

THE SOUTHWEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

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Plains Urbanism

Christian Pongratz is a professor of architecture at Texas Tech University, but hearing him speak about the project Urban Stage in downtown Lubbock revealed that

he has a knack for storytelling as well. "Small West Texas town without a lot going on," he said, setting a familiar stage—wide roads, empty parking lots, and winds unfettered by

natural vegetation. "But then comes in the major players—the university, the biggest employer in town besides the hospital—and they ask, 'Is there

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MFA-HOUSTON UNVEILS STEVEN HOLL-DESIGNED EXPANSION PLAN

TEXAS HOLL 'EM

On January 15, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), unveiled plans for the redevelopment of its 14-acre campus, which includes new buildings by Steven Holl Architects as well as Lake | Flato Architects of San Antonio. **continued on page 6**



GUSTAFSON GUTHRIE NICHOL DESIGNS A CIVIC PARK FOR SAN ANTONIO'S 1968 INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION GROUNDS

THE HEMISFAIR CONFLUENCE

In December, Seattle-based landscape architecture firm Gustafson Guthrie Nichol (GGN) unveiled designs for a new civic park

within San Antonio's 1968 International Exposition grounds, otherwise known as Hemisfair. Inspired **continued on page 3**



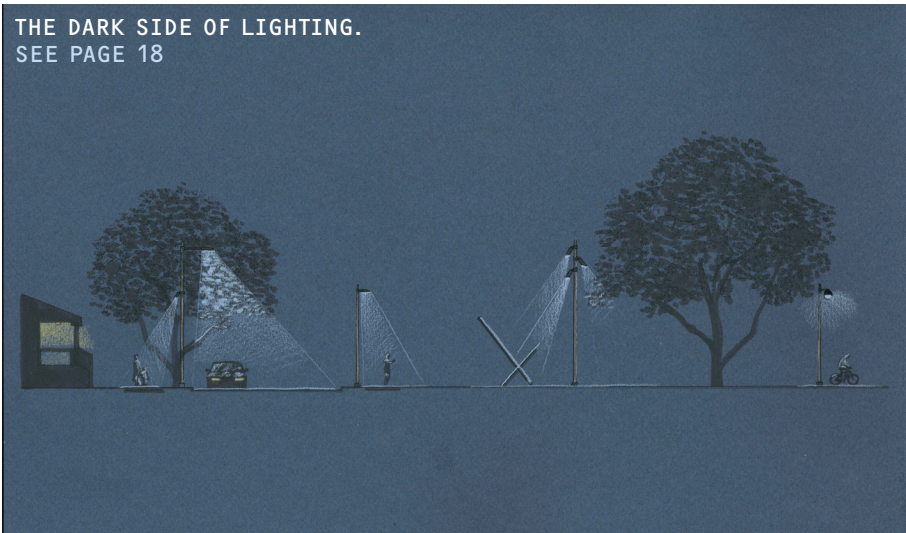
FAMED ARTIST TO BRING COLOR-FILLED CHAPEL TO UT AUSTIN

KELLY GREEN

Houston's Rothko Chapel fuses art and architecture to create a contemplative space that some visitors experience as spiritual. Even the less spiritually inclined describe it

as a highly intensified art viewing experience. Now a second artist's chapel is coming to Texas, designed by another great abstract expressionist, **continued on page 4**

THE DARK SIDE OF LIGHTING.
SEE PAGE 18



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HOUSTON AT A CROSSROADS

In September, Houston Mayor Annise Parker ordered the city's planning department to create its first General Plan, an effort that represents more than a decade of advocacy, research, and community outreach on the part of non-profit Houston Blueprint ("Houston, We Have a Plan," pg. 14). If city council adopts the plan, which it will consider doing in late summer/early fall 2015, it will challenge Houston's reputation among planning circles as a developer's wild west where automobile enabled sprawl reigns supreme, and position the city to grow in closer accord with 21st century national trends. While the outcome of the plan may be guidelines for more transit options and more urban modes of development, it is not likely to result in zoning per se, though zoning it may be by a different name. Whatever it's called, Houstonians will get their first comprehensive vision statement, a plan that will presumably represent the sum of their stated wants and needs. But without spirited leadership to see its provisions through, and a little watchdogging, it will just be a piece of paper, or web page rather, a declaration of aspirations.

On that note, Houston is set to get a new mayor in 2016. Parker is about to reach the three-term limit set on the office. Her successor will inherit the General Plan, should it be adopted. No clear frontrunners have yet emerged in the race. There are currently about a dozen men who have announced their desire to run. While, to my knowledge, none of them have detailed their position on the General Plan, it should be a key issue in the election. The Houston Mayor's Office is one of the most powerful in the country—there is no city manager—and whomever the people elect to take the reigns of the city will have direct influence on how the plan is implemented.

Meanwhile, the price of oil has dropped below \$50 per barrel, from a height in July 2014 of \$120 per barrel. Houston, it has been said many times, is the only city in the U.S. where cheap gas at the pump is greeted with ambivalence. And no wonder. While falling oil prices haven't turned the recent boom to a bust everywhere, yet ("A Tale of Two Cotullas," pg. 8), most of the big oil companies headquartered in Houston have been slashing thousands of jobs, shutting down domestic rigs, and delaying well completions until such a time as the price-per-barrel crawls back to where it needs to be for the boom to roll on. That could be as little as a year. Or it could be longer. Who's to say? But the big companies, for the most part, have done what they needed to do to protect their shareholders. The oilfield workers will get by as they always have, on a wing and a prayer, feasting then tightening their belts. The Big Rich themselves, well, as you might expect many of them are just getting richer. *Forbes* reported that Richard Kinder, CEO of pipeline conglomerate Kinder Morgan, increased his worth by about \$2.5 billion to \$12 billion since September. Great. Hopefully he'll funnel more money to his philanthropic organization, the Kinder Foundation, which has made significant donations to many public projects in the greater Houston area, including Buffalo Bayou Park, Bayou Greenways 2020, Discovery Green, Hermann Park, the expansion of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston ("Texas Holl 'Em," pg. 1), and more. The Kinder Foundation is also involved in the General Plan effort.

Oil boom or oil bust, Houston is poised to leap ahead in its quest for world-class status. With the General Plan it will have a roadmap for smart growth. With good leadership in place and an engaged citizenry, its chances of following that roadmap to the end goal are good. Now if Houston would only put an end to its status as the largest city in America without an architecture critic at its paper of record, then we might really start to get somewhere. **AARON SEWARD**

TEX-FAB 2015 BRINGS THE FUTURE OF 3D PRINTING AND COMPOSITES TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, MARCH 26-29

One Word:Plastics

This year's TEX-FAB symposium in Houston will continue the digital fabrication alliance's exploration of new frontiers and technologies in the field by investigating the latest developments in 3D printing and composites. The use of alternative materials such as flexible polymers and metals is enabling 3D printing to produce component parts for buildings, taking the fabrication method beyond a prototyping tool and giving it the potential to overhaul the manufacturing and construction industries.

Opening the three-day event is Ronald Rael, CEO of Emerging Objects, a self-described "make tank" from Oakland, California. The firm has worked extensively with 3D printing, using everything from concrete, wood, and even salt from the San Francisco Bay. "Because they brought the price down so much they're able to print [items] on an actual building scale," said Kory Bieg, TEX-FAB co-director and assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin's School of Architecture.

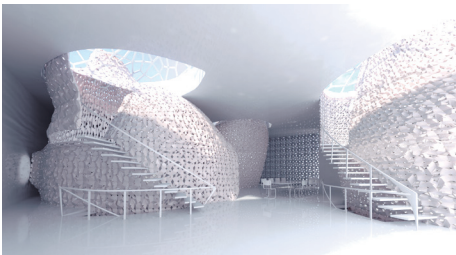
This year's theme is Plasticity. The series of lectures and symposia will also delve into the latest research in using composites to create lightweight structures and building facades. Bill Kreysler of Kreysler & Associates, a leading figure in using composite materials in architecture, will present the latest findings in that field. Kreysler will discuss case studies from around the world of both successful and unsuccessful applications of composite materials in construction and design, analyzing the material properties, design standards, and building code restrictions related to their use.

Top designs from TEX-FAB's Plasticity competition will be on view through April 26, with a spotlight on winner Justin Diles' *Plasticity Stereotomy*. The project explores cohesion and stacking through asymmetrical tessellations made of fiberglass composites. "The brick is the most obvious stack. He's looking at a different strategy of stacking," said Bieg. "Because of the form it distributes the load differently and you don't need the joints and glue that a brick uses. It's also very lightweight."

This year's digital fabrication and design workshops for students and practicing architects aim to push these technologies into the industrial mainstream. Sophisticated new software, such as Monolith, enables architects to generate 3D models that contain instructions for fabrication, thereby eliminating the disconnect between ideas that look great on paper or on AUTOCAD and those that hold water once fabricated. "You can draw a circle on AUTOCAD all day but you don't know if the location and space is correct in relation to the other parts. The way this software works is it uses a note-based computer language or interface. What that means is instead of drawing a circle using AUTOCAD, you create the circle based on parameters. And because you input all the data precisely into the design of these forms and shapes, the computer will give you feedback along the way and tell you if something's wrong in the algorithm," said Bieg, who will be teaching a workshop called Introduction to Grasshopper.

TEX-FAB 2015 will be held at the University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture from March 26-29.

KINDRA COOPER



COURTESY TEX FAB

VISIONS OF PLASTICITY

Ohio State University architecture professor Justin Diles's *Plasticity Stereotomy* (above left) is the winner of TEX-FAB's Plasticity competition. 3D Printed House (above middle) and Salty Gloo (above right) are the

work of Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, University of California Berkeley architecture professors and founders of start-up company Emerging Objects. Rael is keynote speaker at TEX-FAB 2015 in Houston.



Hemisfair Park will create connectivity between San Antonio's core and adjacent residential neighborhoods. It includes an event lawn and stage, shaded promenade along a meandering water feature, and quiet, contemplative gardens.

up with eight programming sections that included our *zocalo* (plaza), a promenade, a lawn, an area where we had water and shade, which we are calling The Shallows, and so on. When GGN arrived we were available to provide a consultant-led community developed program for the civic park."

"Andrés is one of the most professional clients I've ever had," said Gustafson. "It's a luxury to have a client that comes prepared with a well-thought-out scope and program."

GGN's design is multi-layered, with specified zones for the different uses San Antonians said they wanted from this public space, and a variety of typologies that respond to the city's diverse cultural and natural history. The plazas and a gently curved event lawn combined can accommodate 12,000 people around a stage for music and other performances. This function can be activated day and night with both local and touring acts to create a consistent draw. For the less extroverted, there are placid gardens grouped near the few historic houses that remain at the fringes of the Hemisfair site, quiet areas where "you can read a book or take your elderly parent for a walk," said Gustafson.

The water feature emerges from a source fountain in a plaza at the northwest corner of the site and then travels along a tree-shaded promenade in a channel that refers to San Antonio's historic acequias—the irrigation channels dug for the original Spanish mission that later helped define the grid of the modern city. In the southern half of the site the water gathers in shallow pools inspired by the natural limestone formations that collect water throughout the surrounding Hill Country. The water will be a mix of reclaimed municipal water and processed stormwater gathered on site.

GGN is leading a design team that includes local and national firms. San Antonio-based Alamo Architects is providing architectural and urban design services. Seattle engineering firm Magnusson Klemencic Associates is the sustainability and water management consultant. Construction is expected to begin in 2016 once the west wing of the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, which currently occupies part of the site, is demolished. **AS**



EAVESDROP > THE EDITORS

IT'S VERY EUROPEAN

Eavesdrop is scratching its head. First, in January, Gensler released new renderings for the Hotel Alessandra in downtown Houston. Where before the firm had proposed a sleek modern glass tower for the site with strong, swooping vertical lines that accentuated the building's height, the new iteration shows a collection of rectilinear facade treatments of varying levels of transparency arranged to express a podium, tower, and crown with cornice. **Jonathan Brinsden**, CEO of the project's developer, Midway, described the new look as a "modern interpretation of European style." Then in February we learned from **Nancy Sarnoff** of the *Houston Chronicle* that real estate company Hines is in the middle of constructing "a dense European village" (a.k.a. gated community) in the northwest 610 Loop full of townhouses in "Regency and Normandy" styles. The development also features a canal, so residents can pretend they live in Amsterdam, perhaps. A day later, news emerged that The Woodlands Development Co., a subsidiary of The Howard Hughes Corp., is building "luxury high-rise residences with a European sensibility" designed by Atlanta architecture firm The Preston Group. By the look of the rendering, however, the project's sensibility seems to be closer to that of The Westin hotel that is rising next door. Eavesdrop is unsure what the marketing benefits might be of touting Europeanism in real estate development projects of this kind, nor if there is a hell waiting for those who would seek to undermine and cheapen 2,000 years of Western Civilization so that they can chisel a few extra bucks out of their customers, but we are damn sure not going to be duped into aping this meaningless drive!

SKI BUMMER

Meanwhile further north, Grand Prairie, Texas, has been spared what could have been the nation's first indoor ski resort and Hard Rock Hotel. The project's developer, The Grand Alps Group, pulled the \$215 million proposal after a meeting with Grand Prairie's mayor and city manager. They were not happy about losing the big fish. "We were a little surprised," City Manager **Tom Hart** told *The Dallas Morning News*. "We thought we had a pretty good meeting." In a press release, **Sherman Thurston**, Grand Alps' CEO, cited a disagreement about "terms and conditions and costs" as his reason for pulling out of the deal. Apparently the \$30 million in tax exemptions, offer to purchase half the land, and return of 75 percent of the hotel-motel taxes that Grand Prairie promised Thurston wasn't enough to convince the developer, who claims to already have financing in place to build the project, including \$100 million from foreign investors, mostly Chinese. Grand Alps is currently looking for other possible sites in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

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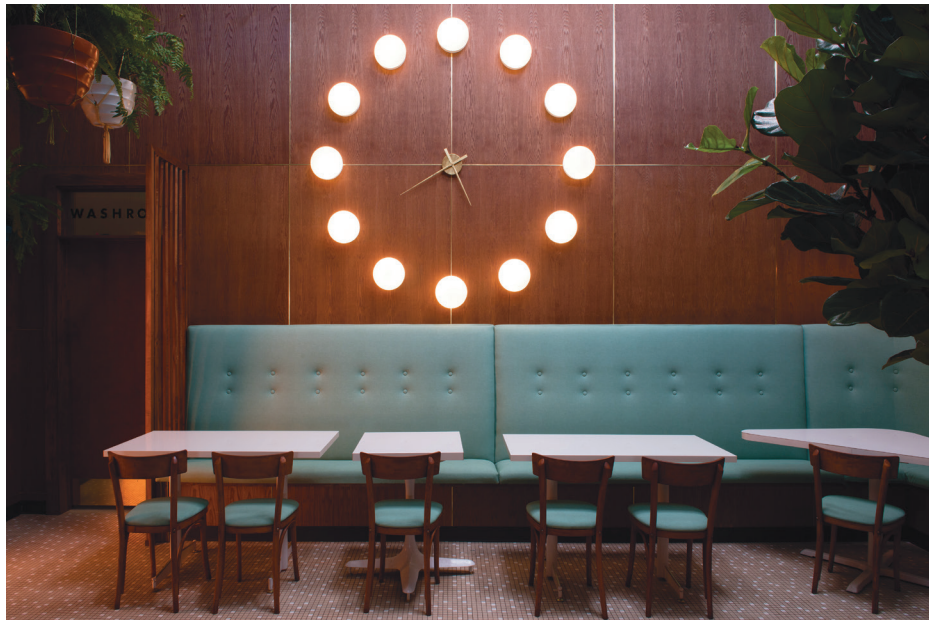
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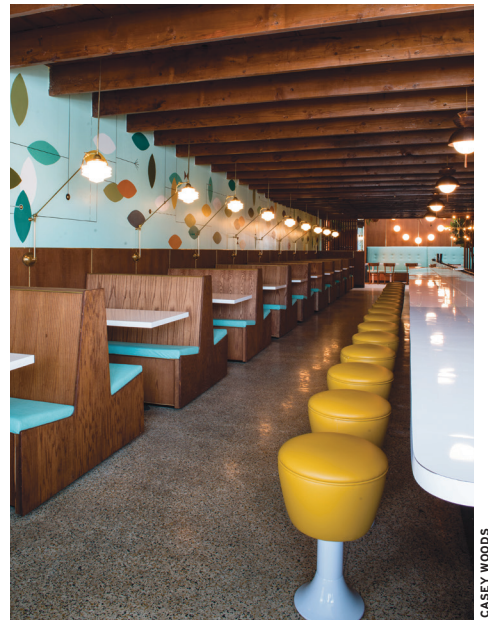
Designers: Mickie Spencer, Clayton & Little Architects

Filling some big shoes, a New Orleans-style diner, serving up Texas comfort fare, has opened in the former and much beloved Arkie's Grill in Austin. The new eatery has channeled its predecessor's mid-century, roadside spirit, and aesthetic, with its own,

more pronounced Googie-inspired renovation—even naming it after the original owner, Faye “Arkie” Sawyer. But first, the owners, Lauren and Stephen Shallcross and Mickie Spencer, gave the restaurant, built in 1948, a much-needed overhaul, from replacing the plumbing and electrical systems, to demolishing the back portion of the building, to taking down an unattractive drop ceiling that concealed handsome, dark wood rafters. Much of the retro interior was conceived by Spencer, a metalworker and designer, who also owns and has collaborated on several restaurants and bars in the area, such as the East Side



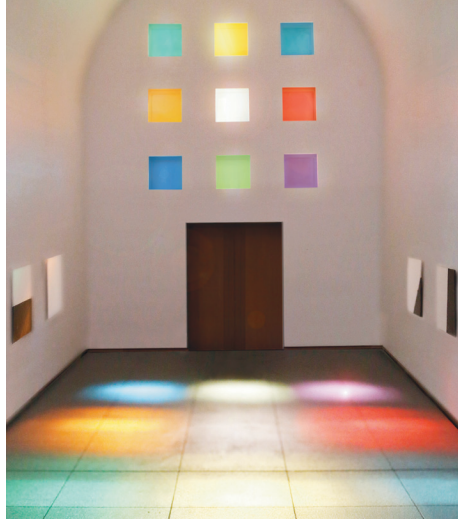
Show Room and Hillside Pharmacy. For the most part, the restaurant is configured like Arkie's, with the counter-turned-bar on the right side, and red oak banquettes with turquoise vinyl cushions to the left. “Even though we rebuilt it, we put it back in the same place because so many people grew up going there and really liked it,” said Spencer. Adding 1,000 square feet to the original plan made way for a new alcove in the back with more seating, an expanded kitchen, and bathrooms. A colorful mural by Spencer, featuring angular geometric shapes and lines, in the main room fits with the 1950s design scheme and contrasts



well with the warmth of the red oak panels throughout the space. Spencer also designed and built the lighting, including the intricate starburst fixtures and the bowl lights suspended over the bar. A new patio, outfitted with strips of AstroTurf and vintage lawn furniture found at antique fairs in Texas, provides outdoor seating and a waiting area. With the help of local firm, Clayton & Little Architects, the exterior was revamped to accentuate the “mid-century modernist look” by replacing the flat facade with dramatic, slanted windows.

NICOLE ANDERSON

Austin, Ellsworth Kelly's first building, is inspired by Romanesque architecture and includes his first works in glass.



COURTESY BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

KELLY GREEN continued from front page
Ellsworth Kelly. Originally designed in 1986 for a private collector, but never realized, the 2,700-square-foot structure will be the first-ever Kelly-designed building. It will be built thanks to the efforts of the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas, Austin, which will also maintain the space and use it for study.

Blanton Museum director Simone Wicha paired Kelly with San Antonio-based Overland Partners to refine and execute the design. “It was developed conceptually, but not schematically. We have been working with Ellsworth to take the concept model and make it a viable building for a university campus public space, while making sure it remains true to his vision,” Wicha told *AN*.

The Blanton has raised over \$7 million to build the project, with a total goal of \$15 million including an endowment.

Kelly's chapel features a cruciform plan, each arm of which terminates with a colored glass installation that will bring multi-hued light into the stone interior. One installation features square windows, each of which is a single color, arranged in a grid. Another includes slit like openings arranged in a circular formation. A third has square colored windows positioned as diamonds arranged in a circle. Facing the entry, a niche will contain a totem sculpture.

Kelly, born in 1923, is known as one of the major American abstract artists working across painting, printmaking, and sculpture. His work spans Minimalism, Color Field

painting, and pure abstraction without being bounded by any one movement. The chapel, however, evokes the six years Kelly spent in France in the late 1940s to the mid 50s, before he rose to international prominence. The artist was particularly taken with Romanesque architecture, which is clearly reflected in the chapel's barrel vaults. In addition to being his first building, this will also be the first time Kelly, now 92, has worked in glass. The Franz Mayer studio of Munich, Germany, will fabricate the glass. Kelly and the design team will use a combination of two layers of glass to create the perfect color.

Though the granite-clad chapel was conceived for a location in California, Kelly rechristened the project *Austin* in recognition

of the particular qualities of Texas light, which will change the experience of the space.

Though *Austin* is entirely Kelly's design, Overland Partners is bringing essential expertise to the project. “In order to add insulation and create a cavity in the wall, the walls had to become thicker, so the building also became taller. We've worked closely with Ellsworth to translate his design intent,” said Rick Archer, a principal at Overland Partners. “One of the challenges of working with artists is learning to remove yourself completely from the design. This is Ellsworth's piece.”

According to Wicha, the museum hopes to break ground on the project soon, and expects it to be completed in about a year.

ALAN G. BRAKE



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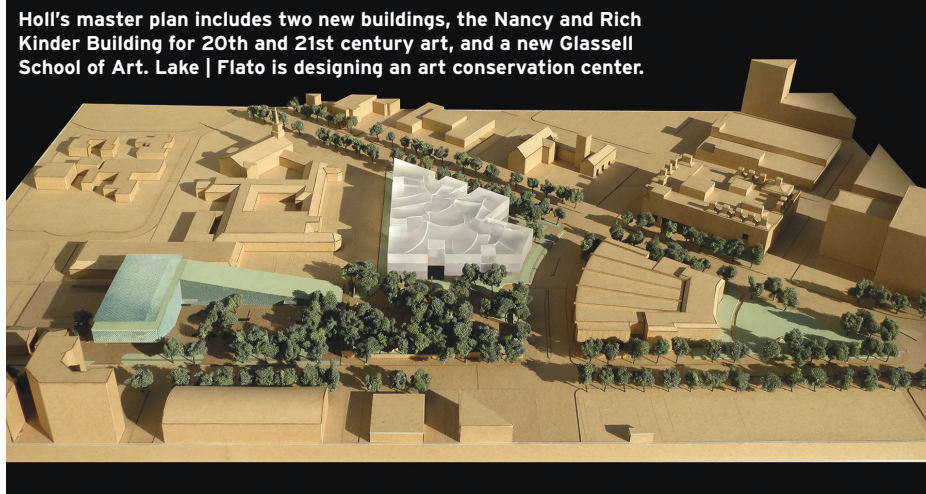
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TEXAS HOLL 'EM continued from front page Holl is contributing a unifying master plan, a 164,000-square-foot gallery space for 20th and 21st century art, and a new 80,000-square-foot facility for the Glassell School of Art. Lake | Flato is designing a state-of-the-art conservation center, which is still in the concept phase.

in New York where he presented the plans. "What you see here is the culmination of a 36-month design process."

The master plan seeks to integrate the new structures with MFAH's current facilities, which represent nearly a century of building. They include a limestone Greek Revival edifice by Houston architect William Ward Watkin (1924, the oldest art museum in Texas), which is connected to a free-span steel and glass addition by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1958/74), his only museum work in the United States; a sculpture garden by Isamu Noguchi (1986); and a Rafael Moneo-designed building for the display of European art (2000). The plan also strives to improve the pedestrian experience across the campus, as well as in Houston's Museum District neighborhood as a whole, by moving 190,000 square feet of parking into two underground garages, which will make room for a series of new public spaces in addition to the new buildings.

Holl's design for the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building for 20th and 21st century art is sited on the location of an existing surface parking lot at the northeast edge of the campus, across Bissonnet Street from the Mies and Moneo structures. The building, clad in etched glass tubes that allow in filtered daylight and emit a glow at night, is three stories tall. Seven vertical gardens are cut into the building perimeter with exterior reflecting pools at the ground level. In these vegetation-shaded sanctuaries vision glass takes over from the translucent tubes. Inside, two levels of galleries—54,000 square feet in all—surround a top-lit, three-level rotunda. The upper level is sheltered under a



"luminous canopy" roof, which has concave curves inspired by the billowing clouds of the big Texas sky. All of the gallery spaces feature natural light. Holl is working with New York-based lighting design firm L'Observatoire International on the project. In addition to galleries, the building contains a 202-seat theater, restaurant and café, and meeting rooms.

The new Glassell School of Art will replace its existing 35-year-old facility, which was designed by Houston architecture firm S.I. Morris, which had a hand in the Astrodome. At 80,000 square feet, the new building has an L-shaped plan wrapping around a public plaza that opens onto the Noguchi-designed sculpture garden. Clad in sandblasted precast concrete panels, it has a green roof that slopes up from the ground, which visitors and students can climb to catch a view over the trees and rooftops of Houston.

The museum also announced that it will select a landscape architect to work with Holl on fleshing out the master plan. Construction will begin later this year and is slated for completion in 2019. **AS**

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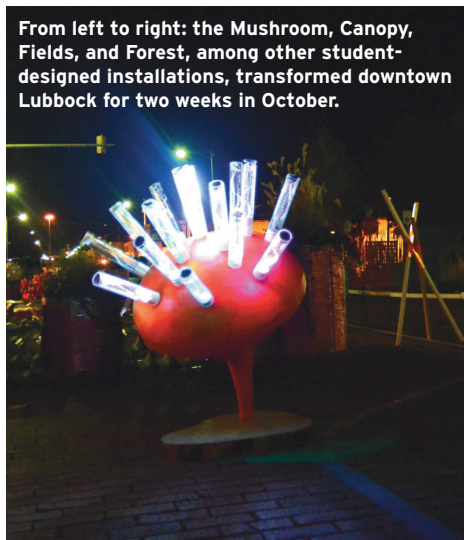
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From left to right: the Mushroom, Canopy, Fields, and Forest, among other student-designed installations, transformed downtown Lubbock for two weeks in October.



COURTESY TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

PLAINS URBANISM continued from front page anything else? What can we do? Well, we can do something."

That "something" became Urban Stage, a student-teacher collaboration designed to showcase downtown Lubbock's potential as part of an interactive community event. Pongratz and his colleague, professor Dustin White, lead 19 students as they designed and built art installations, coordinated with local vendors, and orchestrated a first-of-its-kind event that highlighted the potential for sustainable living in a community where urban design and the environment merge.

Students engaged with a variety of fabrication techniques and materials—including laser-cut sheet metal, plastic molds, and metal pipes—in order to design and build the multi-part installation on a slim budget of \$10,000 with an even tighter timeline of seven weeks. "That's about half the time and money usually allotted to such projects," said Pongratz. Limited resources

lead the team to abort several of the installations halfway through execution, which White contextualized as "an important part of the learning process."

Interactivity was a fundamental component of Urban Stage's design, so most of the installations encouraged user engagement. The "Mushroom," for instance, used proximity sensors to emit sounds and lights when people walked by. "That was quite sophisticated," said White. "They [the students] had to collaborate with electrical engineers on that one."

A second installation, the "Forest," demonstrated how to engage the winds in a public space with thin, human-height sticks planted upright so that the passing air currents created a dance of color and movement. The Forest's interaction with nature deepened after a rainstorm melted the sticks into an intricate weave.

Local nurseries donated cacti and other desert flora in order to demonstrate how

densification of vegetation could transform the harsh bareness of Lubbock's downtown into an urban green space. Low-water plants beautified the area, tempered winds and extreme heat, reduced the carbon footprint, and deepened the interactions between community and the environment.

Urban Stage went on for two weeks in early October, with varied and continuous intersections throughout. The art installations engaged children and adults alike. Local bands performed while participants sampled food from different vendors. Students and professors were present at the event, encouraging the community to ask questions and give feedback. "Students don't normally receive feedback," noted White. "Next year the community will hopefully be more involved in the planning, and earlier on."

Community involvement is necessary in White's view. Despite the recent drop in oil prices, Lubbock anticipates an oil boom that could draw between 150,000-200,000 new-

comers. If the town wants to thrive, he said, it will need to concentrate on directing growth inward by fortifying current structures rather than intensifying urban sprawl.

Lubbock's climate also demands that urban growth incorporate the type of environmentally conservative measures demonstrated by Urban Stage. English lawns, for instance, are popular in the West Texas town, but are ultimately unsustainable due to water restrictions instigated by recent droughts—droughts that could become more frequent in the future. The project demonstrated that Buffalo grass and cacti are more realistic options. "Lubbock is an arid climate," said Pongratz. "You have to be aware of that. To react to that."

The installations remained standing a month after Urban Stage officially ended, a tribute to the project's success and a hopeful indicator that the changes it recommended may not be unwelcome in Lubbock.

ELISIA GUERENA



A TALE OF TWO COTULLAS

In May of last year, *The Architect's Newspaper* ran an essay about how the ongoing oil boom in Texas was impacting the built landscape ("The Architecture of Fracking" *ANSW* 03, 2014). Since then the cost of a barrel of oil has plunged from a high in July of 2014 of \$120 a barrel to less than \$50 as of February 2015.

Despite dire predictions that such a price drop would shut down production in plays such as the Eagle Ford in south Texas, that has not come to pass. The boom is still alive and well.

To better understand what this means for the architecture of the region, the town of Cotulla is

worth closer examination as a case study. Located in the heart of the Eagle Ford play midway between San Antonio and the U.S.-Mexico border, Cotulla was established as a stop on the International-Great Northern Railroad line in 1882. Its economy remained primarily agricultural throughout most of its history and for the majority of the 20th century its population hovered between three and four thousand. Since the 2010 census its population has ballooned as it has been overrun with individuals coming to work the oil fields outside of town. In addition to the RV parks and "man camps"



BRANTLEY HIGHTOWER

that have sprouted up between the interstate and town, there has been a remarkable boom in the construction of chain hotels.

Five years ago Cotulla had two hotels clustered around the Interstate that runs to the east of town. Today it has closer to 30 with more under construction. They are some of the tallest structures in town and these 2-4 story wood-frame buildings are perhaps the most remarkable change to the built environment of Cotulla. Constructed as quickly and as inexpensively as possible, they exemplify the challenge of building for a boom economy. After the oil has been pumped and the legions of roughnecks leave, most of these hotels will be

empty. It is an issue local leaders have already begun to consider.

"Everything that we do has to be with the end goal in mind of being sustainable for the future," said Larry Dovalina, Cotulla's City Manager. One use being considered for the surplus hotel rooms is to incorporate them into a free trade zone. Cotulla happens to be located such that truckers driving from the agricultural regions of Mexico can get to Cotulla on a single tank of gas. The hope is that the town could become an inland transfer point for goods entering the U.S.

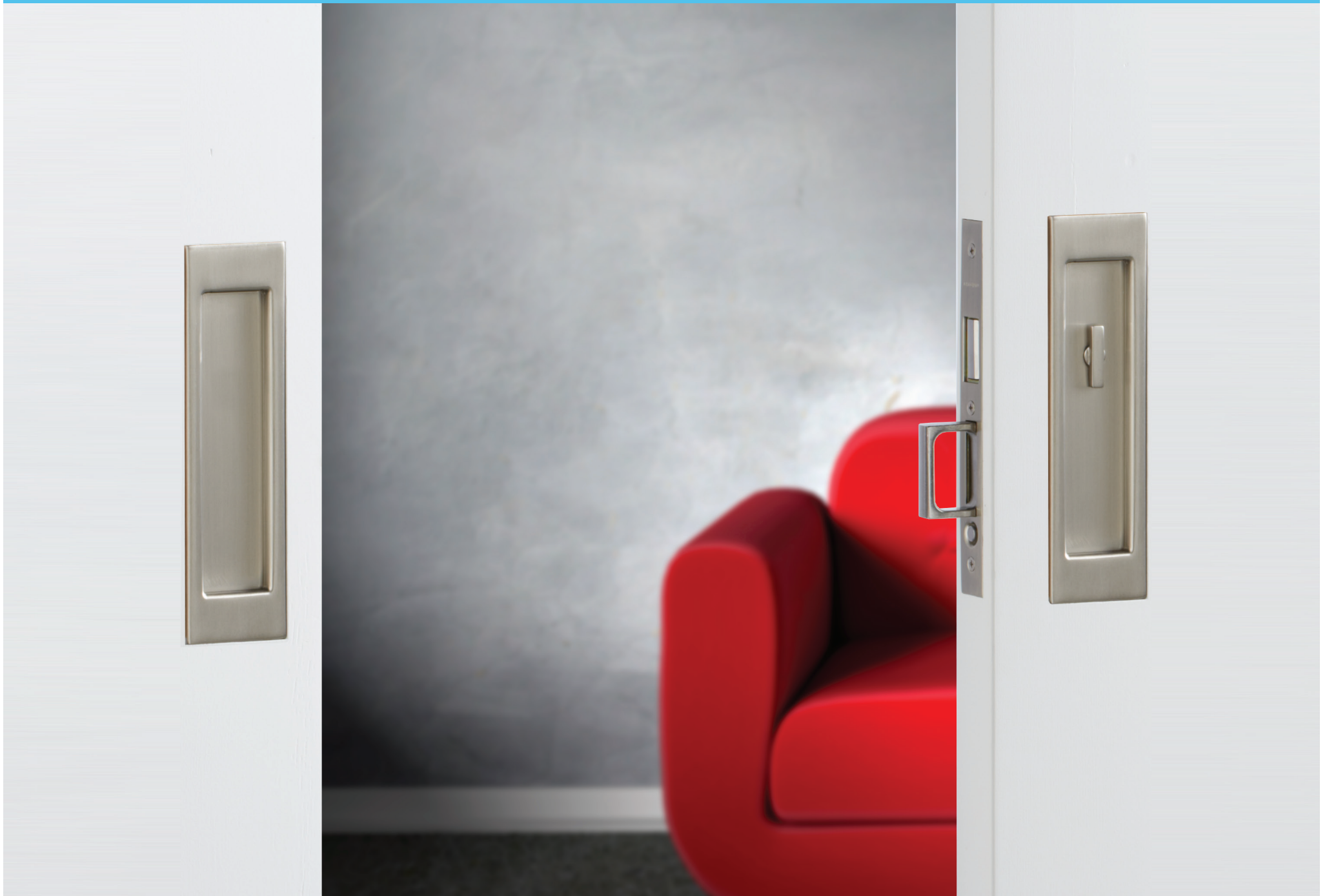
Today there are really two towns of Cotulla. One is the bustling nexus of semi trucks, oil field workers, and cheap chain hotels

Five years ago Cotulla had two hotels. Today it has closer to 30 with more under construction.

along the interstate. The other is the still somewhat sleepy small town about a mile to the east. At first glance, the historic part of Cotulla looks much as it did 80 years ago. The depression-era courthouse still sits upon the hill. The commercial strip along Front Street still faces the old railroad tracks that represent the reason Cotulla came to exist in the first place. What is lacking is any ostentatious example of the wealth that theoretically has come to the area as a result of the oil boom. There is no lavish cultural center or unnecessary monorail. But Cotulla now has things that people elsewhere take for granted. The streets are paved. The schools are better than they have ever been.

This is a reflection of the measured approach community leaders have taken to develop a strategy to allow these two Cotullas to coexist. It remains a challenge to make Cotulla appealing for both a temporary worker who needs a cheap hotel room for the night and a family who wants a place to live in the future. **BRANTLEY HIGHTOWER**

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SELECTIVE SPOTLIGHTS

BALANCING SAFETY, AESTHETICS, AND PERFORMANCE, NEW EXTERIOR LUMINAIRES ALSO ADDRESS ISSUES OF LIGHT POLLUTION AND TRESPASS. BY LESLIE CLAGETT

1 SWELL
PABLO DESIGNS

Made of spun aluminum, this system straddles the line between indoor and outdoor lighting. Its modular design allows a string of lamps to connect to a single power source.

pablodesigns.com

2 AVANZA
SELUX

This fixture combines efficient LEDs, free-form reflectors, and technology that enable optimal brightness transitions. Available in two sizes.

selux.us

3 KICK
ARCHITECTURAL
AREA LIGHTING

A fully shielded optical system eliminates glare and uplight; LEDs are hidden when the upward-angled luminaire is viewed from behind. Available in two sizes.

aal.net

4 GECKO
ERCO

Offering powerful digital light with excellent glare control in a compact, minimalist design, the system features exceptional levels of luminous flux from a virtually invisible, fully shielded light source.

erco.com

5 SIGNAL,
35 COLLECTION
LANDSCAPE FORMS

Cast aluminum luminaires hold multiple arrays of LEDs in tri-board formations, each with its own acrylic lens for economy of replacement and repair. Designed by frog design.

landscapeforms.com

6 EXTERIOR 400
MARTIN
PROFESSIONAL

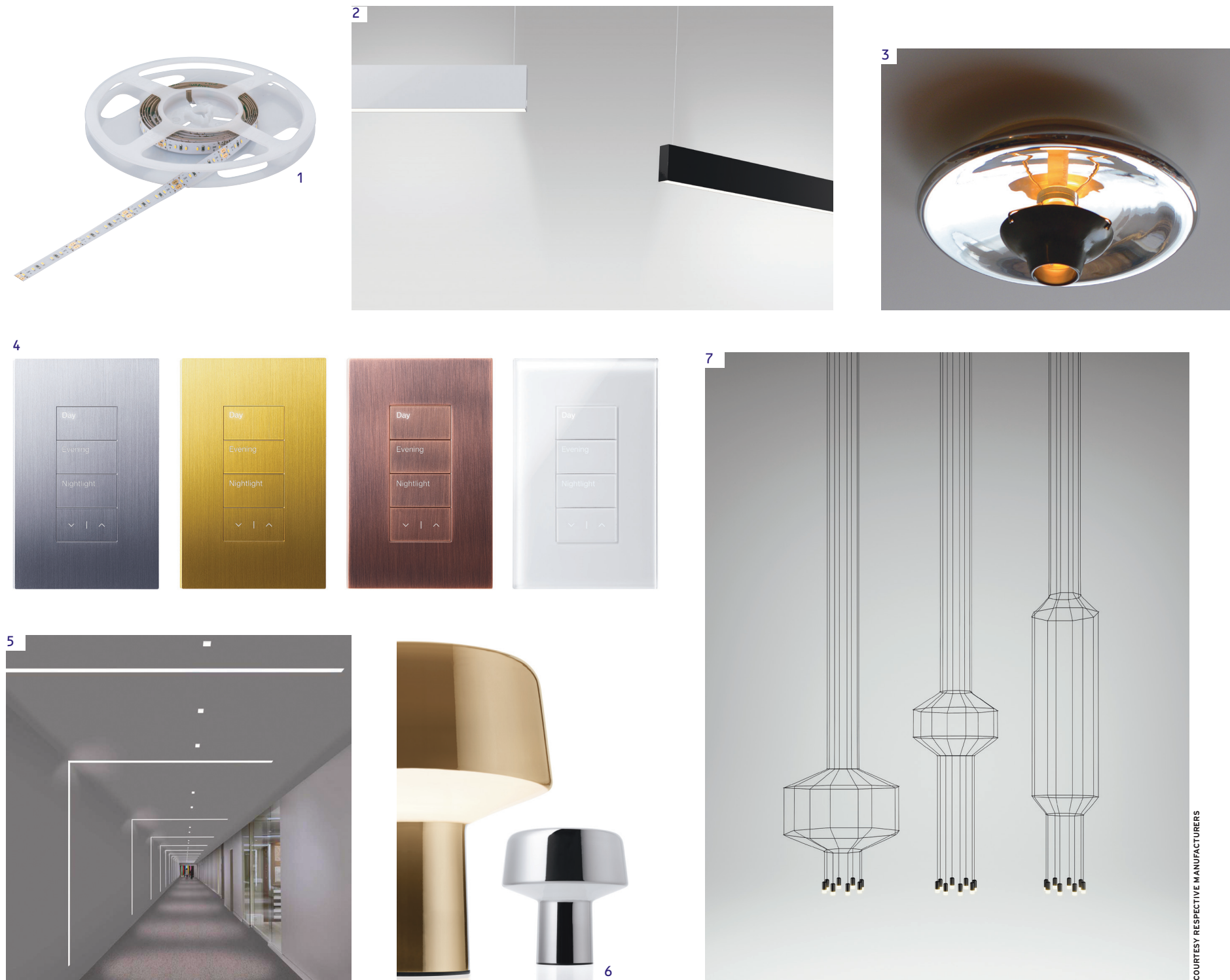
Powerful and energy-efficient, this LED fixture provides high quality white light as well as a broad spectrum of color washes that can be calibrated to ensure uniform light for any outdoor lighting design.

martin.com

7 FLAGPOLE BEACON
FLAG COMPANY

With its downward-focused LEDs, this pole-top fixture illuminates flags—not adjoining property or night sky. A revolving truck allows light to track banners as they blow in the wind. Dark Skies compliant.

flagpolebeacon.com



BRIGHTER IDEAS

ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY AND FABRICATION ALLOW DESIGN FOR BOTH DECORATIVE AND ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING TO GO BEYOND THE CONVENTIONAL.

1 LOOX LED 3015 HÄFELE

With 120 LEDs per meter, these flexible 24V strip lights generate a smooth, continuous illumination. Dimmable, the self-adhesive fixture can be ordered in warm white, cool white, and daylight white.

hafele.com

2 ENDLESS FLOS ARCHITECTURAL

These LED fixtures can be recessed, surface-mounted, or suspended, and are offered with a glare-free option. Endless is available in three widths and four lengths, and is eminently customizable in size and format; it can even be configured to wrap around corners.

flosusa.com

3 VESUVIUS ILEX

In this elegant, unusual ceiling fixture, a polished spun-aluminum shade surrounds a hammered metal baffle. The inside of the baffle is brushed brass, which imparts a warm glow both upwards and downwards. Designed by Kevin Walz.

llexlight.com

4 PALLADIOM OS KEYPAD LUTRON

Backlit control buttons sit flush with the faceplate of this minimalist design, which is available in glass, metal, or plastic in more than twenty finishes. The button layout and labeling is customizable, making it suitable for commercial and hospitality use.

lutron.com

5 VERGE PURE LIGHTING

Slim aluminum channels house a row of LEDs; when plastered into a wall or corner and illuminated, a floating-plane effect is achieved. Runs up to 40 feet and can feed off a single Class 2, 96-watt power supply.

purelighting.com

6 GLASS DROP FOSCARINI

This transformative table lamp has a chromed aluminum, mirror-like exterior that seems to vanish when the bulb is switched on; as light filters through the hand-crafted glass, the finish changes to a luminous gold.

foscarini.com

7 WIREFLOW VIBIA

The electrical wires of this updated, abstracted chandelier can be adjusted to trace geometries in two and three dimensions, allowing a great variety of sizes and forms to be created. Designed by Arik Levy.

vibia.com

LMN
ARCHITECTS
WITH
MARMON MOK
ARCHITECTURE



MARK MANJAVAR

Strangely out of place, yet harmoniously so, the recently completed Tobin Center for the Performing Arts in San Antonio is the best work of architecture in the city in decades. Its closest rival, literally, would be the Central Library designed by Ricardo Legorreta in the 1990s a few city blocks away. It is a shame it has taken nearly 20 years for San Antonio to once again embolden itself with vision and purpose for its citizens.

Looking at the Tobin one is first struck by the marked contrasts

of the building itself. On the one hand there is the historic Spanish Mission facade of the Municipal Auditorium. And then there is the angular, asymmetric glistening folded metal screen that veils the addition, which comes alive at night with a dynamic lighting display. The project houses three performance spaces, the largest of which accommodates 1,768 people with no seat further than 150 feet from the stage. Its construction tells a tale of the changing times in architecture, where technology and craft are

once again at the forefront. That is the tie binding the historic facade to its contemporary partner.

Designed by Seattle-based LMN Architects with local firm Marmon Mok Architecture as associate architect, the Tobin has many advanced elements that set the building apart. First and foremost is the dynamically lit metal skin that wraps the proscenium. It is a complex arrangement of folded and perforated panels, realized parametrically, that screens the building's stepped, windowless

masses with a modulating pattern of 18,000 panels, 1,300 of which are unique. Forming distinct yet-interrelated volumes around the building, the veil interlocks around a triangular support beam cantilevered from the panelized weather tight primary building skin. The panels form a continuous band woven both vertically and horizontally creating a seesaw effect that allows for light to reflect in different directions. Designed with eight different panel types sized to match the existing

building's limestone blocks. The result is a facade that has dimensional qualities and a richness of lighting effects both during the day and at night.

Inside the main performance hall, a pneumatic flooring system allows for the complete transformation of the stepped auditorium seating into a flat floor within 23 minutes. The sheer mechanical acrobatics that the system undergoes is mesmerizing to watch. Banquets and symphonic concerts can be pared on a single day, which opens up the possibility of endless uses and unique experiences within the main hall.

One of the more noticeable and aesthetically prominent elements within the building is the integrated back-lit balcony fascias. Used to signal intermissions, augment a performance with ambient lighting, or create effects, the LED illumination system with a full spectrum of color was not possible just a few years ago. This may be the single most evidently aesthetic element within the hall, one that remains in the shadows until needed. Aside from being a backdrop to the lighting, they serve as a sophisticated dynamic sound baffle system. Perforated with a vegetal pattern that repeats, the fascias absorb sound and displace it throughout the large vertical volume. Together with adjustable panels located behind the seating, they can either be programmed to control reverberation for amplified music performances, or to increase reverberation for acoustical performances.

The Tobin Center showcases a development process that stems from a larger effort within the City of San Antonio. The client's vision with clever financing made possible by the city is working to catalyze a metropolis that prides itself on its tradition of art and culture. The project successfully blends a historically important building into the present with its juxtaposition of old and new architectural elements, as well as functional and aesthetic building systems. This combination of pragmatism and aesthetic intent should serve the creative community as a model for future projects in the city. **KEVIN MCCLELLAN**



The architects preserved the historic Spanish Mission Facade of the Municipal Auditorium, while cladding the new building elements in perforated metal panels with integrated LED lighting.



RESOURCES

Facade Consultant

Front
frontinc.com

Lighting Design

Horton Lees Brogden Lighting Design
hblighting.com

Metal Plate Wall Panels


Kovach
kovach.net

Seating Riser System

Gala Systems
galasystems.com



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HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PLAN

LONG NOTORIOUS FOR ITS LACK OF ZONING AND SPRAWLING, DEVELOPER-DRIVEN, LEAPFROG GROWTH PATTERNS, AMERICA'S FOURTH LARGEST CITY IS ON THE CUSP OF ADOPTING ITS FIRST GENERAL PLAN. FLORENCE TANG SPEAKS WITH THE ADVOCATES, PLANNERS, AND POLITICIANS WHO ARE SEEKING TO MAKE HOUSTON A SUSTAINABLE METROPOLIS WHERE ANYONE CAN PROSPER AND FEEL AT HOME.

Houston is famously, or notoriously, known as the largest city in America without zoning. It covers roughly 630 square miles. To put that in perspective, Houston could accommodate within its limits Washington, DC, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Boston, Baltimore, Cleveland, Denver, Miami, and San Francisco combined. As of the 2010 census, the city had a population of about 2.1 million with a metro area totaling 5.95 million. In the next 20 years, a million more residents are expected to call the Bayou City home.

In the past, Houston has managed such projected growth by expanding its hub-and-spoke freeway system and sprawling out across the vast coastal plain on which it sits. Now, however,

a convergence of political forces, an urban planner from Harvard, a newly installed city planning director, the united voices of citizens, leaders, and groups across jurisdictional lines, and a tenacious campaign lasting more than a decade from one non-profit board is producing a road map for sustainable growth and development.

In September 2014, Mayor Annise Parker directed the planning commission to create Houston's first General Plan. "Houston is constantly changing and growing. We have to have a better way to plan for that growth," said Parker in a statement. "A general plan will allow us to better coordinate our resources, create opportunities for innovative partnerships,

and provide a path to achieving our goals."

BLUEPRINT HOUSTON AND THE GENERAL PLAN

Mayor Parker's announcement marked a major milestone in the decade-long journey that Blueprint Houston, a nonprofit organization formed in 2002, has spent advocating for a plan. "We have tried to be the squeaky wheel in the face of mayors," said Joe Webb, an architect and chairman of Blueprint since 2010.

Among other efforts, Blueprint raised \$120,000 to hire an experienced planner to advise the city in how to develop the plan, scopes, budgets, and timelines. "The city, having never done this before, had no concept of

resources," said Webb. The City of Houston pitched in \$10,000 to hire the consultant.

Blueprint hired Peter Park—the urban planner, professor, former Loeb Fellow, and visiting critic at Harvard's GSD, former planning director of Milwaukee and Denver, and director of his own planning practice—to work as a consultant to the City of Houston's Mayor's Office and the Planning Department.

Park's track record includes innovative planning in urban land use and regeneration, transit-oriented development, and zoning code reform. His research and work focuses on the link between leading innovation for quality design and practical implementation strategies for communities.

Blueprint also held three citizens'

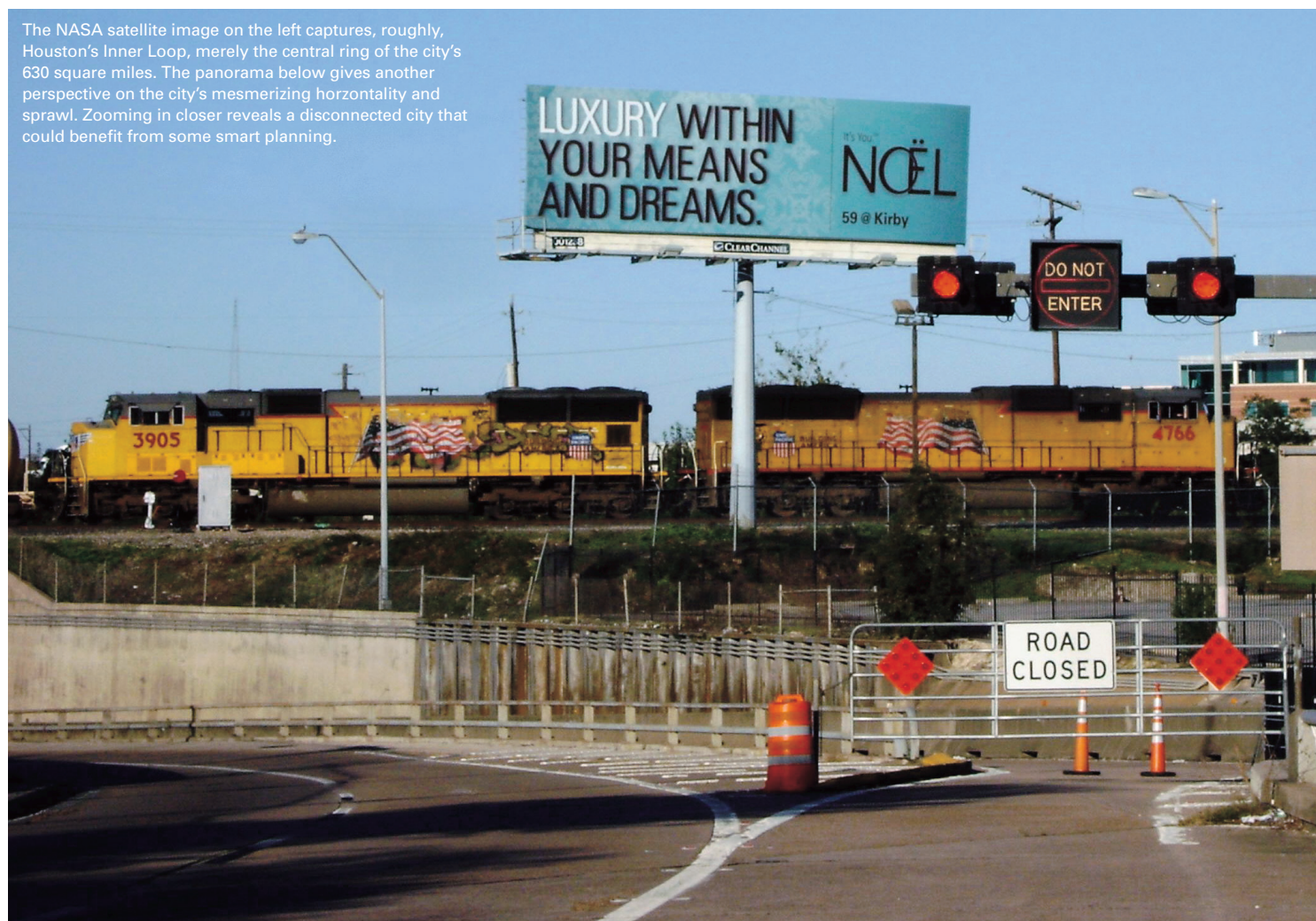
congresses over the years to collect visions of what citizens wanted their city to be. "We compiled all that and gave it to Peter Park," said Martha Murphree, Blueprint's executive director.

THE URBAN PLANNER

Park initiated the exploratory steps for the plan to spur the discussion about viable strategies critical to the growth of a major metropolitan area. He worked with city staff to define the scope of the plan and what it should accomplish.

"It's a big change from what Houston has been in the past, and while Houston does not have zoning, there are a lot of regulations. They have regulations that cities with zoning are getting rid of," said Park. "Houston has been going

The NASA satellite image on the left captures, roughly, Houston's Inner Loop, merely the central ring of the city's 630 square miles. The panorama below gives another perspective on the city's mesmerizing horizontality and sprawl. Zooming in closer reveals a disconnected city that could benefit from some smart planning.



"[Planning can] coordinate major tax breaks, increase jobs, and distribute density in a smart way to concentrate it on the transit corridors." He added that smart planning is also about adding density, more affordability, and greater mobility without more and more cars on the road.

"It's the nature of success that brings people together," said Park. "If you aspire to make great places, people will want to experience them."

THE PLANNING DIRECTOR

In March 2014, Mayor Parker and City Council installed Pat Walsh as Houston's top planning and development official. Walsh is a trained civil engineer from Carnegie Mellon and the University of Texas, Austin, and former director of transportation and long-range planning for the City of Sugar Land. "We have made great progress in developing the plan," said Walsh. "We are wrapping up the vision and goal statement and then we will add more meat to the bone."

He also pointed to a planning and coordination tool, an interactive map available online, with layers of project information on it from various groups such as Buffalo Bayou Partnership, METRO, TxDOT, management districts, TIRZ (a Texas version of tax-increment financing), and the parks department. The city has been asking for voluntary participation from these organizations. The map will be on the city website and powered by its geographic information system.

The plan, as Walsh described it, is being created in a compressed timeline of 10 months. It will be at a higher level as a planning document and is an opportunity to assess whether or not the city has the right tools and if it is using them in an efficient and right way. "We have to do a better job of coordinating with the amazing numbers of entities who do planning in the city, and we have got to work in a more strategic way to work with our development community to utilize

along without a plan, and people ask, 'Why do you need a plan?' but the past approaches of building highways and annexing is not a growth pattern and won't serve the city in the long run."

This historic approach of meeting challenges as they come has created a reactive state and Park believes it is not a viable approach. "How can you have a broader conversation of coordinating growth and policy and vision so that you can optimize the development of the city over time? There are a lot of project plans, and services, and MUDs, and mechanisms, but no overall vision about what's the big idea," continued Park.

Park explained that there are myriad reasons to have plans and, for Houston, the relationship

between development and transportation needs to be addressed—not just cars and future traffic, but also the relationships between development and various types of transportation beyond the automobile.

"Too much development, too much traffic—that comes with growth and change," said Park. "There are changing patterns of Americans moving back into the city and wanting a walkable urban city. It hasn't been a priority. [Walkable areas are] not going to be everywhere, but it ought to be easier to do in Houston and the next generation of people who inherit the city are interested in these urban walkable places. Where people go and want to be there is a high priority on the

human scale and activities for people. American cities prioritize the automobile at the expense of other things: freeways cut through underrepresented neighborhoods or high parking requirements result in objects in a big surface parking lot. High parking requirements and wider roads have not made it easy to create walkable urban areas but I think that is changing."

Park cited Houston's Complete Streets policy (a plan to make streets safer and more accessible, that Mayor Parker issued an executive order for in 2013) as one of the major initiatives that would fall under this broader umbrella vision for the city to grow, protect established neighborhoods, and find ways to direct growth and investment where it is most

beneficial.

He also spoke about Houston's light rail system, MetroRail. The system opened its first line in 2004 and has five new lines in different stages of planning and construction. "I have heard people criticize the light rail and it's ridiculous," said Park. "The corridors are going to become enormously successful and will be able to demonstrate to other cities what capitalized transit investment looks like."

Park also addressed the city's tradition of freewheeling, speculative development. With good planning in place, he said, the risks associated with this type of unrestrained urban growth can be mitigated. "More clarity can be broadcast from the city as a signal to the investment community," he said.

PATRICK FELLER; OPPOSITE PAGE: NASA; BOTTOM: JASON MCLEWEE





These photos by Houston-area artist Patrick Feller show some of the odd juxtapositions of the city, including what remains of Freedman's Town, which was settled by freed slaves in the wake of the Civil War. The bridge on the bottom right is part of the recently revamped Buffalo Bayou Park, an example of a successful public project that resulted from a vision plan and consolidated leadership.

our land in the most effective way possible," said Walsh. "We want our development community to be successful and we want to support them. And we know there are ways we can work together to mutually

benefit. Houston is very successful in many ways without zoning. But we regulate development with subdivisions, landscape ordinances, dedication of right of way, drainage, and parking. We do have a lot

of deed restriction-like zoning protections. We do not expect zoning to be an outcome of this. This is about making sure we are effective as possible at creating and enhancing the city."

One of the ordinances to be examined relates to parking. Walsh said the city would revisit its parking policies to encourage vibrant walkable areas where people can visit their local restaurants and

shops by foot, on a bike, or using transit. "Or it could be thinking more systematically about parking," he said. "There are opposing interests with parking, there is a balance to be struck."

One of Walsh's goals is to gain a maximum degree of community support for the plan by being transparent and soliciting community input so that any future mayor will also have interest in supporting the needs of the people. "I am cautiously optimistic that this plan is going to offer valuable insight into how Houston can achieve good governance," said Walsh.

That is a sentiment echoed by Park. "If a plan reflects what people wanted then it's more likely to be adopted and taken," he said.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

On January 8, Jennifer Ostlind, division manager of Houston's planning commission, presented the draft vision statement for the General Plan. "Houston offers opportunity for all. We celebrate our diversity of people, ideas, economy, culture, and place. We promote healthy and resilient communities through smart civic investments, dynamic partnerships, education, and innovation. Houston is the place where anyone can prosper and feel at home."

The plan is uniting major stakeholders from METRO, the Texas Medical Center, Greater Houston Partnership, Greater Houston Builders Association, Urban Land Institute, Houston Independent School District, The Kinder Foundation, TxDOT, and Harris County to churches, neighborhoods, management groups, and professional groups to coordinate, collaborate, and focus their efforts on strategies to deal with a host of future growth and investment issues: infrastructure maintenance, growing the tax base, efficient spending of tax dollars by City Council decisions, and streamlining the planning and permitting procedures.

"It's a business plan," said Webb, "A set of guiding principles and strategies based on what the citizens said about goals and priorities."

The city will inform and engage the public in the coming months by conducting a series of outreach strategies before the framework plan is presented publicly to City Council for adoption in late summer/early fall 2015. If successful, the General Plan could transform Houston from a model of automobile-enabled urban sprawl into a paradigm for how post-war American cities might reinvent themselves in the 21st century.

FLORENCE TANG IS A DESIGN PROFESSIONAL AND JOURNALIST BASED IN HOUSTON.



PATRICK FELLER



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DARKER, SAFER

The old canard that more night lighting means safer streets has led to the over-illumination of our cities, washing out the night sky and creating health, environmental, and aesthetic problems. John Gendall investigates new research that is leading many designers to raise the call for less light.



In 1909, just 30 years after Thomas Edison made electric light commercially viable, the Italian writer Filippo Tommaso Marinetti came up with an audacious idea: "let's murder the moonlight!," he declared in a manifesto titled by that phrase. Just a little over a century later, his idea, once the stuff of early modernist fantasy, seems truer than he may have expected. The moon's visibility persists (sorry, Marinetti), but stars are a different story. Unless you're reading this on a camping trip in a remote part of Montana, go outside at night, look up, and, depending on cloud cover, you'll very likely see a monochrome canopy of muted light grey to almost-but-not-quite-black, dotted, depending on the size of your city, with a dim handful of stars.

Moving architecture and design to keep the night sky darkened might come off as quaint—something for poets to contemplate—but, as researchers study the effects of

nighttime lighting, their findings point to critical public health and safety consequences, along with a bevy of ecological concerns. "It's a problem with many layers to it, including the aesthetic and poetic problem resulting from the loss of stars," said Linnaea Tillett, the principal of Tillett Lighting Design, a New York City-based firm. "But it's not just a matter of poetry. There are very real ecological consequences."

Those very real consequences also include some serious medical conditions—cancer, obesity, diabetes, and depression—linked to light exposure (by way of melatonin, the hormone that light modulates). That is just one layer. Astronomers can't see stars through the haze of light, migratory patterns have changed, and the cost—environmental and economic—of keeping the night turned on continues to rise.

Over the last 15 years, as glass technologies have improved, the design community has done much

to tackle the issue of daytime light exposure. As skylines around the U.S. become ever more clad in glass, the architects and developers producing these curtain walls, and the critics who write about the buildings they enclose, tend to sing the same chorus: *interior spaces bathed in natural light*. When this sunny thought is not enough on its own, out come studies pointing to higher worker productivity, better achievements on test scores, and happier, more focused brain chemistry. While no one would dispute the merits of exposure to natural light, it seems a good time to ask: what about the natural dark?

"Sleeping in the dark is every bit as important as experiencing light during the day," cautioned Travis Longcore, an associate professor of research at the University of Southern California, and the author of *Ecological Consequences of Artificial Night Lighting*. "We shouldn't want the outside at night to look like the day."

"We are constrained by our evolutionary history," he explained. "We are used to bright days and dark nights, but now we get dim days and dim nights." Drawing a parallel between the emerging research about night lighting and the path of medical science in confronting smoking and sun tanning, he said, "one will, in 30 years, look back and think the same thing."

To avoid a tobacco industry-scale problem, designers are taking a new approach to night lighting. For many projects, this change begins with a basic question: Is light even needed? "Whenever you call for a light, ask if it's truly needed," said Longcore. At the Menil Collection, in Houston, where Tillett is overseeing the lighting for a campus designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), she considered each light source. "Wherever we could, we limited light," she said. "There are no light fixtures we haven't justified."

This does not mean that museum visitors spend their evenings fumbling around in the dark. Physiologists now understand that human sense perception is far more finely tuned to contrast between light and dark than to what had seemed to be the prevailing approach to light: more of it. The trick is to illuminate change—steps, doors, paths—rather than entire landscapes. So, at Menil, Tillett called for path lighting that would render the space easily navigable without blanketing it with light. "We preserved the campus atmosphere, using a play of light and shadow, to enhance wayfinding," she explained.

To get to this level of specificity, designers are rethinking the fixtures themselves, equipping them to control the direction of light to eliminate trespass beyond property lines or municipal borders. Acorn lamps, for example, were perfectly suitable for a kerosene wick in a 19th



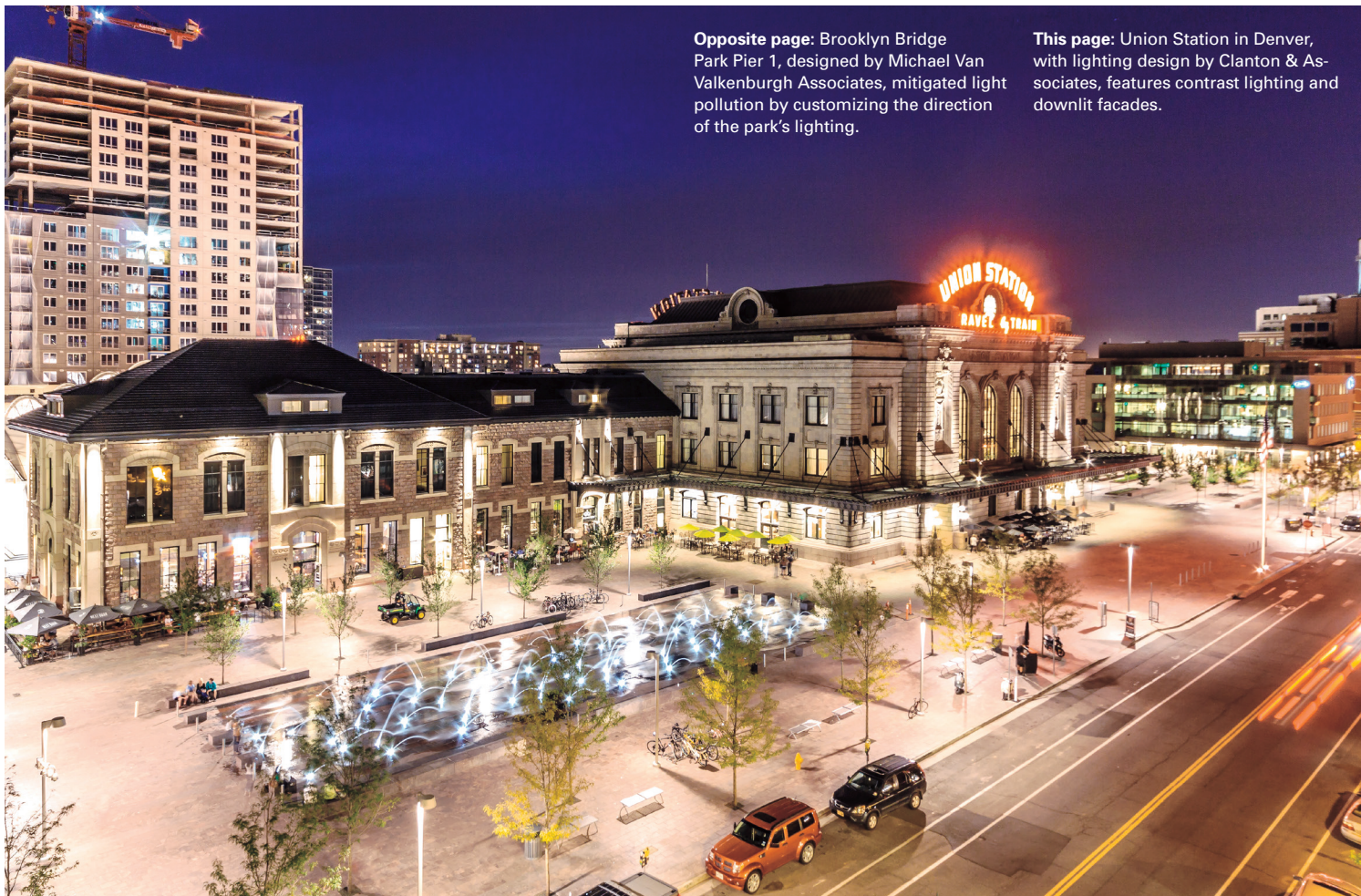
century city, but using them with incandescent bulbs now is a stubborn grasp for historicism to the point of irresponsibility. "Oftentimes parks are lit by acorn lights, derived from gas lamps, so the result is a bunch of glary balls of light along a path,

but everything else is pitch dark," said Matthew Urbanski, a principal of MVVA. With its design for Brooklyn Bridge Park, MVVA carefully tailored the directionality of light to cut down on light pollution and to enhance the experience of the park.



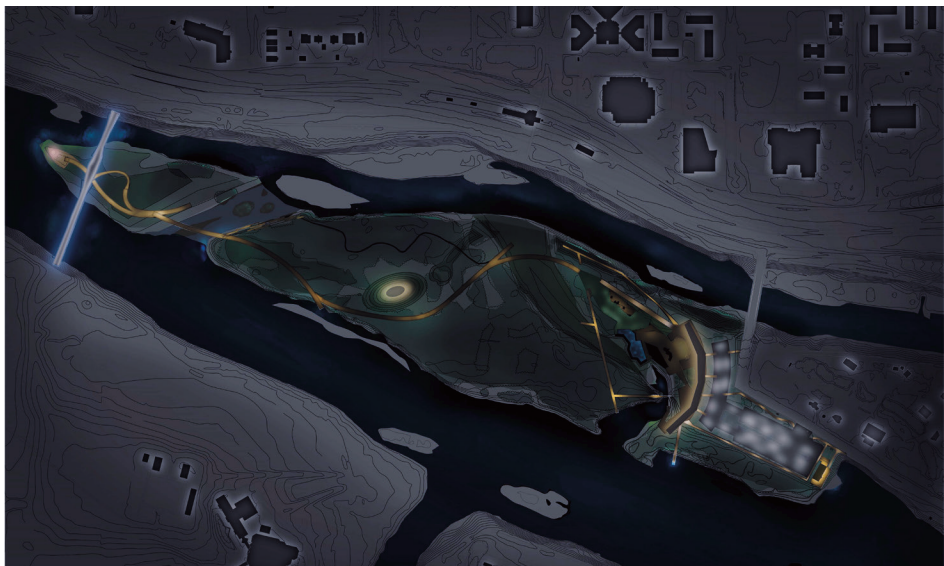
Tucked beneath Brooklyn Heights, any uplighting in the new park would disturb the neighbors above. "By putting light in the right place—high, distributed, and pointed down—we were able to adequately light a place without causing light

pollution," said Urbanski. "When you're on the promenade [in Brooklyn Heights, above], you can look down and be unwittingly staring at a light bulb." For visitors to the park, the firm appreciated the value of looking out onto the water from



Opposite page: Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1, designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, mitigated light pollution by customizing the direction of the park's lighting.

This page: Union Station in Denver, with lighting design by Clanton & Associates, features contrast lighting and downlit facades.



TILLET LIGHTING DESIGN

the shore, so it avoided perimeter lighting that would have interrupted that view, opting, instead, to light from behind with shielded, side-baffled lighting.

One of the canards that has kept outdoor spaces overly illuminated has been the knee-jerk tendency to equate more light with less crime. For decades, cities and property owners held outdoor lights as tonic to illicit or criminal behavior. A 1921 editorial in *Grand Rapid News* said it plainly: "Good lighting of streets lessens, and almost eliminates crime." Reasoning the city could cut its police budget by shifting public funds to outdoor lighting, it went on to say, "It is easy to prove that the best paying investment the city can make is one in electric lights."

That argument, it turns out, is less easy to prove than the writer allowed. As Longcore asserted, "there is no universally applicable conclusion that comes out of criminology research that shows that more light means less crime." Overlighting, in fact, can be worse

than dimly lit spaces for several reasons, beginning with the risk of glare. As Longcore put it, "If you have bright lights, the shadows become much darker."

So, in what might seem a counterintuitive twist, improving visibility at night seems to start with turning the lights down. Nancy Clanton, a Boulder, Colorado-based lighting designer and an author of the International Dark-Sky Association's technical guidelines, has researched this effect in several American cities. "We have studied areas and have gone from full light levels down to 50 percent, then down to 25 percent, and we ask the public to tell the difference, and no one can perceive any change," she said. "Vision is logarithmic, so in lighting, our linear metric is completely wrong," she continued, backing up the fact that lighting can be cut to a quarter of current levels without anyone noticing.

In her lighting design for Union Station, in Denver, Clanton applied her research findings, keeping light levels low, emphasizing contrast,

and downlighting facades (she has found, people feel safer when they can see a horizontal surface more than they would with a generally illuminated ground plane).

Research is also suggesting the light spectrum as something that needs to be carefully considered for nighttime lighting. On this, astronomers, physicians, and ecologists agree: blue light is bad. "The more we introduce blue light in the night-time environment, the more we send out the signal that it's daytime," said Longcore. This applies not only to human physiology—melatonin is suppressed by blue light—but also to ecology and astronomy. "Blue light harms the environment and it's the worst kind of light for sky glow," said Clanton. She recommends lights at the low end of the spectrum. "The moon is 4,000 Kelvins, and we really shouldn't need more than that."

Try telling that to Marinetti. To the patriarch of Futurism, when the moon gave out its 4,000 Kelvins, he "ran to nearby waterfalls; gigantic wheels were hoisted, and turbines

transformed the velocity of the waters into electromagnetic spasms that climbed up wires suspended on high poles, until they reached luminous, humming globes. So it was that three hundred electric moons, with rays of blinding chalky whiteness, canceled the old green queen of love affairs."

There is much to be said for that old green queen. There is the melatonin, yes, and real public safety implications, true, but there is also the issue of getting a nightly reminder of our place in the universe. The night sky has long been the muse of architects and designers, evidenced by cities across the world and over the millennia that have been laid out in response to constellations. Rather than drawing from the past by screwing light bulbs into acorn lamps, it seems that celestial awareness would be a better lesson, designing spaces that don't wash out the fact that we are, as Marinetti puts it, "all of us enwrapped in the immense madness of the Milky Way."

JOHN GENDALL IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

Tillett Lighting Design took minimal approaches to fixture usage at St. Patrick's Island in Calgary, Canada, designed by W Architecture and Landscape Architecture and Civitas (top left), and at The Menil Collection in Houston, which is being master planned by MVVA (top right and bottom).



MARCH

**WEDNESDAY 11
LECTURE**
DBIA RMR Design-Build Best Practices Series
2:00 p.m.
PPA Event Center
2105 Decatur St., Denver, CO
aiacolorado.org

**FRIDAY 13
EVENT**
Celebrate Architecture 2015
9:00 a.m.
Shaw Center for the Arts
Manship Theatre
100 Lafayette St.
Baton Rouge, LA
aiala.com

**TUESDAY 17
LECTURE**
**Forum Panel:
Analytic Creativity**
6:30 p.m.
Dallas Center for Architecture
1909 Woodall Rodgers Frwy.
Dallas, TX
dallasca.com

**WEDNESDAY 18
LECTURE**
**Quantified Threads:
Future Fashion in the Cloud**
by Joanna Berzowska
5:00 p.m.
Louisiana State University
102 Design Building
Baton Rouge, LA
design.lsu.edu

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**THURSDAY 19
EVENT**
**The Astrodome:
Building an American
Spectacle**
5:30 p.m.
Architecture Center Houston
315 Capitol
Houston, TX
aiahouston.org

**FRIDAY 20
EVENT**
Slow Art at The Modern
5:30 p.m.
Modern Art Museum
of Fort Worth
3200 Darnell St.
Fort Worth, TX
themodern.org

LECTURE
**The Next Nexus:
The Necessity for Another
Design Revolution**
12:00 p.m.
University of
Louisiana at Lafayette
School of Architecture
and Design
421 East Lewis St.
Lafayette, LA
soad.louisiana.edu

**TUESDAY 24
EVENT**
**Architectural Record on the
Road: Multi-Unit Housing
Symposium**
8:30 p.m.
History Colorado Center
1200 North Broadway
Denver, CO
aiacolorado.org

**THURSDAY 26
EVENT**
**AIA New Orleans
2015 Design Awards**
6:00 p.m.
U.S. Freedom Pavilion,
The Boeing Center
945 Magazine St.
New Orleans, LA
aianeworleans.org

LECTURE
**Architecture for Humanity:
Salon No. 7**
6:00 p.m.
2532 15th St., Denver, CO
denver.architecturefor
humanity.org

**FRIDAY 27
EVENT**
Gulf Coast Green 2015
7:15 a.m.
816 Town & Country Blvd.
Houston, TX
aiahouston.org

EXHIBITION CLOSING
**That Multitudes May Share:
Building the Museum of Art
New Mexico Museum of Art
Governor's Gallery**
107 West Palace Ave.
Santa Fe, NM
nmartmuseum.org

**TUESDAY 31
EVENT**
**Art of Architecture:
"What's Wrong With Us?"**
1:00 p.m.
Arkansas Arts Center
9th & Commerce, MacArthur
Park, Little Rock, AK
arkansasartscenter.org

APRIL

**WEDNESDAY 1
LECTURE**
**Architecture Speaker Series:
Sarah Susanka on the
Not So Big House**
7:00 p.m.
Crystal Bridges
Museum of American Art
600 Museum Way
Bentonville, AK
crystalbridges.org

**THURSDAY 2
EVENT**
**BIG Little House: Small Houses
Designed by Architects**
7:00 p.m.
Museum of Fine Arts
Law Building
1001 Bissonnet St., Houston, TX
mfah.org

**TUESDAY 7
TOUR**
**Architecture Tour of
The Modern**
11:00 a.m.
Modern Art Museum
of Fort Worth
3200 Darnell St.
Fort Worth, TX
themodern.org

**WEDNESDAY 8
LECTURE**
**Michael Murphy: Beyond the
Building**
6:00 p.m.
Tulane University School of
Architecture
New Orleans, LA
aianeworleans.org



HIROYUKI HIRAI

**SHIGERU BAN:
HUMANITARIAN ARCHITECTURE**
Dallas Center for Architecture
1909 Woodall Rodgers Freeway
Dallas, Texas
Through April 25

The Dallas Center for Architecture is presenting a selection of Pritzker Prize winning architect Shigeru Ban's disaster relief designs. Ban's humanitarian architecture has confronted some of the world's most devastating natural and manmade cataclysms in the last 20 years. The Japanese architect is known for his pioneering designs for United Nations refugee shelters in the mid-1990s, using inexpensive and often recycled materials such as paper tubes and cardboard to make durable, shock-proof structures. Projects on view include the Tsunami Reconstruction Project (2005, Sri Lanka), Onagawa Community Center (2011, Onagawa, Japan, pictured above), Cardboard Cathedral (2013, New Zealand), and Paper Nursery School (2014, Yaan, Japan). Complementing the exhibition is a film screening on April 8 of a 2006 documentary about Ban, *Shigeru Ban: An Architect for Emergencies*. The film features extensive interviews with the architect about the practical, philosophical, and aesthetic aspects of his work. The exhibition is held in collaboration with Austin College, which will present Ban with the 2015 Posey Leadership Award at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science on March 26.

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Left: In its first three decades, *Playboy* featured more architecture and design than naked women. Here is Hugh Hefner, hard at work, wearing pajamas in his rotating round bed.

tastemaker and Preciado maintains that by defining space he was influencing behavior.

Sigfried Giedion introducing his hefty tome *Space, Time and Architecture* (second edition) coined the term “Playboy Architecture” to describe the American postwar attitude as “jumping from one sensation to another and quickly bored with everything.” Preciado contends that Hefner was not merely bored with the status quo but launching an all out media campaign against it as an “attack on modern domesticity and the traditional relationship between gender, sex, and architecture.” And Hefner’s approach was one of play, leisure, and entertainment; he organized his issues on the floor and conducted business in pajamas—work has never been more leisurely.

Hefner, contra Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*, promoted the urban bachelor pad through his own Playboy penthouse. Equipped with the latest audio-visual equipment, lighting, appliances, and furniture, the modern male could entertain, both parties and women, freely. He relocates from the traditional domestic suburban home, and in Hefner’s case a wife, where life revolves around the kitchen and family room, and presumably a reproductive bedroom that implies an end goal of children. Cool, urban apartment living revolves around the bar, the open floor plan, and the bedroom, with its implication of free love and sex. Preciado differentiates two radical postwar spatial regimes: the feminist liberation from domestic space and “constructing a specifically ‘male’ domestic space,” as either a retreat from traditional domestic space or a reaction to the increasing public role of women. Similarly, Preciado implies that Playboy’s stag parties and dedication to interior space has homoerotic tendencies, but it was Playboy’s inclusion of naked women that kept it from being “simply a women’s or queer magazine.”

Playboy created the identity of a man who enjoyed things indoors, rather than the allures of field and stream and mechanics. His domain was the heterotopic play space of the urban apartment. **continued on page 23**

Eroticizing Everyday Architecture

Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy’s Architecture and Biopolitics
Beatriz Preciado
Zone Books
\$29.95

Archi-porn, a contraction of architectural pornography, is bandied about for those publications and websites that feature lush photos of buildings and spaces—full frontals, 3/4 close ups, subtle details—accompanied by scant captions. I like those. They encourage fantasizing about projects and they expose

a lot of projects quickly: form, landscape, lighting, materials, furniture—the things we think about when flipping pages. Occasionally there’s a good article too.

Eschewing images for words, Beatriz Preciado peeks in on Playboy and its impact on postwar American culture, particularly through its use of architecture. In the decidedly academic *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy’s Architecture and Biopolitics*, Preciado follows the origins of Hugh Hefner’s empire and its focus on architecture and interior design as reinforcing his agenda for the cool, hip postwar generation. Though he published stories, articles, and interviews, Preciado contends that Hefner targeted white, middle class, heterosexual male lifestyle through a focused multimedia campaign featuring

architecture and interior design.

Preciado noticed, in rereading three decades of Playboy from the first issue in 1953, that the magazine featured “more architecture plans, interior decoration pictures, and design objects than naked women.” The first image in her book is a sketch based on a 1962 photo of Hefner with a model of the Los Angeles Playboy Club, followed by a similarly posed photo of Le Corbusier holding a model. Photo-rich articles hyped the Playboy Penthouse and its amenities as “part of the architectural imaginary of the second half of the 20th century.” Nearly every issue included full color spreads promoting modern design and positively reviewing the work of modern architects, against the grain of contemporary mainstream publications. Hefner was the

Lotus-Eaters Lost

My Beautiful City Austin
By David Heymann
John Hardy Publishing, \$24

David Heymann’s first book of fiction begins with a nostalgic description of Austin, Texas, as remembered by the unnamed narrator and central character, who happens to be an architect. The heart of the memory centers on a visit to the hill country just west of town, along the Colorado River above Redbud Isle, that he made during a summer in his high school years, in the early-mid 1970s presumably. The narrator and a group of friends, who have just driven in from Houston, explore this rugged terrain in their car, feeling that they’ve stumbled into a land that time forgot, little changed from the

Pleistocene Epoch. Then the car dips down to cross a dry creek bed and they discover that there, among the scrub cedar and beneath the arching branches of live oaks, are modest little houses, shaded from the blazing sun by the encircling vegetation, responding more to the contours of the limestone-studded topography than the presence of the road. A joint is smoked and the group of teenagers pushes on until they find a place to pullover and park among some other cars and a path down to the slow moving, dammed up river. They clamber down the path surrounded by flitting birds, crossing land that seems to have no designation whatsoever, neither public park nor private property. At the river, they jump in the cool, clear water and swim with other swimmers and people floating languidly in inner tubes. No one challenges their presence or pays them much mind at all, except to offer informal greetings, “hey man, hey,” as Heymann records it. Later, on the banks of the river, the narrator is dumbstruck when he sees a beautiful young woman strolling unselfconsciously past, wearing nothing but

flip flops and a beach towel rolled around her waist emblazoned with the likeness of Yosemite Sam.

And there you have it, the Austin of yore, or of myth anyway; the spaced out place where misfits gather to get high, have sex, and live close to nature; the unostentatious, come-as-you-are land of the Lotus-eaters; the final refuge from the “overstuffed burritoness of America,” in Heymann’s words. It’s not a vision the reader gets to enjoy for long.

Before the opening section ends (the book is marketed as a collection of short stories, but reads more like an episodic novel that follows the trajectory of one main character on a consistent thematic arc throughout) the narrator visits this landscape again, years later, and finds it utterly destroyed, not by the ravages of fire or some other cataclysm, but by the built environment. Where before there had been a primordial setting, dotted discreetly by small houses integrated within the landscape, he now discovers a jumble of oversized Italianate villas insinuating themselves preposterously within the Central

Texas countryside. “Oh man!” writes Heymann. “There were kids in high school who would suddenly, from one day to the next, be assaulted by a kind of virulent, weeping, unrestrainable acne. Where before there had been a hot hairy emptiness, now as far west as you could see these steroidal houses, huge and tall and gross and unseemly and pretentious, were erupting out of the cedar forest like a horrid skin condition, an outburst of limestone whiteheads.”

From that point on you get the idea that the book’s title, *My Beautiful City Austin*, is, if not meant completely ironically, a perspective that takes more and more mental gymnastics to keep. The narrator, an architect who finds himself gainfully employed in designing houses for the new rich, struggles to hold onto this idea of what really makes Austin beautiful while perpetrating the same crimes against the landscape that he finds so despicable. Each story, or chapter, tells the tale of another commission and his attempts to convince his clients of new modes of living space, which his idealistic training in architecture

continued on page 23

EROTICIZING EVERYDAY ARCHITECTURE
continued from page 22 True to academia, Preciado includes a healthy dose of theory but it rarely overruns her thesis; Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze appear in small doses, as does contemporary architectural theorist Beatriz Colomina. Though academic work, the breadth of subject matter, topics, and anecdotes keep the discourse from becoming dry.

After exploring the socio-historical development of Playboy and the playmate, Preciado returns to the spatial with Playboy's move from the Chicago penthouse and clubhouse to the Los Angeles mansion, complete with an expansive exterior and landscaping. But Hefner and Preciado always return to the interior space. The mediatization of space as an electro-prosthetics is shown in Hefner's hyper-imagined rotating bed, which is simultaneously a sleeping and work surface, sexual playground, bar, stereo, television, telephone, and intercom, all complete with remote controls and secret doors.

Preciado even takes a dip into the era's more radical explorations in the 1960s when Haus-Rucker-Co and Archigram and its constituents designed personal micro-environments and body suits. Each, like Hefner's rotating bed, simultaneously shielded the user from the outside world and extended one's senses and presence into it. Preciado sees these architectural mediatizations as precursors to today's smart phones and apps—dates, cabs, food—all at a fingertip.

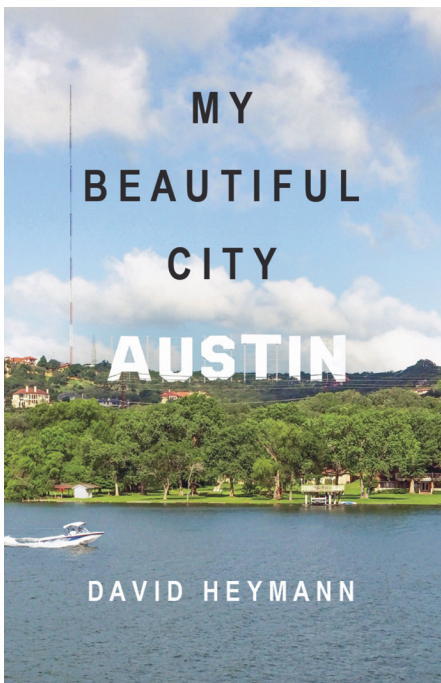
The conspicuous lack of photos, Preciado

explains, results from not conceding to Playboy's request to edit, or censor, content in return for image rights. Controlling the archive, she writes, controls the future history. Playboy doesn't like its name appearing with the word "pornography."

Preciado, a transgender and queer activist, does not focus on exploitation and chauvinism, but rather on social, medical, technological, and capitalistic aspects of postwar society that enabled a change in consumption and lifestyle, what she calls the "pharmacopornographic" regime, including women's liberation, the pill, and disposable income. Preciado navigates a fine line between gender politics, architectural and social history, and new technologies to bring a well rounded look at the phenomenon of sex and architecture as promoted by a 20th century business icon.

Pornotopia, though premised on Playboy, uses the magazine as an armature to explore sexual and gendered spaces and apparatuses in the second half of the twentieth century: bidets and brothels, striptease and boudoirs, bikinis and Barbie dolls, glass facades and open plans, media and broadcasting, the latter as through the voyeuristic eye; Preciado touches on all of these. It just so happens that Hefner rode the crest of these technologies and modern architecture in the service of his idealized space, and consequently promoted them through magazines, television shows, mansions, and clubhouses into a multimillion-dollar empire in a move that was "to eroticize everyday architecture."

JAMES WAY IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.



COURTESY JOHN HARDY PUBLISHING

LOTUS-EATERS LOST continued from page 22 school has prepared him to deliver. The clients, almost invariably, poo-poo his sensitive, environmentally conscious, modernist inspired notions in favor of constructing fantasies of the past—ersatz limestone ruins, faux 19th-century vernaculars. "They are conservationists," he at one point decides, "though they are destroying a hope many architects secretly harbor, that architecture is a conduit to the real."

Heymann writes with no shortage of humor. I found myself laughing out loud

in several places. In person, as on the page, he comes off as a sort of Matthew McConaughey of Architecture & Letters, which isn't to undercut his clear intelligence, but more to convey his laid-back swagger and the confidence with which he fires his darts. And his disappointment isn't only leveled at his fictional character's clients. He unloads on obstinate, dumb-headedness wherever it appears, even in other members of his profession: "Architects think people aren't interested in buildings anymore, and don't look at them, and consequently don't, can't, appreciate what architects really want to do, which is to make fetishized constructions to sit on the landscape like mechanical praying mantids, which will make people look at them some more."

As an architectural journalist, it is refreshing to hear an architect tell the sort of stories about building projects, even fictional ones, that don't typically make the press release. It's no surprise, of course, that such frankness should be so rare. After all, who would hire an architect who goes around trashing his clients? Heymann, who is an architect himself, perhaps best known for the Crawford ranch house he designed for George W. Bush, and a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, is aware of this. He includes a disclaimer at the end of the book, "To my beloved clients: rest assured, you do not appear in these stories." In spite of this assurance, Heymann has said his wife doesn't believe he'll ever get a commission again. If so, it wouldn't be such a bad outcome. He'd have more time to write.

AARON SEWARD IS AN'S MANAGING AND SOUTHWEST EDITOR.

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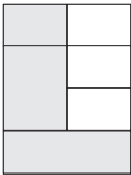
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Remaking First National for Today's Dallas

As we wish a happy 50th to the First National Bank Tower in Dallas we reflect upon a staple of the skyline and the future that is taking shape.

At the halfway mark of the 20th century, Dallas was a city experiencing unprecedented growth. With it would come one of the defining building booms of the era. Fueled by a burgeoning oil industry, inland port, and continued success as a financial center for the region, the consolidation of banking operations would result in the largest construction boom of towers since the late 20s. The historic buildings along Main Street could no longer meet the spatial and functional requirements of this growing industry. In a city built upon the notion that everything bigger is better, modest solutions were a thing of the past. Towers would define the future.

Republic and First National banks were long-time neighbors and competitors. Both were located doors away from each other along Main Street. Republic Bank made the first move toward a new headquarters. Designed by Harrison and Abramovitz (the architecture firm responsible for the aluminum-clad Alcoa Building in Pittsburgh) the 36-story Republic Bank opened at the corner of Ervay and Saint Paul streets in 1954. Topped by a vertically stretched crossed spire, an adaptation of the bank's logo, the Republic Bank tower would stand as the tallest in the city until 1959 and would send a visual message to the world of Dallas' rising modern prominence.

As the Republic Tower opened to the public, First National continued to face immense growth that led to challenging functional constraints. At its peak, the bank's offices occupied eight buildings stemming out from its original home on Main Street. With the merger of Dallas National Bank in 1954, First National built its final addition on the corner of Field and Elm streets. The annex marked the first piece in the 13

parcels—one of the last remaining vestiges of the Elm Street Theater District—the bank would acquire to construct its new tower.

The tower's design was the result of a partnership between two prominent Dallas architects: George Dahl and Thomas E. Stanley. George Dahl's celebrated career covered nearly every function and style throughout the 20th century. From the early adaptations of the Chicago style in the design of the Neiman Marcus and Titcher-Goettinger department stores in Downtown Dallas to the focal art-deco structures and planning of the Texas Centennial Fairgrounds, Dahl's work would shape into the mid-century modern era with projects that embraced the evolving built landscape of the city.

Where Dahl was the seasoned architect of the team, Thomas E. Stanley, by comparison, was the up-and-comer. Stanley spent his formative years under noted Fort Worth architect Wyatt C. Hedrick and later opened his own practice in the early 1960s. His office would ultimately be short-lived, but it amassed an impressive portfolio of corporate and retail architecture, including a series of tower projects in Austin, Chicago, and Indianapolis. The Gulf and Western building at 15 Columbus Circle in New York City marked the height of his career. The tower was converted into the Trump International Hotel and Tower in 1997.

Open to the public on January 31, 1965, the 52-story First National Bank Tower more than doubled the space of the eight-building campus, uniting the bank's operations under one roof for the first time in decades. At 628 feet, the tower claimed the title of tallest west of the Mississippi River and visually supplanted the rivaling banks with one iconic gesture. As an anchor of the skyline, the design focused heavily on the tower's vertical stature with an alternating series

of black and white vertical banding, conveying a height taller than constructed. The stretched hexagonal plan gave the massing a slender appearance as well as a leasable advantage in offering expanded views outward. The building's most unique gesture came at dusk through an integrated fluorescent lighting scheme that runs vertically up each white band. The feature, meant to give the tower the same visual presence day or night, was the first in a common design element seen on towers throughout downtown Dallas today.

The achievements of the First National Bank went beyond the marks for height. The bank held many distinctions for largest usage of building material, from Burmese Teak wood and Persian carpeting to a tinted-curtain wall system that would set the industry standard. The tower also held claim to the highest escalator in the world, which was located within Dallas' first observation deck.

The design of the podium was an exercise in image and contextual response. In a defining trait of Stanley's architectural language, the banking operations were lifted in a single mass atop a series of periphery columns. Meant to evoke the Parthenon in Athens, the columns taper downward from a curved capital, a similar design move as seen in Stanley's neighboring Sanger Harris department store project. The language carried over to the details of the podium, which is clad in Pentelic marble extracted from the Battle of Marathon site in Greece.

Beneath the modern entablature retail, the lobby and banking elements could be arranged freely. Stepped back from the street, the massing provided angles of daylighting into a series of sunken plazas and courtyards. Clad in black granite, the cubic formation of the podium blends seamlessly with the storefront, creating a series of frames at night to view the tenants within. The tower and podium are anchored to the ground plane through an extensive use of Texas granite, extracted from the same quarry as the stone used on the Texas State Capitol in Austin.

The podium configuration afforded a unique organization of program. With the banking lobby and public trading floor lifted, the entry sequence from the street upward offered an intriguing approach that gave visitors a unique vantage point to view the surroundings and an opportunity to sense the weight of the podium. This move provided a free flowing path beneath that connected retail anchors with a covered walkway. A rooftop deck blurred the transition between podium and tower. Serving both public and private functions, the roof garden defined a captivating urban space complete with a sculpture park and dining terraces.

By the mid 70s, First National no longer dominated the skyline. The title of tallest building west of the Mississippi River would be taken by 555 California Street in San Francisco in 1969 and the Renaissance Tower took the title of the tallest Dallas building in 1974. First National's prominence and the building boom inevitably came to an end with the savings and loan crisis in 1986. By 2010, suffering from a depleted occupancy rate and ceased banking operations, the First National Bank Tower closed to the public. After changing hands and going through multiple design iterations, Olympic Property Partners is now moving forward with a project to convert the building into a mixed-use development with retail as the primary occupant at the base and a conversion of the tower into 480 residential units. Merriman Associates/Architects (MAA), a perennial contributor to the historic landscape of Downtown Dallas, is responsible for the redesign effort.

The First National Bank Tower poses a unique challenge with the historic tax credit program. With the tower having turned 50 in January the project could receive up to 20 percent in tax credits from the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program as well as an additional 25 percent from the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, which went into effect in January 2015. For the project to be considered for the National Register it must comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, exhibiting a high degree of importance and contribution to historical events. Significance in the development of architectural, landscape, and engineering fields is also of consideration.

The First National Bank Tower is all but a shoo-in for historic designation, however ownership has declined to pursue it as the redesign calls for the alteration of certain key elements of the architecture, from removing the marble to reconfiguring internal spaces. Though unfortunate at first glance, the process of designation has, understandably, been and continues to be a highly considered and contested portion of the redevelopment process.

MAA's design maintains the original intent behind the basic massing. The three-story volume housing levels 6, 7, and 8 is maintained as a parking garage with program below remaining independent of the perimeter columns. The tower architecture, from an exterior appearance, is left unchanged in form and character as well. Major additions and alterations to the formal nature of the architecture occur at the podium level. In response to changing market and cultural forces, pedestrian experience is the key driver in the design changes,

including the removal of sunken plazas to the addition of a grand stair and seating element that connects the corner of Akard and Elm with the double-height retail spaces.

The changes that conflict with the historic integrity of the building occur in the material selection. The updated palette addresses safety and aesthetic issues resulting from the poor initial construction quality. Other aspects point again toward the changing market, favoring materials that enhance the public nature of the podium through the use of transparent surfaces and updated clear glazing. Removed materials are slated, if they remain intact, to be stored for potential reuse throughout the design.

The Pentelic Marble poses the single largest issue. Though aesthetically defining, the thin veneer of the marble panels—having been applied through a process of wire strung through the top and attached to the substructure with a thin coat of adhesive—requires either re-pinning or replacement. Both pose difficult constraints. Due to their thinness, some panels have cracked under multiple tests and show a series of attachment points at the corners. Replacement also raises concerns, as the panels were selected in such a number from the original quarry that sources are difficult to come by. Left in place, without any attention, the marble would continue to pose a safety issue with the possibility that panels could come detached. This represents the biggest consideration in the renovation process, but it is only one of many in the collective whole that would affect a positive outcome in the tax credit process.

The renovation design is not a far cry from the original intent of the basic massing and organization of the First National Bank Tower, but it is a clear departure from the details. The tower poses many questions and issues with the conversion of mid-century towers, many of which are being repurposed for a use that was unintended in the original design. With the MAA design, the reinterpretation of the podium is in many ways considering the evolution of the public portion of the project through the integration of design elements that will activate the building for the Dallas of today.

The debate is inevitable, yes, but let us not forget the historical context. The First National Bank Tower was built during a time when Dallas was transitioning into a commercial hub for the region. Today that evolution is just as exciting but with a mandate toward a livable inner city. In the end, re-adapting a project of this size to meet that demand may go down as a more historically appropriate move than preserving its original form.

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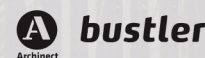
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