THE MORAL OBLIGATION TO BE INTELLIGENT / Feature Editor: Gary Lawrence

I'm Going to Have to Drink This / Matthew Richter

The Brightwater Project / Eduardo Calerón

Pleasure: The Starting Point of Architecture / Pierluigi Serraino
Because vintage architecture should come with new toilets.

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Any donation is welcome and helps in our ongoing leadership campaign. Join in the fun, be a part of the debate.

ARCADE invites you to join us in the pursuit of in depth coverage and debate of Northwest design. Join these leaders in a sustaining commitment to this critical effort.

Please contact ARCADE 206-971-5596.

Charles Eames Centennial: The Ideas Within the Designs

Designer Charles Eames was born in June, 1907. Starting in June 2007, an Eames Centennial year is being honored on every continent (except Antarctica, and we are working on that). Demetrios will bring the celebration to Seattle in the most appropriate way possible, connecting the audience with the Eames Design philosophy. Utilizing rarely seen content from the Eames Office archives, Demetrios will talk about the Eames ideas and process, as well as a personal epiphany that Chuck had in relation to the height of the depression that changed the future of design.

Speaker: Simeon Demetrios, Director, Eames Office

The Inevitable Architect: An Introduction to Implementing Green Building in Your Designs

Ferat about the emerging field of green building, see some of the most exciting technologies available and get a glimpse of the inevitable future of our buildings. Join us in an energetic and lively discussion on green architecture from one of the pioneers in the field.

Speaker: Kirk Graytend, Principal, graytend architects

Sustainability Roundtable: Visionary. Revolutionary. Necessary

Great design is one of the most significant trends of our lifetime. Learning how to integrate sustainable design, green materials and products while keeping the costs down and clients satisfied is an ongoing challenge for these professional practicing green. How does the sustainable message manifest and inspire the design: the industry faces today? The inevitable will become how can you embrace sustainable design, and new world solutions and implement it in your projects.

Speakers: Peter Rocky, Managing Director, Rocky Peterson – NW
c;graytend architects, Principal, graytend architects
Donald Nex, Stronger Sustainable Design Program, G. L. Gordon Senior Administrator
Sara Lewis, President, The Architecture Foundation
Moderator: Matthew David, Assistant Professor, School of Architecture and Construction Management, Washington State University

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THE MORAL OBLIGATION TO BE INTELLIGENT

We make every effort to ensure accuracy, but neither guidelines for understanding the tremendous power a daily newspaper has to prejudice public opinion; exercise sponsorship.

...and culture, lifestyle, real estate or as arcane, and budgeting space for it took on big buildings, like 1000 Broadway, it doesn’t happen in most places — including with international travel (the Filberg house borrows profoundly of the site’s sun, shade, view and surrounding flora, which includes a go out there from Vancouver on weekends, and we would cut and scrape with modernist landscape design in the province. The rolling roof above them undulating under a skylight to capture even more of the vision and rootedness of Rob Filberg or Doug Field purchases. Indeed, Rob Filberg envisioned the house as the site of evening entertainments at a peace-promoting international think tank he had wanted to establish. At the same time, progressive designers and engineers are moving to establishing an infrastructure that actually brings us closer to nature, conforming to the landscape (surroundings) and to become integral to cultural systems in order to enriching for our everyday experience. The simplicity and beauty of the objects themselves proscribes all threats of being alive and the whole idea of “wellness,” to bring this notion to our contemporary times. Pleasure is here portrayed in another light.

...help to define a new language — a new grammar. The most obvious example is the notion of structure, which in the past (or more accurately, in the 19th century) was dark and immaterial. In the 20th century, structure was seen as something that could be designed. The 21st century has seen a return to the notion of structure as something that is not only visible, but also creates a sense of place. This is a shift that has been driven by the need to create more sustainable and resilient buildings.

...and log repairs. Once a network like this is in place, the system can predict failures, schedule maintenance, and once a network like this is in place, the system can predict failures, schedule maintenance, and online access to data. A centralized control system can individually maximize efficiency. Timeframe is one day. The system even prints a résumé of added value. As a result there has been little interest in alternative systems, and this has led to a decrease in the number of alternative systems being developed. As a result there has been little interest in alternative systems, and this has led to a decrease in the number of alternative systems being developed.
Swift Company proposes a ‘Skunk Works’ approach to make the next leap in integrating stormwater management within a dense urban environment. Skunk Works relies on vigorous R&D—and expects failure as a mark of excellence. The barriers between disciplines and systems are dissolved in order to encourage significant design innovation.

Swift Company believes that stormwater management must be integrated into the urban fabric. A conspicuous expression of stormwater systems—in an urban context rich with civic life. Ecological function coexists with and enhances daily urban life, for a layered, joint and multiple use of the public realm.

PASSION. VISION. PLACE.

5 Points for a New (Portland) Architecture (Critic)

Dear ARCADE: A few of us Portland architects got together and came up with the following guidelines for the Oregonian newspaper to use while interviewing for a new architecture critic.

With apologies to M. Le Corbusier:

In order to be a decent architecture critic, you (the applicant) must:

1. Have a substantial knowledge of, or background in, architecture. This provides you with architectural values grounded in practice and/or theory, a necessary prerequisite to any independent thinking. Without them, you cannot comprehend what “good” or “interesting” work is and your viewpoints will forever be shaped by the agendas of others, resulting in merely architectural gossip (unfortunately something Portland already has). A reasonable background in the field means you will at least have the ability to distinguish trends and extrapolate菲尔从 work and ideas that truly have something to say.

2. Be passionate about architecture. If you don’t love buildings and landscapes and cities, from the beginning of time to the present day, stay out of it and let someone else come in who does.

3. Be willing to learn, if your resume in architecture is thin. Ask questions, take notes, attend lectures and meet everyone, not just local celebrities and power brokers. Resist the temptation toward imperiousness, based simply upon your position of influence.

4. Understand the tremendous power a daily newspaper has to prejudice public opinion; exercise it with wisdom and without personal vengeance. To use your position as a public relations vehicle for one particular firm is an abuse of that power and an embarrassment to the community at large. And please, go easy on the celebrity coverage—why hash over the same tired ground when there are so many opportunities to shine a light on lesser known regional talents and issues? Of course, if you don’t know architecture well, you’ll lack the capability to identify these (see Point 1).

5. Do your research professionally and accurately. If you get it wrong, apologize promptly and give the right people credit. Incorrect attributions, inaccurate descriptions and the consistent omission of information erodes your credibility across the board.

Respectfully submitted,
Ms. Belle Luce Keyes and Friends
Portland, Oregon

Care to comment on this or any other article? Contact kelly@arcadejournal.com.
End of an Era: Gragg at the Oregonian / Clair Enlow

Randy Gragg has left the Oregonian. He’s gone on to a magazine project launching about the time this goes to press; one he’s understandably closed-lipped about.

Portland architects are heaving a sigh of relief or waking up and wondering if the heat and light around big design issues was only a dream.

Gragg was not on the assignment list at the Oregonian 15 years ago. “They covered standard hearings and controversies, but there was very little and mostly after the fact,” said Portland urban designer George Crandall.

When Gragg got on staff in 1992, he applied the chutzpah he had honed as an art critic (and editor of Seattle’s non-profit arts journal, Reflets) to the real buildings going up all around him. Over the years since, Portland joined the small club of American cities with architecture critics who are identified with them.

How did it happen? It’s easier to say why it doesn’t happen in most places — including Seattle. In the metro daily, architecture tends to be a stepchild in the houses of arts and culture, lifestyle, real estate or political affairs. The issues are shrunken as arcane, and budgeting space for it makes editors squirm. They fear catering to commercial or political interests. On the other hand, negative commentary seems to beg for a lawbreak.

Finding a little slack in the chain of industrial journalism, a writer can keep internal skeptics at bay long enough to get a voice. When he started at the Oregonian, and long afterward, Gragg’s formal beat was reporting on the arts. He just extended his coverage to include architecture. He took on big buildings, like 1000 Broadway, the ODS Tower and Fox Tower, with focused reporting on publications to validate their work.

With Portland’s aerial tram on the south waterfront, he called for a design competition, lest such potentially iconic project get reduced to haphazard engineering standards. Grumbling about the cost of the sculptural steel-framed station that resulted (with photovoltaic screens), he got on the train captures the public’s imagination.

In these cases, Gragg rightly claims responsibility for directing public attention toward opportunities for excellence. “He was for a better union,” says Oregon’s Third District Congressman, Earl Blumenauer. “He was consistent in that regard.”

Gragg has been criticized, and not just by populist Portland blogger Jack Bogdanski, who clearly believes he is in league with the devil’s duo of developers and planners pushing density. And Gragg’s praise of certain projects — like the imperial Nike North Campus in Beaverton, has come under fire.

These unwieldy credentials to another concern: The critic without strong credentials gets spun by articulate and successful architects and their cronies. Like other journalists and critics who have taken up the challenge of writing about architecture for wide distribution, notably Herbert Muschamp of The New York Times, Gragg has been accused of playing favorites. To paraphrase, he never saw a project by Cloepfil or Holst — that wasn’t great, and he trashed or ignored the work of others without regard for the complexities of design projects.

The fact that next to none of the architects who have grumbled about Gragg in the past will articulate these concerns on the record is perhaps a testament to the degree that design-oriented architects rely on publications to validate their work.

By his own account, Gragg was just “highlighting the work of younger architects who were breaking out and challenging convention…an art critic works, and it’s a small group.” Equal-opportunity criticism may be oxymoronic, but these days work on the above mentioned injunctions in new institutions, and make internal support for the critic even more tenuous.

As Gragg makes the transition from critic to entrepreneur, let us hope the space he and his editors and readers created at the Oregonian does not collapse.

Executive editor Peter Bhatia is supportive but not encouraging. The power of Gragg’s arguments is hard to replace, he says. “It has to do with market,” said Bhatia. “A place like Portland can support (critics)…however, there is no particular effort to rethink or even fill the role. It’s a matter of priorities.”

But markets are created, as city and critic mature together. Ultimately, the role of the critic is to educate the public and hold designers, owners and developers accountable. Not just for the money they spend and the program they fit, but for the places they create and the opportunities they may miss.

And that’s more than fair, according to Blumenauer. “The developer and the architect, they have the ultimate pulpit — the building, the land, the commission,” he says. “They get the last word.”

Gragg himself was an early and vocal backer of the Portland Tram Project — in a way along with many otherSr. Clar Clair Enlow covered the tram project for the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce, whose offices were next to Portland’s own along with many other blogs. The Portland Tram Project was managed by The Oregonian newspaper.

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The “most beautiful house in Canada” is up for sale, and $10 million will net you a masterpiece. The Filberg house in Comox was called just that by Canadian Homes in 1961, soon after this airy, pavilion-like dwelling was completed.

Arthur Erickson’s First Masterpiece on Sale: The Filberg House / Trevor Boddy

The Arthur Erickson–designed house sits astride a spectacular bluff, blessed with one of the most astonishing views in the province: straight south to Hornby and Denman Island; east to the snow-capped peaks of the Coast Range on the mainland; and west to the closer in forests and mountain slopes of Vancouver Island.

The Filberg house is perhaps the best integration of modernist house with modernist landscape design in the province. The rolling lawns around the Robert Filberg house are deceiving, as according to Mr. Erickson, they are anything but natural: the slopes, views and shapes of the entire bluff-top landscape were altered by the client working closely with the architect.

“When I first arrived up there,” says Mr. Erickson, “I thought, ‘Rob Filberg was on top of a small earth house; a Cabezon’,” scraping and moving the soil of the same ocean view land his lumber-baron father had long owned. Mr. Filberg had studied at the University of BC with Erickson in the early years of World War II, just before the architect-to-be joined up with British intelligence.

“I knew him only passingly then,” says Mr. Erickson, just after receiving the house design commission in 1958, they bonded deeply. “I would go out there from Vancouver on weekends, and we would cut and scrape and revise the landscape, hating right up there to understand the play of light.” Mr. Erickson says the design emerged organically month later, only after client and designer came to share an understanding of the site’s sun, shade, view and surrounding flora, which includes a magnificent mature oak, still standing.

All the time, the Mr. Erickson was a UBC architecture professor obsessed with international travel (the Filberg house borrows profoundly from Andalusian Islamic architecture), but his own design portfolio consisted solely of several small houses after, in his own words, “being fired by all the best architectural offices in Vancouver.”

Mr. Erickson’s prizing friendship with Mr. Filberg made for an unusually close mapping of architectural detail with his client’s needs. For example, more of the walls of this house are covered with glass than in any other Erickson design, tempered by outrigger shades fashioned from a lattice of yellow cedar blocking. “Rob had a problem with depression, especially in winter,” says the architect, “so we tried to bring in as much tempered light as we could, all season.”

There was never an opportunity to test whether this healing-by-design would work, because Rob Filberg killed himself shortly before house construction was completed. By the 1960s the Filberg house had passed into the hands of a local surgeon, an Inuit raised in arctic Canada. With his northern background, he found the house filled with southern light, and shapes of the entire bluff-top landscape were altered by the client working closely with the architect.

“After his death,” says Mr. Erickson, “the house was never restored, never respected, coming from a site where Mr. Erickson first knew what he was doing.”

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This is where the story shifts from tragic to hopeful. Doug Field, owner of the locally manufactured BuzzBomb and Zzinger fishing lure, purchased the house he had visited as a child for $450,000 in 1999. Using skills honed in restoring antique cars and aircraft, and in his fishing lure business, Mr. Field and his then wife spent nearly a decade painstakingly restoring the house, right down to the brand details of metalwork and stair treads.

The Field’s very accurate restoration of the Filberg house is of little more amazing because they did it without any direction from Mr. Erickson’s office, or indeed any preservation consultant. They found pieces of a long removed copper fireplace hood in a carriage sale, and worked to perfect their restorations from every image of the house’s interiors and exteriors they could find.

After the Fields finished their restoration, and just before their work was recognized with an award from the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, I had the honour of being one of the first people to spend a night in the restored Filberg house (the Fields then lived next door in a converted big bungalow). I could lay in bed and watch the sun track over the ocean view, because Mr. Erickson had set master bedroom windows low enough to ensure visual contact. In the course of 30 hours, April’s day grey sky shifted to continuous downpours then brightened, the house’s spaces and appointments equally impressive in any condition. Late in the day the cubic, high ceilling living room’s falstones washed with glowing sunset light diffused through the cedar grannie.

The Filberg house’s main structure is thin steel columns, fastened at the top with cylindrical cedar up- and down-lower lights, the planter roof above them unulating under a skylight to capture even more of the embalming view. A wihist friend wished she had brought her instrument, finding Mr. Erickson’s spaces theatrical, even musical.

Indeed, Rob Filberg envisioned the house as the site of evening entertainments of a peace-promoting international think tank he had wanted to establish there, says Mr. Erickson, with cabins for visiting scholars, artists and politicians scattered around it in his site plan. The institute was not to be, as the Filberg family sold the house soon after his death. Later, owner Doug Field purchased the house and grounds for $10 million, it is this landscape that I am most worried about. The house is safe, I would think, but those cliff lands are for sale for chopping up into oceanside condos, an absent millionaire’s second or third house.

Neither the Filberg house nor its grounds have any historic site protection from municipality or province. I hope that a new owner with the vision and mendacity of Mr. Filberg or Doug Field purchases it and keeps this true masterpiece — Arthur Erickson’s first — intact for future generations.

‘Arthur Erickson, www.arthurerickson.com’
Looking Forward Looking Back: 25 Years of Earthworks at Mill Creek Canyon / Brice Maryman and Cheryl dos Remédios

Contemporary artists and designers are chafing against the long-held view that humanity stands apart from natural forces. For artists, ecologically-aware, site specific installations are becoming the norm.

At the same time, progressive designers and engineers are moving away from the still-prevalent emphasis on building for perpetuity, and they are beginning to embrace flexible systems, distributed networks and embodied resilience as the ideal. In a world that brings us Katrina and climate change, stasis seems less and less stable.

Strange as it seems, 25 years ago Herbert Bayer succeeded in creating an infrastructure that actually brings us closer to nature, showing us a new way to work with the systems that flow beneath our feet. Installed in 1982, the Earthworks at Mill Creek Canyon were immediately lauded for their fusion of art and infrastructure, making the installation a powerful precedent for engineers, landscape architects and artists. Originally implemented due to the need for a flood control dam, the installations placed formal and aesthetic considerations on the same plane as functional ones, creating a richly layered public space.

As a Bauhaus master, Bayer's entire career was dedicated to the integration of artistic concerns into the everyday operations of society. Through his work, he carried on his mission of continually seeking to fuse form and function. Perhaps nowhere else did he carry out that ideal on such a grand scale as at Mill Creek Canyon, his first and only public park design.

While addressing the functional requirements of the program, Bayer herself lays out her vision for the park in the August 1982 King County Arts Commission newsletter: “A dam in the ordinary sense constitutes a radical interference with the natural configuration of the land. My intent was, therefore, to give the dams a natural appearance conforming to the landscape (surroundings) and to become integral parts of the landscape being created.”

To achieve this vision, Bayer crafted a series of sculpted spaces that feel both ancient and modern. Pure forms — cones, circles, lines and berms — are built into the alluvial delta at the mouth of Mill Creek Canyon. Grass and concrete, a wood bridge and steps: these are the materials at work, as well as the natural forces of Mill Creek itself. This restrained vocabulary allows focus to remain on the spaces themselves — with solid, archetypal forms playing against the ever-present intermixture of the creek that meanders through the site.

But even here, where Bayer tried to work with nature, the regulatory and contextual terrain has shifted beneath the dam's foundations. As a result of environmental changes, the Earthworks is less pristine than it was when first built. The requirement for the dam's spillway has shifted from a 100-year storm event to a 1,000-year storm event. The Earthworks has also been impacted by changes in fisheries regulations since Mill Creek was recently designated as a “Class A Salmonid Spawning Rearing and Migration” water body. While restoring fish runs has always been a project goal, the City of Kent is now struggling with the proper methods to maintain, preserve and protect both the Earthworks and the salmon runs. Since areas that were previously mown are now off-limits and site lines are reduced by the re-vegetated riparian corridor.

The Earthworks provides a vision for our regional landscapes, and a template for the national discussions about how to fuse natural and cultural systems in order to make place — from Mount Vernon to the Mississippi Delta. As we reconsider our urban infrastructure systems and celebrate the Earthworks' anniversary, we invite you to take a moment to imagine another future for infrastructure, art and design — it is a world that Bayer showed us 25 years ago by dissolving the "barriers" between art and infrastructure to create places that are humane, functional and aesthetically enriching for our everyday experience.

If we could get there, Herbert would smile.

Cheryl dos Remédios is the City of Kent's Visual Arts Coordinator, responsible for arts and community engagement. Brice Maryman is a landscape architect and urban designer at Mill Creek Park, where he also serves on the board of the Cultural Landscape Foundation.

Beaver Bayer: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Bayer

ART MATTERS

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To achieve this vision, Bayer crafted a series of sculpted spaces that feel both ancient and modern. Pure forms — cones, circles, lines and berms — are built into the alluvial delta at the mouth of Mill Creek Canyon. Grass and concrete, a wood bridge and steps: these are the materials at work, as well as the natural forces of Mill Creek itself. This restrained vocabulary allows focus to remain on the spaces themselves — with solid, archetypal forms playing against the ever-present intermixture of the creek that meanders through the site.

But even here, where Bayer tried to work with nature, the regulatory and contextual terrain has shifted beneath the dam's foundations. As a result of environmental changes, the Earthworks is less pristine than it was when first built. The requirement for the dam's spillway has shifted from a 100-year storm event to a 1,000-year storm event. The Earthworks has also been impacted by changes in fisheries regulations since Mill Creek was recently designated as a “Class A Salmonid Spawning Rearing and Migration” water body. While restoring fish runs has always been a project goal, the City of Kent is now struggling with the proper methods to maintain, preserve and protect both the Earthworks and the salmon runs. Since areas that were previously mown are now off-limits and site lines are reduced by the re-vegetated riparian corridor.

The Earthworks provides a vision for our regional landscapes, and a template for the national discussions about how to fuse natural and cultural systems in order to make place — from Mount Vernon to the Mississippi Delta. As we reconsider our urban infrastructure systems and celebrate the Earthworks' anniversary, we invite you to take a moment to imagine another future for infrastructure, art and design — it is a world that Bayer showed us 25 years ago by dissolving the "barriers" between art and infrastructure to create places that are humane, functional and aesthetically enriching for our everyday experience.

If we could get there, Herbert would smile.

Cheryl dos Remédios is the City of Kent's Visual Arts Coordinator, responsible for arts and community engagement. Brice Maryman is a landscape architect and urban designer at Mill Creek Park, where he also serves on the board of the Cultural Landscape Foundation.

Beaver Bayer: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Bayer

ART MATTERS
“I’ve always thought that, in many ways, the pinnacle of architecture is the igloo,” says Eldred. “As far as a structure’s relationship to its landscape, culture and resources, the igloo is the definition of elegance.” Oregon building codes don’t recognize frozen water as a structural element, of course, so Nylen and Eldred turned to more permanent materials for their seasonal structure, which needs to withstand snow-and-wind loads during the winter but also be easily disassembled and stored away for the summer.

The front entrance to the Timberline Lodge is on the inside corner of the building’s two wings. In winter, it acts as a giant scoop, collecting snowdrifts 10 feet high or more. To shelter people as they ascend the stairs to the lodge, Nylen and Eldred designed a series of modular parabolic arches cut from aluminum plate and skinned with polycarbonate panels.

The sections are 20 feet across, 20 feet tall and when all 11 are bolted together they’ll create an entryway that tunnels out almost 40 feet from the lodge’s front door. With its pale palette of white panels and aluminum, the entry feels like the interior of a snow cave or the cathedral-like space within a glacier crevasse.

“We conceived of the new entry as a temporary snowdrift, piled against the massive masonry facade of the Lodge,” say the designers, who are collectively known as NE Works. “The entry appears and disappears with the snowfall each season, echoing the cyclical forces of accumulation and erosion. Like a snow cave, it feels carved away.”

The entry not only seems to be carved into the snowbank, but in practice it will be a form which the snow collects around, and as the snow compacts and goes through cycles of melting and refreezing, it’s likely to pull away from the structure, creating a gap between the snowbank and the exterior surface. The designers might have the best of both worlds, a snow tunnel that passes building inspection.

The formal design process began with a perfect parabola, which Nylen and Eldred sculpted away, melting the sides until they undulated like the scalloped overhang of an eroded iceberg or the zaftig shape of an after-the-party ice sculpture.

The designers wanted to keep everything as simple as possible, so the project has been an exercise in paring down the various elements. The sides originally had metal base plates, which were edited out, bringing the polycarbonate panels all the way to the ground. The door in the original plans was removed in favor of a heated walkway to control ice and snow underfoot. Nylen and Eldred wanted the entry to glow like a lantern, and they found a simple solution: a light tube suspended at the apex of the arches will illuminate the structure’s parabolic curve to evenly diffuse the light.

By using translucent materials, the designers assure that the entry will be suffused with sunlight during the day, and at night it will emit a warm glow—a welcome beacon on a dark and snowy night atop Mount Hood.

Brennan Conaway is a founding member of Nowhere Gallery, a furniture designer with 1X1 Design and a creator of public artworks. He lives in Portland. For more from Brennan, visit www.nowheregallery.org and www.onebyonedesign.net.

With its pale palette of white panels and aluminum, the entry feels like the interior of a snow cave or the cathedral-like space within a glacier crevasse.
I’m Going to Have to Drink This: The Surreal Environmentalist Environments of Susan Robb / Matthew Richter

I’m going to have to drink this one day,” Susan realized as she poured yet another batch of acetic acid, chlorquinol, selenium oxide and aminophenol down the darkroom drain and back into Seattle’s water supply.

And that was the last time this prolific photographer worked in black and white photography. It was 1999, and she was in a simple, straightforward and obvious choice.

Eight years later, Susan the environmentalist is talking about building an artificial environment for climatic polar bears, whose ice is vanishing due to industrially (and individually) driven global warming. Susan the artist is talking about creating a new sculpture called Sea Ice Lifeboat—a roughly 20 by 40-foot raft, floating in the waters north of the Bearing Sea, off in Eliot Bay near the Sculpture Park, made of old oil barrels welded together, covered in a skin of clear plastic bottles (and real snow and ice). The topography created by the plastic bottles either resembles an S VOI rising some 15 feet out of the water, or spells out the text “YOU AND ME” in plastic bottles (or, perhaps, another son of high-CO2 emissions). There is a wild polar bear pacing back and forth on the surface.

Devi’s lighthouse is what the state of Alaska’s Department of Habitat Restoration might create if the department were headed by David Lynch (on acid). It’s Andrea Zittel’s Pocket Lynch (on acid). It’s Andrea Zittel’s Pocket Property (on acid). It’s Andrea Zittel’s Pocket Sea—constructed on an artificial island, complete with a shack, a sun deck and a garden (as opposed for polar bears instead of sunbathers). But it’s also got a “Why? Because,” Susan explains, “I would do it for a bear. I would make that and give it to a bear.”

At the same time that Susan is developing Sea Ice Lifeboat, she’s playing with long tubes of black polypropylene. Three times in the past few months, she has installed Black Toobs (as Giant Black Toobs) on the large field outside the conservatory at Seattle’s Volunteer Park. The clumping piece consists of a number (414 in the last iteration) of 30-foot black tubes of polypropylene (the material from which garbage bags are made), filled with air, tied off at one end and staked to the ground at the other end. As the sun heats the black tubes, the air inside expands, and the wind takes them through a bunching, blow-pocked dance reenactment…

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I rarely ask Susan, “Why?” I prefer to keep asking, “What?” and hope to arrive at a detailed enough mental image of the thing to explain the “Why” on its own. The “Why” here is about “underscoring the disastrous effects of global warming.” It’s about “Seattle’s high-tech industry with its very close proximity to rain forests, desert and glacial mountains.”

It’s about the “high-CO2-dischargers that have sponsored a global climate crisis, consummating on a common corporate gesture of buying indulgences for emissions to humanity through sponsorship.”

At least, that’s how Susan writes officially about the project. In person, over a glass or two of Lillet Blanc, however, she seems shocked that I don’t get the “Why” on my own. “I’m smart, but Susan’s smarter, and she often has to look at me with a wide-eyed, head-shaking, ‘Duh’ on the face,” she explains things that are, to her, painfully obvious.

“Why? Because,” Susan explains, “I would do it for a bear. I would make that and give it to a bear.”

These installations are not sponsored by the So-and-So Foundation; they are not permitted by the parks department; they are official, sanctioned. They are there, says Susan, to spark the question, “Why is this here? What is this doing?”

Are they huge black penises, beckoning and hunting the sunbathers on the lawn? Are they sexes of racing tubes or things in liquid wind? Are they representations of humanity’s amazing ability to create continuous streams of garbage? No. They’re tubes of polypropylene, stuck to the ground, rising and falling with the sun and the wind. The simplicity and beauty of the objects themselves proscribes all attempts to anthropomorphize or overanalyze them.

In talking about her own work, Susan speaks of hybridizations, kaleidoscopic intersections of ideas and images, and an idealized symbiotic relationship between technology, industry and nature. As a human, she is somehow deeply moved by the fact that as humans “we are environment destroyers — I mean, isn’t that what ‘human’ means?” As an artist, she positions herself to respond to these environmental issues in a way a funhouse mirror responds to the reality standing before it: twisted through the logic and intelligence of natural systems, through the technologies available to modern humanity and through the personal brilliance that inspires the unspoken (but still heard), “Well duh, what else are you going to do with a sun, some wind and a bunch of garbage bags?"

Matthew Richter is a freelance and former executive director of Consolidated Works. He is the former performance curator of The Stranger and currently produces and curates performances and public events in Seattle, WA. His current projects include Re:In, a site-specific and immersive environment that will open in November 2007 in the middle of Greenwich Village, New York. He periodically performs in New York and San Francisco under the moniker Black Toobs.

Images courtesy of Susan Robb

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at the table
There are probably as many different definitions of sustainability as there are people engaged in conversations about sustainability. Why? Because democracy, most people believe the idea of sustainability is good, but as an abstraction its meaning lies in the eye of the beholder.

Gary Lawrence
Within Arup, the Global Leader for Sustainable Urban Development, it is my responsibility to create the circumstances in which great design can unfold. Sustainability has always been a critical circumstance for successful design. It becomes problematic when we isolate it, view it as an end in itself or define it too narrowly as an "environmental" issue. There are probably as many different definitions of sustainability as there are people engaged in conversations about sustainability.

Like democracy, most people believe the idea of sustainability is good, but as an abstraction its meaning lies in the eye of the beholder. Remembering that sustainability is a means, not an end in itself, provides a way past this problem of ambiguity. The desired goal of the human endeavor is to optimize conditions for human development over time. This is largely what our founder, Ove Arup, meant when he said that we must pursue our work with a humanitarian attitude.

In pursuit of optimization, sustainability becomes the analytical and decision-making framework that best allows us to move confidently toward that goal. When taken seriously, sustainability requires us to address issues in depth and breadth, at their intersections and over time. Within this framework, sustainability becomes the most robust way to anticipate and manage risk, to create opportunities, ensure returns on investment and to communicate with disparate stakeholders about the relationship between actions and outcomes. It also prevents any single interest from capturing the idea of sustainability and holding it hostage, impeding progress toward a broader common good. For example, any regimen about sustainability that puts issues of environment ahead of issues of human need is not likely to have political viability. During a trip to Australia last year, I was invited to speak at the Cairns Green Development Forum. The Mayor of Cairns struggled against ecological efforts to prevent pollution of the coastline, believing them a barrier to economic development. His concerns for economic development lacked the sustainability analysis approach that addressed issues of breadth, intersections and time. The Mayor and I, together with staff from Arup’s Cairns office, worked through a conversation of how deforestation upland of Cairns, combined with chemical runoff from subsidized agricultural activity and a lack of stormwater management facilities in the lowlands, were feeding a population of algae blooms that was moving ever closer to the portion of the Great Barrier Reef off Cairns. The Great Barrier Reef is the single most important source of the community’s long-term wealth. Once the algae reached the reef it would kill the coral and dramatically reduce the underpinning of Cairn’s tourist economy. The Mayor’s important view that the economic health of the community had to be maintained was, in fact, being threatened by his narrow understanding of the combination of issues that would ultimately cause the demise of Cairn’s economy.

I see a similar conflict of interests in the development of many urban building projects. Too often the designers of the built environment create the stage upon which human life gets played out without actually understanding the nature of the play. Indeed we should be focusing much more clearly on defining the future we are trying to create. This can only be done through constant communication with the users of the built environment. If we are in the business of optimizing conditions for human development over time we should be designing things that actually make people happier while creating more utility and being less burdensome on natural resources and human health.
A TIMELESS ARCHITECTURAL VISION: KANSAI AIRPORT

The challenge of designing Kansai Airport, perched on an artificial island in Japan’s Osaka Bay, required architect Renzo Piano and the design team to be audacious. Together they produced a design with an undulating roof and huge “wingspan” stretching nearly 700 meters from either side of the main building.

The question then became, “Was the project buildable and would it stand the tests that Nature would throw at it?”

Key to Piano’s conviction that his design was achievable, and to his success in winning the commission was the confident, collaborative approach he developed with a team of experts from the global design and engineering firm Arup. Philip Dilley, Arup’s European Chair remembers it clearly: “The challenge of getting the design agreed by the Japanese authorities was huge, as the Japanese fire codes would never allow a single building this large; so lots of our work was based on first principles,” he explains. “And the benefits were huge. Engineers and architects spoke the same language from the start, and the quality of original and collective thinking meant that the overall design was so much more than the sum of its parts.”

Aesthetic, practical, economic and technical considerations combined powerfully in the design engineering of the Kansai main terminal building. Piano’s elegant, flowing design was driven by his belief that the building itself, the refraction of light through it and even the movement of air within it should reflect passengers’ movement from landside to airside, with a visual connection between the two.

Inspired by the concept of flow, Arup’s team proposed that the building’s internal environment should be controlled as a single macro-climate, in one stroke eliminating the need for conventional air ducts and reducing the roof load – an important consideration in earthquake-prone Japan. Sculptural air supply nozzles blow air against curved ceiling elements specially designed to cause the air to travel an extraordinary 80 meters toward airside, providing a level of general comfort across the entire space. Separate local systems set up micro-climates for areas requiring greater control, such as in shops and at the check-in desks. The air movement is discernable to passengers, giving the space a semi-outside feel, the overall effect of which subtly reinforces the sense of flow toward the airside, as Piano wanted.

Piano’s competition model showed a terminal building with unmus- tikable huge wings to either side. No mere ornament, they would create the necessary perimeter to accommodate all airplanes and support the passenger moving system, shuttling people along the wings to and from departure and arrivals gates. The need for sightlines from the control tower to planes precluded an extruded geometry for the wings, which is why they swoop down and away from the main terminal building.

Piano envisaged a building that was easy and intuitive to navigate; and the result is a huge four-story canyon, extending the whole 300-meter length of the main terminal building, lit entirely by daylight. Here, the close teamwork of the architect and Arup’s mechanical engineers paid dividends. The canyon’s glass ceiling was intended to allow natural light to illuminate a bamboo grove and other plantings 26 meters below on the canyon floor. The choice of glass housings for the elevators, and glass walls on either side and along the concourse corridors complements the airy brightness and enhances the passenger experience. The practical benefit is a relatively low energy requirement in comparison with artificial lighting.

In the main terminal building, the open-air ducts that allow the air movement also act as light-reflecting panels suspended between the long arch trusses supporting the roof of the fourth-floor international departures area. This reflected lighting reinforces the direction of passenger movement, as the panels connect the canyon to the wings. All the far side a huge glass wall...
faces the aircraft stands, so when passengers look toward either the
full-length curved facade reveals aircraft and the runway beyond. Even
the roof shape itself suggests skyward movement.

The roof design has an elegant curved geometry, which in turn is
determined by the line of sight needed by the control tower. To avoid
the complexity and expense associated with three-dimensional
curved construction, the Arup team used “toroidal geometry,” rotating
a constant two-dimensional shape around a large inclined circle
to create the curved design. This means that each of the cladding
panels and steel components repeat throughout the length of
the building, allowing standardization of components, therefore,
easing construction and lowering costs.

The site itself raised huge issues for Arup’s structural engineers and
seismic experts. The terminal building needed to cope with the
predicted sinking each year of the manmade island, and the possibility
of earthquakes. The team proposed a “jack-up system” for raise
or lower individual columns to cope with differential settlement.
This innovative settlement correction system has proved an unqualified
success, coping with a differential of up to 300 millimetres in the first
two years alone.

Having met the exacting standards of Japan’s seismic building regu-
lations, Kansai Airport faced its first test within a year of opening.
The Kobe earthquake struck in January 1995, measuring 7.2 on the
Richter scale, and its epicentre was just 20 kilometers away from
the airport. The sliding joints in the building’s construction were entirely
successful in protecting the terminal building and its occupants from
the earthquake. Not only was the main building unscathed, but the
cladding and the glass windows also remained intact. Just three years
later, in 1998, the building survived a typhoon with wind speeds of
up to 200 kilometers per hour and three-meter storm surges.

Over a decade has passed since Kansai Airport’s opening in 1994,
and Renzo Piano’s main terminal building has proved a success both
aesthetically and as the simple, elegant complement to the movement
of passengers themselves through the airport of the architect’s
original vision.

One recent passenger comments: “It’s a beautiful building and
never appears crowded or claustrophobic, even when it’s stuffed full
of people.” Admiring its “light airiness,” another passenger also
appreciates the practicalities: “I find it really hard to get lost there
as there’s only left or right. It’s almost foolproof.”

Kansai Airport was one of ten structures given the Civil Engineering
Monument of the Millennium award by the American Society of
Civil Engineers on April 19, 2001.

Kate Fairweather is a UK-based writer with a particular interest in design,
engineering and architecture.

“Engineers and architects spoke the same language from
the start, and the quality of original and collective thinking
meant that the overall design was so much more than
the sum of its parts.” — Philip Dilley
How can we preserve not only historically significant buildings and great spaces? It’s about maintaining and cultivating green neighborhoods.

What are we now? Who is it that we need and want to become? What seems the most likely path? How do we begin? As individuals and professional members of civil society with special knowledge about the built environment, what are the obligations of designers? — Gary Lawrence

How can we design more storefronts that encourage businesses to stay out on the sidewalk?

How can we celebrate our alleyways in Seattle? These can be delightfully intimate places of activity.

How can we create more people places, more open space and spots for greening on art, water, playgrounds? Where we take up the possibility of open space impact fee, developers/ property owners told us they would rather provide them on private property rather than rely on the City to maintain “free” public space. Let’s take them up on that idea!

Can we design simple, attractive sidewalk kiosks that can just be locked up at night? Where are key locations where they could help animate the streets, to encourage people to walk in and through certain parts of town?

Can we re-design the streetfronts of our older, dense buildings to make them more people-friendly along the street? Can we apply to the Olympic and sometimes the State Senate, or even the City Council, or the Business and Development Board to allow our re-designs to spout out more casually along the sidewalk and encourage the old-neighbors of people walking?

Some Parting Thoughts

What we need are more wonderfully designed buildings, open spaces, people places, family-friendly places, walking places. We need places that can be/need to be to truly be a sustainable city of the 21st century, with a new reality — global warming. Our communities must be bolder about this. But we need your help to ensure that those changes — and many others addressing building form, height, etc. — do not result in unintended consequences.

We have great neighborhoods. Let’s help them stay unique, while still growing and changing in vibrant ways — to recognize the past, but adding new dimensions to the neighborhood feel.

How do we design our street fronts and our buildings to entice more people to be outdoors? Seattle has a mild climate somewhat damp climate. If Copenhagen can extend its outdoor time to 9/12 months, so can Seattle. They use pedways and bracing for snow. If they can, so could we.

We work with developers and property owners. We work with business people and communities. You work with the City Departments. Talk with us. How can we be/need to be more successful at achieving that great sustainable 21st century city we envision — a city for many, not just the young, the educated, the wealthy.

Learning from Other Cities’ Successes

On a recent trip to Melbourne, I saw the results of successful engagement between City officials and the design community. The street furniture was wonderful. The very wide sidewalks, all paved in the same Bluestone, were great. Flower, fruit and paper vendor’s kiosks were a real one addition to the sidewalk, perhaps more importantly, I was struck by the huge crowds of people walking around downtown. How do we make that happen in Seattle? They close off some of their downtown streets to cars during lunch time, so people can walk around more easily and encourage their crowds to be.

How to Celebrate Our Neighborhoods?

There are a number of areas where a serious conversation is to take place between the City and the design community, if we are to create the future city as we prefer. As more development is taking place, we are increasingly hearing concerns about the generic nature of new development — change in scale and texture, the loss of local, small one-of-a-kind businesses, arts organizations, the ones that help distinguish the neighborhood and the city from every other city in the U.S. A.

How can we preserve not only historically significant buildings, but also some of the space “character buildings,” that help retain a neighborhood’s uniqueness?

How can we energize our streetfronts, whether developed with several small projects or with a large, big block development, in ways that are interesting and distinctive?

Are there ways to design some creative/ flexible spaces so that small, local businesses might be able to continue to exist when new development comes in?

If as I believe, sustainability is a political idea with technical attributes, what ought designers be doing within the body politic to help make communities more sustainable for future generations? For appropriate progress to occur, civil society — individuals and their institutions — need to be able to answer the following questions:

Diane Sugiura

Perhaps it was an opportunity that a soon-to-be designer was asked to respond to the question: “Why should designers and design be in remaking the fabric of a city?” My initial response is that it can make all the difference in the world, but design alone is not the answer. It’s more than creating great buildings and great spaces. It’s about maintaining and cultivating green neighborhoods.

While enormous growth pressures, we cannot afford to lose sight of this. This is perhaps the greatest challenge for architects and developers: create neighborhoods that expand and grow at real places for people, not just collections of buildings.

I would like to rephrase the question. Rather than “remaking the fabric of the city,” I would change it to “creating the city we want/need to be.”

This is not to suggest that process and dialogue always lead to productive results. It’s our job as designers to do the best we can, to create the fabric of a city, to make them more people-friendly along the street?

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A CONVERSATION WITH NBBJ

GARY: For some time now I’ve been invited by architects and other design professionals to stimulate a discussion about the role of the design community in creating a more sustainable future for our cities and the people who dwell in them.

The key advantage we have today is that our business context has changed. Owners of buildings and infrastructure are being pressured, either directly or indirectly, by their stakeholders to take a more sustainable approach. In the design profession, we are in the best position possible to help our clients succeed in the midst of this change. It is, however, going to take some work. Two of our greatest enemies in the struggle to incorporate sustainability are conventional wisdom and customary belief. ‘Run our clients and their stakeholders,’ NBBJ is an international firm with projects around the world. How does a firm such as yours, in a position to wield great influence, embrace and manage the change necessary to set us on a path toward a more sustainable future?

JAMES: Our clients to a large extent understand the importance of sustainability just as well as we do. Our responsibility is to help them find the way to achieve it. The time for drum beating is past. We need solutions. From a moral perspective, sustainability becomes an obligation when the problem is no longer surrounded by confusion and ambiguity. 2030 (the AIA initiative that all buildings designed by the year 2020 will be carbon neutral) has brought clarity to the sustainability issue for the built environment. We need a instantly clear statement about water, then for the next problem and so on.

We also have an obligation to reduce the waste in what we do. It’s been reasonability documented that waste in the design and construction industry runs between 30 and 60 percent. Our productivity has gone nowhere when other decent sized industries are showing remarkable progress. The design/construction industry has not left the path. The waste generated would fund both the eradication of world poverty and the 2030 initiative.

ROBERT: Moreover, it would pay for the content need. A tool in building culture is metrics. We’ve just begun to show the content of the criticism is changing, from form and composition to the environment, the economy and society. This culture at NBBJ has always been fueled by the youngest, the brightest and the most recent, challenging assumptions.

GARY: What kinds of waste?

JAMES: Human time. Redundancy in effort. Waste in materials, such as reducing steel fabrication, cutting pipes and sheet metal to fit on a job site, errors and broken materials in site.

GARY: Why do you think that is?

JAMES: Because the industry is highly siloed. Individual components of our industry are optimized for success at benefits their own business specialty, not the project.

GARY: Arup has its own silo problems that we struggle with every day. As client expectations change there’s drive to eliminate redundancy in effort. With a large firm like NBBJ, has the internal struggle against silos been part of what you’re dealing with?

JAMES: Sure. We’ve been on a path to integrated design for 15 or 20 years now and it’s still a struggle to achieve. We try to bring all the disciplines and perspectives to bear on a project at the right time and in the right way, but it’s still important. Integrated delivery, the ability to incorporate all project delivery trades and skills, is embryonic and demands a real cultural shift for all of us in the industry.

GARY: You’re constantly bringing in new people in various design teams to try to address these issues in a substantial way. Within the constraints of the marketplace. How do you make, maintain and manage a culture where sustainability is common practice as opposed to best practice?

JAMES: First we’ve got to own up that we’re not there yet. What we can say is that regardless of what the leadership of any firm does these days, the young people stepping up come with a set of values and a great quest for involvement. There’s a great build up of pressure in every firm to change. It move towards a culture where sustainability is common practice. Leaders don’t have to motivate staff — they just need to provide some direction to make them effective. The issues we’re working on are treatable. First, we must transform the industry in terms of the way that projects are designed and constructed, addressing that 30 to 60 percent, so that we can help our clients see those savings in a constructive way. Second, we must find the viable answers within our own firm for meeting these challenges. It’s a struggle. We’re encouraging, pushing, pulling up and down the firm to make that happen.

GARY: / What’s the pressure?

JAMES: Human time. Redundancy in effort. Waste in materials, such as reducing steel fabrication, cutting pipes and sheet metal to fit on a job site, errors and broken materials in site.

DUNCAN: There’s also the loss of intelligence that happens in the hand off between disciplines in the building design and construction field. Often synergies and savings identified in the design intent aren’t realized in construction.

GARY: Why do you think that is?

JAMES: Because the industry is highly siloed. Individual components of our industry are optimized for success at benefits their own business specialty, not the project.

DUNCAN: There has gone nowhere when other decent sized industries are showing remarkably progress. The design/construction industry has not kept pace. The waste generated would fund both the eradication of world poverty and the 2030 initiative.

GARY: / A tool in building culture is metrics. We’ve just begun to show the content of the criticism is changing, from form and composition to the environment, the economy and society. This culture at NBBJ has always been fueled by the youngest, the brightest and the most recent, challenging assumptions.

ROBERT: There is another shift in our culture. We’ve always been enormously collaboratively, critical about our own work. But the context of the criticism is changing, from form and composition to the environment, the economy and society. This culture at NBBJ has always been fueled by the youngest, the brightest and the most recent, challenging assumptions.

MARGARET: It’s more than just coming up with technical answers to specific problems. We must change how we look at problems so that we are asking the right questions. We need to focus on how we live every day. Where we sit at our desks, how get to work. What we’re doing as human beings in our lives. Those seemingly small and individualistic things can be just as powerful in creating a culture of sustainability as some organizational issues. We have to shift our viewpoint and accept that we’re not above and in control: we’re within the system on the planet. If it’s a concept we have to learn and absorb a bit at a time because it’s huge to get your arms around.

DUNCAN: Moving into our new offices, for me at least, provides a tangible reality. The building system is designed so that when the green light goes on you can open the window. Having fresh air, literally just breathing fresh air from outside, makes you think differently about where you are, where you fit into this thing. It’s not a sort of hermetic isolation. It’s engagement. And that’s quite exciting.

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“...are trying to raise awareness of this new way of contracting, of sharing risk and reward, an integrated approach that aligns economic incentives. Were pushing this approach hard and investing a lot to change in the industry to this leaner more effective way of delivering projects.”

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GARY: One of the metrics is profitability. We’ve seen some large firms get left behind because they didn’t pay attention to the event horizon and weren’t prepared. You were being pushed from below, but, at least in some of the organizations I’ve been involved in, it can take quite a bit of money to push the top of the organization into an alternative path.

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“What is important to you personally is actually important to the profession and important to the world. This is all about life on earth. It’s the only one we have. It’s about the future that we’re making.”

ROBERT: Our clients are stewards of the environment, as we are. We both need to be profitable in order to grow, to have influence and to reward effort.

DUNCAN: Our ultimate goal as a practice is to help our clients transform their enterprises. Whenever I speak to a client about sustainability in terms of, “What will make your business sustainable that you and your people sustain themselves, the people around you, the community you serve?”—those aren’t necessarily choices. It’s not, “Choose sustainability or the profitable.” These elements all come together toward the long-term success of our clients.

GARY: In the education system providing the human resource you need to move beyond moral obligation into delivery of outcomes. Is the breadth available? It’s difficult to create a renaissance mindset in everybody coming out of school. Are you considering bringing other kinds of people into the firm?

JAMES: Indeed, that’s what we think integrated design is all about. A breadth of perspectives. Where do we find them? Some of the most exciting are ones we’ve never thought of before. Where is that new mind that can give us perspective that makes that connection straightforward.

Practicing architects tend to back up on academics a bit. I think the education system in this country is changing a lot. I participate in the Dean’s Forum on the Large Firm Roundtable, looking at how schools and firms can interact to meet the needs of society that aren’t being met by architects coming out of school. Some leading deans are pushing that. One of our moral obligations is to support other kinds of people into the firm?

GARY: On one level, it’s coming up with the right solution. There’s another level, which is hard providing not only the best solution but the right questions right. What problem are we actually trying to solve? Where does that fit within the design process?

JAMES: Clearly it’s our highest-our priorities in our process because we think we’ve focused on that relatively small percentage of the universe that wants to make a transformational change in what they’re about. Whether it’s sustainability, individual performance, a healing relationship with patients, a contribution to society. Therefore, the fewer new clients who come to us having already made up their mind about what they want. Regardless of how far along the path they think they are, we feel it’s our role to back up and ask the first question.

DUNCAN: Within the notion of “discover, design, deliver,” “discover” is a huge component of the process. In the healthcare practice we’ve had clients come to us and say, “We need eight Operating Rooms,” and then our medical planners go out and work with them and find that actually they need a new Emergency Department; Operating Rooms weren’t the problem.

MARGARET: Typically, when you’re studying the goals and you’re trying to find the solutions, the sustainable solutions are the ones that best solve those problems. Sustainability isn’t the goal, but a way of thinking that provides a pathway to the ultimate purpose of the work.

GARY: Pursuing by saying that the moral obligation was no longer under question, the burnout, that what we’re doing and what we’re thinking and all our marketing and all our partnerships. Is the education system providing the human resource you need to move beyond moral obligation into delivery of outcomes. Is the breadth available? It’s difficult to create a renaissance mindset in everybody coming out of school. Are you considering bringing other kinds of people into the firm?

MARGARET: I’m alluding to benchmarking all of our projects against the LEED rating system. The objective here is not to pat ourselves on the back or to try and set a new one. It’s to learn what we’re doing, but to see where we are, identify the patterns, the gaps and the place for improvement. So far the clearest indication is that we’re weak in energy performance. Attacking this area with specificity will allow us to identify the strategies to improve, to both set and understand how far along the path they feel they are, we feel it’s our role to back up and ask the first question.

DUNCAN: I think it’s our highest-our priorities in our process because we think we’ve focused on that relatively small percentage of the universe that wants to make a transformational change in what they’re about. Whether it’s sustainability, individual performance, a healing relationship with patients, a contribution to society. Therefore, the fewer new clients who come to us having already made up their mind about what they want. Regardless of how far along the path they think they are, we feel it’s our role to back up and ask the first question.

GARY: What do you think it’s important for the readers of ARCADE is to know on this question of the responsibility to be transformative?

ROBERT: The first thought is a humble one and that is, “What can we do to help?” Can we do this together? There is no marketing edge. It’s all about you and us.

MARGARET: One of my fears is that the more mainstream (sustainability) becomes, the more that it’s going to be a status quo, and the less sharing there is. We need to continue to grow and share. Unless we can do that, we will.

DUNCAN: I agree. I would say even that it goes from the professional down to the personal. What is important to you personally is actually important to the profession and important to the world. This is all about life on earth. It’s the only one we have. It’s about the future that we’re making.

JAMES: There are other architects that have artists who have not fulfilled well for a long time. The obligation to engage politically. A recent issue of Architecture magazine that I read last week for the AIA as saying that architects make really bad political animals because they all have their heads in the clouds. Architects in the gap who’s representing us to Copenhagen and realized the architects there, and I think generally in Scandinavia, are very engaged politically. Some of them are politicians, or have been politicians. In the U.S., the only congressman in the 20th century who was an architect was Richard Swift (more recently ambassador to Denmark). What’s going on with that? I realize that in my career I have exchanged politics because I felt that architects were never interested in solving the problem that faced Seattle, but only in securing advocacy for the solution to the problem they saw. From the perspective of the City it was so one-sided. Their view was that the only reason architecture and planning is to help people who might not be possible such as otherwise.

ROBERT: Politics is about advocacy. I think we know what the problem is and I know there is passion in our industry—why we haven’t is taken to that passion to the streets and is less on message. One of the things that might have endeared the common good to the minds in the clouds is that they’re rarely to be asked to. We think about issues on a level that isn’t always accessible to those we are advocating for and against. We were to over the fence and say let’s talk about this. We’re informed, we care about this, we’re changing our environment brick by brick. Keep the message clear. Our feel are on the ground and our heads are not in the clouds.
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When so many talented designers choose the same architectural design software to drive business forward, it’s more than a trend. It’s a sign you may be missing out on an exceptional resource. VectorWorks Architect offers architectural design firms powerful BIM features, unparalleled performance and uncommon value. Your competitors are taking advantage of top speed, as well as superior production and presentation capabilities—plus, seamless integration of 2D, 3D and network also optimizes maintenance.

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The light quality and streetscapes are remarkably improved and inviting while significantly mitigating environmental impact. As part of a field study team, we have had the opportunity to speak with the inventors and the operators. Proven options now exist to improve streetlighting quality while saving energy and maintenance costs. If Europe leads with these innovations, why can’t cities in our region follow?

On average, streetlights account for 30 percent of municipal energy use. Light levels are designed to meet — one would hope — highest interaction between vehicles and pedestrians, likely at rush hour. As traffic subsides through the night, our static street lights continue to burn at their brightest.

Additionally, brand new lamps “over deliver,” a necessity to ensure that they will still illuminate enough as they age.

Service trucks in Seattle look for dimming street lights, and cams into a cobrashhead if it flickered on before they drove by.

As my work moves toward downtown it’s important that the streets are as inviting at night as they are during the day. Our current system provides a uniform orange blanket of light that is static for 12 hours at a time, without regard to level of activity or type of neighborhood.

What better time to reconsider the qualities of streetscape lighting: its visual comfort, color rendering, human scale, brightness and contrast, light levels, light trespass, visibility, energy use and maintenance.

Our eyes and brain see differently in darkness — we gradually become more sensitive to bluish light. If the light source can match that sensitivity shift, less energy can yield more visibility. Photometry, used to calculate light levels, lends its ability to describe nighttime illumination as it relates to vision. Color quality, glare control, mitigation of trespass and human scale of luminaires all present opportunities for improvement.

My colleagues and I have evaluated a new breed of street lighting systems in France, the U.K., and Norway. The more desirable of these systems rely on white light that renders all colors well, increasing visibility. Their luminaires are improved in appearance and function. The system we studied in Albi, France, is on a network that dims the street lights in relation to traffic patterns. As an added advantage, this system tames the spectral power distribution of new ceramic metal halide lamps to match the visual sensitivity shift toward blue. The dimming cycle is so gradual that the public doesn’t notice it, even when light output is reduced more than 40 percent at night. The network also optimizes maintenance.
The Brightwater Project / Eduardo Calderón

These photographs were taken during the first year of a six-year commission for 4Culture, King County’s Cultural Service Agency, to photograph in and around the site of the Brightwater Treatment Plant in Woodinville, Washington. The plant will serve King and Snohomish Counties when completed. When these pictures were taken, the construction of the plant had not begun, and the images were taken around the businesses that operated in the area at the time. The photographs are now part of the King County Art Collection.

Eduardo Calderón is a Seattle-based photographer whose work has been widely exhibited and is part of numerous collections in the U.S. and abroad. He also makes formal photographs of architecture that have been published extensively, most recently in the books Art + Architecture: The Ebsworth Collection & Residence (William Stout Publishers) and SAM Downtown (published by the Seattle Art Museum). Calderón is represented in Seattle by Francine Seders Gallery.
The most obvious reason for the ga-ga over the double-cab, and all vintage VWs, is the nostalgia factor. We associate them with the happy, hippy-dippy '70s, with peace, with free love.

I've been thinking about cars lately, mostly because I have too many. When I met my husband I owned no motorized vehicle. All of my earthly possessions fit nicely in the back of other people's cars. A foot-passenger-only ferry carried me from my industrial loft near Pioneer Square to my non-profit job on Vashon Island. Picture the girl from Flashdance — only with grant applications instead of a blowtorch, and yoga instead of all the flashy dancing.

Somehow in the last ten years, along with a husband, I acquired four cars and a motorcycle. I hide them behind hydraulic carriage-style garage doors left over from the dot-com boom. I'm wondering if I get to carry over carbon credits, like my accountant does my losses from the dot-com bust. Because my carbon-neutral days are long gone, and I could really use the carry-over.

There is one bright spot in my sooty stable. One car balances its carbon emissions with a net-positive impact on the world: a cherry-red 1963 Volkswagen double-cab truck.

People are inordinately happy to see me driving around Seattle in the '63. Whereas my driving usually earns me the bird, when I drive the double-cab I get peace signs. I get appreciative head-jerks from men who otherwise have trouble expressing themselves.

The most obvious reason for the ga-ga over the double-cab, and all vintage VWs, is the nostalgia factor. We associate them with the happy, hippy-dippy '70s, with peace, with free love. They are gutless, and therefore non-threatening on the road. They scream "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!" But, frankly, that doesn't explain the babies.

Babies don't feel nostalgic about much. The womb, maybe? Babies do respond to other babies, though. And either through intelligent design or just a happy coincidence in the evolution of the automobile, vintage VWs look like plump, big-eyed babies.

If a baby drew a truck, a baby would draw my double-cab. Do you remember Harold and the continuous-line world he created with his purple crayon? If Harold had a red crayon, he would draw himself into my car and drive away.

Like you, I plan to reduce my car trips to as few as possible. Once the fall clouds roll in, though, I'm thinking of driving around in a yoga leotard and cape with my double-cab, curing people of Seasonal Affective Disorder, distracting them from arguments. Stuff like that. If you need a boost and live in Seattle, send a quick email to ARCADE and let me know your neighborhood. I'll put you on my route.

Jane Radke Slade is a Seattle humorist and a total sucker for life-enhancing design products.

Photos: Max Slade
Since she took on the magazine’s literary leadership in the fall of 2001, I have admired her creativity, hard work and constant sense of humor. Recently, I gathered the courage to find out more about this elegant ball of energy. We met at Starbucks on Piker St. After keeping me waiting for a good 15 minutes, Kelly sheepishly ordered a double-tall-2%-no foam latte. The day was warm and bright.

Kelly was wearing a fabulous white summer jacket and jet black “Einstein” hairstyle. We sat down for the interview, keeping me waiting for a good 15 minutes, as if the President of the Board and didn’t see the need to delay the delivery of the magazine hiding on your watch.

Kelly: Oh, yeah, I remember those days. The board responded by putting into place the basic structure of what the magazine is today. It was an audacious plan at the time. Other than having nightly panic attacks, I had no doubt it would work. We’d get back to the magazine in a bit, but I have been wondering one thing for a while. Which Northwest architect would you most want to be stuck on a deserted island with?

Kelly: That’s not an easy question, Ron, but Tom Kundig comes immediately to mind, as he seems pretty resourceful and has a sense of humor. I can see him coming up with something with some kind of shelter in silver in no time. Gordon Walker also comes to mind; if I’m certain he could make a fire with a couple of sticks and then prepare three tasty squares of something over a cool makeshift fire pit — and come as the end of the day, he’d have resourceful too. I guess Tom and Gordon have that Northwest “rugged individualist” gene in spades.

Kelly: I don’t mean most resourceful… I mean, you know…

Kelly: Oh brother. Let’s just say there are a few. I wouldn’t mind being Sweet Sweet with…

Kelly: Respect the Architect! produced by Guru.

RON: Are you the President of the Board? Am I talking to Kelly Walker or Ron van der Veen?

KELLY: You’re talkin’ to her.

RON: So, that’s it? No names? OK, what is your favorite architectural song?

KELLY: I’m not a musicologist but I’m sure you’ll find it. The “Modern Image of Architecture,” produced by Guru.

RON: Can you tell me about that?

KELLY: It’s supposed to be irreverent. I’d like to talk a bit about the quality of the magazine. Which issue do you think was of the highest quality? Which was the worst? Who was the toughest feature editor to work with and why?

KELLY: My first issue. “The Idea of Regionalism.” feature edited by Jeff Cava and designed by Karen Cheng set a precedent with its high-quality content and beautifully restrained design. “The Modern Image of Architecture,” feature edited by this prominent art curator Sheryl Conkleton, was so well done. Sheryl tirelessly researched the photographic depiction of modern architecture and culled some beautiful images and corresponding commentary. We were really lucky to have her; House Hawk designed that one.

The issue I found the least interesting is the one I didn’t work on due to my maternity leave. “Image = Identity.” feature edited by Norman Banker. I don’t believe in burning bridges — at least not anymore — so I won’t comment on who was the toughest and why.

RON: A few years back, I wrote a Side Yard article stating that Brick House was the best architectural song in rock history. I even did a survey to prepare for the article. Do you think I was wrong?

KELLY: You like the song because it has lyrics like, “The clothes she wears, the sexy ways, make old soul man wish for younger days…”

RON: She knows she’s built and knows how to use, sure enough to knock a man to his knees? As the editor of the premier design magazine in the Northwest, you’ve had the opportunity to see and form opinions about a lot of architecture around the region. What do you think is the ugliest building in Seattle?

KELLY: Unfortunately there isn’t just one. Seattle has such a beautiful natural setting, but the built urban fabric leaves a lot to be desired. That said, after living here now for nearly ten years, I’m happy to say that I can see much good in between a white lotta bad.

RON: You’re being way too PC. Give me a roughing something.

KELLY: Start with Fountain Court and follow your nose.

RON: Now we’re getting somewhere. Let your nose do its thing. Remember, this is Kelly Walker. It’s supposed to be irreverent. I’d like to talk a bit about the quality of the magazine. Which issue do you think was of the highest quality? Which was the worst? Who was the toughest feature editor to work with and why?

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RON: Which issue of ARCADE has been your favorite to work on?

KELLY: That’s a really hard question. I’ve worked on 26 issues. I guess I have to cite my first experience again. It was an exciting challenge. I learned a lot about graphic design from Karen Cheng, and gained a new friend in the process (though we almost came to blows in the beginning).

Ron Walker: There’s nothing like a dame.

Jennifer Wilcox: “Gentryville, Missouri” feature edited by Arton: Better City, was very fun and rewarding. Both for the audacious feature and the critical opinion piece I submitted to put together after the Sheri Olsen/GP debacle “On the State of Architectural Criticism.”

I also had to scramble to pull together “The Desire House” It ended up being a really fun and engaging edition. BNW Video developed a wonderful design for the issue. In fact, we had a long discussion with Roger Cornett on how to repackage their original proposed cover that was too cliché. They did and then won at least one award for it, maybe more.

RON: Tell me what you consider the worst article ever published?

KELLY: I really can’t think of one. Yes, there were some weak ones, but I don’t know about worst.

RON: B-O-R-I-N-G-!

KELLY: Ron, you have way too many questions here anyway. I’m not sure why you’re asking this with anything at all titillating that might make you look smart or interesting. It’s supposed to be irreverent. I’d like to talk a bit about the quality of the magazine. Which issue do you think was of the highest quality? Which was the worst? Who was the toughest feature editor to work with and why?

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RON: Okay, simmer down. Kelly discreetly checks her makeup in the store mirror while I pick up my notebook, which flew off the floor.

For this interview, I was actually hoping to combine a bit of intelligent journalism with some regular smart charm. Your insights have been very thoughtful and engaging, but you’ve left me with little intrigue, gossip, scandal or controversy. Can you end this with anything at all titillating that might raise a few eyebrows?

KELLY: I have no idea what would follow that description and is appropriate within the context of this interview or the magazine…

RON: You’re acting just like an editor! We ended the interview by walking along the pier together enjoying the warm salty air until we approached Harbor Steps and went our separate ways. As I placed back at her bouncing up the stairs, I removed her unwilting energy for ARCADE. I decided to keep walking to the Space Needle and couldn’t resist humming the tune, “There is nothing like a dame.”

Ron van der Veen is a life long comic book editor (No Side Yard had a lot of)

*In Step With* Kelly Walker / Ron van der Veen

In the musical South Pacific, Rogers and Hammerstein wrote, joyously and memorably, “There is nothing like a dame.” Likewise, there is nothing like ARCADE Magazine’s editor, Kelly Walker.

Since she took on the magazine’s literary leadership in the fall of 2001, I have admired her creativity, hard work and constant sense of humor. Recently, I gathered the courage to find out more about this elegant ball of energy. We met at Starbucks on Piker St. After keeping me waiting for a good 15 minutes, Kelly sheepishly ordered a double-tall-2%-no foam latte. The day was warm and bright. Kelly was wearing a fabulous white summer dress that highlighted her brown skin and jet black “Einstein” hairstyle. We sat down for a jovial conversation.

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**SIDE YARD**
Fiction, Nonfiction, Art, Industry and Beyond.
Pleasure: The Starting Point of Architecture / Pierluigi Serraino

Common knowledge holds that pleasure is the primary driver for the reproduction of humankind. Its self-evidence requires little justification; claims in view of the exponential growth of the world population. To the disbelief of many, perhaps, it could be argued that pleasure is also the overriding engine propelling the perpetuation and ultimate legitimacy of architecture as a venerable human endeavor. Why so?

To establish the authority of architecture on pleasure might be deemed reductive, vilifying, derogatory, inconsequential, irrelevant or just plain off. To some extent, these value judgments would be founded on a particular connotation of pleasure: something superficial, ephemeral, secular, hedonistic and probably ill-defined. Conversely, in the realm of the perception of the specter, pleasure is an ameliorating, ameliorating and recreating vector that infiltrates life over time, never opening its direction and target. It is an affirmative that grants us warmth, human and face of its ever-changing self-reflected manifestation in architecture, as well as pleasure in the feeding tube of an experience constantly declaring its own eminent death. The design literature, for all that matters, embraces the latter definition of pleasure—an intangible on the side of life— as a tool that architecture together in a shared tension for the settlement of the built environment.

The search for pleasure in architecture— and in the present text—seems driven by a curious and virtuous reversal. This is an inescapable, unwavering, and recurring vector that stretches life over time, never tapering its direction and target. It is a structural force that grants survival to the human race in the face of its ever-looming self-inflicted annihilation. In architecture, literature, for all that matters, embraces the latter definition of pleasure—an instinct always on the side of life— more than is often the case. The ancients, in their most famous manifestation—the Greek orders of the 5th century BC— with the pleasure that we can all experience by walking in a city we enjoy. With this idea in mind, Lynch constructs the authenticity of good city planning, where individuals can orient themselves to counteract the disaggregating might of modern developments. While arguments in favor of pleasure in architecture can be found scattered in texts written throughout past centuries—which do not remember Vitruvius, Filippo Brunelleschi, Leonardo da Vinci, or Michelangelo—two key examples from the Renaissance command our undivided respect.

In 1499, the Italian architect Francesco Colonna published the monumental book, Hypnerotomachia Poliphili. This renowned volume, only recently (1999) translated into English, contains an account of an affair as an artifice in architecture, bodily and devout, in the mixture of fiction and historical scholarship. Lengthy descriptions of magnificent structures punctuate the narrative, filled with a stream of consciousness. If you wish, you can think of architecture as a means to an end, before James Joyce’s time. The grand scale of these artifacts overwhets the senses of the main characters in what reads like an endless sequence of architectural wonders. In celebrating the ins and outs of edifices, the author shares with his readers the overwhelming feelings of delight, if not actual, that buildings and buildings have on the mind against Poliphili. Here architecture is a backdrop for Poliphilo’s love for Polia, as much as it is a backdrop for Poliphili’s love for Polia. It is perfect in its own way.

Two decades later, Thomas More wrote Utopia (London, 1516), a book in which he devoted numerous pages to the regard of pleasure kept among the inhabitants of his imaginary world. Mental and physical pleasure were an integral aspect of More’s ideal society. The mental pleasure of understanding a concept or contemplating an event was equated with the physical pleasure of being healthy, a paradigmatic state of life. For him, feeling pleasure was a constituent part of being alive and the whole idea of well-being.” To bring this notion to our contemporary times, pleasure is here portrayed as a quintessential attribute of dependable citizenship.

More recently, in his introductory Lecture on Psychoanalytic (Vienna, 1917), Sigmund Freud made the “Pleasure Principle” a cornerstone of his grand psychological project. His thesis on the basis of pleasure as the main purpose of our mental activity. With this sentence, we can carry a societally important mechanism that manages the quandaries of mental existence. Our life is a constant pursuit of the sense of well-being and, as a corollary of this, we also actively avoid unpleasure. Through the mediation of education and socialization, we tend to negotiate the terms of that pleasure by way of what Freud called the “Reality Principle,” or shun an approach to the chase for pleasure and the practicalities of day-to-day life. Although its results perfectly parallel the sexual act as an analogy of pleasure, he extended it to the mental, to the mental. With this new frame of architecture, he found a new way to reconcile the ins and outs, the pleasure and pain, of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture. It is not an accident, as he was able to accomplish his goal, to establish the relationship between the pleasure of architecture and the pleasure of the consumer of architecture.
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