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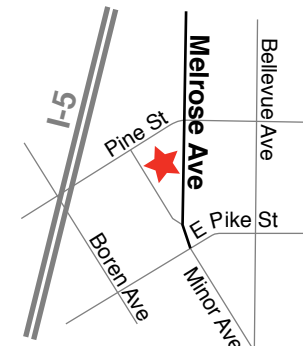


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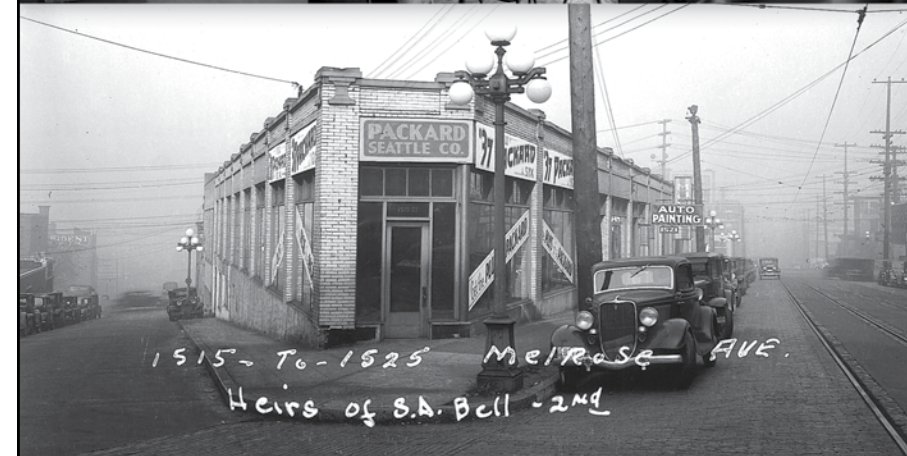
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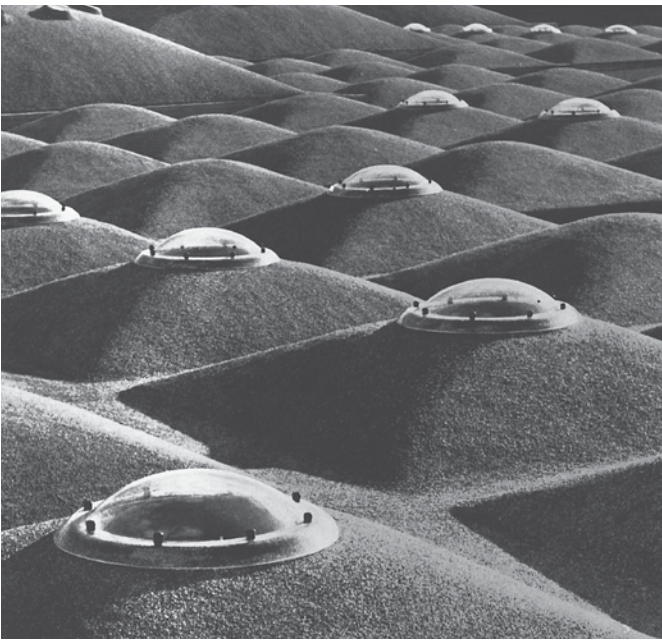
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MANAGING DIRECTOR
Amanda Bakke
amanda@arcadejournal.com
206 971 5596

PUBLICATIONS COORDINATOR
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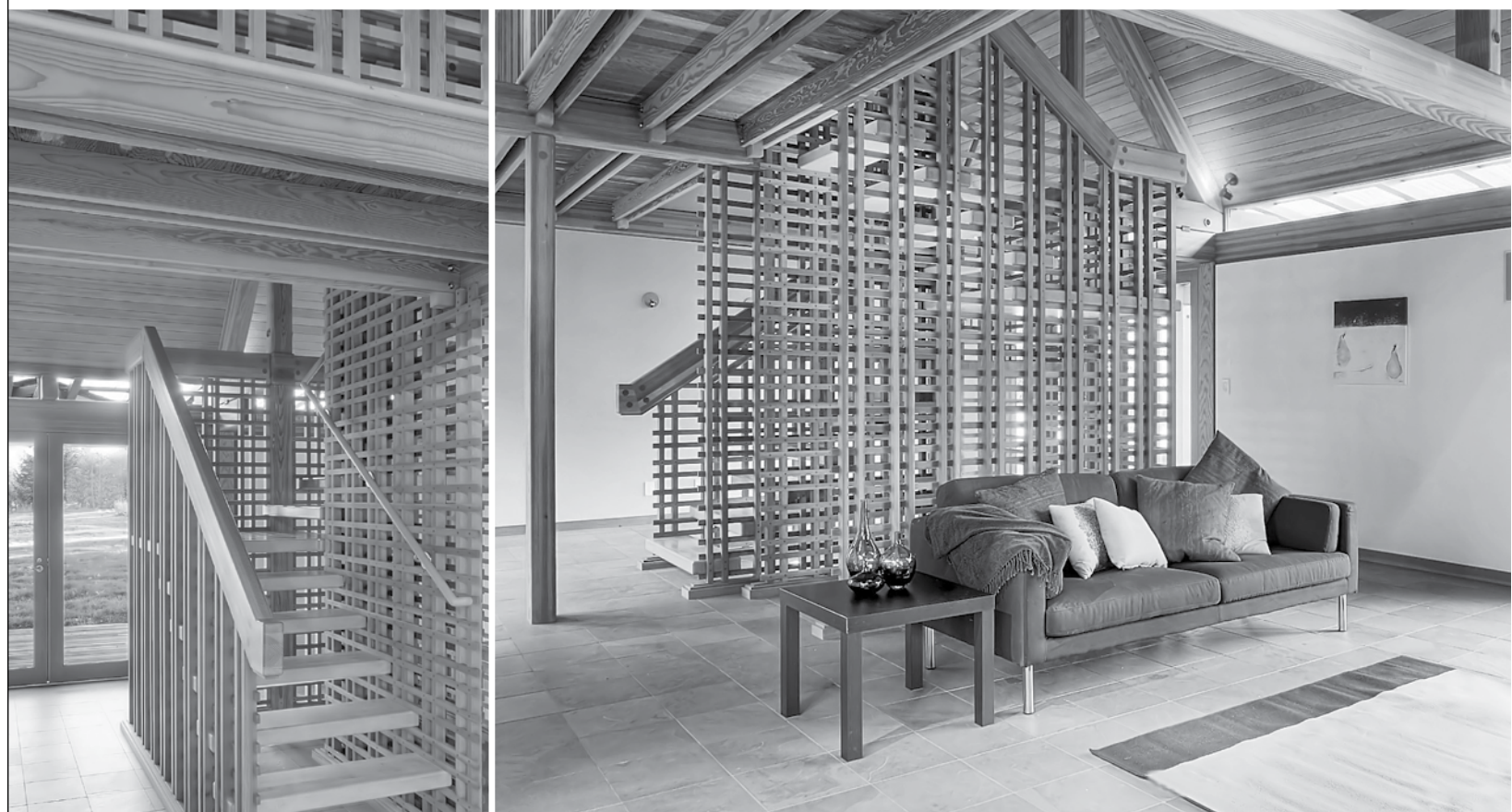
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Perspective

Jeff Robbins

A Tidal Wave of Another Kind

Each year my colleagues and I here at The Lighting Design Lab attend a conference/trade show called Lightfair International, held alternately between New York and Las Vegas. What is particularly attractive about this event is that for three days we (and seemingly the entire lighting community) are exposed to all the latest innovations the lighting manufacturers have to offer (and want us to see). We, of course, need this material because it is no small part of our mission here at the Lab to link these products to end users who may not yet know of their existence. This is especially true of those products and ideas that can add to our arsenal of energy-efficient equipment. For most of the last 20 years or so, new technologies, ideas, applications, etc. occupied only a relatively small portion of the trade show floor. Slow and steady growth in these areas seemed to be the pattern. Recently, however, we have seen a veritable product explosion, and for this year's show in May, some are predicting a tidal wave.

Even though the efficiency of other lamps, ballasts and luminaires continues to improve, the majority of the product explosion is due to the arrival on these shores of LED products and technologies. Now and for the foreseeable future, new lighting products using LED technology will outnumber all other lighting products by a factor of 10 to one! And even though many significant advances have been realized in the field of lighting controls, ballast technologies and indeed in other lamp sources, they are coming to market at a time when that LED “tidal wave” threatens to overshadow even the best of these other products.

LEDs have changed the thinking in every sector of the lighting industry, due in large part to the manner in which they arrived on the scene, so full of promise that no one could ignore their potential. Who could forget the claims of 100,000 hours of life, 60 – 70 lumens/watt efficacy and great CRI (Color Rendering Index) numbers in a range of pleasing color temperatures? What was not to like? Well, here's what I know: It is still an *emerging* technology and should be treated as such, just as we did in the past with every other emerging technology. Why? Because it, like those other technologies before it, is fraught with as yet unsolved problems, in addition to the fact that the fixtures themselves are now, and will continue to be, very expensive.

Heat management continues to be an issue. Because of this, manufacturers of LEDs have already started to back away from those earlier claims of extraordinary lamp life. For instance, we recently took possession of a 16w PAR 38 LED product that was only claiming 20,000 hours of rated life, which, though still very good, is a far cry from 100,000 hours. Color also continues to be an issue. LEDs perform most efficiently in the blue portion of the spectrum. Unfortunately, that makes them almost totally unacceptable for interior applications, and filtering the output to a more acceptable “warm” white reduces the efficacy to a very ordinary level, no better than halogen incandescent. Color rendering remains problematic, so much so that the entire LED industry is trying to have the CRI system replaced with one that makes them look more favorable: the Color Quality Scale.

We firmly believe though that given time, these problems will be solved, one by one, over the long haul. Because there is so much at stake, engineers are working 24/7/365 in an attempt to get them solved. The commitment seems to be there. Beyond the kinds of luminaires and applications in which LEDs have always worked well (such as exit signs, step lights, under cabinet fixtures, etc), we are beginning to see the kinds of products that we can feel good about recommending—general purpose downlights, accent lights and wall washers being chief among them.



However, many of the LED applications are simply not yet ready for prime time. My fear is that in order to not be left behind, even high-end manufacturers will rush to market before products are fully tested. In the end, the greatest challenge may not even be the technology itself, but whether the LED lamp and luminaire Original Electrical Manufacturers (OEMs) can somehow co-exist, or possibly even merge, with the semiconductor industry, which is looking to lighting as its next logical business step. Brace yourselves.

Jeff Robbins is a Commercial Lighting Specialist at the Lighting Design Lab in Seattle. With a degree in theatre, he previously spent 13 years as a Technical Director and Lighting Designer. Jeff is an Adjunct Professor at Cornish College of the Arts, the Education Director for the Western District of the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) and serves as co-chairman of the Testing Committee of the National Council on Qualifications for the Lighting Professions (NCQLP).

Give Me a Hand With This, Will You?

A UW Industrial Design Class Tackles the Need for Better Prosthetic Limbs

On the first day of the quarter, the senior Industrial Design class gathered in their University of Washington studio awaiting the kick-off of a new project. While other students at this level might work on projects in mobile computing, cellular phones or measuring instruments, this was not what this class was about.

As the instructor of the class, I brought along a friend to help teach. Her name was Joanne Tilley, a Georgetown-based artist. Tilley wore a black coat and carried a duffle bag. Walking into the classroom, she pulled her coat aside to expose her arm. It was black, made of carbon fibers and ended in a metal hook. Before the collective staring and gasping abated, Tilley asked, "Hey class, who wants to hold my arm first?"

If we like the way two things interact, we might say they work hand in hand. We joke that something costs an arm and a leg when it is out of our reach. For some, the challenges apparent in this physically inspired word-play are more literal. For those who have lost an arm or a leg — either from birth, through accident or in war — the effortless use of a hand is precisely that which is difficult to achieve.

It is nearly impossible for those of us with two fully functioning hands to imagine what such a loss could mean. The most mundane actions could pose significant challenges, while larger hurdles may pose near insurmountable obstacles.

Historically, solutions for missing limbs have exhibited varying degrees of complexity and varying degrees of success. The archetypal image of a pirate with a wooden leg and a hook for a hand is not so far removed from early prosthetic devices. In developing countries, where the demand for artificial limbs is high due to war, such primitive prosthetics remain the status quo.

In Western countries, there are two schools of thought for prosthetic devices: realistic and tool-based. The

former approach inspires limbs that work to disguise the fact that they are artificial; flesh-colored silicon surfaces mimic skin texture and hair follicles while lacking functional refinement. Meanwhile, technological improvements have also made it possible to develop myoelectric prostheses, motorized limbs controlled through microchips and electrode sensors. But such sophistication comes with a very high price tag. Furthermore, this technological approach intends to recreate what was lost rather than evolving the definition of a limb. It is possible to mechanically recreate a human hand with five fingers that move realistically, but one might ask if such a complex device is the most effective way for someone to pick up, hold and manipulate objects.

In light of this, Tilley and I challenged the Industrial Design class with a quarter-long project to rethink the traditional definitions of prosthetics and their interaction with the human body. Tilley provided essential feedback, critiques and inspiration. Students began by acquiring knowledge about current, past and emerging technologies; some went as far as looking at bionic arms in movies. With cardboard tubes and tape wrapped around one hand, students simulated the constraints of wearing a prosthesis. One concept that emerged from this experiment was that of a prosthetic hand as a team player to the existing hand, rather than a stand-in for the lost appendage.

I encouraged students to seek solutions beyond conventional wisdom, finding inspiration in pop culture as well as nature. Instead of concealing prosthetic limbs, function-based aesthetic designs were intended to fill the bearer with pride. White iPod headphones don't conceal themselves, but flaunt their cool design, and, in turn, make their wearer feel cool. How might a prosthesis operate this way?

After generating sketches, students used three-dimensional foam models to hone their designs,

I encouraged students to seek solutions beyond conventional wisdom, finding inspiration in pop culture as well as nature. Instead of concealing prosthetic limbs, function-based aesthetic designs were intended to fill the bearer with pride.

refining proportions, form and the transition of surfaces. At the conclusion of the quarter, each student presented a hand-built, full-scale model of his or her design, all of which were exhibited at the UW Jacob Lawrence Gallery, February 19 – 20, 2010.

Student designs were meant to inspire, examining unexplored possibilities of prosthetic design that assist in both the physical functioning and emotional healing relative to limb loss. The intent of this project was to encourage development of the next generation of prosthetic limbs, hopefully inspiring new designs that are functional, elegant and affordable.

Magnus Feil is an Assistant Professor of Industrial Design. His research interests are product design in aviation and medicine; product interaction; control of views, vehicles and robotic platforms; and aspects that guide form in industrial and interaction design.



TOP: Joanne Tilley and ID students during the final presentation of the prosthetic arm project. Photo: Magnus Feil. LEFT: *The Chosen*, 2010, Ellen Garvens. Artist Ellen Garvens photograph of the students' work reflects the artist's ongoing interest in perceiving the body through the tools we create. Photo: Ellen Garvens. ABOVE: Sophie Millotte demonstrates the functions of her prosthetic arm concept to the audience. Photo: Magnus Feil



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Eric Nelsen studio, 2009

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Dominic Muren

The Forked Path of Technological Progress, or What Ever Happened to the Tankini?

As the grey skies, chill winds and dark days of winter finally recede from the Northwest, Seattle is experiencing a brief bloom of that rarest of seasonal garments: the swimsuit. Here, where bare skin is seldom seen, we have a unique opportunity to observe the yearly evolution of new species within the swimsuit genus, as they flourish for a month or so, then die away into closets, only to be replaced next year by some new, hopeful edition.

Runways last winter were swarming with new trends: cutaway suits, bandage-inspired suits, and asymmetrical, single-shoulder suits. Many of these haven't been seen for years, or have never been seen at all. Indeed, the preoccupation in fashion with defining yearly trends, and the seasonal necessity of changing clothing types has bred an ecosystem of orphan species—strange, exuberant mutants who appear one season, full of promise, only to disappear without a trace. If nature is cruelly efficient in selecting among individuals in its ecosystems, then culture is doubly so when it comes to swimsuits.

The tankini was one of the most recent casualties in this yearly churn. Made popular in the early 2000s, this hybrid of a bikini and camisole top achieved explosive popularity in fashion houses from Gucci to Target. The suit was loved by an unusually wide range of body shapes because it balanced showing skin and smoothing it. Even more exciting, it came unexpectedly, after an almost uninterrupted decline in skin coverage since the 1960s. By some strange coincidence of designer choice, celebrity movie appearance, novel fabric technology, and inspiration from who knows where, the tankini was born. But despite the excitement from the market for this bravely demure new style, it was gone from shelves within a season or two.

The extinction of the tankini, like so many other promising innovations over the years, indicates a fundamental flaw in the most common model of technological development. We, as a culture, believe that technology "improves" over time. Light bulbs get brighter. Cars get faster. Computers get more powerful for the same price. This idea of constant, linear progress is deeply engrained in our cultural consciousness, and has colored theories from evolutionary biology to eugenics. And just as over time we have realized that there is no "master race" of humans, or "higher order" of animals, we ought to see that there is no globally optimal direction for technology.

In fact, looking back at swimsuits, we can see that revolutions in suit design were brought on, not by

By some strange coincidence of designer choice, celebrity movie appearance, novel fabric technology, and inspiration from who knows where, the tankini was born. But despite the excitement from the market for this bravely demure new style, it was gone from shelves within a season or two.

some overarching long-term goal, but by the instantaneous want of the designers, and the market. One year, it may be a competition to create the shiniest suit. Next year, the skimpiest. Every so often, one of these random directions catches firmly, and lives to spawn a new generation of derivatives next year, as the modern string bikini did in the 1960s (although the bikini suit was recorded in ancient Crete). More often, however, these yearly variations are overtaken by the next year of fresh attempts.

We should remember this as we plan trips to the coast, or Maui, or Ibiza: while we are making decisions that influence suit design in the near term, the long-term direction of this development is less controlled, and certainly not headed in a specific direction. And swimsuits are not unique. Technology certainly moves on a path as new innovations are adopted or abandoned, but our control of this path only really applies at any instant. Over a longer term, the real influences on technology are those out of our control: climate, disease, war and the whims of our collective cultural unconscious. There is no forward or backward to that movement, only intensity of change. The suit you wear this season, with its bandaged form, or slashed-fabric inspiration, will echo in seasons to come, but how, and for how long, it is impossible to say.

Dominic Muren teaches Industrial Design and Interaction Design at the University of Washington. His research focus is on novel methods of manufacture using flexible machinery and local materials to make modular, hackable products for more rich, resilient economies. He is Editor of Humblefactory. com, a blog exploring the development of this new mode of manufacturing. His consultancy, The Humblefactory, develops prototypes to test these new theories in the market.



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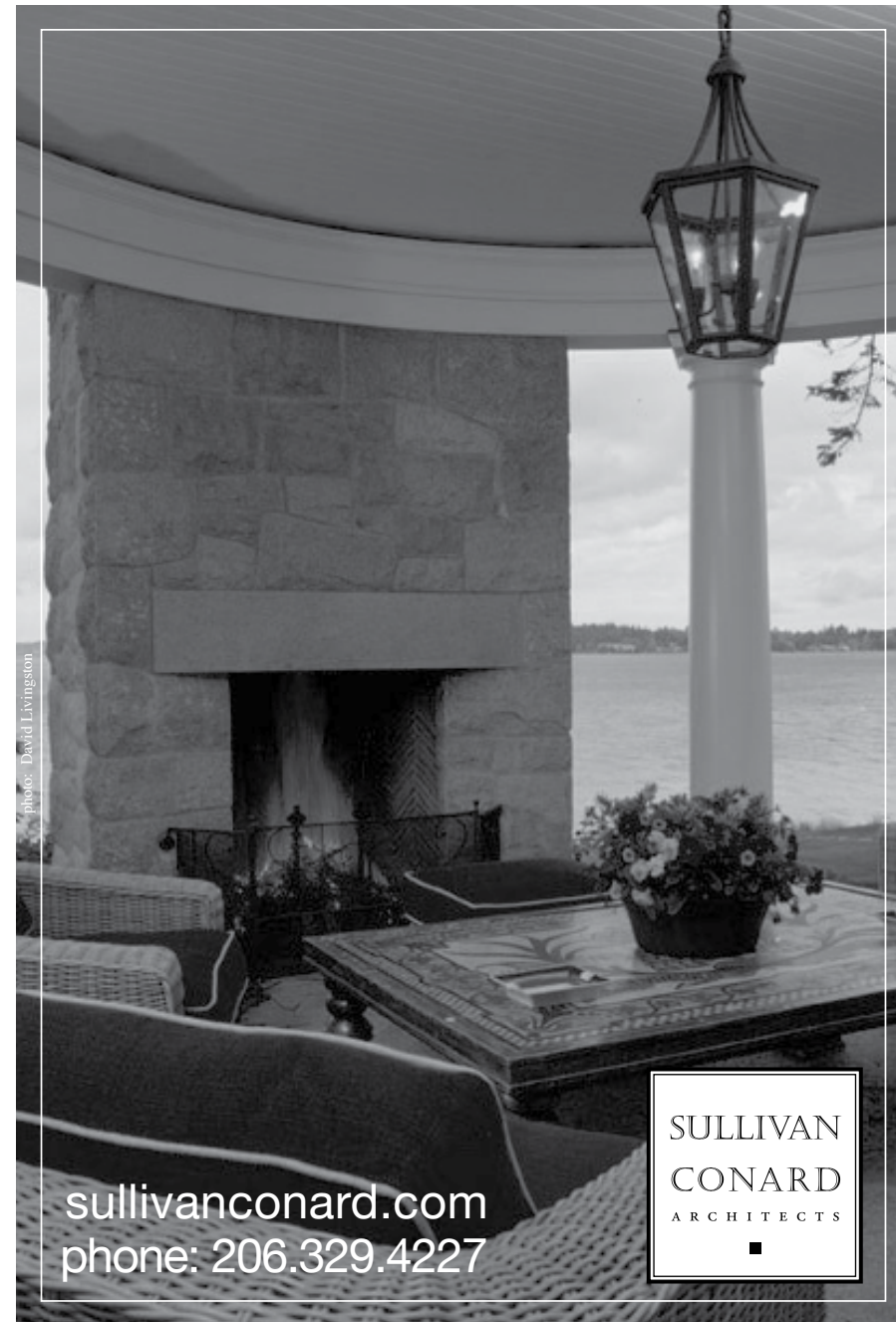
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Local Focus



Don Fels

Gone Missing: The Town of Snoqualmie Falls

Just over ninety years ago, in 1917, the Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company began building houses for loggers and mill workers in the Snoqualmie Valley of Washington State. When complete a few years later, the Weyerhaeuser operation included 250 houses, a community hall, schools, ball fields, a post office, company store, barbershop, hospital, Japanese bunkhouse, hotel and a railroad depot to comprise the new town of Snoqualmie Falls. The town was sustainable; people walked to all essential services and electricity was supplied to homes at very low costs by burning scrap wood in the mill. Hailed from the beginning in their own literature as a “planned community” and a “social experiment,” the town was also promoted by Weyerhaeuser as “permanent.” Internal Weyerhaeuser documents reveal that it expected to consume the hundreds of thousands of acres of forest in forty years. Fifty years ago (40 years after building it), the company sold the houses to the renting workers and they were moved off-site (most are extant elsewhere in the Snoqualmie Valley). The other structures were pulled down, and the town completely disappeared. The ex-town site is now covered by Douglas fir—the same “crop” the mill once turned into the first nationally branded lumber. Beginning in the 1920s, the lumber was marketed as coming from an especially enlightened and progressive place, and was used to construct all the town’s houses and structures.

The town’s publicly declared purpose was to make it a “stable” and “comfortable” base for millhands and itinerant and “wild” loggers (commonly referred to as timber beasts). The company didn’t happily enter into the construction of an entire town, but did so at a time when the Wobblies were making enormous inroads in the lumber camps. As WWI was heating up, it became clear to Weyerhaeuser and to the federal government that there could be a critical shortage of Sitka spruce, crucial for constructing warplanes, if the anarchists paralyzed the industry.

Lumber camps were horrible places to live—damp, overcrowded, vermin—and testosterone-ridden. In order to defeat the Wobblies, the company was forced to dramatically better the living situation of its isolated employees. If the beasts were to be tamed, a host of resident man-tamers was needed. Accordingly, the success of the initiative was entirely dependent on attracting females to the “settlement.” A man employed by the Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company was entitled to a company house at a nominal rent, but only if he had a wife with whom to occupy it. The commercial and industrial heart of the town was of course the lumber mill, but its nerve center was the community hall. For decades, the company organized all manner of family- and women-centered events and programs there. Dances, contests stream of babies was born in the town hospital, (the same facility that treated the loggers working in the world’s most dangerous occupation).

The outbreak of WWI brought a huge manpower shortage; large numbers of able-bodied American men were either being conscripted or volunteering for the armed forces. In order to open the mill in 1917, the company arranged with a Japanese contractor, who supplied a contingent of Japanese-born workers. With this core group, some ex-timber beasts and a few women workers, the mill opened on schedule.



ABOVE: Houses on Reing Road in the Riverside area of Snoqualmie Falls. Today, all that remains is the row of Sycamore Trees planted by Weyerhaeuser in 1929 and visible in this photograph; the trees are a protected landmark.
TOP: House being moved across a temporary bridge from the town of Snoqualmie Falls, 1958.

According to company records, until 1942, when the men were sent to Idaho for internment, the Japanese never represented less than half the workers employed at any time. Yet photographs very rarely showed them. Common perception is that the workers were burly, blond Scandinavians, though to the company, the Japanese were known as “well-behaved” and “hard workers” who never caused labor troubles, the very qualities that Weyerhaeuser was trying to inculcate in its workforce by building and maintaining the town. The Japanese bunkhouse was far removed from the housing offered to the Caucasian workers and was torn down the day after the men were sent to internment.

In its literature about the town, Weyerhaeuser wrote that families “enjoyed all the comforts of the city home with the additional advantages of fresh air and plenty of room.” The “tree-growing company” effectively became the family-growing company, creating city life in the forest. By 1958, the forest itself had also been tamed, no longer offering close-in harvest, and the town was abandoned. Snoqualmie Ridge, another Weyerhaeuser planned community, has since sprouted nearby, and Weyerhaeuser has made known its desire to officially become a real estate investment trust (REIT). The social experiment that produced the town of Snoqualmie Falls would seem to have been much more central to the core Weyerhaeuser business than it might have appeared at the time.

Don Fels is a visual artist who lives in the Cascade foothills. He works worldwide, but the local story of the town of Snoqualmie Falls has attracted him for decades. His installation *Gone Missing: The Town of Snoqualmie Falls* is at the Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum from April through October, 2010.

Art Matters

Abigail Guay

Building Arts

On Commissioning Art and Working With Artists

A well-placed, site-specific artwork can make a good building or home a landmark. Ideally, it will dialog with the structure, draw the attention of passers-by (including potential clients, renters, visitors and the like) and offer an interpretation of the building's location or use.

Commissioning or purchasing art is not like buying a curtain wall or importing an eye-catching tile for a lobby floor. You are buying a concept and adding another creative player to your project team. You are also investing in an object that will have a life both separate from and tied to the life of your building. All in all, no small undertaking. If you decide to commission art for your project, you will want to think about the following things.

Finding the Right Artist for Your Project

The Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park notwithstanding, there is an observable regional bias in the selection of artists for publicly sited projects in the Pacific Northwest. (Feel free to substitute the names of most U.S. geographic regions and smaller cities for "Pacific Northwest." Large cities like New York and LA tend to be more cosmopolitan because they have the requisite money and workforce.) This regionalism is enforced by the agencies that organize and fund public (read: permanent, large) work: state, county and municipal offices with mandates to promote local arts and heritage. Contributing equally to this situation is the tacit assumption by many funders and collectors that an artist who has successfully created one or two big, public-friendly artworks is ideally positioned to produce more of the same.

Dedicated local support is essential to the careers of most emerging and mid-career artists. This does not excuse myopic art-making and funding practices, however—if you commission something that people have already seen before, they sometimes literally will not see it.

If you can, invest some time and money in soliciting and reviewing proposals; an independent art consultant will coordinate this for you. For a potentially more intriguing result, you can also ask individuals that are a step or two outside the art market system to recommend projects they have seen and liked. (I'm thinking of art critics, contemporary art professors, other artists.) Ideally, you will pay at least three artists a proposal fee and fly them in to present in person.

Working with Artists

Artists do not have national associations or codes of conduct. There are no best practices, just good manners.

Architecture programs offer training in materials, building codes and professional practice. Studio Art programs, on the other hand, offer an intensely personal creative experience, with an at best perfunctory overview of professional practices. Artists typically have experience with only those materials you can successfully manipulate in a hands-on, studio environment. As art programs become more sophisticated, access to materials and technologies grows, but the bricks and

mortar type materials that start coming into play with large projects remain, for the most part, out of scope. Art students are also often free to work on a project until the moment it is due, to make drastic changes at whim and repeatedly. They can pull all-nighters; your construction team won't.

Remember, too, that one need not go to school to be an artist. Although MFAs are fast becoming the industry standard, they are not a requirement. Many successful artists have no formal art or business training. As with any group of self-made professionals, quirks abound.

Architects can easily imagine some of the other factors that motivate an artist's behavior. Whenever you place a large, attention-grabbing object in public—a large, attention-grabbing object with your name on it—you will want to control as much of the production and display of that object as possible. And because of the reasons outlined above, artists are not always equipped to effectively share or relinquish control.

Anticipate a strong personality, someone who will notice little flaws in the prep work you've done, someone who may want to change things mid-process. When you can, consider these mid-process requests; they may very well lead to a better, more remarkable end result. The creative process is rarely streamline-able.

Project Management

Most architecture-scale works require engineering or site modification. Make decisions about artwork at the beginning of your project and work with the artist to determine how you need to prepare the space. Site prep often requires cosmetic or structural changes to the building: selecting new paint colors, moving electrical outlets, even adjusting the shape or placement of a ceiling or wall. In almost all instances, addressing these things at the beginning of a project is cheaper and easier than retrofitting a space to accommodate artwork.

If you are doing much more than nailing a standard picture hook into the wall, you need a project manager to coordinate the interests and activities of a group comprising any assortment and number of the following: clients, artists, studio staff, architects, contractors, subs, fabricators and specialists, shippers, etc. Your general contractor, no matter how excellent, is very probably not the best person for the job. If the artist



Installation of Mark Dion's *Neukom Vivarium* at the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle, 2006. Photo: Paul Macapia

you are working with has studio staff, someone from that staff will either act as a manager or support the artist's efforts to this end. Know your primary contact. Any contractors you are working with, as well as the building owners or developers, must also know this primary contact. Establish periodic meetings early on, as well as a system for collectively addressing new ideas and concerns.

The wife of a project funder once called me midway through her day—I'm at the nail parlor!—to issue some directives on the project that then took me two days to clarify and sort out. The chain of command is typically client-architect-artist. Unless you are all sitting around the same table, keep the conversation moving along this path.

The Muscle

Most of the time, artists or their trusted staff/contractors are going to do the best job making and installing the work you've commissioned. Highly specialized installers typically do not cost more than well-paid construction staff, and while most general contractors have the manpower and skills to fabricate and/or install large objects in large spaces, they don't always have the obsessive attention to detail an artist and her staff will. (Or if they do, it might not be in regard to the details of interest to the artist, or you.) If artwork is sloppy around the edges or the craftsmanship is uneven, it is going to show.

Professional art handlers are also an excellent resource. You will find art handling companies and individuals in most urban centers, and they'll typically travel a few hundred miles or more outside city limits for a gig. Members of this professional class (former art students, emerging artists, other artists) know how to handle high-value objects and, typically, offer a good range of carpentry, rigging, electrical and other skills.

If your construction site is union, have a conversation early on about who will be responsible for what activities. This can be particularly difficult to navigate in situations where the artwork is a fairly common structural element like an electrical fixture or a piece of architectural glass. You and the artist will need to make the case for the artwork being outside the scope of the union contract. (I once managed a project where our installers were allowed on site as "advisors" to the construction team. For this to happen, they had to agree to a strict hands-off policy that everyone immediately and gladly ignored.)

Architects can easily imagine some of the other factors that motivate an artist's behavior. Whenever you place a large, attention-grabbing object in public—a large, attention-grabbing object with your name on it—you will want to control as much of the production and display of that object as possible.

Avoiding Disputes

Artists are frequently guilty of agreeing to an unrealistic budget in order to realize a project. They will forgo any actual income, re-allocating the "artists fee" portion of the budget to material or service costs. They will also spend their own money to complete a project. And despite, or rather, as an obvious condition of this complex juggling of funds, the money will sometimes run out. Require detailed budgets from artists and review any material and service lines that relate to construction, fabrication, and any other areas in which you have some expertise.

Finally, plan for the future. Consider upkeep (cleaning, fixing abrasions, replacing mechanical parts), and try to absorb that into your or the building owner/operator's budget. Even very successful artists cannot afford this kind of routine maintenance. Also get a plan in place for what will happen to the artwork if the building is ever raised or renovated, scenarios that can be pretty far from your mind during the construction process.

Abigail Guay is Program Manager at Grantmakers in the Arts. When she was a Project Manager at the Jenny Holzer Studio (2002-06), she coordinated site-specific installations for buildings by SOM, Richard Gluckman, Peter Maerkli and others.

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ARCADE 29.1 September 2010

From Gritty to Glossy: Methods of Design

Feature Editors, Kevin Eckert + Andrew van Leeuwen / BUILD LLC



If you start me up If you start me up I'll never stop I've been running hot
You got me ticking gonna blow my top If you start me up If you start me
up I'll never stop

Rolling Stones

fire

“start me up”

Kelly Rodriguez

I've been thinking a lot about fire thanks to this issue of *ARCADE*. The editorial thrust of this magazine grows from a continual exploration of architecture and design. And while to some this may inspire thoughts of buildings and bowls, to me architecture and design conjure multifaceted images of music, dance, painting, food, sex, cities, babies, poetry, children, lovers, life... To me architecture and design are about our lives and the places in which we live—what we do and where, how and why we do it. And when I'm living my life fully and truthfully, there's a continual flame that keeps me moving forward.

Imagine listening to a piece of music that moves you—no matter the genre, doesn't it have the power to transport and suggest something deeper? As a dancer, whether you're feeling the ache of a slow adagio or the intensity of a Cumbia-inspired hip swivel in a Zumba class, there's a fire that is ignited by the truth of the movement. Or what about the luxurious act of escaping into a book? As Hélène Cixous says, “Reading is a provocation, a rebellion: we open the book's door, pretending it is a simple paperback cover, and in broad daylight escape!... Reading is eating the forbidden fruit, making forbidden love, changing eras, changing families, changing destinies, and changing day for night. Reading is doing exactly as we want and 'on the sly.'” The sensuousness of food, sexual passion, or walking through a vibrant city on a hot day are titillating at the very least, and firey at best. A lust for life is not without fire.

This issue of *ARCADE* represents the culmination of a yearlong exploration of the basic elements of the universe: earth, water, air, and now, fire. For those readers who haven't committed *ARCADE*'s editorial motivations to memory, we hatched this idea a year ago because it seemed imperative to us to go back to basics. As our technological prowess continues to advance, many of us crave a simpler life. More importantly, in this age of climate change (or post-climate change, some might say) our planet is literally dying for a simpler life, gasping for air and water. Like all who live, make and consume, it is incumbent upon architects, artists and designers to adopt a position that intelligently and respectfully works with, rather than against, our complex and dynamic world.

So what about fire?

For this feature I approached 67 people from a variety of professions and walks of life with a call for submissions—I asked them for new and creative views on fire. I solicited artists, writers, culinary types, architects, industrial designers, graphic designers, pilates instructors, musicians, dancers, librarians, curators, academics and government officials.

The first article I received was from John Parman, a writer based in Berkeley, California and co-founder of *Design Book Review*. I didn't know what to expect, but when I started reading, I was immediately drawn into his prose. John writes about “Four Kinds of Fire”; his explication begins with the Great Fire of London and ends with a reflection on death. John's story talks about architecture and design, yet he never utters those words (save for a passing reference to something “designed”). He writes about lives and places that have been lived and inhabited.

Jody Turner, an international cultural trends expert, writes about the challenges faced by designers in the current economic and environmental climates—how to simultaneously work thoughtfully (slow burn) and passionately (fast burn). Amery Calvelli, a communicator for architecture and design, looks at “char” from a new perspective—the beauty and charm that is found in purposely burned materials. Graphic designer Brian Boram challenges the ubiquitous “clean coal” rhetoric of today. Tim Girvin, a brand strategist and graphic designer, delves into the personal fire — passion — of brand leaders. The always wise Robin Woodward reflects on the importance of hearth in the End Note. And industrial designer and Director of Category Integration, Sustainable Marketplaces at Nike, Jane Savage, writes about finding, and refinding, one's creative path and igniting the fire within oneself to pursue it: “It's easy to recognize someone at their creative best—it's like they are on fire.”

Not surprisingly, the predominant theme to which these contributors speak has to do with inner fire. Whether one is trying to find that fire, or has found it, the ultimate notion of recognizing the fire we carry in our bellies, and harnessing it as a tool, is a powerful element of everyone's individual universe.

I'm ready: “Start Me Up!”

Kelly Rodriguez is the Editor of *ARCADE*.

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four kinds of

one

The diarist Samuel Pepys describes London's Great Fire, during which King Charles II, besmirched with soot, made sure he was seen helping put it out. Large swathes of San Francisco burned down following the 1906 earthquake, although a few landmarks survived. In 1968, the tenements of Newark were set aflame by rioters and then left as burnt-out shells, much as the corpses of the condemned were displayed at the gates of medieval towns.

Tokyo burned in the wake of the 1923 earthquake. Rebuilt, it was destroyed again by U.S. bombs. German cities were whipped into firestorms. The Italian journalist Curzio Malaparte filed a story on the aftermath, when those left for dead were shot pointblank by the authorities. A man who survived the atom-bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki died recently. In Nagasaki, he was describing the light the bomb made to a friend when the other A-bomb fell. "Like that," he said.

Napalm rained down on hapless villagers in Vietnam. Lately in Gaza, phosphorus is the rain of choice. Each storm has its screaming child. That a generation separates them shows how little we are moved by these images to put a halt to the barbarous calculations that engender them. Smart bombs and drones now personalize the delivery; instead of the countryside, it's an apartment in Belgrade or a schoolhouse in Pashtun. The replies, too, are personal, wrapped around the body.

two

"Give tongue" is the phrase that my father's book of World War II photographs uses to caption an image of an English battleship engaging a German foe. "Fire!" belongs to the sphere of warfare but has spread to terror and judicial murder. German firing squads used machine guns in France. French firing squads, as Goya depicts, used muskets in Spain against loyalists fighting for their king.

Gary Gilmore chose a Utah firing squad rather than the noose. "Let's do it," he said. Spies and deserters, once hanged, were by World War I mostly shot. Until recently, in China a .45 to the back of the head was the means of dispatch for literally thousands. Someone told me that it's the quickest death, more humane than the poison drip that's replaced it, even there. The drip puts some distance between us and the condemned, but his or her consciousness agonizingly persists.

Sometime in the 1990s, "Ready, fire, aim!" emerged as a business buzzphrase. Marx's "MCM," as explained by Giovanni Arrighi in *The Long Twentieth Century*, describes how capitalism goes back and forth between a money focus (M) and a commodity focus (C, like China now). "Ready, aim, fire" is a commodity formula; whereas "Ready, fire, aim" describes money's endless innovation. *Fire* is the key word in both phrases, however. It connotes a commitment to action that, once taken, is hard if not impossible to undo. "Fire sale" is a potential outcome for either C or M, although (as Nassim Nicholas Taleb points out) neither is very willing to admit it.

Until recently, in China a .45 to the back of the head was the means of dispatch for literally thousands. Someone told me that it's the quickest death.

three

The oil crisis of the early 1970s led me to stay in graduate school, as job prospects for architects dropped off drastically. Arriving in the Bay Area in 1971, I found work quite readily, but was also laid off twice—once because the client didn't pay and then (in my own opinion) because I was too slow. I would count the second layoff as a firing.

Firms staff up and use downturns as the occasion to pare. Tough times are when they're forced to pare more than they'd like, making "hard choices," as they like to say, among the deserving. It's not anyone's favorite process, but firing and being fired are the truest expressions of the nature of work in these United States, which is always a mash-up of trajectories—yours and theirs.

As with any relationship, expectations abound and delusion is endless: the territory of ego. We are exhorted to "work on it," too, making ourselves "fireproof" by constantly upping our game. Yet the bigger picture of the workplace is fuzzy at best. You specialize and find there's no more demand. You refuse to specialize and are penalized for failing to be team player. Similarly, you decline to move to where the work is—or you move and they decide the market isn't worth it.

Being fired can be liberating. It invites us to wonder about them and us. Even if our being fired was lunatic, what do we do with that—seek out new lunatics? What if the whole field abounds with lunacy? As Rahm Emanuel put it, "A disaster is a terrible thing to waste." And keep I.M. Pei in mind. "I retired from my firm in 1990," he told Fumihiko Maki in 2008. "I decided then to devote the rest of my life—I didn't know at that time it would last so long—to do projects of interest only to me. It's very selfish." Emerson called it self-reliance: Hitch your wagon to a star.

fire

John Parman

four

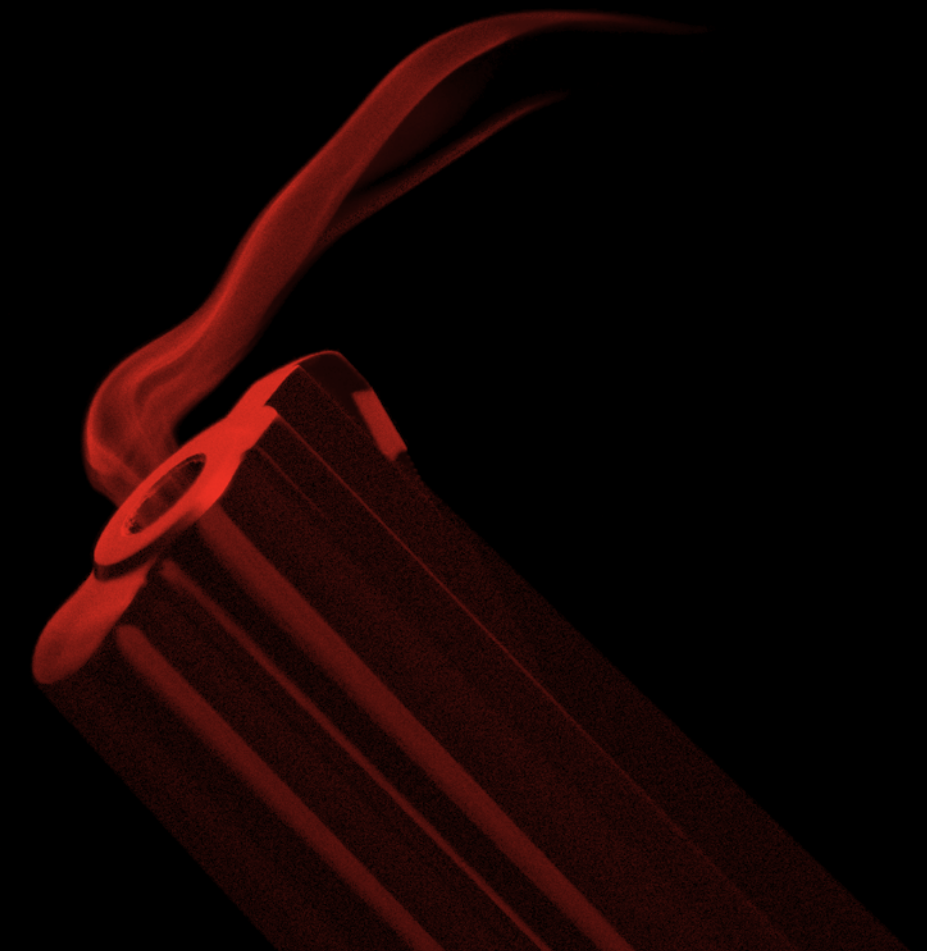
In the mid-1970s, I read some 120 building-fire case studies. This left me with a lifetime habit of noting exits and an aversion to IKEA stores, which are designed like roach hotels. (Casinos also fall in this category, and they encourage smoking!) Another takeaway: The best thing you can do in a fire is get out as fast as possible. (So the best thing you can do beforehand is to simulate getting out quickly until it becomes second nature.) The principal victims of building fires are the old, the infirm and the very young—anyone likely to become disoriented by smoke or to be incapable of saving themselves in a hurry or at all.

Fire is an accompaniment to domestic life. Clothes dryers are a frequent source of fires in nursing homes, while still plugged-in irons, pots left burning on the stove, etc., also do their part. Candles on the Christmas trees of my father's childhood burned some neighbor's house down often enough to be a distinct memory for him. When my daughter lights candles in her room when she meditates, and then forgets to blow them out, my father's stories come back to mind.

Sometimes I wish I'd never read those case studies. My father-in-law used to set up a barbeque in front of our front door—a hibachi, actually, that sat on the walk, the kids circling around him. He was usually having a drink at this point in the party sequence. When I was a kid, a neighbor squirted lighter fluid into his barbeque and it blew up the can. Or so I heard. I must have a genius for storing away these events. In Barcelona, when my oldest son was two, every affordable hotel had the only stairs and the elevator joined to form a single "chimney" with no second exit. I took the front room closest to the ground, figuring we'd escape with our lives if we had to jump.

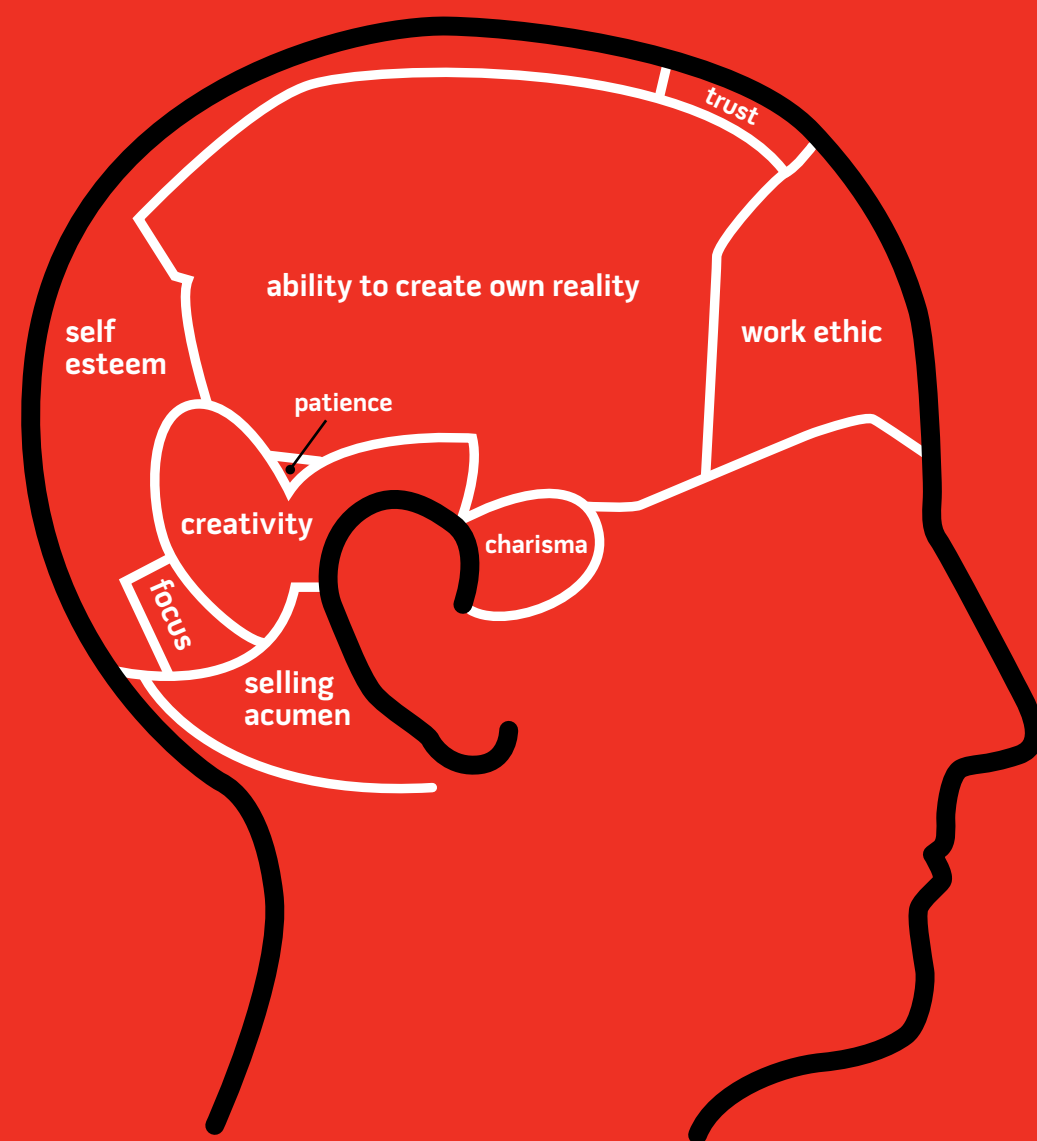
When my father-in-law died, he was cremated and his remains were buried in a box about the size of a concrete block. He'd been an All-American football player in college, so it was odd to see him so diminished. I have a theory that there's a certain amount of residual consciousness once you're dead. Fire, once again, puts an end to it. I think I'd prefer a .45 to the head.

John Parman is a writer and editor based in Berkeley. He cofounded *Design Book Review*.



fire and the alchemy of inspiration and change

Jody Turner



Are you burning out or are you burning upward and onward?

Fire comes in many forms. Most of us think of the fast, red-hot burn, but there is also the deeper and slower coal-burn, and the lighter and wispier, clear, top-of-the-fire burn. All three are fire.

Currently, we are in the red-hot burn. Society is making a major shift and we are in the thick of it. More is being asked of us for less (burnout) and we are uncertain what is ahead within our smoke-filled society. Hints into the future can be found in the trends we have been tracking these several years.

ABOVE: Phrenology of an Entrepreneur, as seen on Jerri Chou's blog entry: Why social entrepreneurs will lead the next generation of business. www.jerrichou.com

My original profession began in design when I worked at Nike, The Gap and Starbucks, cube-to-cube, desk-to-desk. I learned many valuable skills that help me to this day and I also experienced various forms of continual burnout serving up creativity to the greater machines of which I was a part. Shifting to serving my own passion within my own business led me to what I do today. This article is about shared and personal fire for greater and ever greater growth and contribution.

As a trend researcher and speaker, I have focused these last years on the shift from industrial, top-down, brand driven consumption to the cross-shared, consumer- and community-driven innovation models.

As a trend strategist, I have worked the last several years on the personal passion theory for self and company. If you are inspired and are addressing whatever you address with energy, focus, meaning and flow, your outcome can be quite creative and innovative. Like the consumer today, the designers must feed themselves with inspiration to stay vibrant and useful in society. The consumer has become an energy reader; they will be drawn to what brings fresh energy to them and will move away from products that "take" away and drain them.

The tried and true success of smaller "conversational" companies such as Threadless is an example of energy engagement. It is known that Threadless started as an online passion concept and made over 3 million dollars selling T-shirts in one year. Unlike most companies that start as brick and mortar and move online, Threadless was able to open a physical space after succeeding first online. Why such a success? A mixture of personal passion with an invitation to others to submit their passionate and playful designs struck a chord with users. A passionate and playful back and forth conversation is key going forward.

Products are shifting to serving human need first and not necessarily consumption. I mean this in an ever-deepening way as we begin to address economic and environmental distress. An inspirational product that is bright, sexy, cool or happy alone may attract but it will not build a relationship with the user over time, nor will it move the user with a meaningful connection. Solution-driven design builds respect by building what is needed at the right time.

As a visual designer at Nike, I felt a need to move into more meaningful endeavors. When the Lance Armstrong benefit bracelet exploded into society, it was clear that modern brand could influence social action. People were willing to wear "what mattered" to them on their sleeve for everyone to see. This was not a one-time event but the start of a meaning trend that we are in the middle of today.

A newer example of this personal passion and contribution trend is *GOOD* magazine's campaign with Pepsi Refresh in which people submit and share their social innovation ideas for communal vote. Pepsi has taken the millions of dollars needed to advertise at the Super Bowl and put them toward smaller, social innovation concepts created by and voted in by the people.

In a bigger frame, there is a shift from one style of consumption to another. The HAVE DO BE model I learned while working in trend at The Gap can explain it.

Brands no longer define what is cool and what matters and we no longer go to the brand for information about the brand—we go to each other. The Gap Foundation, Bono and Project Red charted this shift: The older industrial model was about HAVING money to make money to DO what you need to do in order to BE who you are supposed to be. This required a dependency on larger corporations, companies and financial sources.

The newer model consists of self-empowerment to DO what you love now, BE who you are supposed to be and define what HAVING is to you. Society and individuals across the globe are redefining what HAVING is to them. The economic crisis has accelerated this process and has taken the larger company by surprise. A reinvention is occurring as a result. Design and design strategy is poised to help usher in this new model.

This does not mean brands are redundant, rather they are shifting how they engage with the consumer by looking at what matters, and by taking a lead from smaller agile groups, entrepreneurs and cultural influencers. This is something I am working on with many companies: meaningful consumption.

Today, a personal path of passion requires communal contribution to be "of the future." The economic and environmental problems facing the globe today ask designers to think differently and make a move from the "thinking about it and working on it" slow burn to a passionate and consumptive "fast" action burn with a focus on brighter and authentically clear new directions. This future flame is about designing within a new category in a new way.

The next generation is already being, doing and having what is important to them quite naturally as cultural citizens. No brand permission is needed to enter this level of influential market engagement, and here are a few examples of new influencers in design and strategy that I respect.

JERRI CHOU

Jerri Chou stands as an example of a young gen woman using her design and strategy skills to drive forward influential groups in NYC. Working in advertising was a start; being an entrepreneur and driving forward new relationships with brands is her passion. Companies are looking at her and to her for new ways of engagement.

Check out her projects:

www.ourfutureistbd.com
www.itsalovelyday.com
www.feastongood.com

Article on compassion for *The Huffington Post*: www.huffingtonpost.com/jerri-chou/compassion-a-simple-elega_b_409945.html

EMILY PILLOTON

Project H and its creator, Emily Pilloton, are at their core about collaboration between designers, and social innovation that's making a difference to those who need it. www.projecthdesign.org.

Emily on The Colbert Show:

www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/262000/january-18-2010/emily-pilloton

Her book, published by *Metropolis*, contains curated products of meaning in design: www.projecthdesign.org/designrevolution.html. Emily is being supported by her own endeavors, by the design community at large, and by various brands offering space for lectures and workshops.

BJOERN LASSE HERRMANN

Bjoern Lasse Herrmann is a young gen man who built a next generation online school that is live, social and scalable. Roles in the school are dynamic; the curriculum is created on demand and collaboratively; people can build a knowledge repository with references from subject matter experts. Essentially they are doing for education what blogging has done for publishing. They built the first prototypes of this school and tested it inside companies like Google and Intuit, and launched it for the public in the beginning of January. Since then, they have experienced a huge demand from around the world.

Also involved is Steli Efti, CEO and shared Principal of Supercool School. Check out School's latest presentation on stage at the DEMO Conference: www.bit.ly/cJme1b
 Latest coverage from USA Today: www.bit.ly/9PSL64

Links:

www.Corp.SupercoolSchool.com
www.SupercoolSchool.com
www.Startup.SupercoolSchool.com

Jody Turner is a cultural trend expert working with companies and communities worldwide in the cultivation of future design. Jody founded CultureofFuture.com in 2002 and has since spoken in Helsinki, Istanbul, Stockholm, London, Brazil, Montreal, Toronto, Geneva, Cannes, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Jody received a brand contribution award in Mumbai last fall at The World Brand Congress.

clean coal

let's change the conversation

Brian Boram

An editorial criticizing the demolition of Pennsylvania Station in the 1960s noted at the time, a “civilization gets what it wants, is willing to pay for, and ultimately deserves.” The march of progress to tear down a Beaux-Arts masterpiece became the basis of an urban preservation movement. The idea that a society can embrace a notion of the future while still hanging onto the past has been a popular concept in urban development over the past 30 years. Does this same thinking apply to the legacy of our energy infrastructure?

Recently I have been a bit confounded by the term “clean coal.” This is the coal industry’s moniker to capture CO2 emissions while ensuring its future as a viable energy source. The “clean” is our future, “coal” our past. I am struck both by the clever collision of these seeming opposites and the hope that we are so ingenious as to marry and resolve this conundrum. Equally so, I am fascinated by the marketing and PR engine that is delivering this message to the populace.

In a Season 3 episode of *Mad Men*, Don Draper offers a solution to the angry cries coming from the citizenry regarding the demolition of Penn Station: “If you do not like what is being said, change the conversation.” In the case on coal, I present you with *America’s Power Army*, the thinly veiled voice of “clean coal.” This supposed army is the coal lobby’s “online community for concerned citizens” masquerading as a legitimate dialogue on energy independence. Its sister-site, *americaspower.org*, otherwise known as the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, tries to make a persuasive case for coal’s future, but in my opinion fails. For starters, the main graphic on the web page is a lump of black coal with an orange electrical cord plugged into it. This certainly is not my idea of a sustainable image! On the same page are statistics citing an 88.5 percent reduction in particulate matter since the 1970s. Their supporting facts read more like forward-looking statements that portend progress, such as: “There is over \$12 billion in clean coal research underway right now in 43 states—even ones not normally associated with coal production.” All things considered, if not for the Clean Air Act of 1970, can coal claim anything clean?



Mountaintop removal is a way of mining coal that does just that, chops a thousand feet off the top of the mountain and throws it in the river. This has serious, long-term impacts on the community and environment, from drastically harming the biodiversity of the waterways and mountain to millions of gallons of sludge that remain. Image courtesy of Appalachian Voices.

Don't black lung, mountaintop removal, highly explosive gases and reserves that will only last the next 150 years still make a better case for “dirty dangerous dead-end coal?”

Coal accounts for half of the electricity generated in the U.S., and is our cheapest source of power. The Obama administration stands behind it as a viable energy source, but with innovative rhetoric that suggests it is a necessary evil. Although I buy into the notion that to achieve a new energy paradigm we must transition our reliance from one technology to another, I am a bit puzzled why, in this era of climate change, we would choose coal for anything in the future. It is destructive to the landscape, may end up using more power to make it “clean,” kills miners on a regular basis, and although cheap and plentiful today, it is not a renewable resource. We will not achieve “clean coal” but we can achieve clean, smart and renewable technologies in our energy future. Yes, we need jobs and, yes, power needs to be affordable. But it is bolder to imagine a new, truly clean energy source instead of just rebranding.

As America’s Power Army states, new technologies are being developed for coal. “Dreaming the Impossible Dream,” an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* by Thomas L. Friedman, provides an optimistic viewpoint on some smart thinking for coal’s nasty byproducts. He writes of a company, Calera, which has pioneered a process of combining CO2 emissions with seawater to produce building materials. “If this can scale, it would eliminate the need for expensive carbon-sequestration facilities planned to be built alongside coal-fired power plants—and it might actually make the heretofore specious notion of ‘clean coal’ a possibility.” Really? Don’t black lung, mountaintop removal, highly explosive gases, and reserves that will only last the next 150 years still make a better case for “dirty dangerous dead-end coal?” Calera definitely has some cool technology and very smart people working on this Band-Aid for coal, but just imagine what these minds could be working on with the time and money not wasted by misguided corporate interests and crafty sloganeers.

The futurist idea that real progress only happens once a generation dies is a morbid, if hopeful, reminder of what society can and will achieve over time. Today our world is changing faster than ever before and in unprecedented ways. The progress we once waited patiently for now requires a new model, not a renovation. Unlike the pomp and circumstance of the stately structures and grand arrivals of our past, we now embrace speed and efficiency. Whether we can deem the ugly as beautiful or vice versa is not the point, but how we spend our energy and the earth’s energy right now is a conversation worth having.

Natural Resources Defense Council
Spoon on America's Power Army
www.americascoalpower.org

Join the conversation at
www.citizenscoalcouncil.org
www.sierraclub.org/coal

Brian Boram is principal and founder of RMB Vivid, a multi-disciplinary design studio in Seattle. RMB Vivid conceptualizes, manages and implements comprehensive identity design systems in the built environment. Brian is a visiting lecturer at the University of Washington and is an ARCADE board member.

charming char

fire's remnant undresses design

Amery Calvelli

Demand for improving our way of living has unconsciously produced a design treadmill of newer-fresher-smoother-cleaner-better. Perhaps we are too close to new things and cannot be objective about our creation of them. Char, while qualifying as a remnant and far from smooth or clean, allows a glimpse into a different dimension of our designed tools and shelter. Char hands us a fresh pair of lenses with which to view what we once may have claimed was damaged.

Taking a torch to vintage chairs and furniture pieces, in 2002, Maarten Baas presented a small collection of burnt furniture for his final project at the Design Academy of Eindhoven. Using fire to confront ornament head-on, he called to attention history, patina and even the flawed nature of the human hand while staring into the headlights of our habit of designing beautiful things.

Do we make things we don't really touch? I had to touch the first pieces of his “Smoke” furniture that I saw. Baas had carefully burned two-dozen pieces of furniture for an exhibition at Moss in New York. Each was presented on white displays in a clean, crisp gallery space. In Bass’s hand, Rietveld’s *Red and Blue Chair*, once the iconic representation of De Stijl principles, now stood for a new (and yet unnamed) style that, in its transformation from smooth to slightly craggy, questioned the perfection of the design of everyday things. A dining chair, a grandfather clock, the Campana brothers’ *Favela Chair*, the ‘*You Can’t Lay Down Your Memory*’ *Chest of Drawers* by Tejo Remy—all were blackened to the perfection of the imperfect human hand. Transformed by scorched crevices, cracked pockets and blackened to the absence of sheen, char was an imperfect reminder of the impermanence of life. In defying the logic that burnt furniture should be discarded, another dimension of beauty resulted. My perception of materiality was altered.

Yakisugi House (2007) and *Coal House* (2008), by architect and historian Terunobu Fujimori, are two examples of wrapping buildings in charred cedar. Evenly burning cedar planks for a few minutes can actually serve as a preventative to fire, rain and rot for up to 80 years. Fujimori experimented with a traditional charring technique called *shou-sugi-ban* and charred boards as long as 25 feet. Gaps from imperfection and warping are filled with plaster. The pinstriped result is as impressive as it is tender, fusing its temporal materiality with the ground from which it comes. From this new lightweight version of the material, once known as wood, emerges renewal.

A heaping pile of charred-black chairs, car parts and props discarded from past shows was center stage at the late fashion designer Alexander McQueen’s Autumn/Winter 09-10 runway show. Snagged in the luxury industry’s web of insatiable desire, the collection entitled *Horn of Plenty* juxtaposed both a respect for and a subversion of haute couture. In a *New York Times* review of the show, McQueen lamented that “[t]he turnover of fashion is just so quick and so throwaway.” His provocative collection and runway design brought to the forefront considerations of longevity and reuse.

Charred furniture, a charred building skin and a charcoal pile of rubbish each force the beauty index into a pendulum swing from awe to shock. McQueen’s pursuit of a new fashion industry dialogue equals Maarten’s quest for a different way of thinking about what products we create and why. Fujimori’s exploration in cladding forms a deeper connection with shelter. None were satisfied with what the production line currently offered.



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We are not accustomed to an emotion of endearment when looking at what fire has left behind. Flames as metaphor for fear is so deeply imbedded in us that even from a near-spiritual-Bill-Viola perch of a screen, flames are commanding. When a flame heats wood and releases smoke, organic matter is transformed, leaving a remnant as guilelessly as one might leave chocolate on a hotel pillow when turning down the bed for a guest. Like the chocolate, char is a surprise gift.

Leonard Cohen reminds us in “Anthem” to “Forget your perfect offering. There’s a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.” From a remnant of fire we discover a new entry into what we design and why. Charming char.

Amery Calvelli is a communicator for architecture and design. Her favorite pastime is exploring the new: if it is better, or not, and why.

Studio Maarten Baas, *Smoke*, 2002. Original design: Gerrit T. Rietveld’s 1918 *Red and Blue Chair*.

Pieces of furniture are literally burned, after which they are preserved in a clear epoxy coating. All *Smoke* products come from the Baas & den Herder studio in the Netherlands, except for three baroque products reproduced by the Dutch label Moooi. Gallery Moss and Maarten Baas have been collaborating on the “Where There’s Smoke...” series since 2004, producing a collection of well-known design classics of Rietveld, Eames and Gaudi. Collectors and museums around the world have commissioned Maarten Baas. www.maartenbaas.com
Photo by Maarten van Houten, www.maartenvanhouten.nl



brandfire

Tim Girvin

Fire Offering, the Wanderer / Memorial Cairn for Matt Girvin, Decatur Island, Washington. Photo/Installation: Tim Girvin

As a designer, presuming strategic intention, the practice is never about what's on the surface alone, but more what lies beneath it. The legacy of any design decision lies in historical experience—it is about the story of what has been, what story might be told now, and how that story could extend to the future. In exploring the idea of design, we might liken it to the signature—the “signing” of a solution in the original use of the word. For every design might be just that—regardless of the transparency of interpretation, it is a filtration of personal spirit and character.

In reaching into the heart, the center of the conception of the translation of design, the nexus of a relationship — the challenge of finding a solution — the spirit of the designer, the signature, will be seen. Anyone committed to the ethos of creativity will reach into their soul of experience and the foundation of expertise to bring forth, in the power of a solution, something that is profound—to them, to the community. It is the profundity of this action — for the person, the creator, the reach to others — that builds passion. That sense of soulfulness drives the path to the answer.

Passion is fire. Passion is pain. Passion is empathy—the reaching into the heart of a relationship, to a problem, an idea, a question that is holistically embraced. And that sense of embrace — which is about the spirit of captivity — is consistently driven to get closer to the flame of the challenge that is set, and to seek the exhilarating freedom of the ideal response. But that response will always be tinted by the person that creates that answer. Surely, in any design problem there will be consistency in understanding the issues at stake, the nature of the question, the character of the audience—but always, in the end, the spirit of the actual signature of the outcome will be touched by personality. The hand draws from the soul.

Working with leaders from around the world, the idea of fire is a compelling patterning in my experience—who, in that game, is really *in it*? *Who is really entranced by the problem that needs to be seen, in scene and newly discovered.* The person in front — the one who leads — needs to be inflamed with that sense of profound and continuing commitment to explore the nature of the pathway to the design answer, and also, what lies beneath that exploration. Every answer yields another question—and

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then another answer. As a person who focuses on *the brand* as a form of communicating between relationships, the ideal leader is one who touches and contemplates every detail of that resolution; it's not the glancing overview but the details that make this approach to enterprise memorable.

To think about the concept of brand, it's important to toss out the conventional definition of what that trapping means, and go beneath, into the primordial history of words. Brand, the word, was first spoken at least 4,000 years ago — its etymology is embedded deep in the roots of Indo-European language — and there, in the beginning, the spirit of the word is fire. The translation of this expression really only found its home in the West during the last millennium, first scribed in a monastery off the coast of Scotland, a refuge from the battery of that tumultuous time.

In working on brands, I always work with the leadership of that brand, and in that entwining — the idea of brand and the human spirit that lies in the heart of it — there is a kind of genetic mingling. The human brand. And in most of the powerful brand stories that are attached to the presentation of design as a key aspect of value, human leadership is the fire that burns at the soul of that encounter.

In the early days of my career when I worked as a consultant at Apple, then successively afterwards, I was exposed, firsthand, to Steve Jobs. While some of the team then defined Steve as a kind of maniac, for me that opening encounter was about passion—and the fire of the details in getting things right, down to the microscopic shading of an industrial design detail, the form language of a returning curve of an object, a screen interface, or the touch of handcrafted typography. That initial encounter spread to others at Apple in which the same passion was incited — the fire of the brand, which sparks and ignites that inspiration — is voiced in everything. You are either part of the flame, or you are extinguished by it.

So too in speaking with designer Tom Ford, every detail of the Tom Ford brand has a sense of the touch of his passionate fire. He designs to create *what he doesn't see in the market and what he wants to see in the market.* He designs, literally, for himself. That fire is a blazing trail—a *signature*. And finding that opening, the obsession to create, is something that continuously empowers every decision of experience.

Anyone who works at Apple, or at Tom Ford, or any culture of *brandfire*, will tell you the selfsame truth—the power of the brand story is about that fire of a flammable signature. Each touch, a gesture of fire.

Tim Girvin is the founder of GIRVIN | Strategic Branding, one of the longest-running, privately held design organizations on the West Coast. Girvin believes in passionate curiosity, collaboration, languages, wandering and working with leaders around the world in telling brand stories to newly voice and visualize their presence and experience.

ignition

designer on a journey

Jane Savage

I have been a *fire keeper* and participant in several traditional Lakota sweat lodge ceremonies in my life. The key to keeping a good fire is a clear mind and a prayer of good intention. The Lakota way is an intense, earth-based spiritual practice, whereby in the sweat lodge one can aggressively burn off that which ails you.

Ever on a search for spiritual expression and self-improvement, I was curious and attended an Ananda service that involved an ancient Vedic fire ceremony. It was a very gentle fire set in a chafing dish fueled by sacred oils. Prayers were written on small pieces of paper to be offered to the fire and burned. From American Indian to East Indian, the spectrum between these two forms of spiritual practice is extreme in terms of purifying with the fire element. From these deep experiences, I realized how necessary it was for me to keep alight my own mystical flames, whether or not I had access to these rituals on a regular basis.

On the cover of Sir Ken Robinson's book, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*, there is a graphic of a flame. It's safe to assume that the element to which he's referring is fire. I first learned of Sir Ken by watching a video of him speaking to the class of 2009 at my alma mater. He is a leading thinker on creativity and human potential.

He was recently in Portland speaking at Powell's Books to promote his latest work. I found him delightfully inspiring. Sir Ken gave many examples of artists, musicians, mathematicians and athletes whose lives had fallen into place by following their passion and being in their element.

One man in the audience asked Sir Ken, *What if you're passionate about a lot of things?*

His answer was that you will have little time for the others once you focus on one or two. But his main point was that it's more of a challenge for people to figure out what their passions are versus having too many. In my mind, Sir Ken is a modern day Prometheus, who took fire from the gods to give it to the mortals; using his wisdom and research into the creative drive, he aims to ignite the untapped potential in the lives that he touches.

His case is that when you find your passion, your life falls into place. For most of you reading *ARCADE*, you are likely connected to the design or architecture field or have an avid interest in it. In the beginning, it may have been a struggle to find your creative path—it certainly was for me.

I grew up outside of Boston, and I was lucky enough to be in a school system that had a great arts program. When my art teacher in high school asked me what I was going to do for college, I told her I was going to study engineering and play lacrosse.

No you're not. You're going to get your portfolio together and go to art school, she directed. She invited design schools to give us slide shows of their programs. When it hit me that I had to be a designer, I felt like I was on fire. I was worried thinking about how I was going to convince my parents to let me go, but willfully determined to have my way. There was a recession; I watched them talk my brother out of studying architecture five years earlier, and I wasn't going to let them talk me out of design. My mother, in helping my case to sway my father, told him that I had been drawing my whole life. Ever since I was a young child she kept a pen and paper in her purse for me.

I read about a study that stated the evidence of career choice is written in your DNA—based on traits passed through your parents. This explains why twins separated at birth often adopt similar if not identical career choices. We have our work programmed into us.

My creative ability came through my father's line. His mother was a talented dress-maker and artist in the Philippines. He told me stories of how she would create precise drawings of him. I wish I had those drawings, but sadly she and her stories were lost in WWII. My father's family was broken apart. Given a choice to stay with his distraught father or go to his strict maternal grandmother, he chose the latter, setting in motion a path of choices that eventually led him to the U.S. where he would meet my mother, who was from the southern Philippines. On our last visit to the Philippines, I realized that it was highly unlikely their paths would have crossed there. They had to meet in the U.S. and follow their destiny, so that my life could fall into place.

In *Faces of America* on PBS with Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr., eminent cellist Yo-Yo Ma recounts his father's wisdom, "...it takes three generations to make a musician: 1 – to get out of poverty, 2 – to go to college, 3 – to master the instrument..." I look at my five year-old son, and there's not a doubt in my mind that he will be the master of whatever he chooses.

Many people came before me so that I could add up to who I am today. As a designer, I'm constantly refining and re-defining my role because I am doing the same with my self from a spiritual point of view. I am blessed to have found the path of design. I have all the tools, and I still wonder: *What is it I am here to do? What is it that will honor the legacy of those who have come before me? What will be my legacy?*

Every creative person I talk to is wondering about their true purpose and legacy. There are a lot of frustrated or misguided artists and designers out there. The state of the economy hasn't helped. All the artists I know, except for one or two, are in survival mode to stay in the lines of financial security and healthcare benefits. The planet is having a financial and environmental resource crisis, causing us as consumers to reconsider our consumption. We as designers are rethinking how we conscientiously address the consumer's needs. In addition, Sir Ken argues, we are also having a human resource crisis because we've barely scratched the surface of our collective human potential.

In 2006, I led a group of designers from Nike on a trip to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan sits on the western shores of the Caspian Sea at the crossroads of Asia, the Middle East and Russia. Known as the *Land of Fire*, it's a country full of natural resources of the petroleum kind. We had an opportunity to visit a tourist site eternally aflame due to fissures in the earth seeping natural gas. There were no barriers safeguarding us from the undying blaze, so we could get beside the heat as closely as we wanted.

It's easy to recognize someone at their creative best—it's like they are on fire. You know the feeling when you are doing your creative best—it's as if your belly is burning.

Our project in Azerbaijan was to teach design and art to displaced children from the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Their school was on one floor of a clean but dilapidated summer sanitarium near the sea. The rest of the rooms in the building were one-room apartments where many of the children lived crowded with their families. Many of us came back from this trip in a state of unease—returning to our comfortable lives with a humbled sense of perspective.

Quite a number of designers on the trip are no longer with the company, having left to pursue opportunities more fitting with deeper needs. It's not clear what the trip may have inflamed in my travel companions, but for me it affirmed that my path as a designer includes inspiring creative potential.

I can only imagine that at least one of the 80 kids with whom we worked may one day be inspired to follow their own dream to be an artist or a designer. Each of these children is an extension of that land, with gas fissures of possibility waiting to be set alight—no different than the fire my own high school art teacher kindled in me. They will go on and pass the flame and the world will be altered.

I think that artists and designers who've been lucky enough to find the creative path owe it to themselves and to each other to channel. Prometheus. Ken says in his book that each child has a singing voice that's like ringing a bell. I'd say then that each person has a creative expression that's like a flame. It can be as small as a gas leak, waiting for ignition. It's easy to recognize someone at their creative best—it's like they are on fire. You know the feeling when you are doing your creative best—it's as if your belly is burning.

I am on the creative path. You may be, too. Light the flame. Touch lives. Change the world.

Ignition.

Jane Savage lives with her husband and son in Portland, OR.

Volcano drawing by
Max Savage.



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City Building Vancouver

Trevor Boddy

A Gold Medal to the Richmond Olympic Oval's Wood Roof

One has to look back a half-century or more to find an Olympic Games as architecturally un-ambitious as Vancouver's. Breaking with modern Olympic practice, the Vancouver Olympics Organizing Committee (VANOC) elected to sponsor no architectural competitions at all. Such new design commissions as there were (Vancouver is the largest city ever to host a Winter Games, so much of the construction work was limited to adaptations of existing facilities) went to bland corporate practices, our best designers such as Bing Thom or John and Patricia Patkau not even getting interviews. Moreover, as the first global sports event entirely planned after 9/11, VANOC spent more on security than on new buildings.

It should come as no surprise that the standout design creation of Vancouver's Olympic Winter Games was for the only venue where some semblance of civic entrepreneurship was permitted. An oval-shaped arena for speed skating was originally slated to be constructed in the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby, but an aggressive proposal to host the building from rival suburb Richmond prevailed. Innovative use of wood was a priority for both VANOC and the City of Richmond—in particular the use of small dimension lumber harvested from BC's huge stock of blue-stained beetle-killed pine. (Since these BC pine beetles are no longer killed by hard winter frosts due to global warming, the province now has unsold mountains of lumber; simultaneously, export markets for wood-framed suburban bungalows in the United States have all but dried up.) Since the structural engineering practice headed by Paul Fast and Gerry Epp is Canada's leader in engineered wood design, the firm was linked with almost every architectural team shortlisted to design the venue, with Cannon Design emerging the winner.

Fast + Epp's resulting roof design for the Richmond Olympic Oval is epochal, pointing at the central role sustainably harvested wood will play as the ever-renewable green-construction material of the future. Clever design by the engineers and their linked wood-manufacturing concern StructureCraft solved two enormous design challenges: fashion a large, clear-span structure almost entirely out of timber, and make much of this roof out of small-dimension studs (two-by-fours) salvaged from climate-change-killed British Columbia pine. Architectural in the best possible sense, the Fast + Epp design for the speed skating Oval is ingenious in reconciling its large span with small structural member size.

At StructureCraft's factory, two-by-four studs were cut into short sections, then the wood was screw-connected through L-shaped metal connecting plates into curving V-sections, which structurally act as long beams. Three of these V-sections were then aligned side-by-side and covered with a capping plywood diaphragm, forming what the engineers call a "Wood Wave Panel." Once the huge, glulam-laminate wood-beams in a V-configuration were set up across the ice surface to be, cranes lowered the Wood Wave Panels into position as roof elements, then sprinklers, air supply, lighting and other service elements were woven into their latticed forms. The Oval's roof-curves sweep dramatically upwards along its north elevation, admitting stable light and magnificent mountain views.

This design feature was stymied by VANOC, who insisted on covering up of all windows for the Olympics, worried that outside views would permit "ambush marketing" by companies not on their sponsorship list. The situation was made worse by glare-inducing lighting by Stantec Engineering. Polychrome end-wall patterns and other architectural embellishments devised by associates Cannon Design are nearly as distracting—this building is all about the roof.

The work of Fast + Epp was included in my exhibition *Vancouverism: Architecture Builds the City* in its showings in London, Paris and Vancouver itself, and it was the highly innovative Richmond roof that surprised and delighted many. Subsequently, engineers Fast + Epp were awarded the 2009 I-Struct-E prize (the equivalent in the world of structural engineering of the Pritzker prize for architecture) for their trail-blazing ideas, deservedly beating out Arup's design for the Beijing Bird's Nest Stadium. If the heavy steel members and faux-sculptural mesh of the Arup/Herzog de Meuron design represents the architecture, economies and materiality of the decade past, the elegant green efficiency of Fast + Epp surely represent a bold direction for this new decade. With innovative architecture shunted aside by design-averse Vancouver Olympics organizers, it took the leadership of engineers to produce a design that is truly Olympian. A gold medal to Gerry Epp, Paul Fast and StructureCraft for the Richmond Olympic Oval.

Urbanist, architecture critic and curator Trevor Boddy is one of the organizers of the recently concluded open ideas competition for the City of Surrey "TownShift: Suburb Into City" (www.townshift.ca).



OPPOSITE: Nic Lehoux Photography, courtesy of Cannon Design. THIS PAGE: Derek Lepper Photography, courtesy of Cannon Design.



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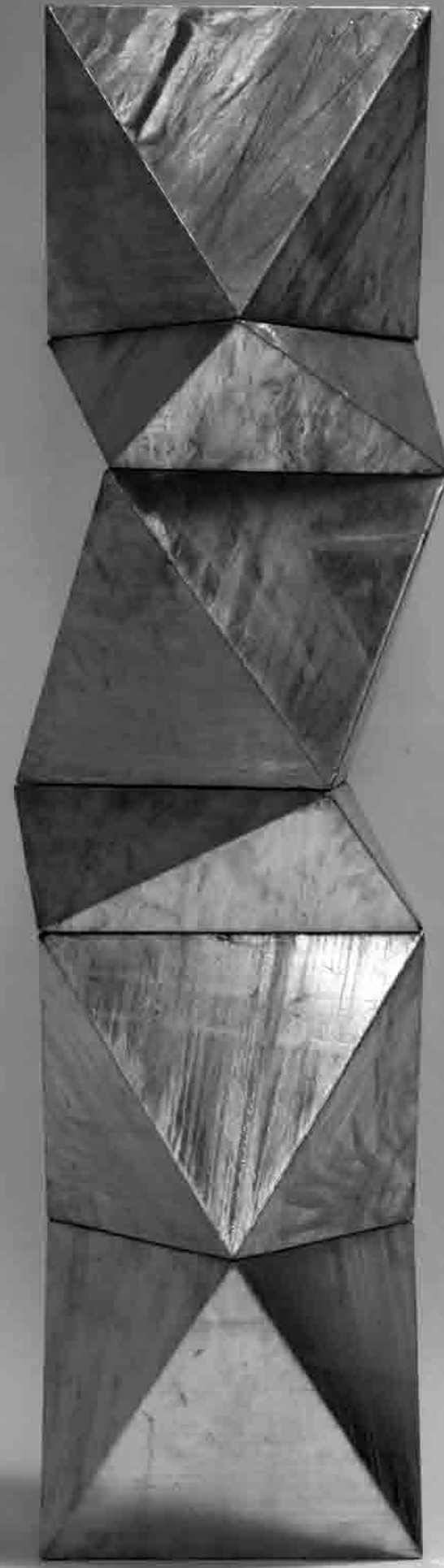
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JM Cava

Aldo van Eyck: Labyrinthian Clarity

The Writings of Aldo van Eyck, 1947-1998.

The Child, the City and the Artist.

Vincent Ligtelijn and Francis Strauven, eds.

Two Volumes (Illustrated) + DVD in slipcase.

SUN, Amsterdam. 2008 238 pages and 744 pages.

“Modern architecture has been harping continually on what is different in our time to such an extent even that it has lost touch with what is not different, with what is always essentially the same.” Aldo van Eyck

By the time a young Amsterdam architect named Aldo van Eyck began work on his commission for a Municipal Orphanage in 1955, the sails of modern architecture originally filled with the excitement of change and invention were solidly in the doldrums. The masters remained — Wright, Aalto, Mies, Le Corbusier — but as

idiosyncratic artists on their personal trajectories, no longer prophets of a new world. And the dumbed-down glass box had begun its inexorable take over while an attenuated and dandified cocktail modernism dominated the press in the work of Ed Stone, SOM, Yamasaki and Philip Johnson, who had just given his “Seven Crutches of Modern Architecture” lecture, targeting history, drawing, and structure as irrelevant back-benchers while calling Wright “the most important architect of the 19th C.” The ebullient adolescence of the avant-garde had dissipated into a torpid adulthood of formal style.

van Eyck was raised an intellectual idealist and he early on developed a passion for aspects of philosophy, art, and architecture that expressed paradoxes of the human condition, resisting neat singular resolutions. He was a world citizen with an early childhood in the Netherlands, a later upbringing in London, schooling in Switzerland, and a family cultural heritage in Surinam. In his lifelong pursuit of a viable living

In his writings, collected for the first time in this handsome two-volume set (with a DVD of a lecture), van Eyck invokes the viewpoint of a child throughout; a child filled with wonder, delight and humor, naturally rebellious and irrational.

modernism, he was no reclusive bookworm—he was in the trenches, both as a practicing architect and a confidant of the likes of Arp, Rietveld, van Doesburg, Braque, Léger, Brancusi and Tristan Tzara; “the great gang” as he referred to them.

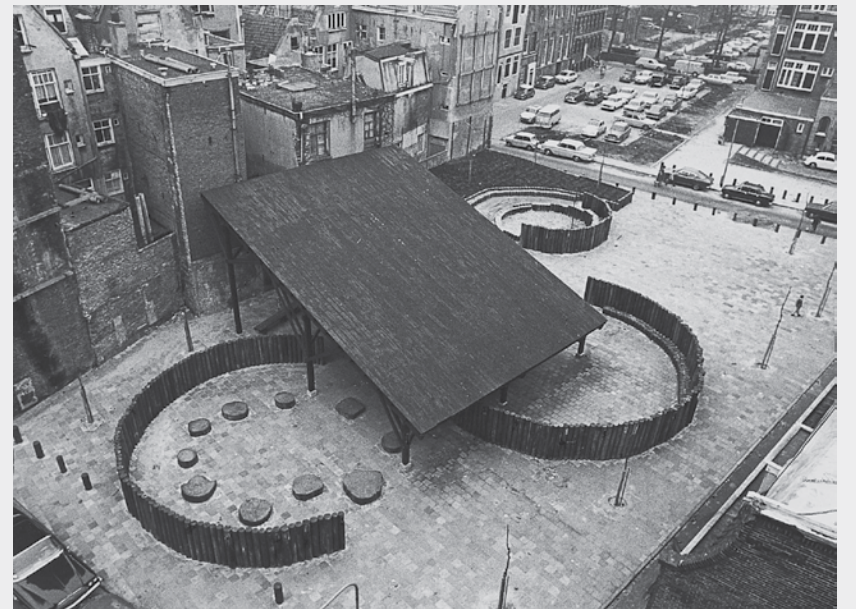
Out of this exposure, he believed the avant-garde offered more than merely a change in artistic style. He felt its most significant contribution to Western artistic/scientific culture was its stance that the relationship between Mankind and Nature was coequal and non-hierarchical. Modern art — and by extension, architecture — expressed, as Mondrian put it, an “equivalence of the dissimilar” where opposite “pure relations,” are uncovered, balanced and ultimately “...reveal the reality that is behind visible things...” (Klee).

As Lefavre & Tzonis remark in their book on van Eyck, the Orphanage, as it became known, should have received little attention, but upon publication became wildly popular among architects, probably because it successfully integrated architectural opposites previously considered irreconcilable. It mixed Palladian classical composition with anti-classical principles of avant-garde art (De Stijl) and non-Western vernacular (Dogon villages). To this blend, van Eyck added a constant concern of all Team 10 members — what they referred to as the Architecture of Community. Borrowing a phrase from the philosopher Martin Buber, he called it “the in-between.” This attitude, as Lefavre says, “...placed the emphasis on buildings as means for creating relations between people rather than as goals in themselves.” Inspired by the surrealist poet Louis Aragon, van Eyck felt that “ordinary forgotten everyday areas” in the city should be elevated to “privileged places of poetic experience and social life.” This led him towards architectural models that included contradiction in meaning and a strategy of cellular aggregate space so that however large the development, the smaller scale was always represented. Kasbah and Labyrinth were among his favorite descriptions; they implied anti-hierarchical arrangements, timeless and mythological spaces, and even chaos, which to van Eyck allowed for discovery.

This was an anti-elitist, anarchic approach in which every space in the building/city had the full status of architecture or planning, no matter how ordinary or mundane; an attitude in direct opposition to the Miesian doctrine that so carefully distinguished between “building” and “architecture.” From this stance, Modern buildings and urban design were meaningless and barren. Le Corbusier’s urban concepts of “functional city,” “heart of the city,” and urban “core” were unable to accommodate human paradox and remained shackled to large-scale space plans ignoring the essential role of time. “The material slum has gone,” he said, “... but what has replaced it? Just mile upon mile of organized nowhere, and nobody feeling he is somebody living somewhere.”

In his writings, collected for the first time in this handsome two-volume set (with a DVD of a lecture), van Eyck invokes the viewpoint of a child throughout; a child filled with wonder, delight and humor, naturally rebellious and irrational. Certainly a child’s point of view was far from the canon of modernist theory, marginalized into near oblivion, yet van Eyck chose it as a primary point of view from which to theorize about space; so much so that he titled his own 1962 collection of essays, *The Child, the City and the Artist*. A typical observation is that after a snowstorm, it is the child who temporarily becomes “Lord of the City”; architects, he thought, should provide “something for the child more permanent than snow.” In fact, one of van Eyck’s major vehicles for exploration was his set of designs for over 700 playgrounds built in and around Amsterdam over a 30 year period.

After the Orphanage and the Sculpture Pavilion at Arnhem, van Eyck’s most significant influence was through two other architects: his colleague Louis Kahn, and his former student, Herman Hertzberger, both powerful teachers and designers in their own rights. Kahn and van Eyck had a long-term dialogue and both of van Eyck’s early buildings (and Hertzberger’s) reflect Kahn’s masonry tectonic of the time, particularly in pre-cast concrete and concrete block. When Kahn made his drawing/



TOP: Nieuwmarkt, playground, 1968. Photo: Pieter Boersma

LEFT: Child playing with one of the corner circles in the children’s sandpit. Image courtesy of the van Eyck Archive.

OPPOSITE: Aldo van Eyck, Amsterdam Municipal Orphanage, 1955-1960. Photo P. Goede

statement about the city, he described it simply as a place where a child could decide what he wanted to be. And both Hertzberger and Kahn embraced van Eyck’s anthropological, anti-hierarchical and non-Western viewpoint in their building and teaching. This non-Western lens (from visiting Dogon villages in West Africa) disclosed dramatic limitations and omissions in modern movement ideals, in particular the detrimental consequences of universal space. As he liked to say, “Whatever Space and Time mean [referring to Giedion’s title], Place and Occasion mean more. For Space in the image of man is Place, and Time in the image of man is Occasion.”

van Eyck was a prolific writer and speaker. He co-edited the Dutch architectural journal, *Forum*, from 1959-1963, was a member of CIAM, founder of Team 10, and remained a tireless teacher, practitioner, scholar and thinker all his life. These volumes collect the entirety of his articles, major talks and writings which prior to this, were often near-impossible to obtain. To architects seeking connections between meaning and form, these thoughts of Aldo van Eyck manage to be both provoking and inspiring, while avoiding academic pedantry. Like Louis Kahn, he believed that only essential timeless aspects of architecture could provide the traction needed to move forward. He was committed to working within the frame of rational modernism, expanding it to include the irrational, spiritual and dualistic facets of human existence; merging left and right brains, as it were. This was, and remains today, a heroic and quixotic goal, given the cultural forces that determine architectural form. Yet, despite this and the lack of commissions throughout his long career, van Eyck never relinquished the idea that architecture had the power to both engage us more closely with, and enlarge our understanding of the world we live in. Buildings, he said, should be “icons of joy, affection and optimism.” And in the few works he was able to build, they were.

JM Cava is an architect in Portland, where he teaches, writes and designs buildings and gardens.

Book Review

Eva Hagberg

When is a review not a review?

Roy McMakin: *When is a chair not a chair?*
Rizzoli. 2010.
208 pages.

I broke my arm two weeks ago. At first I thought I couldn't write this review. I was sad. Partly I was sad because I like writing. Mostly I was sad because I like Roy McMakin. Ever since first writing about his work two years ago, I've been a little bit of a McMakin fan club president, and so I thought, after just being sad for a while, "What would Roy McMakin do?"

McMakin would make everything somehow okay, and he would find a way to write this review. Scratch that. He would find a way to communicate what he wanted to communicate. I'm telling this review to my friend Danielle, who I don't know very well. It feels very intimate and all of a sudden. The thing is, Roy knows a lot about intimacy, and all of a sudden.

McMakin is an artist who happens to create objects that take the form of furniture and houses. His work is at once ephemeral and grounded, heavy and ethereal, emotional and intellectual. From his *Slat Back Chair* to his installation *Lequita Fay Melvin*, a collection of objects named after his mother, from a house he designed for two Seattle-based art collectors, to the Western Bridge gallery space in that city's industrial neighborhood, Roy's work is consistently tactile, thought provoking and transformative.

I didn't know all of this the first time I saw Roy's work. I had been sent on assignment by *Wallpaper* magazine from New York to Seattle, and all I knew was that I was there to see a house. The photographer and I drove from Tacoma to Lake Washington and spent a couple of hours in the house before Roy got there to talk about it. I spent time looking at the perfect detail work, the impossibly smooth surfaces, the stairway that seemed to hover despite looking like it weighed one-hundred thousand pounds. As I had learned to do over the course of similar assignments the years before, I walked through the house, following its figure eights of circulation and trying to figure out just what the angle of curvature truly was. I went outside, looked back at the picture windows and thought really, really hard about what this house could mean.

I was suffering from *labyrinthitis* at the time. I had been dizzy for a couple of weeks. Friends had encouraged me not to fly to Seattle, fearing some grave inner-ear disorder that would surely be made worse by some thirty-five thousand foot elevation. My career came before everything, so of course I came. On the transcript of our interview, I can hear myself trying at first to be incredibly professional, to keep the conversation focused on Roy's identity as an artist or an architect, it's all so confusing. And then I hear myself just telling him what's going on. I've been lucky enough to be able to spend the last few years telling Roy what's going on. Because the thing — one of the many great things — about Roy is that you really can't fake him out.

McMakin's work gets to the core of the human condition. I didn't realize that I had a human condition before I met Roy, but the more time I spent looking at projects like *Untitled (A Small Chest of Drawers With One Drawer That Doesn't Fit)* or *Love and Loss*, his installation at the Seattle Olympic sculpture park, the more I realized that McMakin tends to manifest physically what I — and all others who experience this human condition — feel emotionally.

McMakin is an artist who happens to create objects that take the form of furniture and houses. His work is at once ephemeral and grounded, heavy and ethereal, emotional and intellectual.

As McMakin tells art writer Michael Ned Holte in the latter's essay appearing in the recently published monograph, *Roy McMakin: When is a chair not a chair?* (Rizzoli), "My job is to create meaningful objects." Ned Holte describes McMakin's *Maple Chest*, dissecting the seemingly straightforward piece of furniture for the eccentric, intensely intimate piece of art that it is. "The straightforward title belies the eccentricity of the work's details, which reveal themselves in time," he writes. "The side panels are partially open, exposing several drawers; the front legs are strangely curvy and tapered; the spherical pulls are spaced differently on each drawer; and — most unnervingly — an avocado shaped depression is located centrally on the only drawer with no pulls. The depression is at the same height as the solar plexus of McMakin's lover at the time, playing with a double meaning of the word chest and lending the piece of furniture provocative bodily presence."

It reminds me of the first time I saw McMakin's *Self-Portrait with Jim*, which appears on the title page of the monograph. On the right, a perfectly rendered representation of a handsome mustachioed man; on the left, a delicate wooden chair whose bent arms circle from back to seat, open for embrace. It's not that Roy thinks he is a chair that makes this piece so compelling; it's that Roy is able to see how easily our furniture operates as both an extension of ourselves and as a prescriptive object.

I've spent a lot of time with Roy since that weekend two years ago, and we've always circled around the same question: How does he do what he does? McMakin flirts with answering this question in a six-paragraph essay, which appears facing an almost imperceptibly curved table. "Today, I make paintings, houses, chairs, sculptures, tables, photographs, drawings, vases, chests of drawers and juice glasses. These endeavors require the creativity of the artist as well as the pragmatism of the design professional and small businessman."

"I see the job of an artist as that of a philosopher of visual experience. I am interested in how meaning is contained within objects and how I can illustrate and manipulate that meaning. I am interested in how memory, familiarity, scale, craft and functionality factor into this investigation. I am interested in how emotionality becomes perceptible."

That untitled chest of drawers, the one with that misshapen drawer that doesn't quite fit, is an example of McMakin's perceptible emotionality. It is functional and, therefore, can be classified as a design object, as can most of McMakin's work. But it is the immediate sense of longing, isolation and memories of traumatic lunches in the high school cafeteria that seeing this drawer, almost the same size as the others but not quite, elicits. The thing that makes Roy so brilliant is that his furniture not only expresses that formerly ineffable sense, but immediately soothes, holds and convinces you that everything is going to be all right.

Flipping through McMakin's monograph is a look into a mind that is at once meticulous and expressive, sharp edged and enveloping. His titles alone, like *A Slightly Not Round Tea Table*, produced in 2005, or *Would Table*, or *A Door Meant as Adornment*, the title of a solo show at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, offer a linguistic expression of the artist's wide-ranging playfulness. Some could read in this seemingly effortless wordplay the type of compensation frequently used by smart and self-aware people as a way of deflecting any talk of pain. And it is here, in this constant push and pull between pain and comfort, mourning and excitement, and, to borrow a phrase from the artist himself, love and loss, that the crux of what makes McMakin truly an artist, rather than a deeply meaningful furniture maker, lies. It is because of McMakin's work that I understand that my arm will not always be broken. And it is because of Roy that I know it's OK.

Eva Hagberg writes about architecture, culture, and design. She is the author of the recently published book *Dark Nostalgia* (Monacelli), a collection of interiors that evoke an idealized past, and is currently working on her second book, *Nature Framed*. This fall she will begin studying for an MS on her way to a PhD in Architectural History at the University of California Berkeley, where she will think about domestic space, intimacy and the meaning of objects. She lives in Portland, Oregon.



TOP: *Self Portrait with Jim*, 1981, gouache on paper, 13 x 16 inches, 33 x 40 cm.

LEFT: *Untitled (a small chest of drawers with one drawer that doesn't fit)*, 2008, maple, enamel paint, 51.25 x 28 x 20 inches, 130 x 71 x 51 cm. Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

Photos: Mark Woods

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Side Yard

Ron van der Veen

It's the End of the World as We Know It!

The top 10 Architectural Recession Songs of All Time

Kelly Rodriguez, our esteemed ARCADE editor, has been hounding me daily for a positive, uplifting, cheerful Side Yard contribution. It's two in the afternoon and I am sitting at work in front of my computer wearing a slightly stained T-shirt, colorful pajama bottoms and Chuck Taylors. I just realize I only shaved half my face this morning... and I didn't shower. I can't think of a single past client to call today; my list ran out weeks ago. I have a warm, half consumed Miller Light from lunch staring at me. Wow, my socks really smell when I take my shoes off...

Yeah, cheerful...

Suddenly my iPod starts blaring, "Oooh, take the money and run..." and I have one of those "aha" moments: **The Top 10 Architectural Recession Songs of all Time!** Kelly loves this mostly because it's the ONLY idea I have come up with in three weeks. This burst of energy elevates me out of my stupor, and the music starts to flow.

So here is my list starting from number 10. If you feel I overlooked a particular song, tough luck! I'm not in a cheerful mood.

10. "Money for Nothing" by Dire Straits.

This is technically more of a pre-recession banking/developer song. Also, the line, "We gotta move these refrigerators/we gotta move these color TVs..." makes direct reference to what several of my architecture friends are doing to make money these days.

9. "Burning Down the House" by Talking Heads.

OK, I admit I don't exactly know what this song is about, but it has "house" in the title, and it's so angst ridden it had to be on the list.

8. "Your Cash Ain't Nothin' but Trash" by The Clovers.

Steve Miller ripped off this 1954 R&B hit. I put this song in here because I figured at least a few people would write me complaining I had no authentic blues songs. I wish I had the balls to sing this to some of my derelict clients.

7. "Car Wash" by Rose Royce.

What better architectural recession song than one that has commercial building references and describes what several of my other designer friends are currently doing for work?

6. "Shuttin' Down Detroit" by John Rich.

Had to throw in a country song! This genre is good for recessions, but most songs are about losing your farm, horse or truck—not exactly architecture. This one is also number four on my "Top Five Urban Planning Recession Songs of All Time." Here is the chorus (remember to sing this with a twang):

'Cause in the real world they're shutting Detroit down,
While the boss man takes his bonus pay and jets out of town.
And DC's bailing out the bankers as the farmers auction ground,
Yeah, while they're living it up on Wall Street in that New York City town...

5. "We Built this City (on Rock and Roll)" by Starship.

Not actually a recession song and barely rock-n-roll. Furthermore, I HATE this song. Starship does sing about building a city, but I threw this in to see if you were really paying attention!

4. "Money (That's What I Want)" written by Bradford/Gordy and made famous by the Beatles.

There are actually several good recession songs with the title Money. I love this one because it is so raunchy. I altered the lyrics a tad to make them more architectural:

Your [designs] give me a thrill,
But [marketing renderings] don't pay my bills,
Now give me money,
That's what I want...

3. "Take the Money and Run" by The Steve Miller Band.

This song is also in my "Top Ten A.I.G. Bailout" song list (hey, I have a lot of lists because I have a lot of free time). This one is so far up because I have always secretly wanted to be Billy Joe in the song. You know, "Two young lovers with nothin' better to do..."

2. "Livin' for the City" by Stevie Wonder.

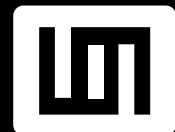
Funk-a-fide, gritty, urban, relevant, bad-to-the-bone funky, ghetto, out of cash, car smog, streetwise, did I mention funky? This one, hands down, tops my "Top 10 Urban Planning Recession Songs of All Time."

1. "It's the End of the World as We Know It" by R.E.M.

This could either be a song about the economic collapse or B.I.M. technology. Whatever way one spins it, compared to the mid-2000s, it really is the end of the world as we know it... And I feel fine?

You know, these songs are actually making me feel a bit...cheerful...
"Ooooh, take the money and run..."

Since writing this article Ron van der Veen has showered, changed his clothes and sent out 17 resumes. He also still writes for ARCADE. If you have suggestions for future topics, please email him at ronv@mithun.com.



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End Note

Robin Woodward

Fire

Fire is a call to action. “Fire it up” dates to the era of coal-fired engines, and most recently, “fired up and ready to go” applies to this era of political engines. The dreaded, “You’re fired!” has its origins in mid-1800 British coal mining towns. For earlier nomadic peoples, a sacred duty was to carry the still burning coal from one campsite to the next; hearth-to-hearth. “The fire in the earth first kindling the flame, the hearth where we gathered. The center of life.” (from “Millenium” by David Whyte). If you think of the hearth as home, as the gathering place, fire becomes the metaphor for life, for our lives.

In speaking of fire, a friend suggested we could use it to eliminate the myriad architectural atrocities around us, but that doesn't seem like a workable idea. Rather we might want to expand upon the idea of the hearth as the heart of the home, and of the home more as shelter than ego. As stated in a recent issue of *ORION*, “[we must] evolve a culture suited to the limits of the Earth.” Examples of exceeding those limits abound.

As I write this, I'm looking at a construction site across the street. What had been for 30 years a simple, if homely, two bedroom, one bath, house has been transformed into a monstrosity. A porch and second bathroom, along with some needed structural upgrades, were added in the first phase. Not too bad. The second phase saw the addition of a two-story building with a two-car garage on the ground floor and guest quarters with a deck (a Northwest scourge) above. The current phase involves enclosing what had been the attached garage, raising the floor level to match that of the house, and creating yet another roof line in order to gain a higher ceiling for who knows what. The remodeled garage now includes a covered portico for an additional vehicle. Every square inch of buildable space on this lot is now covered. It's a maze with no architectural integrity, no heart, no hearth and no sensitivity to the earth. Surely a candidate for pyrotechnics.

How much is enough? I live in a community where, among upper income people, guesthouses abound and sit empty most of the year, while small inns and bed & breakfast establishments struggle to survive and would welcome these “guests.” However, it is very challenging to talk people out of building unnecessary structures, which needlessly take up land and resources, divide and separate us, and do not foster gathering around the hearth. A healthy relationship with the earth demands the consciousness required to tend a fire. It also demands attention to air and water. The inextricable linkage. This photo of the hearth in a family home in the north of Sweden reminds us that simplicity meets these demands.

To educate is a responsibility of design professionals. Not accepting that responsibility, as fraught as it is with challenges, is a disservice to both client and profession. A good design centered around hearth simply works. The office tower is as much in need of the concept of hearth as is the tiny cottage. Although many of us do not have the skill of good designers, we sense when something is right, when something works. Living with good design changes lives.

Any definition of good design must include the intertwined elements of life: earth, air, fire and water. Without this inclusion, the designer is operating in a vacuum. These elements remain stubbornly out of our control and far too often, at our peril, are not considered either singly or collectively. Fire is perhaps the most easily comprehended. The curtain too close to the flame, the fuel carelessly stored, the tiny finger on the hot stove, the smoldering tree roots bringing the forest fire to our door. Lessons learned and not.

Sleek and modern or quaint and cozy, the concept of hearth serves as a point of departure, a point around which to gather and ground thoughts and ideas.

Robin Woodward is a retired Seattle restaurateur, a lifelong gardener who has been working her Orcas Island, WA plot for the past 20 years, an active restorer of old buildings, and one who is passionate about small footprints. She adds less than 15 gallons of non-recyclables and reusables to the landfill each year, and is shooting for zero in 2010.



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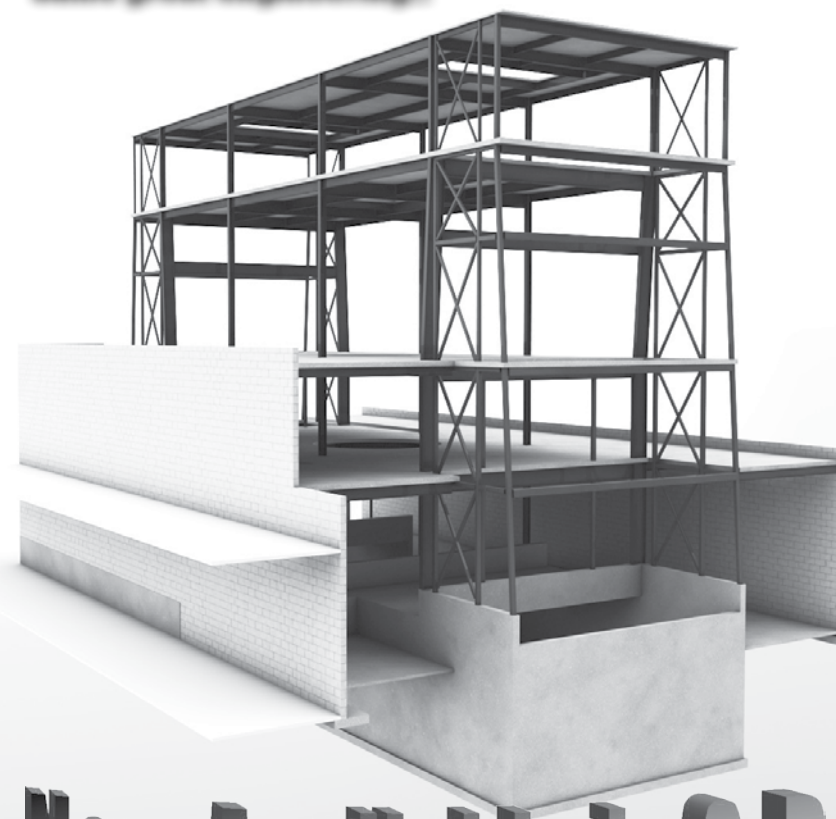
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