori's more manifesto-like argument for an interdisciplinary practice. The pair note in their preface that their interest and approach stem in part from "urgent ecological concerns" that they suggest would be better answered by a more integrated practice model, and in part from the simple creative potential they argue is inherent in the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries—an approach they term "Interface."

The book divides "Interface" into three interconnected categories, Topography, Ecology, and Biocomputation, each presented via a brief introductory timeline and essay followed by a series of projects. The projects range in scale from small built components—the aggregative blocks of Aranda/Lasch's Grotto or the floating sensors of Amphibious Architecture, a project by Columbia University's Living Architecture Lab—to large urban interventions—Weiss/Manfredi's Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle or the Parque Atlántico by Batlle i Roig Arquitectes in Santander, Spain. In between stretches a broad spectrum of buildings and landscapes. Included in the compilation are a wide variety of unbuilt competition entries, research projects, and built projects, spanning from

the relatively unknown to the iconic. If this appealing volume suffers from one thing, it's its very inclusiveness. The three categories are so open-ended as to become almost meaningless, particularly in that topography clearly underlies the vast majority of them. The selection of projects is similarly broad and uneven. Some projects, like Peter Eisenman's City of Culture in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, ongoing since 1999, appear at this point like relics of a pre-Landscape Urbanism era of form-making. Meanwhile, many of the unbuilt projects, such as Höweler + Yoon's Eco-Pod and Balmori and Sanders' own NYC 2012 Olympic Equestrian Facility, remain firmly within the realm of the fanciful without approaching the depth and nuance that evolve out of grappling with the realities of constructing such spaces. At the same time, some of the built projects are so conceptually thin that one wonders at their inclusion. Also notable is the omission of certain practitioners and projects: the terraced housing projects of Bjarke Ingels Group, in particular, come to mind. Projects are generally represented by brief—too brief—textual descriptions, photographs or rendered views, and drawings. One longs for a slightly smaller selection of projects, represented in greater depth.

However, the strength of the book—and this is not to be taken lightly—lies in its framing of ecology, and in its strong stance on the potential power of integrating landscape and architecture to address ecological issues through built form. Balmori and Sanders write:

Rather than oppose space and matter, and as a consequence architecture and landscape, designers need to see them as an accumulation of independent processes as complex as any

continued on page 13

## DISCIPLINES UNBOUND

*Groundwork: Between Landscape and Architecture*  
Diana Balmori and Joel Sanders, Monacelli, \$50

*Landform Building, Architecture's New Terrain*  
Edited by Stan Allen and Marc McQuade, Schirmer/Mosel, \$65

For the last decade, with landscape architecture on the rise and architecture increasingly ceding territory in the urban realm, a new book appears on shelves every few years arguing for the integration of landscape and architecture. Beginning with Aaron Betsky's *Landscapeers* of 2002 and Anita Berribeitia and Linda Pollak's *Inside Outside* of 2003, these books are typically part coffee table

tome and part manifesto, filled with images of the latest vegetated surfaces, creeping parasitically over walls and roofs. Embedded within the volumes are calls to arms, arguing that the two disciplines are one, and that the way forward is the breaking down of disciplinary bounds.

This year, almost ten years on from the publication of the aforementioned books

## NEAT NECESSITY

*Design with the Other 90%: Cities*  
Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum at the United Nations  
405 East 42nd Street  
Through January 9, 2012



Visitors to *Design with the Other 90%*, the important, imperfect survey of socially conscious urban interventions organized by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum but on view at the United

Nations Visitors Lobby, are greeted with a barrage of maps, colors, grainy photos, information graphics, crude models, and blinking video screens. This messy assemblage is, for those of us who are used to

Left: Early Morning Market, Durban, South Africa.

tidier design exhibitions, initially off-putting, a bit like taking necessary medicine. Pushing past this resistance offers great rewards, however. While not groundbreaking, *Design with the Other 90%* is a heartening testament to the problem-solving powers of design and a bracing reminder of the stakes of rapid urbanization around the world.

Though covering much of the same thematic territory as MoMA's recent show *Small Scale, Big Change, Design with the Other 90%* is a show devoted to practical solutions, not high design. What prevents the show from being too dreary—and elevates it above better-looking exhibitions—are the voices of the residents and end-users dispersed throughout. In Bangladesh, a simple bamboo platform built over the edge of a lake and a new garden in a formerly garbage-choked patch of land became a community recreation and education space. They have inspired others in the slum to take up gardening, and a group of young girls expound on their love of the spaces and describe how the sheltered platform has allowed them to set up a library in their impoverished community. One

of them speaks of now wanting to be an architect when she grows up. Their optimism is infectious.

Other projects present a similarly humble nobility. Also in Bangladesh, Floating Community Lifeboats, designed by architect Mohammed Rezwan, serve as schools, libraries, and health clinics. These boats have a straightforward elegance that acknowledges vernacular precedents while addressing contemporary needs. With their whitewashed bamboo walls and column-free spans, they are dignified settings for providing social services. They also reflect an understanding of the water-logged country's fragility in the face of rising tides and climate change.

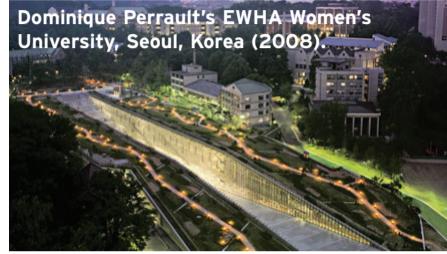
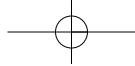
The show includes many examples that integrate economic issues with the informal, slum settlements and planned development. Solutions like the Integral Urban Project in Caracas create community gathering spaces and improved drainage by paving and enlarging the jagged footpaths and staircases that thread throughout the favelas. In Durban, South Africa, the rebuilt Warwick Junction market provides a safe and sanitary environment for small-scale food vendors, with precast concrete cooking cubicles and steel serving tables. Both projects upgrade existing conditions rather than trying to

will them away.

In addition to the visual barrage, and perhaps due to it, the exhibition feels somewhat dislocated. Bouncing around the world from one project to the next is oddly leveling, and the various places covered begin to blur. Informal settlements are not the same around the world, however, and cleaner exhibition design and a different organization strategy could have helped viewers differentiate and distill the vast quantity of information presented.

Many of the projects in *Design with the Other 90%* are modest in their scope but could be replicated at very low cost on a much larger scale. The designers and community groups included in the show have demonstrated the initiative to create these intelligent solutions. Cooper-Hewitt deserves credit for engaging a new public and institutional audience. On a recent visit, the exhibition was crowded with viewers, many more so than at a typical show at the museum's currently shuttered Carnegie Mansion. Let's hope some of those viewers are decision-makers from the General Assembly. Smart policy could carry these projects forward and vastly improve conditions for the millions flocking to cities around the world every year.

ALAN G. BRAKE IS AN'S MIDWEST EDITOR.



COURTESY DPA

**DISCIPLINE UNBOUND** continued from page 12  
machine or, indeed, any creature. This awareness of the environment as a complex system puts architecture and landscape on equivalent terms and will encourage practitioners to create designs that approach the efficiency and performance standards of a living being.

One might argue that the focus on ecology is part and parcel with the integration of systems—and disciplines—put forward in the book, and in fact should underscore all of the projects within its pages, as opposed to being just one of three categories. The handful that do not fit this description—the vast shadeless surfaces of Eisenman's City of Culture are, again, a striking example—perhaps do not belong in the book at all.

In contrast, *Landform Building* puts forth a far more singular and strongly grounded premise. In many ways, the book follows conventions first introduced by *S, M, L, XL* back in 1995: low-res, full-bleed photographic images interspersed throughout the volume pack a punch, providing a sort of unifying ground within which essays, projects, and discussions are differentiated by strong graphic and typographic identities. The hypothesis of the conference and this ensuing

volume is outlined in a series of compelling essays written by Stan Allen, and supported by projects, texts, and debates culled from both architectural history (essays by Kenneth Frampton and Reyner Banham) and the conference itself.

The book includes a wide selection of projects, broken into chapters on Form, Scale, Atmosphere, and Process, and often accompanied by text or conversations with the designers. In the Form chapter, at last, we find BIG, represented by their housing project "The Mountain": a heap of parking in a developing area of Copenhagen, with terraced housing piled on top. Also included are several crystalline projects by Mansilla+Tuñón. Within the Scale category, we find the even more overtly crystalline Spina Tower by Ábalos and Sentkiewicz, as well as buildings by Steven Holl and a seemingly out of place park by Stan Allen himself. The Atmosphere section brings us, among others, the incomparable Kanagawa Institute of Technology by Junya Ishigami. Finally, Process focuses on innovation in fabrication and structural solutions, depicted through projects by Office dA, Toyo Ito, SANAA, and Michael Maltzan.

Building from the theoretical underpinnings of Kenneth Frampton's essay, "Megaform as Urban Landscape," which was first presented at the University of Michigan in 1999 and was reformulated for this publication, Allen makes an impassioned argument not for the disciplinary integration of architecture and landscape, but rather for the reintegration of large-scale "landform building" techniques into architectural practice. The book puts forward a sort of alternative architectural

history, unearthing a trajectory of design strategies, from terraced housing to man-made buildings to megastructures, in which built form rises from the land as a recognizable and formally organized surface, making its iconic mark upon an otherwise undifferentiated ground or urban fabric.

Indeed, as the title suggests, *Landform Building* focuses heavily and unabashedly on form. Nowhere is this more evident than in the images selected for the publication—spread after spread of photographs and renderings of mountain-like objects. Despite a riot of images, we do not encounter a sectional drawing until page 119; throughout the book, sections appear only a handful of times. The exploded axonometric, the preferred visual trope of Landscape Urbanists everywhere, is equally scarce.

Representational choices are telling. While the section and the exploded axonometric have the capacity to express layers of information, systems, elements in relation to one another, the photographic image and the rendering—particularly as used in this book—only depict the surface and its overall formal expression. The emphasis on the singular, outer shell of the building as object—unusual or landscape-like form notwithstanding—betrays a dismissal of the very advances made possible by the contemporary landscape techniques that Allen calls out in his introductory essay. The surface of a building, however intricate, bears no capacity on its own to perform as contemporary landscapes do—to organize systems from ecological, hydrological, infrastructural, and climatic to programmatic. Indeed, although many of the buildings contained within the pages

of *Landform Building* engage programmatic and formal complexities, most seem to stop short of addressing these other layers of information and potential influence. As for landscape itself, it generally fails to appear in anything more than its nineteenth-century incarnations: a framed view; an outdoor room; a lung for the city.

Ultimately, *Landform Building* presents a strong, coherent treatise on one potential direction for architecture, illustrating its points through a broad array of well-selected projects within a consistent and compelling graphic framework. But the book fails precisely in the area in which Balmori and Sanders' *Groundwork* prevails. Allen and his compatriots at the Landform Building conference appear locked in the same fight for disciplinary autonomy that has pushed architecture into its current corner. Still regarding the urban realm as a disjointed jumble that can only be made intelligible by oversized architectural iconography, the proposition forgoes the possibilities inherent in a cross-disciplinary, performative, systems-based approach.

Figuring prominently in both text and images in not only *Groundwork*, but also *Landform Building*, the Seattle Olympic Sculpture Park, that poster child for Landscape Urbanism, remains perhaps the most concrete example of this approach thus far. The project successfully integrates landscape, architecture, infrastructure, program, and ecology on a formerly derelict site. And, yes, it also operates as a formally compelling icon within the city.

ELIZABETH STOEL IS A WRITER AND DESIGNER BASED IN NEW YORK CITY.

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FEBRUARY 16-17, 2012

# COLLABORATION COLLABORATION

## CREATING THE 21ST CENTURY FAÇADE:

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ADVANCING CURTAIN WALL DESIGN IN THE DIGITAL AGE

### METALS IN CONSTRUCTION 2012 FAÇADES CONFERENCE

Thursday, February 16, 2012 8AM-5PM  
McGraw-Hill Auditorium, New York, NY

7.5 AIA CES CREDITS

**KEY NOTE SPEAKER** PATRIK SCHUMACHER Director, Zaha Hadid Architects

**PRESENTERS** BILL ZAHNER Zahner DENNIS SHELDEN Gehry Technologies MIC PATTERSON Enclos  
JONATHAN MALLIE SHoP FEDERICO NEGRO CASE Design Inc. BRAD BELL Digital Fabrication Alliance  
ANDREW VRANA Digital Fabrication Alliance ANNA DYSON CASE PHILLIP ANZALONE Columbia GSAPP  
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### DIGITAL FABRICATION WORKSHOPS

Friday, February 17th, 2012  
Pratt Institute 14th Street

#### WORKSHOP TOPICS

PARAMETRIC DESIGN Gil Akos, Ronnie Parsons, Studio Mode  
SCRIPTED DESIGN Skylar Tibbits, SJET  
REVIT DESIGN David Fano, CASE Design  
COMPUTATIONAL DESIGN & 4D SEQUENCING John D. Cerone & Hashim Sulieman, SHoP  
RHINO DESIGN Kevin Patrick McClellan & Brad Bell, Digital Fabrication Alliance

#### PRESENTED BY

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