Risky
The Role of Risk in the Creative World

MARY & RAY JOHNSTON
The mission of ARCADE is to provide dialogue about design and the built environment.

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The new Lodge, the centerpiece of the resort, opened to the public on June 24, 1950. Architects Young, Richardson, Carleton & Detlie described the building as being based on “modern Swiss Alpine architecture”—sort of, of course, we see it as one of the early buildings of Northwest regional modernism. The Lodge won a Washington AIA Honor Award in 1951, the next April it was one of only three buildings to receive national AIA Honor Awards. Today, Lake Wilderness Lodge recalls the emergence of mid-century modern architecture in the Northwest and reminds us of the history of the region as a vacation destination as well as its urbanization over the last sixty years.

In the early 1950s, property owners along Lake Wilderness, which had previously been the site of a large sawmill, opened their land as a hunting and fishing camp. Tom and Kane Gaffney had acquired the land by 1926 and the next year advertised Lake Wilderness Grove with picnic grounds, a sandy beach, furnished cabins, recreational facilities and other attractions including a large dance pavilion and a roller skating rink. The resort prospered, even during the Depression, as it was away from the city yet much closer than any of the national parks. In 1949, the Gaffneys initiated major improvements including the new Lodge. Construction began in October 1949 and was completed the following June.

The design of the $1- by 271-foot lodge is particularly dramatic, with a large, glassed dining room opening to a cantilevered concrete dock with a view of the lake and beyond to Mount Rainier. The primary materials of the exterior are smooth-finished light-colored stucco contrasting with hand-riven, dark-stained cedar boards. The broad gabled roof was originally topped with light-gray, marble chips.

The most notable feature of the interior is the 35-foot tall cedar tree trunk, five feet in diameter at the base, sculptured by Northwest master woodcarver Dudley C. Carter (1891-1992), who drew upon Northwest Native American motifs for the carving. Carter, the center of the lobby, this sculpture is surrounded by a free-standing curved staircase that links the main lobby and the mezzanine. The ceiling of the lobby dining lounge and dining room were originally located (2007). His new book about the UW Department of Architecture & Urban Design for the interiors.

In 2008-9, Maple Valley turned to SHKS Architects for restoration/stabilization of the exterior and Makers Architecture & Urban Design for the interiors. The project included restoration of the exterior materials, repair of the cantilevered concrete dock and handrail, seismic upgrades, insulation to improve energy performance and renovation of historically significant parts of the interiors.

In 2011, Historic Seattle recognized Lake Wilderness Lodge with a “Best Rehabilitation Project” award for the exemplary approach to renovating a significant mid-century Modern building, providing needed upgrades while respecting the integrity of the original design. The Lodge now serves as a popular location for events (especially weddings), as well as seminars and conferences.

The lodge is strikingly modern with a long list of prefabrication, including the cantilevered concrete deck and handrail, and numerous modern design details such as a主要 materials of the exterior are smooth-finished light-colored stucco contrasting with hand-riven, dark-stained cedar boards. The broad gabled roof was originally topped with light-gray, marble chips.

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For more than a decade, Katharina Grosse, born 1960 in Berlin-based, has received sought after commissions to produce site-specific works for acclaimed institutional and public spaces. Using a compressed air spray gun, the tool of a housepainter, she sprays vibrant colors of children's sidewalk chalk and marbles directly onto walls, floor, ceiling and window surfaces, sometimes incorporating into the composition objects like automobile headlights, hot-water-car stereo foam, discarded-teen clothing and dirt. (The latter, when overlaid with streaks of bright paint, recalls the keepsake glass containers of colored foam, discarded-seeming clothing and dirt. (The artist's painted installations are, in sheer size, arresting. To even begin to take them in, you must commit to investigating multiple vantage points, to standing still and scanning from one edge of your peripheral vision to the other."

"One Edge of Your Peripheral Vision," October 2011 (photograph: Bryan Ohno)

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Made to order cabinetry for anywhere in the home. Choose from a menu of solutions to balance your needs for functionality, ergonomics, aesthetics and budget.
It seems that you've positioned yourselves well for institutional work. I think so. I was at a dinner where graphic designer Michael Bierut was relating some amazing stories to him by Museum of Modern Art. He said he’s looking for architects who put an incredible silver tongue. I think, when you do anything really well for somebody, word gets out whether it’s interior, residential or institutional work. I think the whole issue of people being generally aware of your work is good, but being too easily found isn’t necessarily the best scenario either. We don’t actively seek out potential jobs; it’s very much like competition very much because we’re not very good at it. We do best with interviews with potential clients.

When you’re on the shortlist of a client who has sought you out, how does that process work? Generally, we have to go to the client (rather than meeting at our office), and it’s usually the same architects being considered every time. Some architects have prepared drawings and models, and others have an incredible silver tongue. Now that we’re more experienced, we don’t actually think about who we’re talking to. The conversation is more about being who we are rather than catering to each project. When we talk about our ideas, we can’t talk about them in architectural terms. The ideas have to be presented in a way that makes it clear to someone who doesn’t understand a building what you’re asking for. I think that’s the whole point. We don’t really think about things three-dimensionally. I think much more in two dimensions.

Looking at this group of people that you’re typically competing against, it sounds like you prefer the client to sit with you, face to face. I understand the specialness of a kind of house-museum that’s tucked away; that it’s been a hard time to get to is a loss. The people who take classes at the existing location have mostly been from a retired, well-to-do demographic. It seems that you’ve positioned yourselves well for institutional work. I think so. I was at a dinner where graphic designer Michael Bierut was relating some amazing stories to him by Museum of Modern Art. He said he’s looking for architects who put an incredible silver tongue. I think, when you do anything really well for somebody, word gets out whether it’s interior, residential or institutional work. I think the whole issue of people being generally aware of your work is good, but being too easily found isn’t necessarily the best scenario either. We don’t actively seek out potential jobs; it’s very much like competition very much because we’re not very good at it. We do best with interviews with potential clients.

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This issue of ARCADE was originally conceived as the last in a series that loosely explores seemingly disparate forces that come together to make something unexpected. Our approach was to set up an opposition with piety, order, rules and, by implication, timidity on one side and rebellion, ambiguity, tension, uncertainty and bravery on the other.

We took a cue from the great outsider architect Bruce Goff. It has been noted that he sometimes achieved “dreadful results” because, like any great artist, he “was not afraid to fail.” We found the phrase “not afraid to fail” exhilarating. Failure is scary territory and gets at the heart of what we seek to explore in this issue: the role of risk in creative pursuits.

To take risks is difficult right now. The design professions are weighted down with the contradictory tasks of building things while at the same time saving an environment that we have contributed mightily to degrading. Is the concept of rebellious, experimental design somehow immoral in this dire climate, or must we take risks, both technical and aesthetic, to overcome the forces that threaten to pull everything down?

The idea of experimentation and risk also goes straight to the question of the relevance of design, the role of emotion in architecture and the designer’s obligation to reflect the complexity of modern life while creating responsible yet ambiguous and surprising results.

But risk is not exclusive to the design professions, nor is courage, innovation and revolt against the status quo. In inviting politicians, chefs, performers, educators and writers as well as urbanists, artists and architects to contribute to this issue of ARCADE, we hoped to get at the core of creative bravery, why it matters and why it’s worth it. Our contributors have taken the concept to a broader, richer place, telling stories of emotional, financial, political and sometimes even physical risk. It turns out risk is personal. A vision emerges of two faces of risk: serious, calculated risk taken in order to reach a higher goal, and joyous, frivolous chances taken for the sheer thrill of it. Most of our contributors embrace one kind or the other, and sometimes, both. The common thread is the wholehearted endorsement of making the leap, taking the chance, going out on that limb, no matter what the motivation.

It is fitting that this is the last issue before ARCADE’s 30th birthday celebration year. Thirty is mature, grown-up. Twenty-nine is dangerous.

MARY JOHNSTON, FAIA, is an architect in Seattle and co-founder of Johnston Architects. Mary is past chair of the Seattle Design Commission and an occasional guest lecturer at the University of Washington College of Built Environments.

RAY JOHNSTON is a founding partner of Johnston Architects. He has contributed to the built environment in Seattle and throughout the West for 30 years. Ray’s other home is Twisp, Washington, where he chairs the board of trustees of Twispworks, a PDA promoting education, sustainability, economic vitality and arts and culture in a rural setting.
Fall 2011

Kahn Burning

DANIEL S. FREEDMAN

The fire that is not put out is a holy fire. — G.B. Shaw

The singular American architect Louis I. Kahn was born Leiser-Izke Schmuelowicz in Estonia, in 1901, where he spent his early childhood in the small village of Parns. When he was three years old, something in the hearth caught Kahn’s eye: “I remember I took the coals out of the fire and put them in my apron,” he recalled. They flared up. It was a heavy rug-like apron… It flared up and I tried to protect my eyes, which I did. My hands were burned, and my face. “The accident disfigured Kahn’s lower lip and chin. Historians have largely avoided or ignored the psychological effects of this accident, since any causal relationship between Kahn’s injuries and his architecture rests on pure speculation. Why then do theorists Kahn’s burned? Two reasons at least: first, to help interpret the strangely compelling self-portrait Kahn produced between 1929 and 1949, during his formative years as an architect; second, to test Elaine Scarry’s argument that one consequence of intense pain is its externalization into creative work, in particular as ‘fragments of world destruction.'

In The PSYCHOANALYSIS OF FIRE, Gaston Bachelard argues that the poetic signification of fire rises out of fundamental social prohibitions:

[There is at the base of a child’s knowledge of fire an interaction of the natural and the social in which the social is almost always dominant—fire is initially the object of a general prohibition; hence this conclusion: the social interruption is our first general knowledge of the fire. What we first learn about the fire is that we must not touch it. As the child grows up, the prohibitions become intellectual rather than physical… Consequently—the problem of obtaining personal knowledge of fire is the problem of clever disobedience. The child wishes to do what his father does, but far away from his father’s presence, and so like a little Prometheus he steals some matches.

From his earliest years, then, we have an unusual window into Kahn’s relation to risk, which may help illuminate his complex significance in the history of modern architecture. Like a little Prometheus—who seizes in order to give despite the cost—he keeps courting fire.

G.B. Shaw

The fire that is not put out is a holy fire.

Jan Hohstim.

Self Portrait with a Cigarette

The Paintings and Sketches of Louis I. Kahn

Cooking Without a Net

JERRY TRAUNFELD

One morning in 2007, soon after returning from a culinary tour of India, the idea for a restaurant settled in my head. It was inspired by the thali—a round tray holding various small, individual dishes that work together as a complete meal. In the few weeks of my trip, I ate many. Some were simple lunches with dal, curry, rice, pickle and flat bread; others were elaborate dinners with nearly 20 separate items on one tray, all with bold and varied flavors that complemented and contrasted each other. A thali is meant for one person and eating it is an adventure at the table. That morning I thought about how much fun it would be to serve my own style of food on a thali, and all at once I decided I should open my own restaurant, and that this restaurant would be named after my mother, Poppy, and I that I would leave The Herbfarm after 17 years of heading its kitchen.

I liked this idea so much, in fact, I decided to open my own place. I held a job interview. It was very formalized about, and I knew too many other cooks whose quality of life was diminished by the day-to-day grind of restaurant ownership. But if I was ever going to do this, the time was right. As far as I could tell, there were no other restaurants in North America doing anything like it, and here was an opportunity to make my mark with something truly original. It was this excitement of designing a new dining experience that motivated me more than anything. The small plate phenomenon had been going on for some time, as diners were eager to sample many things on a menu rather than a traditional appetizer and entrée, but there were several things that bothered me about the trend. First, most diners share the plates and pass them around the table, and as a table of more than two, it leaves everyone with a bite or two of this or that. And who gets the last bite? Secondly, when you order a selection of these small plates, they don’t always make sense together or feel satisfying as a meal. The thali would be different. It would allow me to concoct a balanced array of dishes that are meant to go together, and best of all, you would have all to yourself.

The opportunity to create the environment also excited me. Even though the serving style is Indian, my inspiration for the interior was Scandinavian. I grew up in a house of Danish modern furniture and wanted to draw from that sensibility, pairing modern design with warm materials and practicality. I hired Starbucks’ Kent design, who custom designed the chairs and cabinetry, and we hung le Klint lamps, tektum as a wall covering and a mobile at the kitchen’s entrance. We dotted the room with orange circles representing a poppy and used the circle in our menu design.

Traditional thalis are most often served on stainless steel trays holding stainless cups. Mine needed to be warm and modern. I gathered all the small dishes I could find, avoiding the white dishes every other restaurant seemed to be choosing, and began mixing and matching to come up with an anodized aluminum tray (a pizza pan) of Heath Ceramic’s bowls and ramekins mixed with miniature Japanese dishes, along with a few other small-scale odds and ends.

I was already taking a huge risk by opening a restaurant of any sort; we all know they often fail. Opening one with a completely new concept multiplied the risk. I had to invent everything from the ground up. I had to start how to get things rolling, how things would run once the doors opened or how the public would react. Honestly, I brushed thoughts of failure out of my mind. I had to believe this was going to work and convince everyone around me it was a great idea. I opened about 18 months later.

The first year was tough, especially the first few months. We had little time to train staff before opening, and we were packed every night. Opening a restaurant is a process, and it takes time to fine tune, especially when there is no template to work from.

The criticism hit me hard. With online rating sites and blogs, you hear everything, and the negative comments get under my skin. Many customers loved what we were doing, but others were resistant. They were used to dining in a certain way and were confused by a meal set in front of them all at once in a bunch of little dishes. They wanted to know what order to eat things in and wanted instructions. Some would eat their soup and salad first and be annoyed because other food became cold. Some were expecting Indian food. I was questioned again and again if I was planning to stick with the concept. And the economy kept getting worse.

I toughed it out. As time passed we found our customers—the folks who get what we were doing and were delighted by it. We became part of the neighborhood. We listened to feedback and tweaked everything. Service became more polished and the cooks found their groove.

It’s been nearly three years, and we are still serving thalis. Our seats are filled every night. Our guests love the variety of tastes set in front of them. I still haven’t heard of any other non-Indian restaurants opening that serve thalis, but if another chef follows my lead, it will make me happy. I’ll know then I’ve left a mark.

JERRY TRAUNFELD is a chef in Seattle. He is the owner of Poppy Restaurant and the former executive chef at The Herbfarm Restaurant in Woodinville, WA. In 2000, Jerry was named the James Beard Award for “Best American Chef Northwest and Hawaii.” He is the author or two cookbooks, The Herbfarm Cookbook and The Herbfarm Kitchen
Danger in the Middle Ground

MIKE MCGRINN

Imagine two futures. One is a stagnant economy, rising income inequality, declining health of individuals and the dire consequences of global warming. And communities in which everyone’s just looking out for themselves.

Now imagine a different future. One where innovation, education and intention provide opportunity, build new ways of doing business, within the circle of prosperity and squarely confront our pressing environmental problems.

That’s the choice we face right now. If we continue our current course and speed, we know we’re going to get the first future. Because that’s the present we’re living today. Between these two futures lies a chasm. A chasm of history, fear, obsolescence and waste of all, entrenched power.

So how do you get to the other side? It’s not by trying to figure out the middle point of everyone’s position. That’s the choice we face right now. If we continue our current course and speed, we know we’re going to get the first future. Because that’s the present we’re living today. Between these two futures lies a chasm. A chasm of history, fear, obsolescence and waste of all, entrenched power.

So how do you get to the other side? It’s not by trying to figure out the middle point of everyone’s position. Because if you do that, you only leap halfway across the chasm and fail entirely. Instead, we have to find the collective will to jump all the way across.

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So You Want To Change the World?
A Conversation with Alex Steffen

MARY JOHNSTON

For this issue of ARCADE, we are looking at taking risks—esthetic, technical, political, social and cultural—in order to reach some higher place. It strikes me that this theme has been the essence of your career so far. Is that a valid assessment?

ALEX STEFFEN

At the most basic level, I’m interested in the question, “How can we make ourselves into good ancestors?” How do we build a good life that increases the options of the generations to come? At the very least we should seek to do no irreversible harm.

We’re sort of the opposite of good ancestors today. There may have never been a way of life more dangerous in the future than that of contemporary North America, and there may never have been a generation more destructive than the one now in power. When people reach a certain age, they are thought to embrace the long view, so it’s a paradox that while perhaps two-thirds of those who have ever reached age 65 are alive today, we have never had a shorter planning horizon or less discussion of our duties toward future generations. On a regular basis we do things that we know will impoverish the choices of our descendants, perhaps in utterly catastrophic ways. As Paul Hawken says, “We have an economy where we steal the future, sell it in the present and call it GDP.”

If the planetary reality we face today isn’t risky, I can’t imagine what is.

MJ Yes, there are dangerous times, but I know you also believe in being optimistic, and I like your statement that “cynicism is obedience.” One of the assertions we make in this issue is that orthodoxy and a too-strict adherence to rules produces at the very least bland, and at the worst, destructive results. Could you discuss how that “cynicism is obedience.”

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Democracy is a balance between rights and the responsibility to respect others’ rights. Many things people once thought of as their property rights we’ve learned to see differently. You can’t own another person as a slave, but a bear with hunting dogs in a pit or dump your raw sewage in the street. I think nearly all of us would agree that, in hindsight, issues invesed by slave owners, drug dealers and patent trolls are far outweighed by the benefits to society gained when their practices ceased. I feel better, bears and chokers victims particularly agreed.

Now we’re at a moment when we have to take seriously our responsibilities both to our neighbors (who ever they may live on the planet) and to the rights of future generations. If that means people with particularly tasteless lifestyles find those lifestyles dramatically more expensive (or even find certain options no longer available) I was, well that’s unfortunate for them but part of progress. Times change.

MJ Early on, where’s the thinnest thing you’ve done, aside from challenging conventional wisdom (or maybe it’s really that)? Running with the bulls? Driving at night in the desert with your headlights off? AS I will occasionally risk-obsess young man. I did a lot of stupid stuff, often with the best of intentions. The scars and scandals numerous. Indeed, I take as a sort of personal motto the rhetorical question, “What could possibly go wrong?” But that’s a story for another time.

MJ So, going back to the issue of ARCADE, we are looking at taking risks—esthetic, technical, political, social and cultural—in order to reach some higher place. It strikes me that this theme has been the essence of your career so far. Is that a valid assessment?

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People want to be surprised by the unexpected. As an architect who crosses into the realms of performance and installation work, this has become very clear to me. Designing architecture that has the capacity for the unexpected is not at all “rebellious” or “risky,” but an overlooked necessity within our built environment.

Partnering with renowned choreographer Alonzo King and Grammy-award winning musician Mickey Hart, I recently had the unique experience of creating a collaborative ballet, which explores the intersections of architecture and movement. In the ballet, “Triangle of the Squinches,” instead of static backdrops, all the “sets” have various unexpected kinetic characteristics. The ballet partners the dancers with transformable architectural surroundings, providing the performers with the unique opportunity to explore, play, manipulate and transform their environments, creating and defining new spatial relationships simultaneously.

The architectural objects are designed to record the physicality and impact of the dancers pushing on or pulling against them by shape shifting, rebounding, deforming and reconfiguring themselves. Like the human body, these same architectural “bodies” have the ability to resist and subvert their partners’ moves, forcing the dancers to adjust their movements and react to their imposed physical environment. By engaging one another in a direct partnership, the architectural elements and the dancers begin to explore and reveal the body’s often unapparent, conflicting and desired relationships with architectural surroundings.

For eight evenings I sat in a packed theater of 800 attendees and listened to the gasps, the “oohs” and “ahhs” of the audience reacting to the unexpected changing forms and use of the sets as the dancers climbed, shifted, reshaped, folded, mounted and concealed themselves within and upon the architectural objects. At moments, the sets seemed weightless; at other times they seemed to weigh thousands of pounds. Sometimes they appeared solid or dense, only to be revealed as thin and delicate. After every show, audience members came up to me and asked how things were done, built, moved, what materials were used and how I found them… People are curious and yes, they want to be surprised by things around them.

In a recent installation I designed for Cirque du Soleil and Infiniti, an interactive landscape around an Infiniti car included LEDs and motion-sensors that would track Cirque du Soleil guests and cause the landscape to change color, pattern, light intensity or simply shimmer. People were delighted at the unexpected depth of interaction the installation offered. They explored, played and danced with the interactive tree, trying everything out before deciding they absolutely needed a photo of themselves within this whimsical world. Here again, people wanted and loved to be delighted by their architectural surroundings, and in this case, one that allowed them to manipulate and alter their environment in a somewhat similar manner to the ballet dancers above.

In regard to more traditional architectural projects, the unexpected can exist within spatial or programmatic transformations, malleability, adaptability and flexibility to create a very open design with many possibilities. Additionally, a project’s materials can be used in inventive and unexpected ways. Applying these “unexpected” solutions to even the most mundane archetypes – a parking garage, for example – can enable it to become a world travel destination descended on by the public (see the garage at 11 11 Lincoln Road in Miami Beach by Herzog & de Meuron, for instance).

It’s easy for most architects to head toward a conservative design approach—not ruffling any feathers, or raising any eyebrows by proposing unexpected or untested design ideas. Architects tend to play it safe by doing what is “expected.” LEED scoring has made things even safer; now we architects can uphold our own design mediocrity with environmental scoring systems that defend and award even the most hideously and unengagingly designed structures.

People seek transformation, suspense, surprise—terms rarely used by most architects within their design processes. But it’s the creation of the unexpected that evokes emotion and provides interest, tension, humor, whimsy and even the realization of brilliant pragmatism. These are the things that allow architecture to thrive, to be loved, engaged and cared for by its public. Ultimately, that is what creates great works of architecture that sustain.

CHRISTOPHER HAAS is a San Francisco based architect and founder of HAAS Architecture. Prior to establishing his own practice in 2007, Christopher was a collaborator with Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron, where he served as project architect and project manager of several projects, including San Francisco’s de Young Museum and 11 11 Lincoln Road in Miami Beach.
The experience of making my first feature film, We Go Way Back, was enormously cathartic and utterly life-changing. But for my second feature, I wanted to stay away from unaltered water, leaving behind the traditional way of making movies and trying an experiment instead. I would erect as many pieces of equipment from the set as possible and reduce the crew from fifty to four. Instead of working from a traditional script, I would allow the actors to improvise their lines from an eight-page outline. I wanted to treat narrative film as a documentarily in the hopes of achieving an aesthetic of extreme realism.

Two weeks before the shoot, I had a total panic attack. What the hell was I doing? Who did I think I was? Would an actual film result from these efforts? I hadn't a clue. But I realized that great art is not possible without great trial. And I created this revolving mantra for myself: “No matter what happens at the end, we are going to have a fabulous time in the trying.”

Then, I made absolutely sure that we did. And I have made absolutely sure of it on every film project since.

BERNARD HOSEY is a sculptor working globally from his studio in the Methow Valley. His work has been exhibited in the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in Manhattan and the Benning Gallery of the Smithsonian.

RAY JOHNSTON What led you to work in steel?
BERNARD HOSEY I didn’t have to learn it. On my dad’s side of the family, blacksmithing goes all the way back to Ireland, Spain, Capetown. It was a natural thing for me to do.

RAY JOHNSTON Are you familiar with your spheres? Have you always been working with these forms?
BERNARD HOSEY When I first started seriously working, it was with body jewelry adornment, but it got really big. A six-foot earring—it’s now hanging on a building in Wisconsin. I was exploring the material, seeing what I could do with it. I think my first sculpture dealt with directional thrust.

RAY JOHNSTON With others, the surface is only implied. How do you get to these expressions?
BERNARD HOSEY Yes, for a long time, I was working with directional compositions—reaching vertically or horizontally… until the spheres.

RAY JOHNSTON But the energy is in pulling it apart, something deeper, strong, not just this visual hit… like defying gravity. So now I am defying gravity.

BERNARD HOSEY You felt compelled to shift away from the single line spheres that imply a surface—you felt doing with that?
RAY JOHNSTON Yeah, it did. Literally, I just slammed against a wall and couldn’t work anymore. I was tired. I had been in China for three months and came back and went into my studio and nothing was happening. Usually when I finish a series, I get bored. This time I was more than bored, I was empty. It might have been the first time I felt that way. I guess the writers call it writer’s block—not an uncommon thing. But my artistic life just ended.

BERNARD HOSEY I had to bring it back, give it a new life. So, I did.

RAY JOHNSTON I had three days of heavy duty frustration that turned into anger. I couldn’t pull anything out. So I started working with the sculpture marking the entry of the town of Twisp. That was number one, the first in a series; in the second version I started playing with the Twisp Sign ideas as a reference point. I took it one more step and then started to deconstruct it, taking the energy and breaking it down, moving it around. This sequence led to a two-piece sculpture, the first time I had done that. I pulled the two pieces apart and discovered a new kind of dynamic in the work. There was a relationship between the two pieces that had all kinds of energy. So, I was OK then, I wasn’t dead any more. I had climbed over the wall. At that point I was ready to go back into the spheres. I started laying up lines and laying up lines, a complete sphere or an implied sphere, then I started adding these blocks hanging in there and then I rotated it all and the base was no longer a base. It changed, it came together.

BERNARD HOSEY So as you were coming out of that period, there were new elements to your work. At any point did you feel a sense of risk? That you might be going down a dead-end?
RAY JOHNSTON No, I don’t look at things that way. It’s a danger not to go there. I didn’t have a plan in the first place: Mistakes are learning experiences, they are not wrong, especially for emerging artists who can make a lot out of scrap. My work is just an evolving thing; there is no fear. The risk lies in walking away from it all.

BERNARD HOSEY This is a kind of risk I hadn’t thought of: Even more so than blowing it, denying the opportunity to blow it is unacceptable.

RAY JOHNSTON That’s the essence. That’s the toughness. That would be a nightmare—not having the opportunity to explore. That’s like quitting and going fishing. People do that. I don’t know how they do it. I don’t want to go there. You pursue all kinds of things that are important, building a 747 example, and then you don’t have a 747 to build anymore. Maybe then it’s time to give your knowledge away in a loving manner.

BERNARD HOSEY And now, you are exploring this direction where gravity is unfolded?
RAY JOHNSTON Yes. I asked for the first version to be returned, which I had sent to China. I am thinking I can play with light, color, form and then, arrested motion in one piece. They are getting really complex. They are suspended. Something is happening and it stops in progress. It defies time. It comprises one line, two weeks from the inside first, then I start working on it and pull it out. The first of this series is Chasit a composite one line, 120 feet long. The next one, Chris Crow, is more complex. But I think I’m done with that. I’m moving into this new order. I want to defy things or define things differently within the spherical form. The form is important,
Creating Art from Logic

DAVID MILLER

When I think about modern buildings or structures that I admire, certain ones always come into my mind: the Lever House Engineering Building (Steilberg), Salk Institute (Kahn), Inland Steel Building (SOM), Vietnam Memorial (Maya Lin), the Ruck-a-Chucky Bridge (Myron Goldsmith with SOM) — I could go on. These projects tend to be somewhat aggressive in how they assert themselves and are sort of revolutionary, with both extraordinary logic and spirit. How do we attain spiritual value in design? I believe it is not without taking risks, and mining the depths of logic is risky business. In my dual roles as a Design Partner at Millier/Hall and a Professor in the UW Department of Architecture teaching design students, I have come to recognize the importance in taking calculated and strategic risks to achieve art in architecture.

Great risk-taking architecture is often generated out of competitions. Many winning schemes selected by competition juries do not follow the rules, but instead reinterpret the project's program and make an alternate proposal. In his talk 'Architectures of the Invisible,' Louis Kahn said, "One of the great lacks of architecture today is that institutions are not being defined, that they are being taken as given by the programmer, and made into a building." Programs are important, but they are beginning points. In presenting her winning scheme for the Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen at the UW's spring Scan Design lecture, Lene Trampler described the way her office dissected the presented program and then proposed a radically different project on a new site. The proposal was a floating ramp in a grove of trees and had such conviction, logic and spirit — it was the unanimous choice. But designers should not just look to competitions as license to take risks. What is an appropriate risk strategy for everyday architecture? How can designers elevate proposals for office buildings, institutional structures and community housing projects to true art? The process begins by actively critiquing the idea of program and by investigating the possibilities, the logic, in the essence of place (not just the "site"). Collaborative teamwork engaging an open-ended thought process can lead to uncompromised solutions and hopefully something poetic. However, an open and probing design approach necessitates being brave, and this is not easy today. Too many factors conspire against us: budget (always the justification for lack of invention), poorly conceived and dogmatic design guidelines, LEED checklists, etc. Maybe designers should think of every project as a competition, wear their competition hats when they do a bus barn or a public school, push the limits, jump off the edge, à la Ruck-a-Chucky Bridge. As I tell students when I lecture at schools of architecture, "Be brave!"

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Secret City

ALLISON NAVER

When I was a kid, I loved to break into buildings — schools, churches or ideally, big, empty, industrial spaces. As I tell my grad students Molly and scale walls, get on rooftops of buildings and discover every aspect of those places that we possibly could. We never did damage, never caused harm, but instead relished in the unique poetry that exists when you tug on a door that hasn't recently been opened and let yourself into a forbidden zone — a found space.

During these escapades, I was often at great physical risk — climbing trolleys, old fires escape hundreds of feet up the sides of buildings, getting guns pulled on me by security guards, being chased off properties by German Shepherds and being arrested for trespassing. I was paid for the thrill of pulling open slightly stuck doors leading to newly discovered, long-forgotten worlds.

The joy of that entry process, as well as its inherent risks, always changed my relationship to a space. The way light found itself into the room became a revelation; the history of the building and its previous occupants became a series of tantalizing mysteries. I have always been fascinated by both the visible and invisible worlds in our city, those made of hidden histories and taboos. The concealed story of a city also manifests itself through the lack of clarity about what happened at certain places and the initial purpose of particular buildings. This poverty of cogent information is glorious for an artist — it's where the real storytelling can begin.

As a theater director, I try to re-create the sense of risk, wonder and joy found when discovering a forbidden, abandoned, empty or unused space. When directing, I always want the audience to experience the stage the way I've always encountered these places — that is, to feel they've entered a space filled with secrets, that the space could have sat empty for 20 years or been vacated quickly before their arrival, a world that feels palpable, experienced and filled with endless ways of encountering and interpreting our environment.

In my production of Euripides at a contemporary theater in Seattle, the seemingly oppositional idea of "lost/found," "remembering/forgetting," "life/death," "above/below," "drop/catch," and "light/dark" created the emotional landscape. As we approached the project, the design team and I worked to create a world that could both hold and heighten these contradictions. This was a place that needed to feel familiar and strange, joyful and melancholy — somewhere that could simultaneously contain the land of the living and the land of the dead. We were reminded throughout our process that often the deepest truths emerge from these seemingly contradictory singularities.

We decided to set our production in an abandoned swimming pool (very much based on an old swimming pool that I had recently discovered in Pittsburgh). A broken diving board and trash littered the floor — the trash was actually handbills of missing persons and letters that people had written to loved ones. The swimming pool felt right because it could be both the romantic world of Orpheus and Eurydice as well as the Underworld. It could also hold such oppositional feelings as great joy and great sorrow.

Characters arrived in the Underworld via an elevator that raised (a stand-in for the river Styx). Once in the Underworld, Eurydice reconnects with her dead father. He builds her a 3-dimensional house made from string found on the swimming pool floor. Periodically, letters from Orpheus (desperately searching for Eurydice throughout much of the play) would come flying through the space. Orpheus was on a grid about 150 feet above the audience and would push the letters through the grating. After Eurydice's death and subsequent arrival in the Underworld, I wanted to create a sense that Orpheus was “above ground” searching for her while the rest of us were in the Underworld.

In all the work I do, I want my audiences to feel that they are the first to encounter a previously empty or abandoned space. In this way, I feel that they experience a uniquely personal connection to the world of the play and, as a result, a much deeper relationship to its story, ideas and characters. Mostly, in the process, my audience becomes a group of comparators standing with me (just as my friend Molly did), ready to trespass on forbidden property while creating and recreating the stories of our time.

Photo: Allison Naver
There are 98 parking officers
In 2010, the average Seattle parking officer generated $460K in ticket revenue. The average salary of a 2010 Seattle parking officer was $42K.

There are 70 types of parking violations
More than half a million (544,878) parking tickets were issued in 2010. In 2010, the average Seattle parking officer generated $240K in ticket revenue. In 2010, Seattle parking ticket fines totalled more than $22 million. The average parking ticket fine in Seattle was $41 during 2010.

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The most ticketed
The most ticketed spot in Seattle during 2010 was in Capitol Hill. The 2nd and 3rd most frequent spots were in the University District. The 15 most ticketed neighborhoods in Seattle.

The schedule is 24/7
Most tickets occur during lunchtime (11am–1pm), followed by 3–4pm and 7–8pm.

INFO FEED

Don’t Even Think of Parking Here

TIER 1

TIER 2

TIER 3

TIER 4

*The top 12 officers generated more than 25% of the total.

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The Vancouver architecture practice of Bing Thom has over the past two years received the highest possible accolades from its Canadian colleagues: the 2010 Royal Architectural Institute of Canada’s award for top architectural firm, and in 2011, the R.A.E.C. Gold Medal went to Thom personally for his lifetime of achievement in design. The reason for this attention is that in an architectural landscape that rewards bland commodity over creative innovation, the works of Bing Thom stand out. Bing Thom’s work is unpredictable, and in times when public and campus architecture more resemble beltway branch offices, Bing Thom gets the strange but wonderful work—or more accurately, he makes it strange and wonderful.

For instance, take the Thom-designed Surrey Central City, where a suburban campus for 4,000 students is rimmed on one side of an exact 1970s shopping centre that never closed its doors, topped by an office tower and fronted by a transit-oriented place—in all, a key demonstration of the hybridity in typologies, building programs, social missions and materiality that is the hallmark of Vancouver. Surrey Central City was made possible by pushing wood engineering to do things never seen before, courtesy of Thom’s ongoing creative collaboration with Canada’s most innovative engineers, Fent + Epp. More recently, Thom did a campus plan for Calgarian’s Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, where the only component constructed on top of an existing structure is a large room on Main Street, near the Punjabi Market. Weddings and local families were forced to book wedding venues in other parts of the city at King and Simcoe. Thom broke radically with this for its glass construction gained with the Law Courts/Robson Square, where he was team leader. The building aims to demonstrate that real structural confidence has a sinuous formal repertoire, unconventional but un-conventional, in other words, there’s been no room in the urban cloister for anything but carefully tailored suits or cameo costumes.

Many of these same patterns—a commitment to technical and programmatic innovation, a sinuous formal repertoire, un-conventional but un-conventional architecture—are apparent in one of Canada’s most under-published but innovative buildings of the past two decades. BTA’s Sunset Community Centre, created for a park on Vancouver’s south Main Street, near the Punjabi Market. Thom’s commitment to formal and technical invention driven by disciplines of [hybrid] arbitrariness, [hybrid] social gracefulness, and [hybrid] rectitude, in other words, Thom’s work is unpredictable, and in times when public and campus architecture ever-out, Bing Thom’s commitment to formal and technical invention driven by disciplines of [hybrid] arbitrariness, [hybrid] social gracefulness, and [hybrid] rectitude.

Notes on the Synthesis of Form

TREVOR BODDY

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We walk through the two-story Pavilion du Roi and enter the pedestrian colonnade wrapping the remarkably simple open square. We are stunned—this is perfection.

The surrounding buildings are approximately 70 to 90 feet tall—not too high but tall enough to frame the square. An inhabited public arcade and a 60-foot road with two lanes of parking wraps the central square. On the inside edge of the road is a tall, elegant wrought iron fence wrapping a double aisle of small deciduous trees. Inside the double aisle, the square is divided into four quadrants with a central grove of immense Beech trees, whose height is equal to the surrounding ring of buildings. The larger square is bisected with wide crushed granite walks. Each quadrant is approximately 1/3 of the larger whole.

Moving constantly toward the square, Vines cover the walls and cobbles cover the stones. Ahead is the Pavilion du Roi, the south gateway to the square we are seeking. As he brought the French Wars of Religion to a close, King Henry IV of Navarre entered Paris in March 1594 with the conviction that the city would become the new Rome. Thus began his remarkable impact on the city's planning. With the Place de Vosges, we can experience King Henry's use of the Roman model of the place royale ("royal place" or piazza). He defined the design and layout and created what is still a stunningly cohesive urban environment, and upon completion, the Place de Vosges quickly transformed into a desired life four centuries later.

The Place de Vosges is without the standard, single-use recreational element we find in American squares or parks. Instead, the area is structured to accommodate multiple groups of people doing various things throughout the day. Everyone owns a little bit of the space and no one dominates. Individual road, pedestrian and people watch. Small groups play and talk. Simple is better.

Here, simple civil cohabitation thrives. To be fair, the Place de Vosges succeeds because of density and a history of urban living; the typical Parisian spends significant parts of his or her day in the public realm. At the square, we count twelve places to stop and linger; we pause and are able to participate in this urban experience.

The afternoon is passing, and with regret, we will return.
I doubt anyone in the construction and design industries has experienced a time when cost reduction was not a current topic. No matter what the cost baseline, a general upward trend persists over time.

In the housing realm, the attempts at cost reduction focus on things like new product forms that promise to do the same or better for less money, or the search for the building teams that are fast, talented and inexpensive, or factory-built housing. Some cost reduction is possible, but in the US houses do much more than provide shelter. Housing confer status, indicate social group affiliation, and contain clues to how we want to see the world and ourselves. Homes, as they become homes, exhibit a high level of symbolism. Derived from our culture, existing symbolic definitions of the home bias our selection of form, size, materials and spaces.

Cultural preferences change relatively slowly, and the average 40–50 year life of residential structures creates a visual persistence of form that tends to reinforce existing biases. This creates inertia. What housing ideals do we as a culture embrace in the US? We like our separate houses. In fact, we love choice and the prospect of having things customized. With this, how can we reduce housing costs in general? Choosing smaller houses is the way forward for factory production. For these companies, the industry is a marketplace, and they will adjust their operations accordingly if they are constructed factory-built housing is in their financial interests. They remainagnostic to delivery methods and choose based on overall return.

Inertia is the owner of the construction company The Albion Group llc.

Don Ewing
Ron van der Veen

Back to School and very Un-cool

I will admit it. Anyone who has followed this column for a while knows that I am fixated on my image as a hip, urban designer. In the past, I’ve written about cool parties, cool clothes, cool glasses, cool toys, cool architectural words, cool houses (even Koolhaas!) and cool camping. And dallered on these topics in a cathartic attempt to analyze and enhance my game. Never do I feel the disconnect between the hip I want to be and the un-hip I really am more than at this time of year when my three sons start school (Johan is now a senior in high school; Nathanael is a sophomore; and Kuzbekistan Community College to reestablish my relevance in his life. In the meantime, get me out of these tight Euro-jeans because I can hardly breathe!)

I made a lot of mistakes with Johan and Nathanael. I think my relationship with Ronny is much better for now. Some of my friends say it is because he is a late bloomer. I say it is because I have learned that saying nothing is the hippest thing I can possibly do. As a matter of fact, I would recommend parents go to mime school to learn to communicate with their adolescent kids. But miming is really only a last resort in case your cell phone loses its juice, making texting impossible… at the dinner table.

I have also learned to watch what I wear now. Dads, you can find the cash to buy new shorts that aren’t up to your thighs. Your kids don’t know who John Stockton is. As a matter of fact, I now know that the less I wear around my kids, the more tenacious my relationship with them becomes. For some reason, they just aren’t into seeing my sharkskin upper body with only 30% body fat. In my vain attempt to relate visually, I have now resorted to my image as a kid in the late ’70s and early ’80s, I actually used to rap and break-dance. I still had street cred. As a kid in the late ’70s and ’80s I was actually even cooler than a cool one. They started bragging about how obsolete I was, like it was a competition among buddies. I remember once helping Johan carry a rather large project to school because he was on crutches. He would only “let me” do it if I promised to walk ten feet behind him, make no eye contact with anyone and place the project on the ground in the hallway so as to ensure I didn’t carry it into the classroom. A few years before this he still used to cuddle with me on the sofa. What happened to you, Johan???

At this point, I think I need to defend my parental hipness a bit. I mean, I am an architect, for god’s sake! Architects ARE cool. If they weren’t, why would so many actors play them in movies and TV? When I used to go to my kids’ grade school to talk about what I did, I brought nifty models, not spreadsheets or word documents! And how many dads have tattoos and play in rock bands. (I’ve noticed that if I mention that our band covers a song that they like on the radio, they will automatically dismiss that very song as LAME)? They should carry it into the classroom. A few years before this he still used to cuddle with me on the sofa. What happened to you, Johan???

Hey un-cool dad, would you please move to another country and just send me money?

What would you like for breakfast? Mmm…
How was the first day of school? Gooo’…
What would you like for breakfast? Idunno…
Is your homework done? Mmm…
How was the first day of school? Uh-huh…
Is your homework done? Ya…
How was the first day of school? I am un-cool around adolescence. When a boy reaches puberty, his vocabulary reduces by 90% and half the sounds out of his mouth are grunts.

Over the years, I have observed that all my boys have commenced thinking I am un-cool around adolescence. When a boy reaches puberty, his vocabulary reduces by 90% and half the sounds out of his mouth are grunts.

RAPHAEL LEVY is our brutally candid Side Yard columnist and probably the hippest architect in town. You can reach him with ideas and comments at rvanderveen@DLRGroup.com.
**Directory**

The companies within ARCADE’s marketplace directory have a passion for design, art and culture in the Northwest. Please give them your consideration when planning your next project or making your next purchase. If you share these values, please consider a directory listing or advertising for your company. Contact Erin Kendig at 206-971-5591 or erin@backyardmedia.com for more information.

**Architectural**

- **Hilton**
  - www.hilton.com
  - Hilton is a leader in the hospitality industry with sustainable design and innovation since 1919. Hilton’s architects, interior designers, and landscape architects and planners work to inspire sustainable growth through leadership, innovation at all stages of design and delivery.

- **Saltwater Consulting Architects**
  - www.saltwaterconsulting.com
  - Saltwater Consulting Architects is a full-service design and technology firm that delivers high-performance, sustainable architecture and design. This dedication to excellence in architecture design. From the right choice, personal collaboration with our clients to creative ideas and new construction strategies, Saltwater Consulting Architects designs buildings that perform and celebrate.

**Architectural Fabrication**

- **12th Avenue Iron Inc.**
  - www.12thavenueironinc.com
  - 12th Avenue Iron Inc. specializes in design and fabrication of architectural steelwork, sculpture, and furniture for the built environment. They also offer a wide range of products, including steel fabrication and finish, ready to purchase on their website.

- **Argent Fabrication LLC**
  - www.argentfabrication.com
  - Argent Fabrication LLC is a full-service design and fabricator of custom architectural metalwork, furniture and lighting for residential, commercial and architectural projects. They utilize the latest computer-aided design and fabrication tools to create custom metalwork.

- **Studia23 Metalworks**
  - A full service custom metal fabrication and design shop. They create architectural metal, furniture, signage, retail fixtures, gates, lighting, and more.

**Architectural Products/Services**

- **Krownlab**
  - www.krownlab.com
  - Krownlab is a full-service custom metal fabrication and design shop. They create architectural metal, furniture, signage, retail fixtures, gates, lighting, and more.

- **Statements Tile**
  - www.statementsatile.com
  - Statements Tile is the premier Northwest distributor of ceramic, stone, glass and metal tile for commercial and residential architect and design firms in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska and Northern California.

- **Fenestra Exhibits, Inc.**
  - www.fenestraexhibits.com
  - Fenestra Exhibits, Inc. specializes in turnkey building solutions, from concept to completion, to create a seamless experience for customers.

- **Windows, Doors & More**
  - www.windowsanddoorsnw.com
  - Windows, Doors & More offers a wide variety of energy-efficient windows and doors for residential and commercial applications.

**Statesman’s Tile**

- **KJ**
  - www.krekowjennings.com
  - KJ is a General Contractor that, through collaboration with owners, architects, and clients, creates unique projects and sustainable construction.

- **Harjo Construction**
  - www.harjoconstruction.com
  - Harjo Construction is a full-service construction company specializing in turnkey design and construction services.

**Engineering**

- **Turner Exhibits, Inc.**
  - www.turnerexhibits.com
  - Turner Exhibits, Inc. designs, fabricates and installs kinetic architecture and innovative building solutions.

**Cultural Services**

- **4Culture**
  - www.4culture.org
  - 4Culture is a public-private partnership agency for King County, a leading organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of cultural arts, supporting those who preserve our shared heritage, and creating a vibrant, sustainable future.

- **Sullivan Conard Architects**
  - www.sullivanconard.com
  - Sullivan Conard Architects is a team of landscape architects focused on providing the highest quality of service and craftsmanship.

**Marketing**

- **A&R Solar**
  - www.A-RSolar.com
  - A&R Solar provides high quality, turnkey residential and commercial solar energy systems throughout Puget Sound. Offering design-build services for retrofits and new construction, as well as consultation and site evaluations.

- **Abidian**
  - www.abidian.com
  - Abidian is a Seattle based cabinet manufacturer specializing in environmentally conscious products and methods, innovative designs, as well as sustainable wood and natural resources.

**Architecture**

- **Schuchart/Glow**
  - www.schuchartglow.com
  - Schuchart/Glow is an architecture firm that specializes in environmental and human factors.

- **Windows, Doors & More**
  - www.windowshowroom.com
  - Windows, Doors & More has the Northwest’s most comprehensive display of window and door products featuring more than 20 brands and is home for The Loewen Window Center of Seattle.

- **Inform Interiors**
  - www.informseattle.com & www.informportland.com
  - Inform Interiors supplies the pieces to furnish and light your contract and residential projects, with added emphasis on green, energy efficient and healthy building standards. Let’s make it happen!

- **IIDA**
  - www.iida-northernpacific.org
  - IIDA is a professional networking and educational association, which provides diverse educational and networking opportunities and a commitment to strengthening the design community.

- **Landscape**
  - www.benchmarklandscape.com
  - Benchmark Partnership is a landscape architecture firm that specializes in creating integrated design.

- **Marketing Services**
  - www.worxds.com
  - Worxds provides digital and traditional marketing services for the design and art community. Their expertise in project-focused marketing, media, and public relations.

- **Photography**
  - www.ositogreule.com
  - Otto Greule Photography provides high resolution digital, and traditional film photographic services to design professionals to create evocative stories describing your work, the values you bring to it, and the particular ways you respond to client needs.

- **Real Estate**
  - www.4Culture.org
  - 4Culture is dedicated to providing a wide array of programs that explore and celebrate design as central to the way we live, work, and travel.

- **Westlake Concrete Construction LLC**
  - www.westlakeconcrete.com
  - Westlake Concrete Construction LLC is a full-service concrete company specializing in commercial, residential, and industrial markets.

- **Sustainable Products/Design**
  - www.sustainableproductsdesign.com
  - Sustainable Products/Design is a full-service company that provides sustainable products and services to the design and architecture community.
Definitive Audio began in Seattle in 1975. The one thing we couldn't claim when we started out was experience. Experience is not something you can fast-track or short-circuit. You can only gain it over time. After 35 years, we are proud of our team of engineers, technicians, and project managers who bring knowledge, passion, and dedication to our projects every day.