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PERSPECTIVE

Green is Naturally Beautiful
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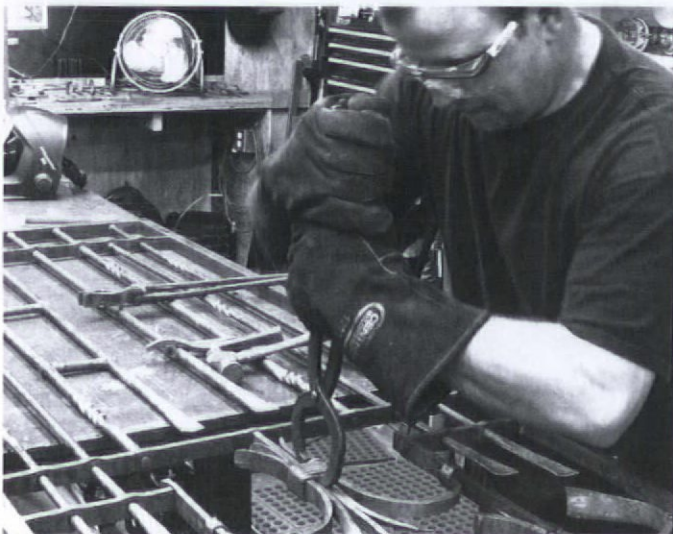


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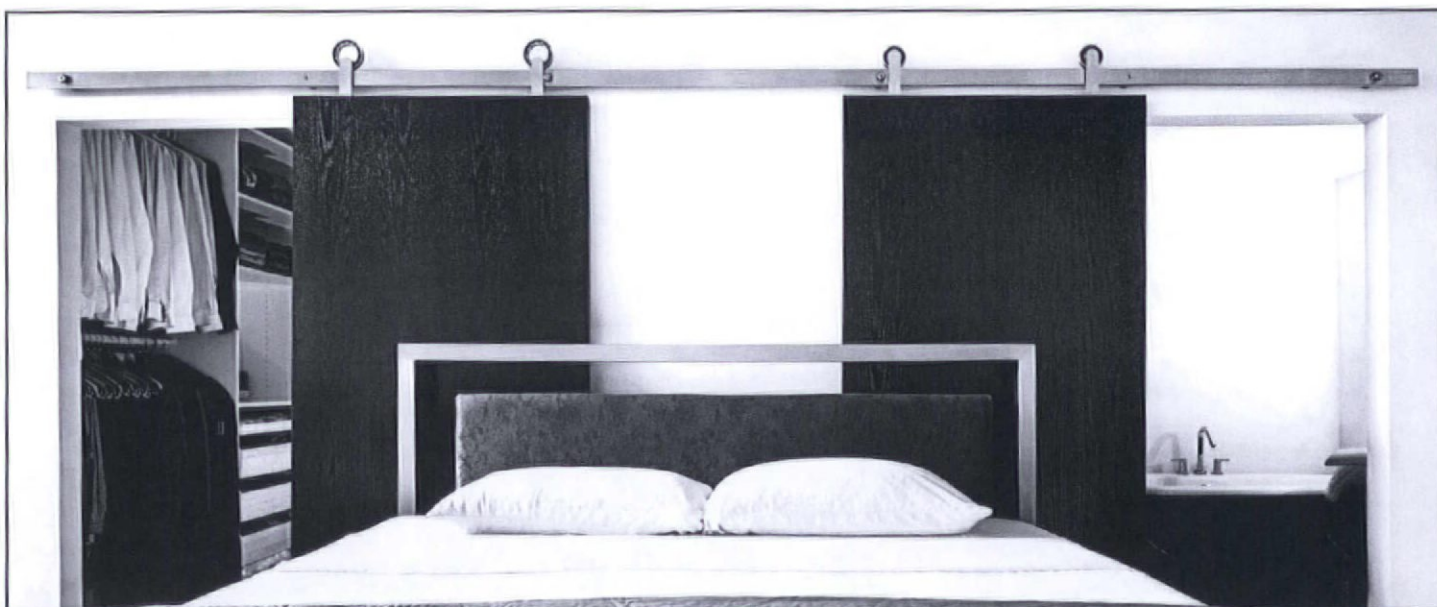
Using common plumbing fittings, Cris Bruch integrated function, form and fantasy in his piece for the Environmental Education Community Center at the Brightwater wastewater treatment facility near Woodinville. *South Branch, North Fork, Puddles* captures rainwater run-off, channeling it into the landscape.

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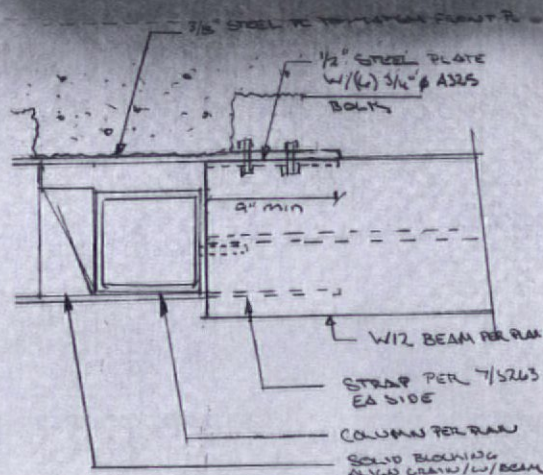
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JEFFREY KARL OCHSNER

There's No Place Like Home

HILLCLIMB COURT at 30

"The world's crummiest site to put a building on," was how Seattle architect Rick Sundberg described the location of Hillclimb Court when it was published in *Architectural Record* in February 1984. Yet the project, which turns 30 this year, is a remarkable achievement and proof that constraints can often help produce great buildings.

The City of Seattle issued a request for proposals for the 27,000 square-foot parcel in 1979. The project was daunting: Not only was there a 45-foot grade-change between Western Avenue and Alaskan Way, but the west side of the site faced the two-level Alaskan Way Viaduct, a source of continuous noise that also blocked views. The RFP required a garage for 200 cars and the project, to be constructed on top, was to be visually sympathetic with the Pike Place Market.

The project team of Cornerstone Development, Olson/Walker Architects and Gulf Landau Young Construction Company won with a proposal to create an oasis in the city, a complex of 35 condominium units (ranging in size from 520 to 1,150 square feet) and two retail spaces, all framing a shared courtyard atop the podium of a four-level parking garage.

Hillclimb Court achieves maximum effect with limited means (in mathematics, this is the definition of elegance). The design team (Gordon Walker, Rick Sundberg, Rick Worrell, Todd Heistamnn, Tom Rasnack) arranged the residential units in two rectilinear bars enclosing the west and south sides of the courtyard and sheltering it from the Viaduct. The retail and entrance pavilion frames the east side of the courtyard and presents a pedestrian-friendly commercial-front along the sidewalk at Western Avenue.

The section provides a variety of unit types: two-story townhouse units facing the courtyard, one-story flats at the third floor and two-story townhouse units at the fourth floor. Because the first-floor townhouses are entered from the courtyard, only two levels of upper-level circulation, at the third and fourth floors, are required. The units face the courtyard and turn their backs to the Viaduct, except at the upper-level townhouses that look out west to Elliott Bay.

The poured-in-place concrete frame is ordered on a 30-foot grid that carries directly from the parking garage into the units. Units are mirrored (back-to-back), allowing an alteration of the struc-

The center of the project, the shared courtyard, may be unique in the city. In terms of "defensible space," the designers did everything right. Almost all the units have good views of the courtyard, which can also be seen from the adjacent Hillclimb, yet it is secure, with a hierarchical sequence of spaces from the public sidewalk along Western to the private interior of each unit. The scale of the courtyard is extraordinary with secure space big enough for young children to ride bikes and play ball games. Green spaces abound, with landscaping that has grown over the last three decades—now including trees with trunks up to eight inches and mature wisteria.

HILLCLIMB COURT achieves maximum effect with limited means. In mathematics, this is the definition of elegance.

tural bays and the mechanical bays with fireplace/chimney, heat-pump shafts and toilet exhausts clustered together and detailed on the exterior with a set of louvers.

The modular, concrete structure provides the primary character of the architecture and may be considered a contextual response to the concrete frame of the Madore Building (which once housed warehouse and light manufacturing uses), immediately to the north across the Hillclimb, and to other buildings nearby. However, the architecture is not imitative—the detailing of concrete, with crisp reveals emphasizing the modular order, is refined, contemporary and sophisticated. The industrial theme is also apparent in the corrugated metal, glass storefront and metal pipe railings. Glass block, used in the entry pavilion, allows the passage of light while enhancing privacy.

The quality of Hillclimb Court was recognized on its completion. The project received a 1983 Honor Award from AIA Seattle. In 1984, it appeared in *Architectural Record*, *GA Houses* and other journals.

Hillclimb Court has aged very well. Solidly built, it suffered no damage other than a few drywall cracks in the 2001 Nisqually earthquake. The homeowners have routinely invested in maintenance, cleaning, painting, roof repair, landscape care and the like. The building has inspired loyalty and units only occasionally change hands. ■

JEFFREY KARL OCHSNER is a professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Washington. His new book, *Furniture Studio: Materials, Craft, and Architecture*, will be available in April 2012. He thanks George Rolfe and Susan Jones for their assistance with this article.



DENIS HAYES

Green Is Naturally Beautiful

The Living Building Challenge is a bold, new certification program that tests green buildings against the most rigorous performance standards in the world. A building cannot receive full certification until it has operated at demanding levels for at least one year. Much attention has been directed to the energy, water and materials criteria of the Challenge; these are objective characteristics that can be measured and counted. However, I want to focus on an equally critical part of the LBC test – “beauty” – and the central role it plays in green building design.

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

In 1896, Louis Sullivan, the architectural titan, was the first to write the words: “form...follows function.” Rather than follow precedent, or generate random graceful swoops, the form of a building, according to Sullivan, should flow organically from its purpose.

While that might seem self-evident – one would not want a cathedral that looked like a prison – this basic dictum was received as a bombshell at the time. And it started modern architecture down a curious path.

In 1908, the Austrian architect Adolf Loos took a further step, denouncing architectural ornamentation as “criminal.” The Bauhaus school, led by such giants as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, embraced this vision and sought to eliminate all superfluous grace notes from the built environment.

One branch of this modernist school ultimately produced housing developments so “soviet” in their utilitarianism that they evoke gulags. Today’s “big box” retail outlets – essentially featureless – are also part of this tradition.

A different modernist derivative led to exposed plumbing, heating ducts and structural elements (whose beauty had not previously been widely appreciated). Brightly painted plumbing is considered ornamental-but-not-superfluous. This approach reached its presumed zenith at the Pompidou Centre, a collaboration of Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano.

TROPHY BUILDINGS

Movements invariably produce counter-movements. Today’s most celebrated architectural prizes are frequently awarded to buildings that are nearly pure ornament. In these concoctions, form often bears no significant relationship to function. Like sculptors,



Many visually stunning buildings are rendered habitable only through torrents of electricity from the grid and heroically creative engineering. They are “sculptures with plumbing.”

LEARNING FROM NATURE

In dramatic contrast, the Living Building Challenge insists that a building be designed from the ground up to be useful and healthy. A living building must be designed to radically minimize its impacts on the earth. And a living building's design must be beautiful.

Beauty was no mere afterthought to the Challenge's authors. Jason F. McLennan and Eden Bruckman had seen plenty of ugly structures that met very high environmental performance standards, and they knew that unsightly design would not inspire a successful movement.

The LBC authors also knew that “beauty” could not simply be mandated. Beyond a series of generalized principles, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

In conjunction with the other elements of the Living Building Challenge, the authors appear to be affirming that architects should never have to choose among aesthetics, functionality and performance. If faced with such a trade-off, architects need to probe more deeply into their designs to solve for all three ends simultaneously. In particular, stumped architects should explore how nature has solved analogous problems during the last couple billion years of beta testing.

Most of what we know about our perceptions of *beauty* is based upon the human response to natural patterns. Fibonacci numbers, the golden ratio, Fermat's spiral and scores of other algebraic mainstays that define beauty are commonplace in nature and were discovered there by humans.

And nature, over time, *always* favors designs that are functional and make the most efficient use of scarce resources. That is the essence of natural selection. Buildings that seamlessly blend beauty, efficiency and functionality are almost always inspired by something Mother Nature invented millions of years ago. (While natural selection produces superb blends of functionality and efficiency, humans don't always appreciate their beauty. That is particularly true of some that can cause us harm.

star architects produce objects that bear their own unmistakable signatures. Shown photos of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao, Marqués de Riscal and Disney Hall, the man on the street could easily guess that they are all by the same architect, but he would have no clue as to which is the museum, the hotel or the concert hall.

There is no denying that today's prize-winning buildings have panache. The sculptural elements of the Disney Center, the National Assembly of Wales, CCTV headquarters, the Burj Khalifa and virtually everything by the astonishingly versatile Zaha Hadid inspire emotional reactions of the same sort as Rodin, Henry Moore or Brancusi. Developments in materials science, computer topography and CAD-CAM have now made imaginable buildings that could not have been built 10 years ago. It is hard to find anyone who isn't affected – whether delighted or shocked – by these trophy structures.

What many of these visual icons don't do very well, however, is serve the actual needs of their tenants without unduly burdening the planet. Comfort, convenience, productivity, acoustics, views from inside-out and even healthy indoor air are reduced to second-order concerns. The sculptural elegance of the structure, when viewed from outside, trumps all other considerations.

Sculptor Richard Serra famously dismisses architecture as mere “plumbing.” Although intended as arch sarcasm by the artist of the artisan, his comment operates effectively at another level.



The Bullitt Center, Seattle, WA. Rendering courtesy of The Miller Hull Partnership.

MORE INFORMATION:

Living Building Challenge / Trim Tab: "The Role of Beauty in Green Design: 'Pulchraphilia'"
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Snakes, crocodiles and sharks, for example, are superbly tailored to succeed in their environments.)

LOCATION + EFFICIENCY

The Challenge also emphasizes the role of place. It acknowledges the beauty (as well as the efficacy) of thick adobe walls of the American Southwest and breezy verandas in the Southeast; of A-frames above the snow line and stilt houses on most of the world's bayous. Living building architecture is, of necessity, regional architecture. It takes advantage of sun, rain and wind instead of fighting to overcome them.

In important ways, the LBC's beauty is a celebration of the same elegant simplicity found in Apple's iPad and Air. Aesthetics were not compromised in these devices in pursuit of superb functionality. Rather, a sleek, elegant beauty emerged as the consequence of an uncompromising search for the best possible user experience achieved as efficiently as possible. Like living buildings, these devices minimize the use of materials and energy.

THE BULLITT CENTER, THE GREENEST COMMERCIAL BUILDING IN THE WORLD

Anyone asked to describe the Bullitt Center is likely to begin with its large, visually arresting roof. To capture enough solar energy to power a *six-story building in cloudy Seattle*, an expansive roof is essential. The roof is also a collecting basin to capture rainwater to store seasonally in a huge cistern. This functional design provides a striking architectural signature for the building—it is as regionally appropriate in its own way as adobe or stilts.

The Bullitt Center has unusually high ceilings: The developers (Point32) included one fewer floor than would have been possible under Seattle's regulations in order to ensure that every tenant has direct access to daylight and fresh air. The architects (Miller Hull) specified ample use of gorgeous FSC-certified wood from nearby forests for the walls and ceilings. The owner (Bullitt Foundation) demanded an external, glass-enclosed staircase with great views to lure tenants away from the elevator, saving electricity while promoting health through exercise.

The end result is an elegant, simple, modern structure. Its features are the product of creative efforts to fulfill its purpose as an office building in ways that serve the tenants' needs as efficiently as possible in a Seattle environment.

The Living Building Challenge is premised on a belief that the 21st century will require a rapid, worldwide movement to ultra-high-performance buildings. But for this movement to realize its full potential, these buildings must also be a source of beauty, joy, well-being and inspiration. They will marry Sullivan's "form follows function" precept with the highest levels of efficiency currently achievable. Learning from nature's preoccupation with maximizing return from scarce resources, they will also be beautifully functional. ■

DENIS HAYES is CEO of the Bullitt Foundation, an environmental philanthropy located in Seattle and focused on human ecology.



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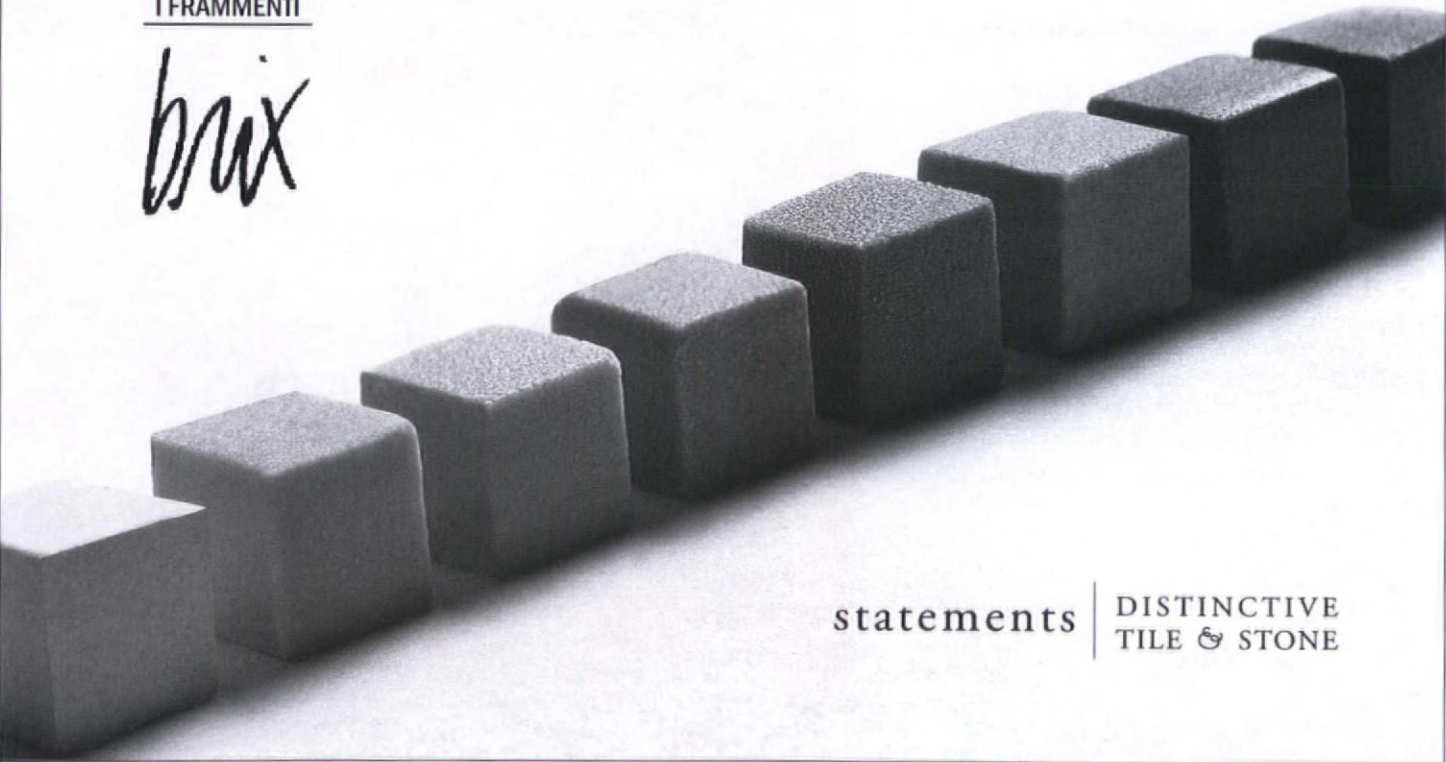
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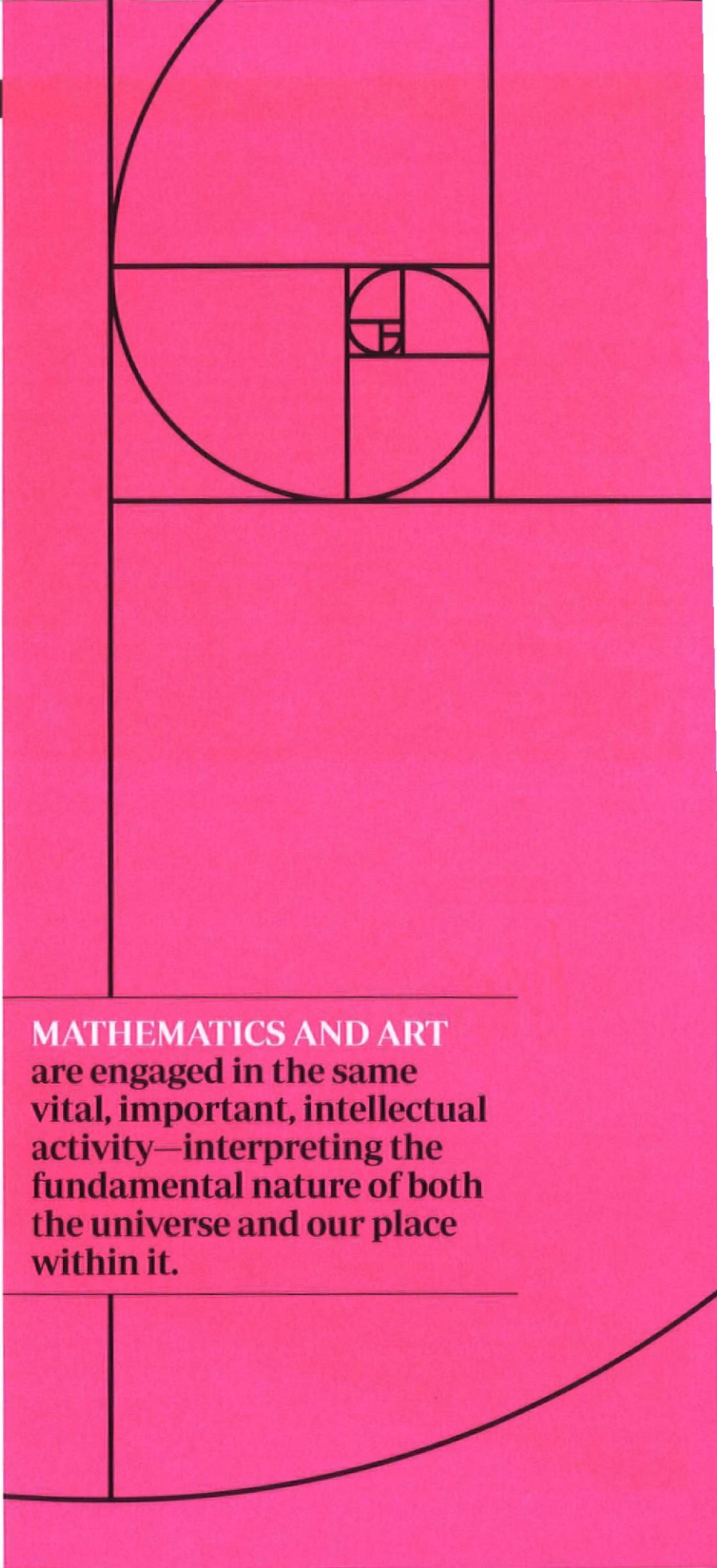
Jointly Seeking Truth and Beauty

In 1990 I was in the middle of a traditional academic career, teaching philosophy and logic at San José State University, when I received a call from a friend that changed my life. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the folks who accredit West Coast institutions, had just visited the California College of Arts and Crafts (now CCA) and informed them that since they granted the BFA degree, every student was required to take a mathematics course. Would I be interested in becoming the CCAC “math guy”?

When I interviewed with the Dean, he told me I had two responsibilities: (1) Make sure the course(s) had enough mathematical content to satisfy WASC, and (2) Make sure the courses were interesting enough so that my students didn’t occupy the President’s office. As a big believer in the McLuhan dictum that “Those who try to draw a distinction between education and entertainment know nothing about either,” I figured I could handle (2). As for (1), WASC never complained; occasionally a student did, but I guess not at the Presidential level. Here’s how I did it.

First, I set out to convince my students that, at their essential cores, mathematics and art are engaged in the same vital, important, intellectual activity—interpreting the fundamental nature of both the universe and our place within it. Second, since it would have been inappropriate and impossible to teach a traditional algebra, geometry or calculus class, I tried to help my students understand how mathematicians approach problems, the types of questions they ask and how such strategies might

MATHEMATICS AND ART
are engaged in the same vital, important, intellectual activity—interpreting the fundamental nature of both the universe and our place within it.



be applied to artistic endeavors. The capstone course requirement was always an individual project relating art and mathematics that was shared with the entire class.

ARTISTS AND MATHEMATICIANS ARE ENTWINED IN A COMPLEX, FIVE-STAGE RELATIONSHIP:

01 Shared Tools

Every form of human activity uses mathematics as a tool—for counting, measuring, modeling. Try stretching a canvas, annealing glass or designing a building without some pretty sophisticated mathematics. Similarly, mathematicians engage in visualizations (non-Euclidean spaces, topological transformations, higher dimensions) that seem as much art as mathematics.

02 Mathematical Foundations

Like the hard sciences, the foundations of many of the fundamental concepts of art (e.g., perspective, proportion, symmetry) are mathematically based. Frank Gehry seems as much an applied mathematician as an award-winning architect.

03 Mathematical Inspiration

There are no limits to what any artist may choose to depict, so it should not be surprising to discover that many artists have found inspiration in mathematical concepts and ideas: Phidias, Leonardo, Dürer, Kandinsky, Escher and Le Corbusier not only created works inspired by mathematics, they also wrote treatises explaining the role of science and mathematics to the arts. Today, those in the Cyber-Arts movement, with their interest in chaos theory, fractals and computers, are sometimes hardly distinguishable from the mathematicians working on those very subjects.

04 Epistemology

Artists and mathematicians are both problem solvers in search of beautiful, truthful, elegant solutions. As they seek their solutions, artists and mathematicians may both profitably ask themselves:

What are the ground rules? What limits do they enforce? What if I change something? How can I sort, organize, group and visualize information? Is there a pattern? Will the trend continue? What are the maximum and minimum extents of the problem? The solution? What are the possibilities? Am I missing something? What strategies are available? Is there a different way to approach the problem? How are resources employed? What if I build a model and then understand how it grows to scale?

Given their applications of similar epistemic processes and goals, artists and mathematicians may be uniquely suited to judge the quality of each other's work.

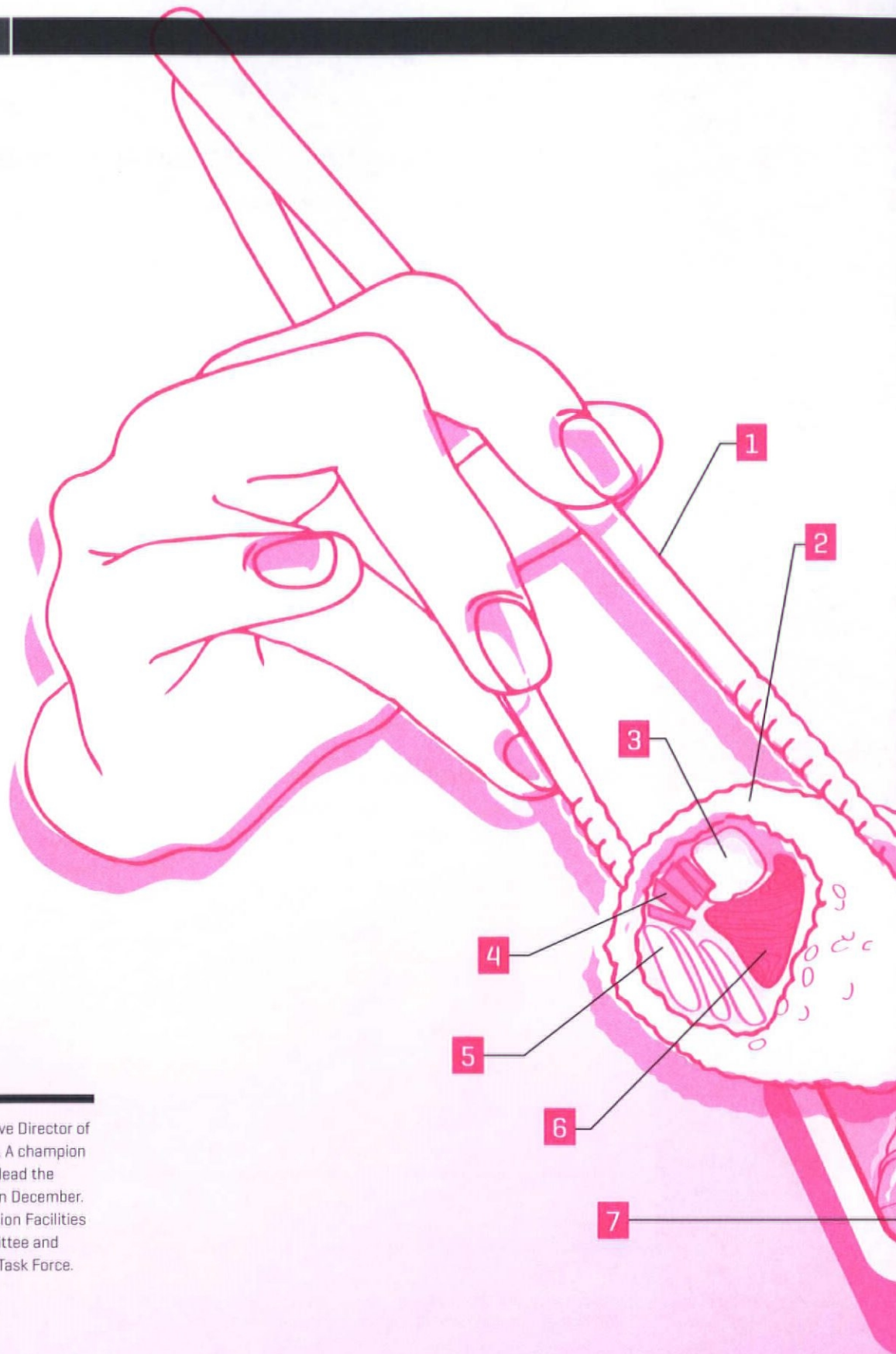
05 Metaphysics

Does the work of mathematicians tell us more about the inner workings of our own minds or the outer workings of the universe? Similarly, should artists be credited with inventing totally new ways of seeing or merely with discovering already preexisting modalities? Such questions may have no final answers. But this much is clear: Mathematicians and artists are engaged in the ultimate act of imagination—creating something out of nothing.

Finally, we need to do more than simply understand the affinity these two disciplines have for each other. We need to incorporate their *modus vivendi* into our own lives. For how else are we to define the good life, and live it with grace, if we leave the creative act and appreciation of beauty to specialists? ■

HOWARD LEVINE has, in addition to his teaching posts, held positions with the National Science Foundation, the California Post Secondary Education Commission, and both UC Berkeley's Sensor and Actuator Center and the Center for the Built Environment. He may be reached at hplpayson@gmail.com.

Readers interested in the art-math connection can find additional information at: ISAMA.ORG, BRIDGESMATHART.ORG and LEONARDO.INFO.



MICHAEL SEIWERATH is the Executive Director of the Capitol Hill Housing Foundation. A champion of affordable arts space, he helped lead the Cultural Space Seattle conference in December. He chairs the Seattle Arts Commission Facilities and Economic Development Committee and serves on the 4Culture Real Estate Task Force.

Illustration by Randall Phillips

1. **CHOPSTICKS:** Market Forces
2. **RICE:** Cultural Space Broker
3. **CREAM CHEESE:** Property Owners
4. **CUCUMBER:** Arts Organizations
5. **AVOCADO:** Arts Supporters
6. **SALMON:** Artists
7. **GINGER:** Grants
8. **WASABI:** Entrepreneurs
9. **SOY SAUCE:** Resources

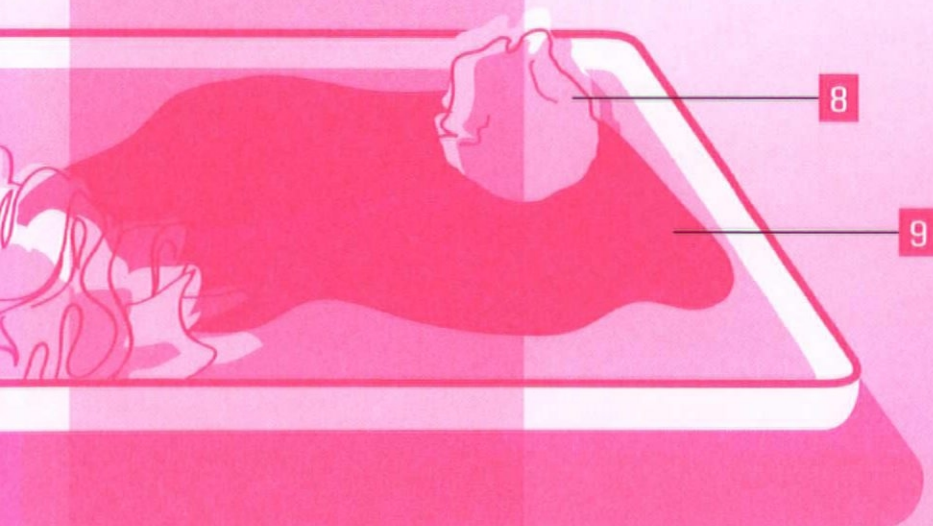
MICHAEL SEIWERATH

The Seattle Roll: A Cultural Space Ecology

All we can eat—Seattle has a seemingly insatiable appetite for arts space. We always say we want more, and every area of the city has called out the arts as a priority in its neighborhood plan. But how do we ensure homes remain for the organizations and artists that are so desirable? How do we preserve the built environment ingredients for a vibrant cultural scene—the theaters, studios, galleries, social halls, live-work lofts and old buildings?

Seattle has a cultural space ecology that can work if all the elements come together. But market forces bring relentless pressure, favoring uses that can have a higher financial return.

In order to create more art spaces, we need an active, coordinated response driven by a cultural-space connector, be it government or another entity, that can facilitate necessary partnerships. The resources and political will are needed to create a program to connect property owners to artists, funders to organizations and halls of worship to performance artists. Will 2012 be the year Seattle finally perfects its roll? ■



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ZHANG DEFENG

A Good Place with Beautiful Mountains and Clear Water

Zhang Defeng is a working artist and educator in Beijing, China. He is an Associate Professor at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts Department of Sculpture, and is active in the Academy's expansive public art program. The Academy is located 10 miles north of Tiananmen Square and is a hotbed for artists trained in the integration of fine arts, architecture and urban design. When founded in 1918 (as the National School of Fine Arts), it was the nation's first school for fine arts and marked the beginning of modern Chinese arts education. Academy faculty and students drew international attention during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests for their exploration of cultural symbolism, but censorship continues.

Zhang Defeng's richly patterned, enameled cloisonné sculptures express a charged Chinese cultural symbolism by using phallic rockets, toilets, rounded stones and the figure of Venus de Milo. This complex imagery, the mix of Eastern and Western symbolism, and Defeng's sometimes provocative siting demands thoughtful consideration; beautiful stones set in an ecologically barren, traditional garden and a toilet with a mirrored seatback quietly question values. His exploration of a rich artistic tradition as a means of current expression is a fundamental challenge for contemporary Chinese artists. Today, with increased censorship and the continual disappearance of artists, an awareness of work like Defeng's – art that engages complex issues of cultural change and a powerful history – is more poignant than ever. Duchamp might have had some thoughts.

— BARBARA SWIFT

Through a series of works titled *A Good Place with Beautiful Mountains and Clear Water*, I have interpreted my insights and understanding of the beauty in Eastern culture and expressed my love of life, nature and art. In 1999, I began using the cloisonné craft – which has a deep cultural and spiritual history in China – and traditional Chinese subjects to express cultural history but through a contemporary lens that reflects the spirit and issues of today.

I think that the most important pursuit of an artist should be more than ideas. It should include work that presents, actively and explicitly, an attitude toward nature and cultural traditions. This active and explicit attitude determines the contemporary value of the work, and as a result, contemporary art has a different kind of richness and vitality.

In this work I made great effort to integrate culture and nature, with the objective of showing the subjects – such as rocks, lotus flower and water – in a dreamlike atmosphere of beauty. These scenes form a distinct emotional space for the viewer, and with this a corresponding relationship with Chinese culture past and present.

I believe that Easterners associate beautiful mountains and clear water with the vital characteristics of nature, which are mysterious. My work provides its viewers – who through viewing become part of the work – with the intellectual and emotional capacity to re-imagine the past and the present. My work conveys the passion and goal of building a better place. *Through the creation of space in my work, using only natural elements, nature and culture become one; the viewer is immersed and his or her emotions aroused.* ■

top left
Wear Bright Clothing Venus
cloisonné sculpture, 2000

top right
Patriot No.2000
cloisonné sculpture, 2001

bottom left
Inside the Garden of Summer
cloisonné sculpture, 2009

bottom right
Throne of the Thinkers
cloisonné sculpture, 2000
[detail: mirrored seat back]

ZHANG DEFENG is an artist and educator in Beijing, China. Defeng studied at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts – where he now serves as Associate Professor in Sculpture – and the Akademie der Bildenden Künste Nürnberg, Germany.





PAM BEYETTE + NORIE SATO

Lighten the Grip: China's Evolving Public Art

In the Chinese golden month of October 2011, eight to nine months into the *Arab Spring* and with the fear of a potential *Jasmine Spring*, the Art + Design Delegation (of which I was a member) sponsored by the China Worker's Center for International Exchange (CWCIE) traveled to Beijing and Shanghai to explore the implications of rapid and explosive change through the lens of the arts and environmental design. Ten days of nonstop meetings, visits to cultural touchstones, art districts and extraordinary food resulted in a rich context against which to discuss public art and its state in China and in the United States. Meetings with groups representing the China Artists' Association, the Central Academy of Fine Arts and the Shanghai University Fine Art College involved vigorous discussions that challenged the capabilities of the delegation's brilliantly skilled interpreter. Formalities were quickly dispensed and meetings typically ran beyond the scheduled one and one-half hours to three hours, with issues ranging from artist rights, copyright, ecological concerns, education programs, artist selection process, censorship and fabrication. Where interpretation became a roadblock, hand signs and laughter filled the gaps.

— BARBARA SWIFT

The following are thoughts and observations about the state of public art in Beijing and Shanghai from Norie Sato and Pam Beyette, members of the Art + Design Delegation.

PUBLIC WORK

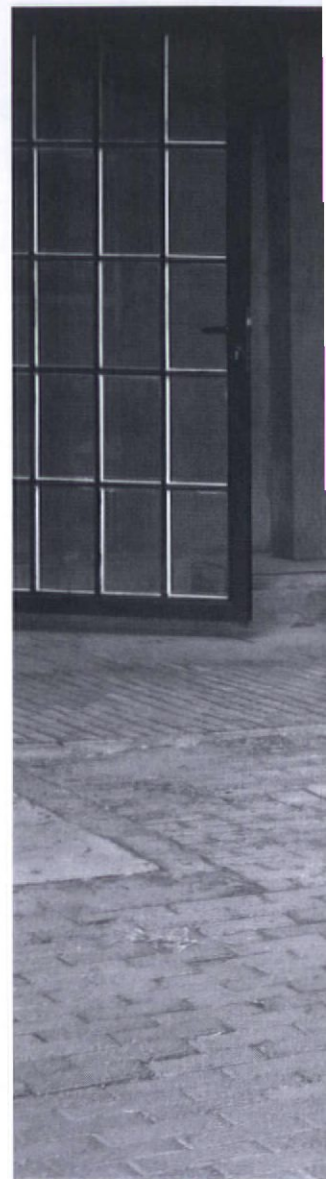
The rate of infrastructure development in Beijing and Shanghai (and throughout China) is astronomical with tremendous new opportunities to integrate public art into light rail, public plazas, open spaces, streetscapes, city centers and waterfront development. The interest in and level of infrastructure development and investment in public art is enviable from our point of view but must be seen within the context of the culture and *opening up*.

Large architectural firms sometimes employ staff artists to design public art for their projects rather than engaging independent professional artists. While this method seems the closest to an integrated art model, there is little evidence of a collaborative-design team approach, with public artists as full partners, associated with infrastructure projects in China. Will these opportunities be structured to support a more visionary integration? To this, Wan Hongyi, the vice chief magazine editor of *Public Art*, a Shanghai University publication, believes that China's elite cultural system limits the development of public art because public art is anti-elitist, anti-tradition and anti-class art. This new way of thinking about public art in China is promising.

EDUCATION + LEADERSHIP

The government sponsored art academies and universities are powerful resources for public art with departments dedicated to the discipline; they also act as the primary pipelines for faculty and senior student public artists. The training in the academies is oriented toward mastering traditional sculptural formats, but in the public art program, architecture, urban design and landscape architecture are incorporated into the core education. An interdisciplinary way of working appears to be a fairly new concept, but as newer generations of artists come to the forefront, there will be a shift toward context-driven, holistic and community-oriented artworks in Chinese public art.

University senior faculty develops public art opportunities, creates projects, manages selection processes and provides other functions. It appears that the respect that these university members have





798 Contemporary Art District

This interest in and level of infrastructure development and investment in public art is enviable from our point of view but must be seen within the context of the culture and *opening up*.



from cultural leaders, officials and developers has been useful in getting public art into urban developments. At the moment, many of the public art professors are frenetically busy with mega projects from an endless stream of government and private sources. Using their institutional weight, art academy administrators negotiate with factories and fabricators to assist their faculty in producing public art, rent large studio spaces and provide other facilities to produce the work—an enviable situation from our point of view.

ARTIST'S RIGHTS + A PUBLIC ART TRADITION

There is an increased interest in artist's rights and copyright issues and to address this, the China Artist Association has set up a Copyright Protection Office. Artists are finding that due to the speed of development, public art that was produced just a few years ago is being destroyed without notice or compensation. Luckily, in the US there are some protections.

The US system of providing a percentage of a project's (typically large-scale developments) budget for the arts was raised in discussions associated with building a tradition of public art. Interest focused on how our selection process is structured, including the role of a peer jury. In China the rules, regulations and procedures for the selection of public art currently tend to be inflexible and draconian with public officials or wealthy developers calling the shots, with little room for professional artistic evaluation or input.

Sustainability and environmental issues do not yet appear to be explored by Chinese artists in their public art. In a country as populous and demanding of resources as China, these ideas are critically important. Public art and Chinese public artists may frame part of the discussion.

As public art becomes more prevalent in China, it is becoming a means to promote social progress and dialogue. It is evident that public art in China aspires to the US model of collaborative, site-specific, community place-making. Capitalism and free expression is tricky in a communist state, and the evolving role of public art, reflected in the light of a potential *Jasmine Spring*, will be interesting to watch. ■

THE ART + DESIGN

DELEGATION was led by artist Norie Sato and landscape architect Barbara Swift and included Seattle artist Pam Beyette and Los Angeles architect Tracy Stone, with coordination and facilitation by WTE, Inc., Redmond, WA.

PAM BEYETTE is a Seattle artist working in the public realm. She collaborates with architects, engineers, scientists, writers, communities and public agencies to create site-specific public art nationally.

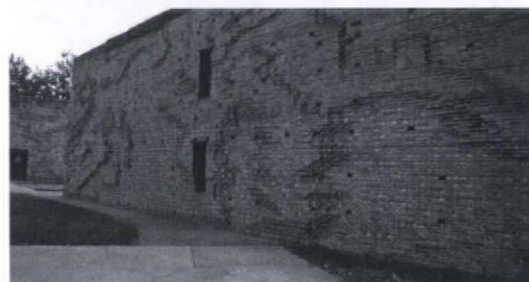
NORIE SATO is a Seattle artist whose work in the public realm includes art in civic buildings, transit, university facilities, airports and parks, among others, both regionally and around the country.

BARBARA SWIFT is the founding member of Swift Company, a landscape architecture and urban design practice working in the western United States and is past chair of both the Seattle Arts Commission and Design Commission.

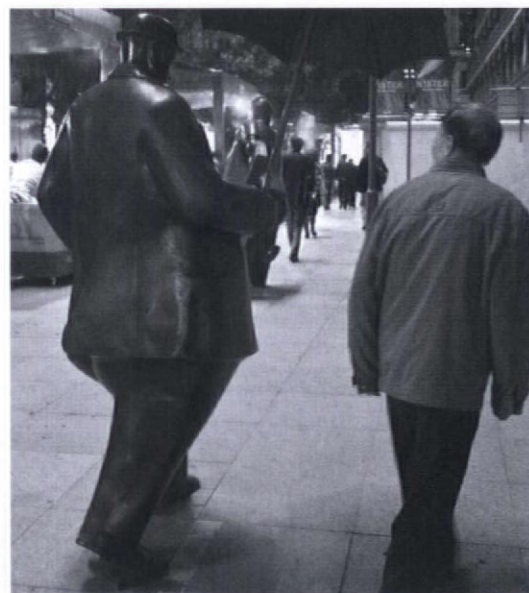
All photos by Pam Beyette except where noted.



Tiananmen Square Topiary



Three Shadows Photography Center, Beijing



Shanghai night scene



Tiananmen Square LCD Screens. Photo: Nori Sato



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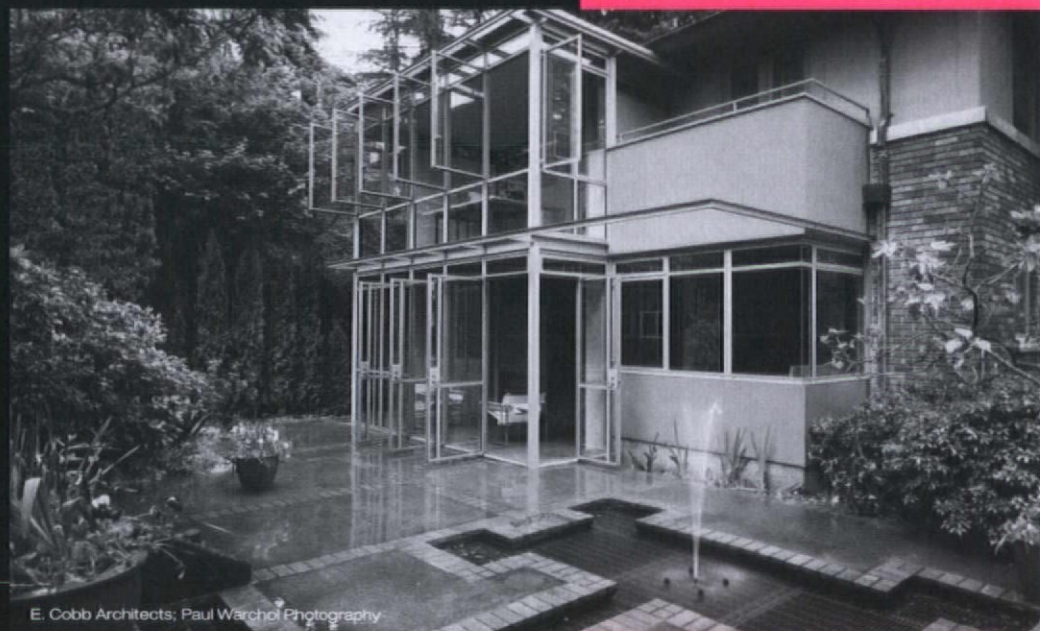
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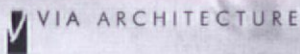
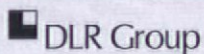
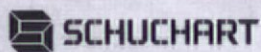
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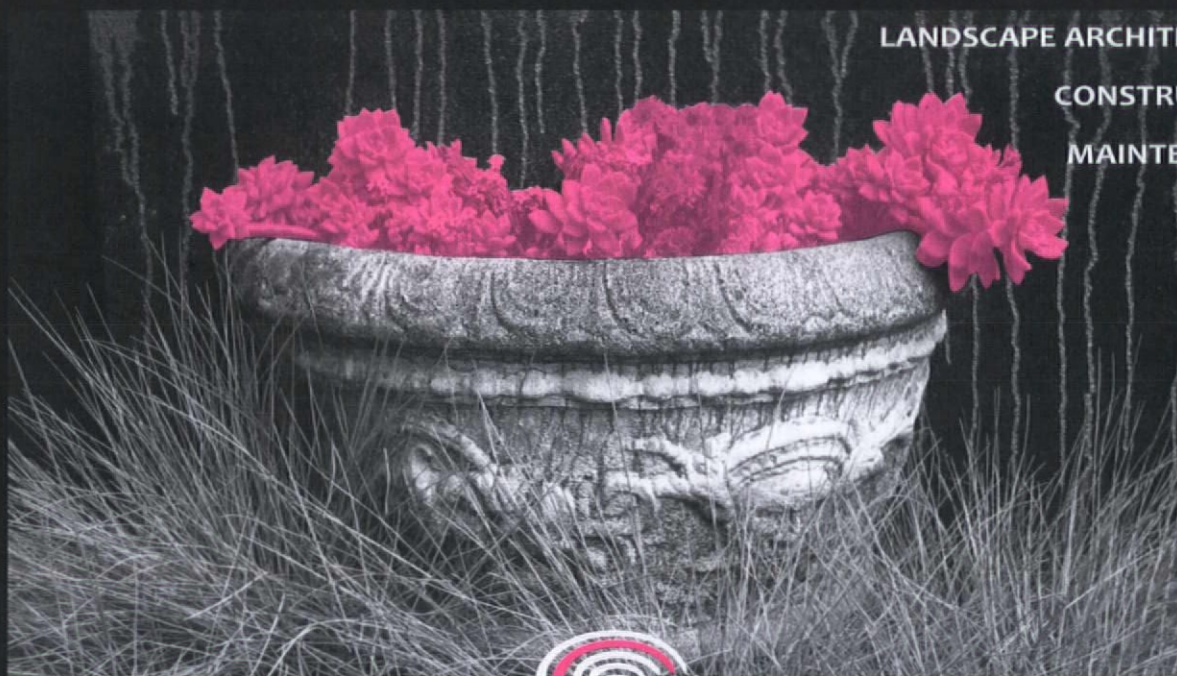
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THE FUTURE OF ASIA'S CITIES

March 3 *Why Asia's Cities Strangle Rivers*

Frank Rijsberman, Global Development Program,
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

March 10 *Life in an Asian Slum*

Melanie Walker, Deputy Director for Special Initiatives, Bill &
Melinda Gates Foundation / Celine d'Cruz, founding member
and Coordinator of Slum Dwellers International (SDI)

March 17 *Urbanism and Health*

Howard Frumkin, Dean, School of Public Health,
University of Washington / William Daniell, Environmental
Health Sciences, University of Washington

March 24 *Messy Urbanism, Bottom-up Placemaking*

Daniel Abramson, Urban Design and Planning, University
of Washington / Jeffrey Hou, Landscape Architecture,
University of Washington

March 31 *Designed Ecologies—
Built Solutions to Urban Environmental Issues*

Kongjian Yu, Founder and Principal of Turenscape; Dean of
Landscape Architecture, Peking University

April 7 *Asian Urbanism: Negotiating the Global*

Vikram Prakash, School of Architecture, University of
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Design Practice Now: Less

BY KELLY RODRIGUEZ

When the ARCADE Editorial Committee began discussing potential themes for the magazine's 30th anniversary volume, we settled on the concept of *less*. Today, at a time when the global economy and climate change have defined a new world, what are the implications for the manner in which architects, designers and artists communicate, practice, educate and live? In the last issue we addressed communication. In this issue we present a handful of ideas about how better to practice—now and always.

The last several years have caused us all to reconsider not only what we do, but how we do it. During this time, I personally witnessed and was affected by the confounding impact of an uncertain present and future caused by the recession; I also observed and experienced singular expressions of humanity and creativity inspired by these same circumstances.

While the economy may be improving, the future of professional environments remains tenuous, and many practitioners remain cautious. We cannot know what the future holds, but one thing we can be certain of is that moving forward we must practice with more efficiency, including consuming and creating less stuff and using and degrading less space. Most importantly, we must not be afraid to take creative risks, as creative fear is as paralyzing as economic fear and very often results in conservative thinking. Clearly, we need innovative ideas now more than ever. We need to embrace the power of design to create a better world.

On the following pages are some ideas that exemplify innovative ways of thinking and practicing, including an explication of the immeasurable importance of the design professions; why a sustainable future for our cities must comprise a firm ecological awareness and environmental ethics; the value of investing time and resources to feed creativity; the benefits of a mutually supported business strategy; and jumping fences—reinvent how you do what you do.

And remember what IDEO's Tim Brown said: "It's not an *either/or*, it's an *and*. You can be serious and play." Maintaining a playful sensibility feeds creative solutions, promotes a flexible mind, and helps to inspire a sense of optimism.

Let us know what you think. ■

KELLY RODRIGUEZ is the Executive Director and Editor of ARCADE.

America by Design

BY RICHARD FARSON

The road ahead for designers promises a most interesting and rewarding future, but it is probably not the one they are expecting. Few could imagine that design will become the most important profession in our society, the only one that can guarantee the US's success. But that is the role it will play.

Mobilizing the design community to redefine itself so that it can serve in this urgently needed, greatly expanded and far more socially responsible role is challenging indeed. America is failing fast, but its people, even many designers, are largely unaware of the mounting dangers.

America, once the world's leader, is no longer at the top of most measures of success. Indeed, we are seldom in the top 10, often at or near the bottom of lists of developed nations, and the trouble is worsening every day. We are among the least educated, unhealthiest, violent and crime-ridden nations in the world. We suffer from disastrous community destruction, massive homelessness, debilitating traffic congestion, perilous environmental practices, irresponsible media and a government near paralysis. Our entire physical infrastructure and related social systems must be rethought, redesigned and rebuilt.

Design will save America, not because designers are currently addressing the challenge, but because of the forces at work that will make design powerful enough, designers motivated and wise enough, and the public insistent enough to perform such a rescue.

What are the developments that will make this design rescue possible? Briefly, here are 10 already in motion, albeit mainly behind the scenes:

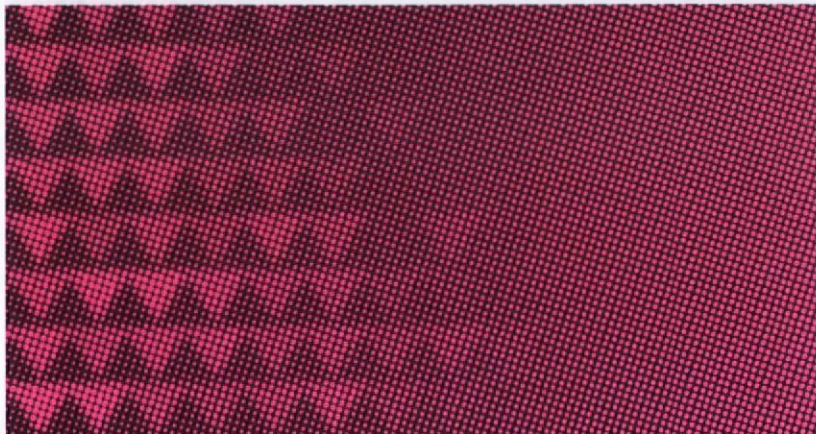
01 *A New Criterion of National Success*

Quality of life, more than economic success, is becoming the new criterion of national accomplishment. People everywhere are beginning to demand it—68 percent of 12,000 polled in 12 countries favor quality of life measures, such as happiness, over Gross Domestic Product (GDP). While business will continue to prosper, it will exist alongside, and continue to serve (but not lead), a completely redesigned and newly effective public sector focused on advancing all infrastructure and social-system designs, restoring community, establishing equality and strengthening democracy.

02 *The Growing Power of Design*
Professionals and the public are discovering the broader, deeper and stronger powers of design based on its ability to create situations, the most influential determinants of human behavior. Because of this, design will become the most powerful profession, greater than education, medicine, law, media...greater than any.

03 *Design's Broader Social Responsibilities*
Designers' newly discovered powers will lead naturally to greater social responsibility. Presently, the profession of design limits its social responsibilities mainly to insuring environmental sustainability. But as it embraces the developments of the last half-century in social design and neuroscience, its powers will increase exponentially, enabling it to address all levels of concern, all social issues, all troubled infrastructures.

PROFESSIONALS AND THE PUBLIC
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DEEPER AND STRONGER POWERS
OF DESIGN** BASED ON ITS ABILITY TO
CREATE SITUATIONS, THE MOST
INFLUENTIAL DETERMINANTS OF
HUMAN BEHAVIOR.



04 *Greater Financial Resources for Design*
This major movement of design leadership into the public sector means access to new financial resources. Like the fields of education and health, design must become a public priority—budgeting in the billions, planning in the trillions. Just imagine if designers had been ready with a coordinated and integrated master plan for the \$800 billion stimulus package recently funded to help repair the national infrastructure.

05 *Broader Executive Leadership in Design*
New design technology has so advanced and complicated its processes that design leaders can no longer be comprehensively expert practitioners. As design's reach is extended, that complexity will grow. Therefore, like successful corporate CEOs, who seldom remain technically competent even in the fields from which they came, design leaders must also redefine their roles, not only to focus on helpful staff relationships but to bring an inspiring vision based on an understanding of the larger potential context of the work, crucial social issues, newly collaborative professions, political forces in play, overcoming barriers to success and an orientation toward a future beyond what most are seeing.

06 *Design's Increasing Influence at the Top*
As a result of addressing issues of increasing importance to society, design leaders will become members of high councils of decision makers, greatly increasing the influence of design. Then all designers will be able to aspire to such positions as were enjoyed by architects a century ago when they associated with America's presidents.

07 *Embracing Paradoxes of Social Change*

Designers, accustomed to solving problems with identifiable causes, find that public sector social issues present complicated, often paradoxical, predicaments, with causes we may never be willing to eliminate. Crime is a good example because it arises less from pornography, violence on TV, bad parenting, or even poverty, than it does from aspects of our society we cling to, even cherish: affluence, urbanization, materialism, mobility and especially, freedom. Most troublesome social issues are riddled with such paradoxes, and to cope with that fact, designers are beginning to adopt new strategies for change, based on achieving improvements rather than final solutions.

08 *Steady Exercise of Professional Judgment*

As designers move into leadership roles in rebuilding our national infrastructure, they will necessarily abandon their current practice of subordination to client's desires. Instead, they will assume a vitally necessary posture of consistently exercising their best professional judgment. Having the ability to say no – as do physicians, lawyers, accountants and professors – is the only way to guarantee better design.

09 *Design for Liberation*

For the first time in history, designers have made it possible for millions of disabled people to enjoy full access to society. Designers can apply that capability to liberate all others oppressed by confining roles, including not only races, classes, gays and women, but others who do not even recognize their oppression, such as children—and even six-foot-tall white men. New system designs will remove limitations, foster development, stimulate creativity and make possible the fuller realization of everyone's potential.

10 *Going to the People*

The design professions' long-standing experience involving the people to be affected by their work in the design process will serve them well as they undertake the remaking of our public sector activities. That is not to say that there haven't been many cases where moneyed interests or backroom politics forced designers' betrayal of public trust. But when designers are able to exercise their best professional judgment in determining design practices, how the people will experience the results becomes of paramount interest; from the start, the people become active participants in helping to shape the designs. And the designs further the powers of the people. That is what we like to call "The American Way."

Designers are destined to become the leading professionals in our nation, not only saving us from disaster but advancing us to unimagined achievements. Understandably, designers may feel unprepared for all of this, but they cannot, must not, ignore the fact that design has become the only profession with the power to meet this challenge. ■

Psychologist **RICHARD FARSON**, author of *The Power of Design* and president of the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, was founding dean of the School of Design at the California Institute of the Arts, president of the International Design Conference in Aspen, and public member [non-architect] of the AIA Board of Directors.



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The Beautiful Big-Foot

BY KONGJIAN YU

TOWARD A NEW LANDSCAPE AESTHETIC

"LITTLE-FOOT" AESTHETICS

For almost a thousand years Chinese girls were forced to bind their feet so they could marry citified elites; their natural "big" feet were associated with provincial people and rustic life. At first, foot binding was the sole privilege of the high-class. The practice flourished until the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. Respected intellectuals wrote poems and created paintings praising artificial, tiny feet, while today they would be considered grotesque and abused. Painters portrayed classic Chinese beauties with small feet, flat breasts, tiny waists and white skin, which was in stark contrast to the strong and healthy peasant girls of the day. For a long time the beautiful have been viewed as necessarily unproductive and exempt from the "crude" survival-oriented processes of nature.

This definition of beauty and its connection with high-status urbanites is not unique to Chinese culture. Pre-Hispanic Mayan priests and nobles deformed their children's bodies in a quest for social status. Their "beautiful" features – sloping foreheads, almond-shaped eyes, large noses, and drooping lower lips – today seem as grotesque as bound feet.

For thousands of years the urban elite worldwide have maintained the right to define beauty and good taste in their assertion of superiority and power. Bound feet and deformed heads are among thousands of cultural practices that served to elevate city sophisticates above rural bumpkins and reject nature's inherent goals of health, survival and productivity; now landscaping and city building are the most visible and extensive instances of this tendency.

"Little-Foot Urbanism" is the art of gentrification and cosmetics. Its superficial nature replaces the messy, fertile and functional landscapes associated with healthy productive people. Today's Little-Foot Urbanism landscapes, cities and buildings are like the "Little-Foot" girl: unhealthy, deformed, deprived of functionality and malodorous. Little-Foot Urbanism is a path to death.

The massive movement of populations from rural to urban areas is a recent phenomenon, and the aesthetics defined by the pre-20th century, privileged, urban minority are eagerly sought by the masses. These migrants are eager to bind their



feet—to gentrify themselves physically and mentally. Contemporary Chinese environmental design reflects the aspiration to become sophisticated. In the current Chinese “City Beautiful Movement” (or “City Cosmetic Movement”), urban design, landscape design and architecture have lost their ways in a search for meaninglessly wild forms and exotic grandeur. This kind of work accelerates the degradation of the environment and is desperately unsustainable. We need a new aesthetics of big feet – beautiful, big feet – that will restore landscape architecture and urban design as an art of survival.

BIG-FOOT AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES

The major “Big-Foot” aesthetic principles and qualities are based on ecological awareness and environmental ethics.

1 Make friends with floods. Little-Foot Urbanism works against natural forces, especially water and landscapes, which are already present. As an alternative approach to conventional flood-control, do away with the concrete binding

on the urban water system and take an ecological approach to flood control and storm-water management, revealing the beauty of native vegetation and the ordinary landscape.

2 Create a green sponge to achieve a stormwater resilient city. Contemporary Little-Foot cities are not water resilient. Use stormwater parks as green sponges, collecting, cleansing and storing urban stormwater. This approach sustains other ecosystems’ services, regulating and supporting natural systems, and providing the city with cultural and aesthetic experiences.

3 Go productive. Millions of acres of fertile land have been transformed into urban landscapes; acres of crops have been gentrified into lawns and flowers in the past three decades in China. In a productive alternative, agricultural landscapes become part of the urbanized environment and remain aesthetically enjoyable.

4 “Gentrify” a rural landscape without sacrificing its functionality. When rural landscapes are urbanized, they are typically gentrified, meaning Little-Foot ornament. The alternative is to “gentrify” the rural and working landscape without sacrificing its functionality and productivity.

5 Value the ordinary and recycle the existing. For a long time we have been proud of ourselves as human beings capable of building, destroying and rebuilding. Because of this, both natural and man-made assets have been overused, and we are on the brink of a survival crisis. As an alternative, machines and other industrial structures can be recycled for educational and functional purposes. “Messy” and “rustic” are aesthetically attractive. Environmental ethics and ecological awareness can be built into our urban landscape.

6 Let nature work. From Versailles and historic Chinese gardens to the contemporary Olympic Park, great efforts are made to create and maintain artificial ornamental landscapes. Instead of providing ecosystem services, public spaces become a burden on cities in terms of energy and water consumption. Another design approach would be to let nature work, thereby providing an environmental service for the city.

7 Minimally intervene. In the process of urbanization, natural landscapes are usually replaced with overly designed and gentrified gardens and parks. As an alternative, use minimal interventions to achieve dramatic improvements, turning a “messy,” natural Big-Foot into some-



thing beautiful by preserving its natural processes and patterns.

8 Design landscapes as living systems.

75 percent of surface water in China is polluted and badly in need of sustainable and replicable solutions. Landscapes must be designed as living systems that filtrate and heal polluted water systems.

In China 18 million people are urbanized each year, immigrating to the city from the countryside, striving to be “urban” and gentrified. When poor developing countries follow Little-Foot Urbanism, they encounter the American “jumbo dream” and the scenario gets worse. (Witness China and India who have pursued the American dream of jumbo cars, houses and whatever jumbo else.)

China has only seven percent of the world’s natural resources of arable land and fresh water, yet they need to feed 22 percent of the world’s population. Two-thirds of China’s 662 cities have a shortage of water; 64 percent of the cities’ underground water is polluted; one-third of the national population is in danger of drinking the polluted water; and 50 percent of wetlands have disappeared in the last 30 years. Imagine where Little-Foot Urbanism combined with the “jumbo dream” will lead China. How can we survive in the future? We have misunderstood what

it means to be *developed*. We need a new system and a new vernacular to express the changing relationship between land and people. ■

KONGJIAN YU has been a professor of urban and regional planning at Peking University since 1997, and is the founder and Dean of the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. He founded Turenscape, an internationally awarded firm, whose practice covers architecture, landscape architecture and urban design across scales. Through his works, Yu tries to reconstruct ecological infrastructure across scales and to define a new aesthetic based on environmental ethics.

A portion of this article was excerpted from *Harvard Design Magazine*, Fall 2009.

A A GREEN SPONGE TO ACHIEVE A STORMWATER RESILIENT CITY

Qunli National Urban Wetland in China’s Haerbin City acts as a green sponge that retains and filtrates the urban stormwater, providing multiple ecosystems to residents. The design strategy uses cut-and-fill to create an outer ring of ponds-and-mounds surrounding the former wetland. A skywalk links scattered mounds, allowing surrounding residents to have an above-the-wetland and in-the-canopy experience.

B MINIMUM INTERVENTIONS The Red Ribbon [Tanghe River Park] uses minimal intervention to turn nature into aesthetically attractive, urban green space. Against the background of natural terrain and vegetation, the landscape architect placed a 500-meter, red-ribbon bench integrating lighting, seating, environmental interpretation and orientation.

C GO PRODUCTIVE At the Rice Campus of Shenyang Jianzhu University, stormwater is collected to irrigate the rice paddy in front of the classrooms, and open study rooms are placed in the middle of the rice fields, turning a rustic, productive rice paddy into an aesthetically attractive, urban setting serving multiple functions.

D A WORKING LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMED The Qinhuangdao Forest Park, at 576 acres, is a transformed working landscape demonstrating strategies to “gentrify” a rural landscape without sacrificing its functionality. By changing the landscape at critical positions and with minimum intervention, a monotonous, artificial windbreak forest with a decaying farm has been transformed into a lively urban park. A skywalk and boardwalk were built at the edge of the farm, allowing visitors to have close contact with the farm, and to observe the working landscape.

E LANDSCAPE AS A LIVING SYSTEM Shanghai Houtan Park, built on a former industrial brownfield, is a regenerative living landscape on Shanghai’s Huangpu riverfront, a narrow, linear 35-acre band. Its constructed wetland cleanses 2,400 cubic-meters of water, attracts flora and fauna species and has become a favorite public space in the center of the city.

All projects shown by Kongjian Yu / Turenscape. Photos courtesy of the designer.



NBBJ: Feeding the Culture During Hard Times

BY BARBARA SWIFT

At 8:00 A.M. on November 3, 2011, the seventh annual NBBJ design charrette commenced. Leaders in design and delivery from the firm's seven offices, along with jurors Daniel Friedman, Chris Rogers, James Brasuell and I, gathered at NBBJ's South Lake Union location to do two critical things.

The first and most important was to take this time, freed from daily demands, and use it to work together, building human networks spanning disciplines, expertise, familiarity and offices. Building social networks in this firm of 700 is a central strategy intended to support effective, rapid adaptation and innovation; design work and the systemic building of a firm culture focused on integrated thinking, leadership and work with social relevance. The second purpose of this charrette was to explore socially challenging questions within a real community: develop a clear concept, define the problem and create a process and product. A charrette of this kind tests and shifts methods and conclusions typically used in practice, creating space for innovation and exploration among a team working together for the first time.

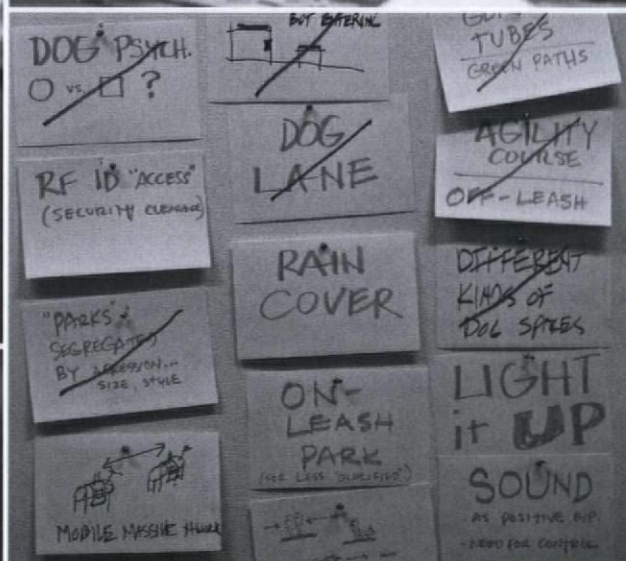
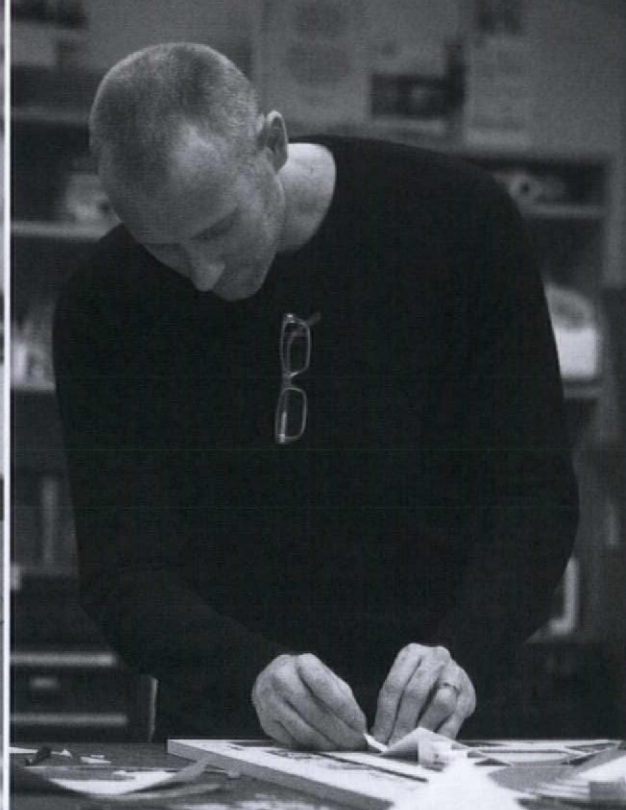
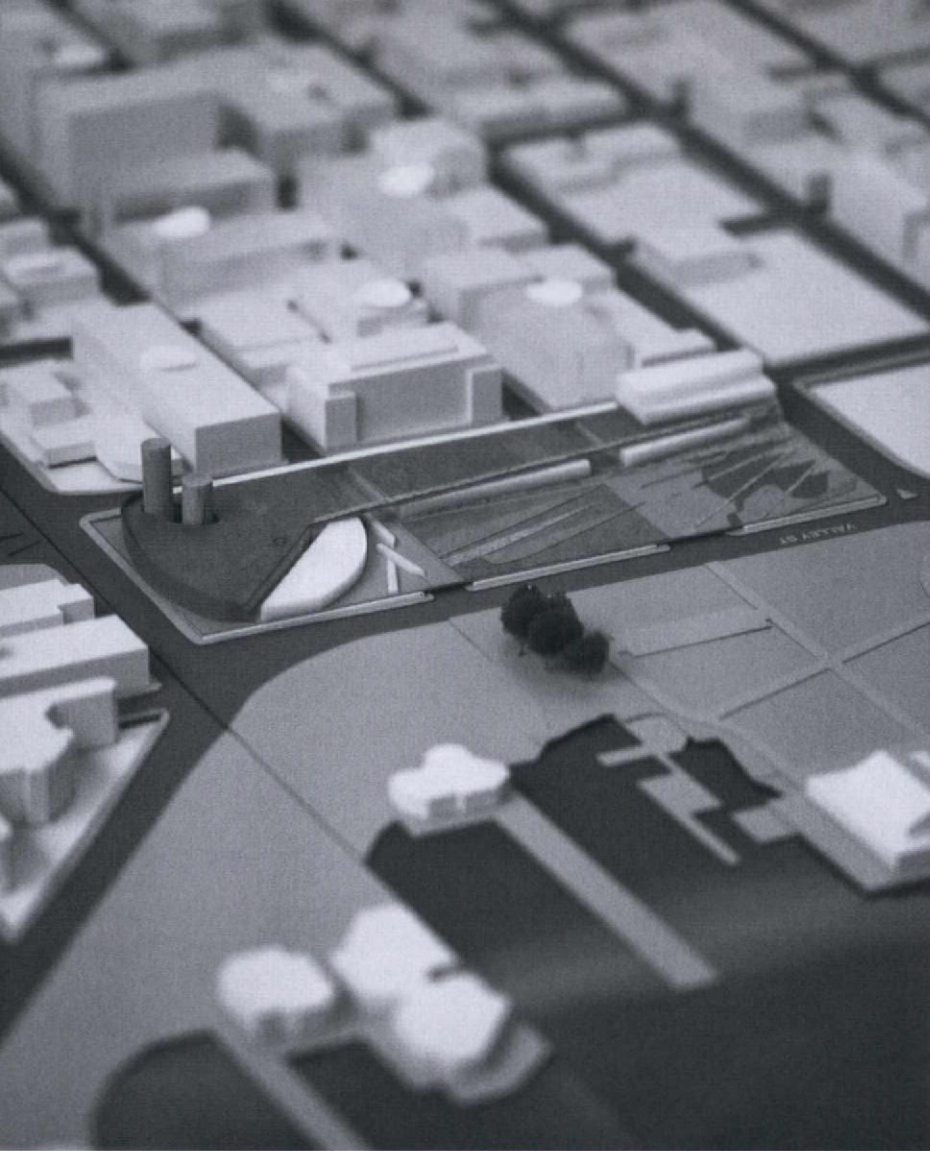
Why is this sort of exercise important? Because organizations tend to become engulfed by their traditions, bureaucracy and past, resulting in irrelevant, risk-free solutions that lack innovation. This pre-

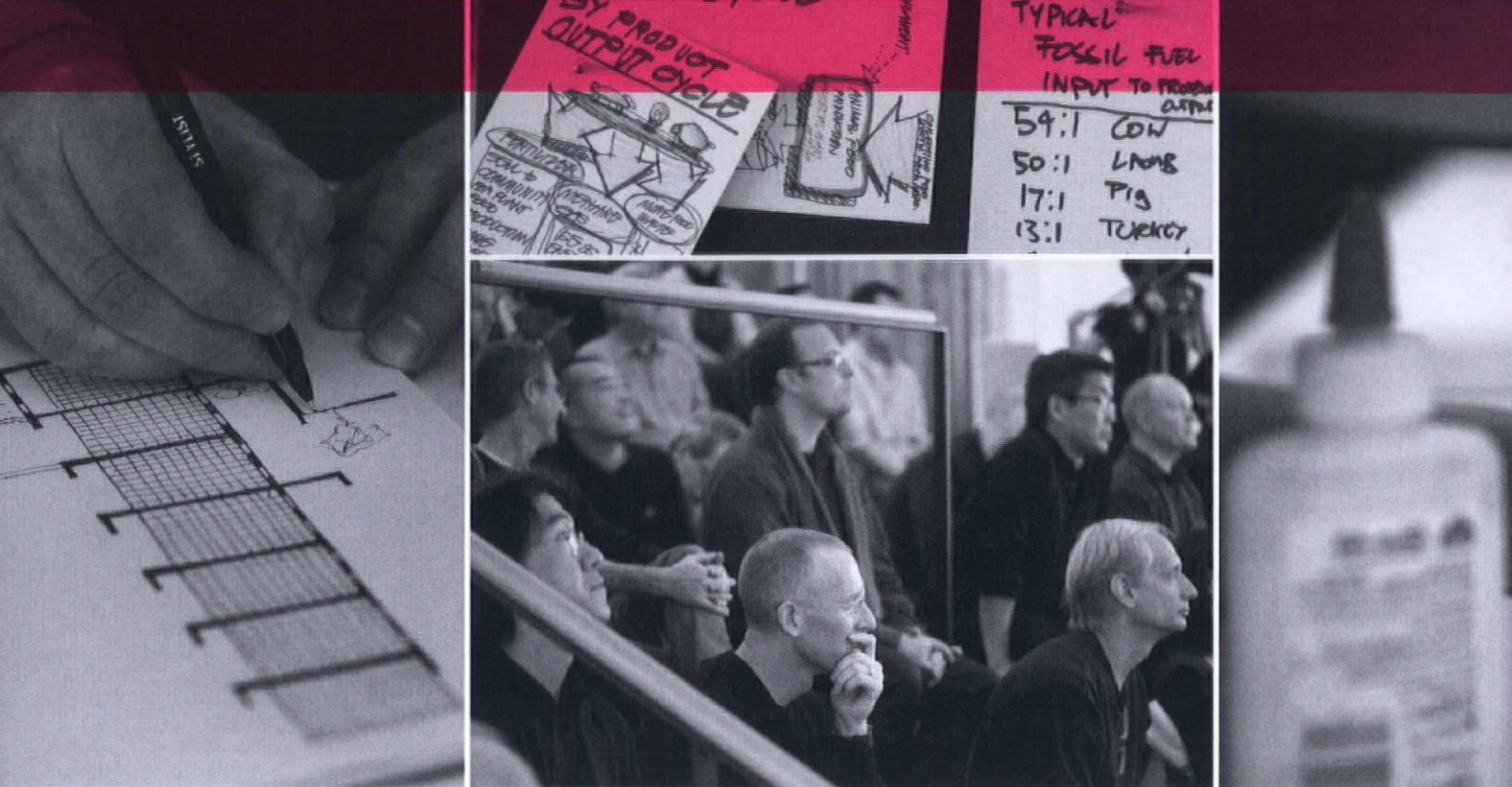
dilection typically applies more to large design firms than small. In addition, the current economic crisis demands that design professionals make a fundamental and rapid shift in understanding what is relevant and how to work in a world that demands innovation and problem-solving skills more than ever. There is more that needs to be designed, more that needs to be explored and more that needs to be integrated; this must be done differently and with strong leadership. It is essential that firms fight the inclination toward stasis and hardwire their organizations' cultures for change—particularly large design firms, who impact greater portions of the world. It is essential that these organizations invest in and support a human-centered approach to integrated thinking among their networks of diverse design professionals, so they can respond to critical, complex issues quickly and with heightened understanding.

At the November charrette a total of five interventions were identified for exploration, all within easy walking distance

of NBBJ's South Lake Union office. They included a full-block campground, a speakers' forum, a dog park, a cemetery and a full-production farm. At 3:00 P.M., after a wild day of talking, cutting, drawing, modeling and building, the 10 teams presented their work, each in a maximum of five minutes, to their colleagues and the jury.

These are challenging times, and in some cases, firms are holing up, tweaking how they work, discussing past "profit centers" and complaining. Others are not complaining, and see the current economic crisis as an opportunity to dig in, think and work hard. These firms understand that the challenge is to constantly strive to re-conceive how they work, to be relevant and to respond to changing needs and circumstances. The need for agile, skilled design is dire, and the need for rich, soulful solutions placing social fabric and civic life at the forefront, with their myriad complexities, is essential.





THIRD TYPOLOGY OR FOURTH?

BY DANIEL FRIEDMAN

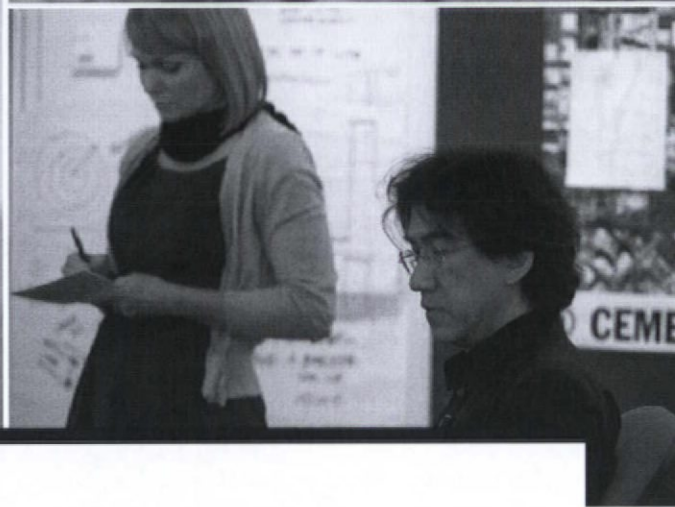
In a famous editorial written for *Oppositions* 7 in 1976, Anthony Vidler identifies a “third typology” modeled after neither primitive hut nor machine but rather after the city itself—composed of historical forms and fragments but released from any implicit obligation to history; made new with each new context; self-referential; independent from the specificities of both use and function. “The heroes of this new typology,” Vidler writes, are “the professional servants of urban life, [who] direct their design skills to solving the questions of avenue, arcade, street and square, park and house, institutions and equipment in a continuous typology of elements that together coheres with past fabric and present intervention to make one comprehensible experience of the city.”

Vidler’s insights help frame one reading of NBBJ’s all-firm, in-house design competition, since its organizers chal-

lenged designers to investigate five urban “types.” Besides their obvious programmatic considerations, we could pretend for a minute that one of the problems NBBJ was trying to solve was a “fourth typology”: How do we extend the characteristics of earlier typological models—primitive hut, machine and city—into the realm of globally connected, local communities, whose forms incorporate teletechnology and social networks?

Of 10 excellent projects, I’m not sure any suggest wholly new criteria for type, but one stands out in its potential for genuine hybridity: the cemetery scheme that features vertical fiber optic tubes, which penetrate the green roof plane of a large but simple memorial volume, illuminating both interior and urban space. This kinetic forest of tall, luminescent reeds gently bends in the wind, generating continuously shifting waves of light at the

same time it generates its own electrical energy; seen at night from afar or above, or from within its darkened enclosure, the designers intend to conjure up a galaxy. They channel Boullée’s Cenotaph to Newton and Rossi’s San Cataldo “City for the Dead,” which they skillfully atomize and recombine in the context of digital experience. On the one hand, the tubes embody the ancient herm, distant relative of the headstone and bollard, named after Hermes, god of boundaries and crossings; even more hauntingly, they recall Aboriginal “Sorry Business,” in which family members commission artists to design special funerary poles (“sacred logs”) elaborately carved and decorated to capture the essence of the soul they memorialize. On the other, they suggest a novel convergence of data and death, resulting in a new and expressly-urban funerary architecture.



5

SOUTH LAKE UNION INTERVENTIONS

The NBBJ cemetery project delivers a poignant speculation on the building type from which all type flows, the one with the deepest and most distant past. In its aspiration to provide new urban space for future “Sorry Business” – in its steady accumulation of giant, life-affirming, luminescent “monuments” – this project transcends its program. “The limit of architecture lies precisely in this point,” Hegel writes, “that it retains the spiritual as an inward existence over against the external forms of the art and consequently must refer to what has soul only as to something other than its own creation,” or put differently, in the words of poet Julia Mishkin (from “Sir Isaac Newton on MS and Alchemy”), this project suggests “the way departed souls / are beyond the world / redeeming light from inertia.”

CAMPGROUND

Given a full city-block and an existing barrel-vault shell suitable for adaptive reuse, what should an urban campground be? Can it be a place that addresses homelessness, provides essential amenities and supports the larger community?

SPEAKERS’ FORUM

How can design enable citizen engagement through the right to occupy, supporting free speech, and offering access to knowledge?

DOG PARK

Can dogs connect a community? How do we solve the emergent needs of hundreds of Amazon employees who bring their dogs to work and our South Lake Union community every day?

CEMETERY

Does a cemetery have a place within our urban community? Given a scarcity of acreage, is there a vertical typology suitable to an infill site? How might a vertical solution tackle the profound nature of a cemetery?

FARM

Can a production farm with animals exist within an urban setting and contribute to local production and food security? How might significant, underutilized, residual spaces be better leveraged?

JURY COMMENTS

JAMES BRASUELL

Imagine a world where a spirit of collegial and respectful collaboration is the norm during the process of designing the built environment—it's a far-fetched fantasy to be sure, but few are as well equipped to raise the level of conversation about environmental design as architects and landscape architects. The thought-provoking assignment of the NBBJ design charrette – to reimagine common public spaces replete with ideological and cultural baggage, like cemeteries or public forums – produced beautiful designs, but the caliber of the conversation was the most telling indicator of the unique talents assembled for the activity. I remain deeply impressed by how eloquently each team described complex, idea-saturated designs, providing clear access to abstract and complex ideas without patronizing the audience or diminishing the awe inspired by their work. I left the event hopeful about the ability of the design community to spread the word about the benefits of good design and reinvigorated with new ideas about the value offered by urban environments.

CHRIS ROGERS

The charrette provided a conceptual framework from which the teams could further the evolution of South Lake Union as a patchwork of great public spaces, initiated by the firm's highly successful Alley24. The successful exploration of each typology required that equal play be given to physical space, time, adaptation and shared use in order to transcend divisions of class and ownership.

I was very impressed by the thoughtful commitment of time and energy made by the firm. It felt more like a retreat than a charrette—a perfect climate for an open exchange of ideas. I never once heard a cell phone, which suggested to me how well the participants were able to step away from their daily grinds—another indication of the importance placed on the exercise.

BARBARA SWIFT

I was blown away; the process and products of this seven-hour commitment were impressive. It is one thing to read and hear people espouse the importance of setting aside time for discussion and exploration, and it is another to witness it in action and see the results. The approach to each problem was exceptionally humane and centered on a deep commitment to social justice and ecology. This was constantly reflected in the presentations, the approaches and solutions. The five interventions each raised deeply challenging issues. An urban campground and notion of traveling light gets right to the underpinning of land ownership, social stability and inequity—and none of these issues are easily addressed. In this case, the physical strategies were lyrical and the organizational issues were still challenged; what more can you ask for in seven hours?

In another case, an "app" was developed to build a community network of dogs and dog owners, which demonstrates that not all problems result in three-dimensional object solutions. It is all in how you pose the question and how open you are to the outcome. In the case of the dog population, the organization responsible for the dogs – the 6,000 new tenants in South Lake Union – have the obligation to integrate the dog-park zone. The solution: an elevated network cutting through buildings and connecting blocks with parks, blurring property lines and placing the responsibility on the tenants, not the public. Not surprisingly, the solutions for the cemetery, the citizens' forum and the farm all included strategies deeply rooted in a primal way. The solution for the speakers' forum included a bowl scooped out of a slope with the sky as the roof. The cemetery concepts used sky above and earth below in a simple, powerful strategy. With both of these designs, the overall results were ephemeral, poignant, powerful and relevant.

I found it inspiring to see solutions that expanded beyond the disciplines of those involved—to hear problems framed by their humanity, not by the simple program, to see solutions that were not object-driven but embedded in social need. It was inspiring to see a firm work hard and commit the resources to continually renew itself, to invest in its greatest resource—its staff. ■

DANIEL FRIEDMAN, FAIA, is the dean of the University of Washington's College of Built Environments.

JAMES BRASUELL is the editor of *Curbed LA* and former editor of the *Planning Report* (a monthly land-use journal) and public-radio guest-commentator.

CHRIS ROGERS is the founding partner and CEO of Point32, a real-estate company located in Seattle that focuses on the role of development in creating civic identity.

BARBARA SWIFT is the founding member of Swift Company, a landscape architecture and urban design practice working in the western United States and is past chair of both the Seattle Design Commission and Arts Commission.

All photos:
Sean Airhart / NBBJ

Incomplete Manifesto for Growth

By Bruce Mau Design

First written in 1998 by **Bruce Mau**, founder of award-winning, interdisciplinary design firm Bruce Mau Design, this manifesto articulates Mau's beliefs, strategies and motivations. Fourteen years later there is still much here to inspire and energize the daily practice of any creative endeavor.

01 Allow events to change you.

You have to be willing to grow. Growth is different from something that happens to you. You produce it. You live it. The prerequisites for growth: the openness to experience events and the willingness to be changed by them.

02 Forget about good.

Good is a known quantity. Good is what we all agree on. Growth is not necessarily good. Growth is an exploration of unlit recesses that may or may not yield to our research. As long as you stick to good, you'll never have real growth.

03 Process is more important than outcome.

When the outcome drives the process, we will only ever go to where we've already been. If process drives outcome we may not know where we're going, but we will know we want to be there.

04 Love your experiments.

Joy is the engine of growth. Exploit the liberty in casting your work as beautiful experiments, iterations, attempts, trials and errors. Take the long view and allow yourself the fun of failure every day.

05 Go deep.

The deeper you go, the more likely you will discover something of value.

06 Capture accidents.

The wrong answer is the right answer in search of a different question. Collect wrong answers as part of the process. Ask different questions.

07 Study.

A studio is a place of study. Use the necessity of production as an excuse to study. Everyone will benefit.

08 Drift.

Allow yourself to wander aimlessly. Explore adjacencies. Lack judgment. Postpone criticism.

09 Begin anywhere.

John Cage tells us that not knowing where to begin is a common form of paralysis. His advice: begin anywhere.

10 Everyone is a leader.

Growth happens. Whenever it does, allow it to emerge. Learn to follow when it makes sense. Let anyone lead.

11 Harvest ideas.

Edit applications. Ideas need a dynamic, fluid, generous environment to sustain life. Applications, on the other hand, benefit from critical rigor. Produce a high ratio of ideas to applications.

12 Keep moving.

The market and its operations have a tendency to reinforce success. Resist it. Allow failure and migration to be part of your practice.

13 Slow down.

Desynchronize from standard time-frames and surprising opportunities may present themselves.

14 Don't be cool.

Cool is conservative fear dressed in black. Free yourself from limits of this sort.

15 Ask stupid questions.

Growth is fueled by desire and innocence. Assess the answer, not the question. Imagine learning throughout your life at the rate of an infant.

16 Collaborate.

The space between people working together is filled with conflict, friction, strife, exhilaration, delight and vast creative potential.

17

Intentionally left blank. Allow space for the ideas you haven't had yet and for the ideas of others.

18 Stay up late.

Strange things happen when you've gone too far, been up too long, worked too hard and you're separated from the rest of the world.

19 Work the metaphor.

Every object has the capacity to stand for something other than what is apparent. Work on what it stands for.

20 Be careful to take risks.

Time is genetic. Today is the child of yesterday and the parent of tomorrow. The work you produce today will create your future.

21 Repeat yourself.

If you like it, do it again. If you don't like it, do it again.

22 Make your own tools.

Hybridize your tools in order to build unique things. Even simple tools that are your own can yield entirely new avenues of exploration. Remember, tools amplify our capacities, so even a small tool can make a big difference.

23 Stand on someone's shoulders.

You can travel farther carried on the accomplishments of those who came before you. And the view is so much better.

24 Avoid software.

The problem with software is that everyone has it.

25 Don't clean your desk.

You might find something in the morning that you can't see tonight.

26 Don't enter awards competitions.

Just don't. It's not good for you.

27 Read only left-hand pages.

Marshall McLuhan did this. By decreasing the amount of information, we leave room for what he called our "noodle."

28 Make new words.

Expand the lexicon. New conditions demand a new way of thinking. Thinking demands new forms of expression. Expression generates new conditions.

29 Think with your mind.

Forget technology. Creativity is not device-dependent.

BRUCE MAU DESIGN is

a design and innovation studio centered on purpose and optimism, working in five main business areas: Visioning; Communications; Environments & Experience Design; Web & Digital Media; and IP, Product, & Content Development. Many of their engagements combine several forms of media and experiences simultaneously. BMD works in a global context with organizations that are thought leaders in Culture, Commerce, Media and Education.

BRUCEMAUDESIGN.COM

30 Organization = Liberty.

Real innovation in design, or any other field, happens in context. That context is usually some form of cooperatively-managed enterprise. Frank Gehry, for instance, was only able to realize Bilbao because his studio could deliver it on budget. The myth of a split between “creatives” and “suits” is what Leonard Cohen calls a “charming artifact of the past.”

31 Don't borrow money.

Once again, Frank Gehry's advice. By maintaining financial control, we maintain creative control. It's not exactly rocket science, but it's surprising how hard it is to maintain this discipline and how many have failed.

32 Listen carefully.

Every collaborator who enters our orbit brings with him or her a world more strange and complex than any we could ever hope to imagine. By listening to the details and the subtlety of their needs, desires or ambitions, we fold their world onto our own. Neither party will ever be the same.

33 Take field trips.

The bandwidth of the world is greater than that of your TV set, or the Internet, or even a totally immersive, interactive, dynamically rendered, object-oriented, real-time, computer-graphic-simulated environment.

34 Make mistakes faster.

This isn't my idea—I borrowed it. I think it belongs to Andy Grove.

35 Imitate.

Don't be shy about it. Try to get as close as you can. You'll never get all the way, and the separation might be truly remarkable. We have only to look to Richard Hamilton and his version of Marcel Duchamp's Large Glass to see how rich, discredited and underused imitation is as a technique.

36 Scat.

When you forget the words, do what Ella did: make up something else ... but not words.

37 Break it...

Stretch it, bend it, crush it, crack it, fold it.

38 Explore the other edge.

Great liberty exists when we avoid trying to run with the technological pack. We can't find the leading edge because it's trampled underfoot. Try using old-tech equipment made obsolete by an economic cycle but still rich with potential.

39 Coffee breaks, cab rides, green rooms.

Real growth often happens outside of where we intend it to, in the interstitial spaces—what Dr. Seuss calls “the waiting place.” Hans Ulrich Obrist once organized a science and art conference with all of the infrastructure of a conference – the parties, chats, lunches, airport arrivals – but with no actual conference. Apparently, it was hugely successful and spawned many ongoing collaborations.

40 Avoid fields.

Jump fences. Disciplinary boundaries and regulatory regimes are attempts to control the wilding of creative life. They are often understandable efforts to order what are manifold, complex, evolutionary processes. Our job is to jump the fences and cross the fields.

41 Laugh.

People visiting our studio often comment on how much we laugh. Since I've become aware of this, I use it as a barometer of how comfortably we are expressing ourselves.

42 Remember.

Growth is only possible as a product of history. Without memory innovation is merely novelty. History gives growth a direction. But a memory is never perfect. Every memory is a degraded or composite image of a previous moment or event. That's what makes us aware of its quality as past and not present. It means that every memory is new, a partial construct different from its source, and, as such, a potential for growth itself.

43 Power to the people.

Play can only happen when people feel they have control over their lives. We can't be free agents if we're not free. ■



Saving the World Has to Be Fun

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR JOHN BIELENBERG

INTERVIEW BY BRIAN BORAM

COMMON is a collaborative brand and creative community for accelerating social change. Founded in January 2011 by Alex and Ana Bogusky, John Bielenberg and Rob Schuham, COMMON supports, connects and celebrates those designing a new era of socially-minded enterprise. COMMON's mission is to catalyze a global creative community with the tools, resources and opportunities to design positive social change, all done through the shared values of a collaborative brand. COMMON's community and events are dedicated to shifting from talking about problems to actually engaging in new solutions.

In short, COMMON wants to save the world with a new approach to capitalism and have fun doing it. If I didn't know you better, I would surely question your motives. Who put you up to this?

Ha! For the last 20 years of my career in graphic design, I have been questioning the meaning and significance of my work with corporate clients. I've made some money and won some awards, but I never found enough personal satisfaction running a design business to warrant my investment of time and energy. So, in 2003 I started a program called Project M to try and inspire young designers to invest their careers in work that matters...whatever that means to them. What I've noticed during the last nine years is that some of the most successful Project M projects are actually social enterprises like PieLab, HERObike and Alabambo.

In 2010 a friend introduced me to Alex Bogusky and Rob Schuham, and it triggered a harmonic convergence. They had very successful careers in advertising and marketing and were looking to change their approach. Together we came up with the idea of COMMON and started trying stuff out during 2011. From the beginning we believed that COMMON should have an element of fun. Because, well...why not!?

How does COMMON complement your design practice?

It is in the service of solving bigger, gnarlier issues. Recently, we ran a session in Detroit funded by the Legacy Foundation, which was created in a billion dollar settlement against big Tobacco to promote anti-smoking. A session we called the Menth Lab was a weeklong workshop in Detroit to discuss the negative impacts of tobacco marketing on African American and Hispanic communities. Out of workshops like these come ideas, and ideas become design projects. We don't start with design, but I do think design is an important part of making ideas come to life in the world. All of my work now is focused on driving positive change through enterprise. The graphic design is in support of that effort.

THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF COMMON IS THAT ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS IS ONE OF, IF NOT THE MOST, POWERFUL FORCES SHAPING THE WORLD RIGHT NOW. INVENTING CORE VALUES FOR ENTERPRISE THAT ALLOW IT TO OPERATE IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER DOES NOT PRECLUDE PROFIT.

JOHN BIELENBERG has won more than 250 design awards, is an AIGA Fellow, has been featured in the ID 50 and teaches at California College of the Arts in San Francisco. Most recently, John was awarded the NASAD citation for outstanding work as designer, author, educator, social activist and his overall impact on the fields of art and design.

TEDXTALKS.TED.COM/VIDEO/TEDXGREENVILLE-JOHN-BIELENBERG

COMMON.IS

BRIAN BORAM is a member of the ARCADE Board of Trustees. Brian worked with John in his San Francisco studio in the 1990s. John has remained an influential design mentor to Brian over the years.

Global brands are more powerful than ever. The idea that brand value can be harnessed for a collective social benefit is a great objective. What does the COMMON brand stand for?

We've loosely based COMMON on some of the concepts presented in a book called *The New Capitalist Manifesto* by Umair Haque. We're trying to embed some basic core values like transparency, sustainability, collaboration and community into for-profit ventures. Capitalism and corporations are the most powerful forces shaping our world, but the status quo of business now is totally unsustainable. All enterprise must become social enterprise if we are to have any hope of a positive future. It's just "common" sense.

How does the COMMON community fit into this new world order?

COMMON is a platform for people who want to channel their dissatisfaction and anger into action. These people can be both young activists (bottom up) and enlightened leaders within large organizations, institutions and corporations (top down).

It's been a year since COMMON launched. Last August, COMMON held its first "pitch" event. Now in 2012 you have events in NYC and Cape Town, South Africa. What has the response been?

I think the response has been strong and positive! We had about 800 people pay to attend the first COMMON Pitch event in Boulder, Colorado. We've also had quite a bit of press coverage, so I think that the time is right for something like this. The fundamental idea of COMMON is that enterprise and business is one of, if not the most, powerful forces shaping the world right now. Inventing core values for enterprise that allow it to operate in a responsible manner does not preclude profit. Generally, we are finding there is an appetite for this kind of solution to business. We are out there speaking at events, such as TED talks, and meeting with all kinds of business and community groups.

COMMON seeks the creativity of passionate individuals who want to work together and make our planet a better place. Who are these social entrepreneurs?

Well, the winners of COMMON Pitch Boulder were two designers from Norway producing a versatile solar-powered light to replace expensive and dangerous kerosene lamps in third world homes; two advertising guys in Europe that are launching a company called Beta Shower to enhance hygiene; and a 19-year-old woman who quit Princeton to develop a simple, cheap device called the Sun Saluter that makes solar panels more efficient by tracking the sun.

How will COMMON help guide these entrepreneurs?

The winners of these pitch events get a whole suite of things, one of which is cash, but they also get connected with mentors in design and business. The ideas that get funded will be provided with services such as the design of their websites, legal services and marketing teams to help communicate a COMMON code of values.

Why is design a good tool for social enterprise?

We think of design in the big "D" sense—smart and creative solutions to problems using design thinking for idea generation, prototyping and execution. Plus, design is cool, and cool is relevant! We want to make COMMON interesting in the same way that popular culture is interesting; rather than boring, it is relevant and what is desired.

Is COMMON an evolution or a revolution?

I would say evolution. It is just taking pieces that are already there and putting them together in a slightly different way. Business and corporations have amassed great power and are dominating the course of the world. This can be devastatingly bad or this power can actually be focused on things that are sustainable for the planet by acknowledging the interconnectedness of it all.

How can we join the cause?

Anybody can join the COMMON community. People can attend the pitch events; students can come to a COMMON project. Corporations can hire COMMON Lab to come discuss a project or brainstorm a topic. There is a bunch of ways to engage, and we continue to come up with more every day. ■



WOLKEN COMMUNICA / STUDIO GYPSIES

One year of studio locations in Seattle
From 11/2010 to 11/2011

- 1 **DESIGN MOVIE STUDIOS**
2208 NW Market St
- 2 **ELECTRIC PEN**
4117 Stone Way N
- 3 **PIXELUBE**
2212 Queen Anne Ave N
- 4 **GRAYPANTS**
3220 1st Ave S
- 5 **FROG**
413 Pine Street
- 6 **SITE WORKSHOP**
1927 Post Alley
- 7 **AGNES UNDERGROUND**
1433 12th Ave

Catch Us if You Can

DESIGN AND THE GYPSY LIFESTYLE

BY KURT WOLKEN

More than a year ago, my graphic design studio Wolken Communica decided to shed our office of 10 years. We didn't move to a new office—we decided to drop the whole office concept altogether. We're still Wolken Communica, but as we went mobile, we also started calling ourselves Studio Gypsies.

The idea was to avoid the traditional studio in order to challenge ourselves—to reconsider how we work and how we look at the world. Laptops at the ready, we bunk down with our fellow designers, clients and friends, changing our location like we change our underwear—every two months or so.

Having worked in the same building for more than a decade, we're making up for lost time. We're traveling the city of Seattle, truly tasting it in a way that no other business can say they are. We've been seemingly everywhere—a warehouse in SODO, a Post Alley overlook at Pike Place Market, an underground bunker on Capitol Hill and a dock on Lake Union. That's only the beginning. And, peripherally, the neighborhood coffee joints and pubs we've been to? Multiply the number of places we've worked seven-fold. (Maybe eleven-fold. OK. Fourteen-fold.)

No longer is there a worn path from our beds to desks—we now have to think about *where* we're headed every day. More than a few times we've started our morning commute headed in precisely the wrong direction. And we've frequently mumbled *Dude, where's my car?!* as we end the day. It may be a new set of work hazards, but they're better than the old, traditional ones.

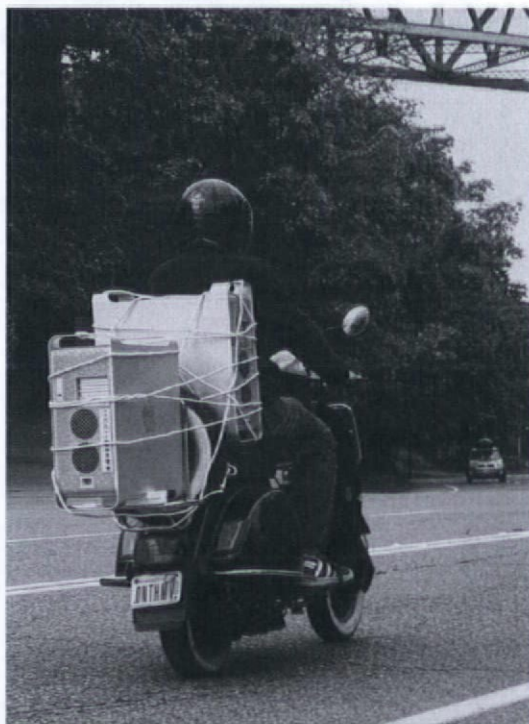
Since our two-man design team has been traveling for a year, I've compiled a list of things I should have learned by now, for those who might dare to follow our caravan's path.

WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE LEARNED BY NOW

Having to explain our business concept will never cease. We are not freelancers; we are running our design studio in your studio. We are not in-house contractor designers; we will work on our clients' work while we're in your space. We barter, trade, pay and perform for the space. We appreciate the opportunities provided.

Everyone is more creative when surrounded by other creative people. That is certainly true for us. It is also true for our hosts, as they seem to like that we provide a slightly disruptive element to the status quo.

Not all people are creative. (Even when they say so on their business cards.)



WE DIDN'T MOVE TO A NEW OFFICE—WE DECIDED TO DROP THE WHOLE OFFICE CONCEPT ALTOGETHER.

The more you have to carry in your backpack, the less excited you are about working remotely.

The faster you pare down your bag for the daily commute, the happier you, and your back, will be. Our last change of venue took 45 minutes and that included breakdown, travel-time and set-up. Other than the electronic goods, the only other accessories you really need are scratch paper, a serviceable pen, a stapler and all-purpose tape for MacGyver moments.

Public-bathroom, hot-air hand-dryers dry damp clothes well. If you're committed to riding your bike to work, this comes in handy. One caveat: It also helps if you don't mind standing in a public bathroom semi-nude.

Not all connections to the Internet are created equal. Check the bed before jumping in.

Contrary to popular belief, coffee is not regularly available in every office in the Seattle metropolitan area. Despite this, it is safe to assume that you'll be surrounded by four or more options to buy coffee—unless you're in SODO. Then, your options become more limited: items that fell off the back of a truck, and prostitutes, mostly.

The Cloud can't come soon enough. Clients REALLY care if you can access the archives of past work you've done for them so you can help them FAST on something NOW. Storing old jobs can be an issue—there's only so much room in a laptop.

Clients really do all say the same thing: "I wish I were doing what you're doing!" We've found that our clients are stoked that we're doing something fun. And as for the quality of the work they're getting—we think we are doing some of our best work ever.

That's what we've learned. We realize that not everyone can pack up their office and go Full Gypsy, but for those who can, it pays in spades for all involved. And in the end, that's the most important thing we've learned: Everyone benefits. We all get better. It is symbiosis. It is kick-ass.

Look around: Are there a couple of desks in your space that you never use? Why not host someone for a month or two? What do you have to lose? Better yet, what do you have to gain?

See you around town. ■

KURT WOLKEN spent his formative years in the midwest and founded the Seattle-based graphic design studio Wolken Communica in 2000. The collaboration, process and products of design drive Kurt on a daily basis.

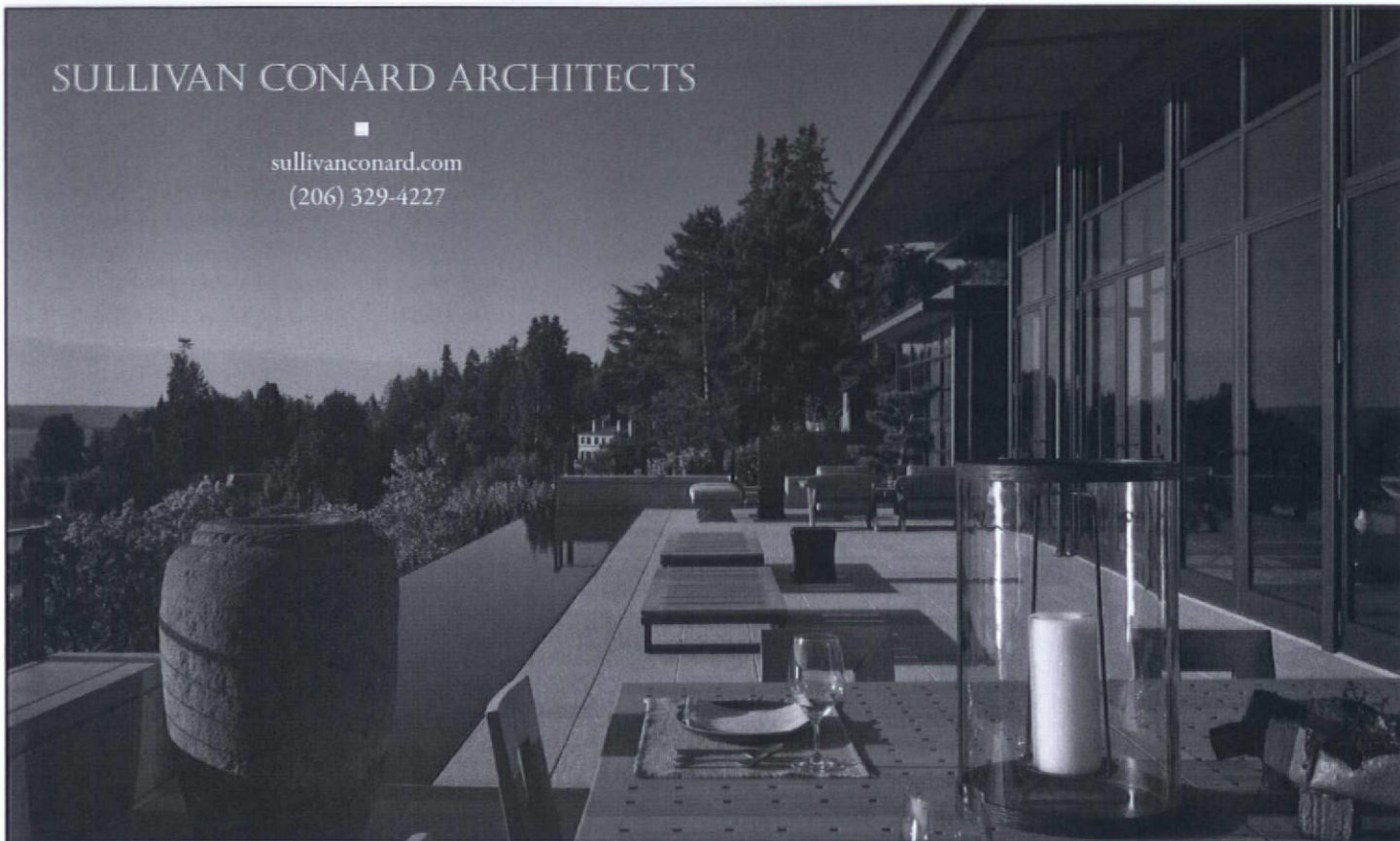
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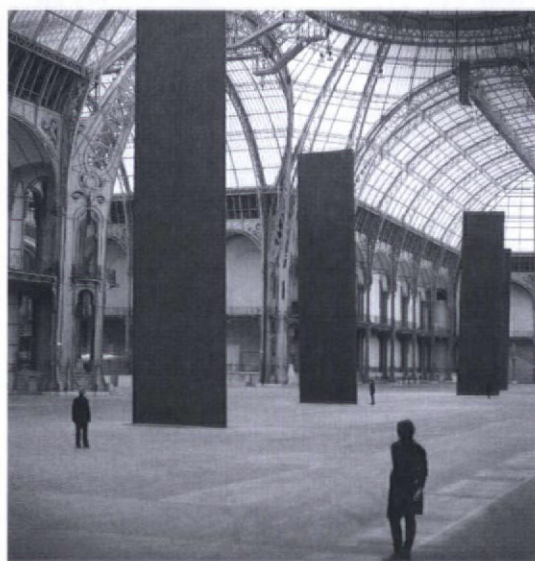
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JM CAVA

The Art-Architecture Complex by Hal Foster



THE
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HAL FOSTER

Verso Books 2011
\$26.95

“If you ask me Jeeves, art is responsible for most of the trouble in the world.” — P.G. Wodehouse

These days I rarely read anything labeled “architectural research.” Call me curmudgeonly, but as far as I’m concerned, architectural research needs to be related to practice. Most of it, however, seems a collage of opaque, self-referential clouds of irrelevancy, unrelated to anyone’s practice on the planet, a closed loop, theory written for theorists. I find greater wisdom, and certainly wit, in Bertie Wooster anytime. But, like the inimitable Jeeves, Hal Foster’s newest contribution to the genre, *The Art-Architecture Complex*, stands alone. Recently, I was upbraided (by a theorist) for being overly generous with my praise in print, so take this with the proverbial grain, but for those of you unfamiliar with Hal Foster, let me introduce him: brilliant thinker, lucid and entertaining writer and – what really sets him apart – equal parts critic and socially committed human being, connected and sympathetic to architectural practice.

As an academic (Princeton), there are times when Foster can get a little professorial, but don’t hold that against him—he always brings it back to ground within a page or two. He’s really a cultural critic, with art/architecture as his lens of provocative observation. It’s refreshing to find writing on design that isn’t attempting to force a straightjacket of idiosyncratic theory onto the world at large. Foster writes because, through the fog of our distraught culture, he perceives an outline, the shape of something important and useful to our collective



evolution and well-being, drilling into the complexities of contemporary architecture and art with unmatched clarity and social concern. No other academic of his stature (except Kenneth Frampton) has the humility to introduce his work by admitting to "...the fatigue that many feel with the negativity of critique, its presumption of authority, its sheer out-of-date-ness in a world-that-couldn't-care-less..." Explaining his persistence in the field, he muses that "one sometimes becomes a critic or a historian for the same reason that one often becomes an artist or an architect—out of a discontent with the status quo and a desire for alternatives. There are no alternatives without critique."

For those of us putting together buildings and places, a good critic is invaluable. She can open our eyes to ideas and connections we hadn't seen before, thus informing and enriching our work. (Kahn famously paid a completely unknown individual an annual salary to be an office critic, much to the consternation of his accountant.) Foster is terrific at unearthing the unintended consequences of our consumer-oriented culture on architectural/artistic ideas, in particular on those architects who imagine their work as critiques of consumerism. Like an experienced doctor, Foster knows right where to find the malaise, putting his finger on the inherent contradictions and the enormous difficulties of escaping the ubiquitous

and voracious cultural forces that instantaneously consume, repackage and sell such criticism as a new commodity.

Foster's excursion begins with well-known "avant-garde" contemporary architects, zeroing in on their romance with modern and contemporary art. We find the usual suspects here – Hadid, Herzog & de Meuron, Koolhaas, Diller-Scofidio – all self-labeled as "artists," and Foster is quick to point out the many differences between intention and reality in their work. Many have noticed these discrepancies, but never to my knowledge have they been expressed so clearly. More fascinating are his observations on architects who attempt to resist consumer/corporate culture head-on with "straight" architecture – Rogers, Foster and Piano, for example – and yet remain unable to make headway (at least in large-scale projects). Norman Foster's office, as the most influential of the group, finds itself in the double-bind of attempting to critique the culture it has been coopted by. The enormous financial and artistic success of this office has led to its own internal corporate structure that in turn produces expensive scenographic objects conducive to slick corporate imagery. This paradox is not uncommon and raises the question—is it possible for an office (or anyone) to retain a critical stance while raking in large fees from a corporate clientele, having achieved a status of influence?

Foster writes because, through the fog of our distraught culture, he perceives an outline, the shape of something important and useful to our collective evolution and well-being, drilling into the complexities of contemporary architecture and art with unmatched clarity and social concern.

There's no easy answer, and Foster doesn't attempt one, but he does a good job of raising our awareness.

Less enigmatic but no less observant are the contradictions Foster sees in Zaha Hadid's emphatic self-proclaimed status as an avant-garde artist/architect. Clearly and methodically, he fires his arrows straight to the heart of the matter. Hadid's built work:

...has carried the utopian visions of Suprematism and Constructivism into the promised land of actual building, yet...in the final analysis...her relation to all these modernisms is less deconstructive than decorative—a styling of Futurist lines, Suprematist forms, Expressionist shapes, and Constructivist assemblages that updates them according to the expectations of a computer age. Too often, then, Hadid suggests not a formalist whose reflexivity is generative, but a stylist whose signature shapes become involuted and stagnant.

After the book's rousing architectural discourse – and I'm leaving out much that is good, like Richard Gluckman's work with the Dia Art Foundation – there is a jump in content over to minimalist art, focusing on Donald Judd, Dan Flavin and Anthony McCall with a little Robert Irwin and James Turrell; boxes, neon tubes, film, abstract space and light. I nodded off a little here, as my artistic fire isn't lit by the idea of a neon tube buzzing away in the corner of a room. If this makes me an artistic cretin, so be it. But it's like those passages in *The Magic Mountain*—you trust the author and figure you'll come back later when the time is right. The master sculptor, Richard Serra, ends the book in an extended interview/discussion with Foster in what really is an understated afterword that has a peculiarly quiet strength. Listening to artists talk about themselves generally makes my head throb –

almost as much as listening to architects talk about themselves – but Serra and Foster are straight shooters, and it's a pleasurable read. In Serra, Foster seems to find a felicitous blend of cultural/architectural/artistic critique that is as good as it gets for “summing up.”

Foster is too careful a thinker and writer to reduce his research into any facile single conclusion, but I'm not. What I see in all this is the simple fact that art/artists may at times achieve certain goals usually found in the realm of architecture – tectonic presence, site specificity, sentient and corporeal awareness – but the reverse is untrue and undesirable, architecture being inextricably enmeshed with requirements and responsibilities foreign to, and even hostile to, art. This book sets a standard for *bona fide* research into contemporary architectural theory and lays the groundwork upon which architects, artists and cultural observers can further reflect. The mysteries of what Foster calls “the art-architecture complex” haven't been solved – and perhaps they're not supposed to be – but there's more light on them than before. As for those self-referential clouds of irrelevancy, my theoretical sky now resembles one of Bertie Wooster's description: “light blue with cotton-wool clouds and a bit of a breeze blowing from the west...a kind of uplifted feeling...” ■

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



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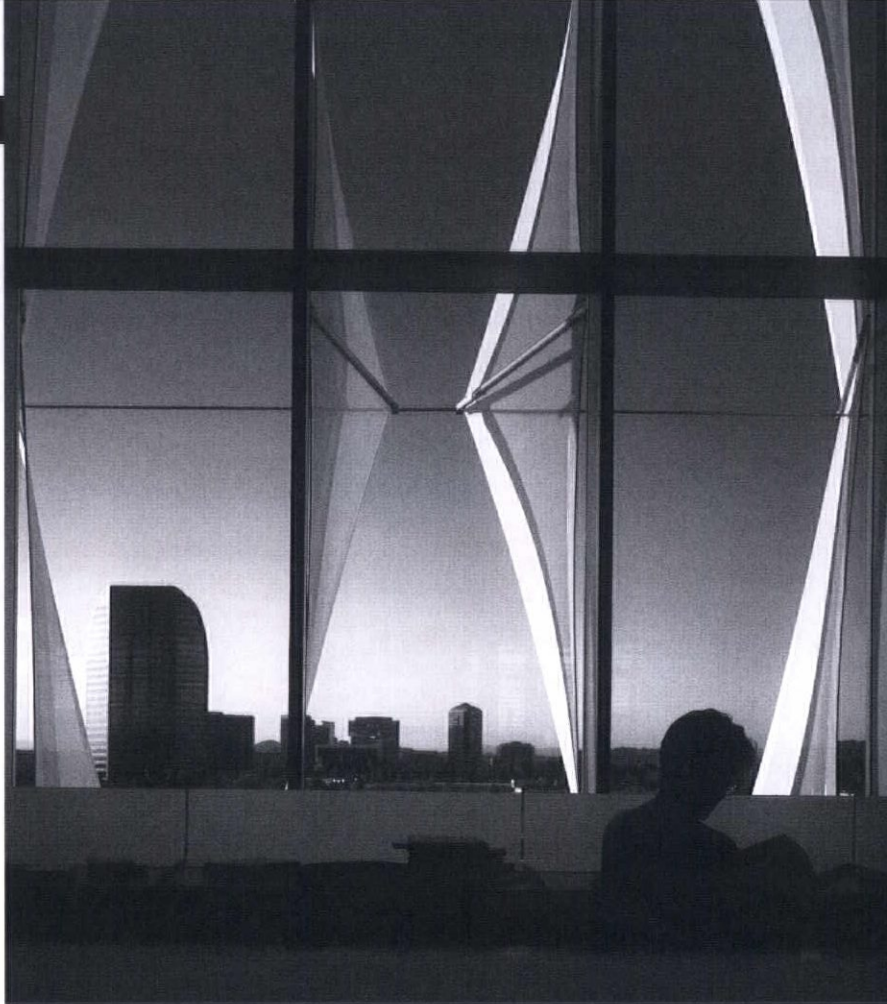
Making the Ordinary Extraordinary

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILL BRUDER

In December we met with Will Bruder at the extraordinary Phoenix Central Library that he designed in 1989 as part of the collaboration bruderDWLarchitects. He spoke about desert light, a strict budget and what it's like to work through the public design process of a civic building. Afterwards, Will was generous enough to chat via phone with us and elaborate on his 40-plus-year journey in architecture.

A tour of your website indicates that you've got more than a dozen current projects, yet you still made time to give us a personal tour of the Phoenix Central Library. How do you remain so accessible?

The person is the brand; sharing, mentoring and navigating a dialogue are all part of the deal. In my own experience, I've knocked on very few doors that someone wasn't kind enough to open. You never know what you're going to get—sometimes it's a five-minute conversation, and sometimes it's an hour conversation, sometimes a lifelong friendship. The act of engaging with people is necessary to the process of discovery. There are always unexpected results from each interaction, conversation or experience; it's less about knowing something and more about discovering something. The best work comes out of these investigations.



Years ago at a lecture we attended, you told the architects in the audience to "Honor your clients. They could have gone out and bought a house on a credit card." What traits do you continue to see in those clients who are willing to go on the adventure of architecture?

In their life experiences, these clients have caught that architecture has something unique to offer. For them architecture offers the potential of an armature for better living, so they become willing to take that step.

Most clients approach me not for a certain style or because of what my portfolio looks like but for the possibility of inventing something for them. What matters to them is the process of design and

We're so fascinated with the computer and its software, often at the expense of the intellectual tools that should drive both the pencil and the screen. Once you're in line at the laser-cutter, so much of the design's potential is already lost.

I teach based on my beliefs and the values that I find important. For me personally, architecture goes from mind to heart to hand; it's a very direct process. With or without digital technology, the starting point is always the same. It's still all about getting to who people are—and so it is with design students as well. I try to bring different course studies to the curriculum and expand who they are. I ask them to get their heads fully engaged and

The act of engaging with people is necessary to the process of discovery. There are always unexpected results from each interaction, conversation or experience; it's less about knowing something and more about discovering something.

how their lives will be changed by it.

The first conversations with a client can be very honest. Recently, I was approached to do a 15,000 square-foot house in Las Vegas. I immediately dove into a conversation about the size. Was there a large family, a special circumstance, a collection of some sort driving the size? I wasn't seeing my investigations resonate, so I quickly lost interest and the conversation ended. In order for me to take on a project, I have to value the client's values and dreams.

On the other hand, I'm currently speaking with a client about designing a 1,100 square-foot home on Lake Pend Oreille in Idaho. The client has a vision of doing something very special; it's a modest little structure with two feet of lake frontage. I spent two or three hours with him to move the conversation forward and see if we would benefit by creating some architecture together. This project is as exciting for me as working for wealthy patrons in the civic realm of Riyadh.

As a self-trained architect and a teacher, you bring a fresh perspective to the nature of academics; are architecture schools preparing students to be good architects?

It's challenging to teach architecture in such a way that students understand and capture the spirit of the poetry and pragmatism of their art.

their hands dirty. As designers, developing intellectual tools allows our studios to work in a cooperative model and toward a common goal; it allows us to get somewhere that we've never been.

Given that your work is known for rediscovering form with each project, is it difficult to establish a standard set of details in the office?

The only thing "standard" is a belief in the possibility of making. It's not about creating a set of standard details, but rather, having a consistent understanding of architecture and a respect for the craftsman; details follow their tools. It's important to inquire about the possibilities that each tool and material hold and what each allows and inspires. This type of standardization becomes a way of thinking—a respect for materials and knowledge of tools. My mantra is that I'm always interested in "how the ordinary can become extraordinary." Ordinary materials are so often overlooked, and the key to making them extraordinary is in understanding them through fresh eyes.



We love that you designed a car wash—it doesn't begin any more ordinary than that. How was it as a design project?

It was great; the car wash was an intriguing balance of function and idea. Interestingly, the architecture itself was fourth or fifth on the list of design priorities, below getting a clean car, good service, and so on. At the same time it's a perfect project for an architect to apply their skills to because the product follows the process. There's also an entire design strategy around having this captive audience since people have 10 or 15 minutes with nothing to do while they're getting their car washed. There's time to socialize, look around and buy "tchotchkes." So we designed the retail component, and it took off. We did a couple of these car washes, and each of them did better in sales than the car washes that weren't designed by architects. These car washes have become iconic, and two even won awards for best car wash in America. Notably, there wasn't an architect on the jury—it was all car wash professionals. I'll always be intrigued by a project if it has an honest sensibility in and of itself.

Living and working in Phoenix, you're at ground zero of the suburban crisis of sprawl. Is there hope for the suburbs in America?

No, I don't think so. For too long I lived out past the edge of the sprawl, and I've now moved back into the city. The habit of the endless drive just isn't a sustainable model if we value our time and quality of life. Architects belong to the city, not to

Burton Barr Phoenix
Central Library,
Phoenix, AZ. Photos:
Bill Timmerman

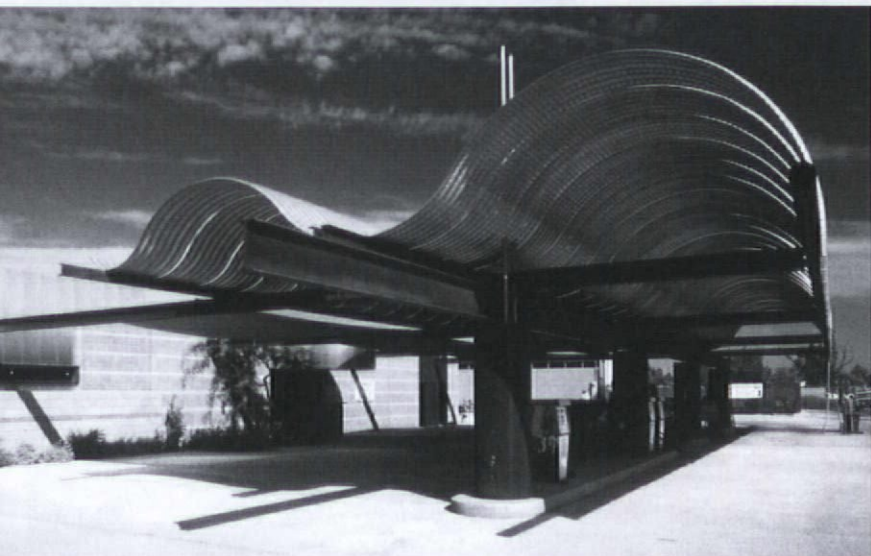
the edge. Our studio moved into an old repurposed building that was a former dance studio; it's right in the center of the city. We have small residences and businesses as neighbors. We are part of the urban fabric. Perhaps the suburban crisis can be mitigated by some repurposed strips, which can form nodes of activity and identity. We have all the "free" ways we need. Let's fill in the areas between and not blade any more desert.

And how is Downtown, Phoenix doing these days?

It's a complicated puzzle. Every city is tied to political cycles of two or four years, and unfortunately, with most modern, auto-centric cities, architecture is more often about object making than the urban fabric at a pedestrian scale. Despite the political variables, I've made the commitment of 40-plus years to this city. I, and many others, are working to make our central core a "20 minute place," where by foot, bike or public transit you can meet all your needs and live a full life.

It's been said that the age of the high-rise is over; apparently that's not the case in your office, as you've got several on the boards.

A tall building is still an iconic marker that has the power to define a skyline and a place. There are a handful of high-rises that remind us of the power and beauty of this building form. For the design competition for the Tatweer Towers in Dubai, we asked ourselves what it means to be iconic in Dubai; we wanted to present an attitude of social



Weiss Guys Car Wash,
Glendale, AZ. Photo:
Scot Zimmerman

New River Residence/
Studio, New River, AZ.
Photo: Neil Koppes



change and sustainability. The vertical is not dead yet; rather, it's about how high-rises honor a place.

With increasing levels of programmatic requirements, city bureaucracy and building code regulations in the architecture profession, how do you advocate keeping the poetry in a project?

It's important for architects to understand that building codes are only there to protect life safety, and you can appeal anything in the codes; their introductions even state this. You can't feel bound by building codes, and at the same time you have to understand them; you can't challenge the rules until you know the rules and why they're there.

Years ago, we had a project in Tempe, Arizona, where we actually appealed and changed the building and zoning codes simply by continuing to ask "why not?" We embraced the democracy of the building code process, and we proved our case; it worked because people want to be part of an idea. You have to take building codes as a challenge and realize that there is a place for collaborative conversation and change in each project.

Do the design review boards and community meetings often associated with public work pose a threat to the invention and wonder of architecture?

No, they're never threatening. The review boards and public meetings empower the poetry, wonder and beauty of a project. The town or city is coming together to do something special, and part of our job as architects is to listen to and edu-

cate the public. It's about opening up a dialogue and coming to these meetings with a sense of potential. Frankly, I can't understand why we have so many mediocre buildings that don't rise to the occasion. People love to see their ideas reflected in a design solution. ■

WILL BRUDER, a self-trained architect, has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in sculpture from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Supplementing his studio art education were studies in structural engineering, philosophy, art history and urban planning, followed by a full architectural apprenticeship under Gunnar Birkerts and Paolo Soleri. Subsequent to becoming a registered architect, Will opened his own studio in 1974. Most of Will's 450 commissions have celebrated the craft of building in ways not typical in contemporary architecture, striving to invent forms specific to function and his clients' aspirations.

WILLBRUDER.COM

BUILD LLC is an industrious design-build firm in Seattle run by Kevin Eckert and Andrew van Leeuwen. BUILD LLC's work focuses on permanence, sustainability and efficiency. BUILD LLC maintains an architectural office, a furniture workshop and a development company and is most known for their cultural leadership expressed in frequent posts on their BUILD blog.

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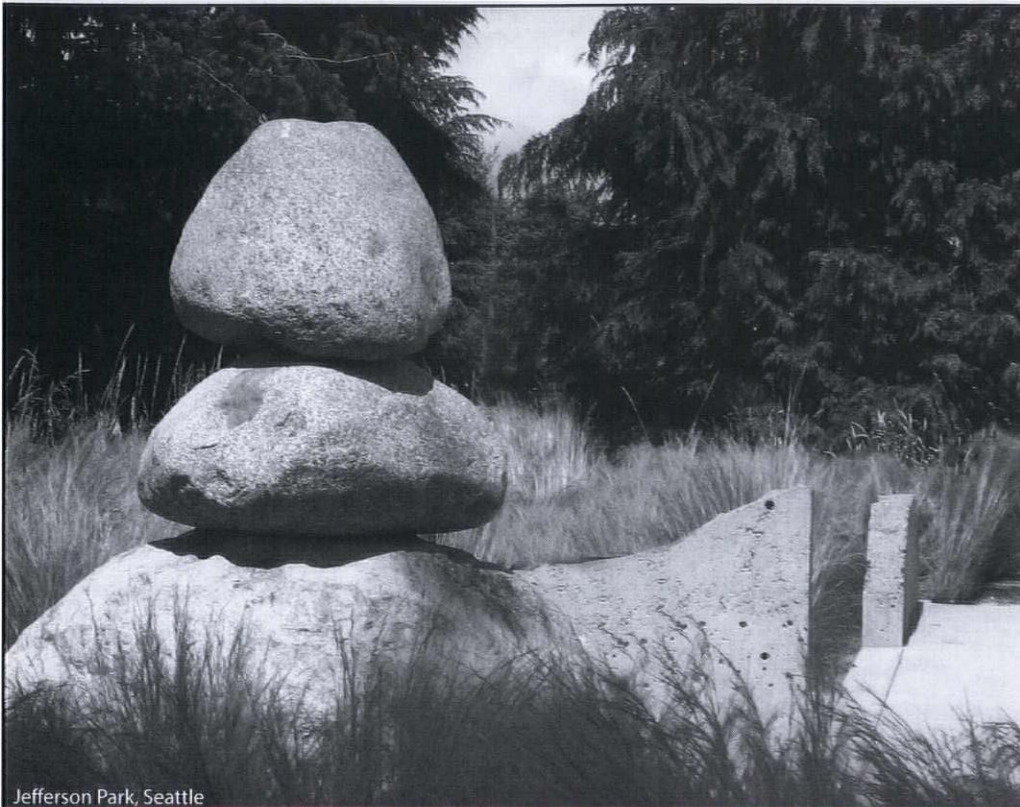


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RON VAN DER VEEN

What Side Yard Hasn't Written About...Yet

With the last issue of ARCADE we celebrated our 30th anniversary! This got me thinking a lot about the implausible eight-year run of my Side Yard column.

The goal from the beginning has been to peer into the ironic and curious side of architecture and to poke a bit of fun at a profession that often takes itself VERY seriously. When I started I honestly didn't think our profession was that quirky, and I never considered myself a writer.

Over the years, virtually all of my Side Yard stories have been at least semi-autobiographical. Many of our readers have helped me along the way, too. I actually get great suggestions from fellow designers with curious experiences or observations. I have come to recognize that architects aren't as tedious as I thought. Pompous, yes, but not that dreary.

The toughest part of writing this column is typically selling ideas to Kelly Rodriguez, ARCADE's editor. I keep lots of notes and reflections in my journal that are often the beginnings of these columns. But as fluidly as the ideas might flow, I must be prepared for Kelly's heavy hand of denial. In fact, included here is a sampling of valid ideas that she has discarded.

LAWYERS ARE DESTROYING ARCHITECTURE

I had just experienced a few tough run-ins with lawyers and sincerely wanted to get my jollies off on them with this article. Kelly put the thumper on this one, but I still think this topic is quite pertinent—because lawyers really ARE killing the profession or at least taking all the fun out of it.

THE WORLD'S WORST CLIENT

I tried getting this article through the editorial chopping block three times! It is about a neurotic and sexually obsessed client who almost drove me to insanity early in my career. Kelly thought I was making the story up and called it "preposterously sophomoric." I finally convinced her that this was a true story, but she still rejected it because she thought it was too creepy.

BRANDING YOUR OWN FIRM

Because so many of my laid-off friends have been starting small firms during this recession, I thought it would be helpful to explore some DOs and DON'Ts about branding one's new company. Kelly thought this topic was too depressing. Suggestions like: No more than three last names in a firm moniker no matter how many unemployed buddies you started it with. Why can't more firms name themselves like rock bands? Stay away from iconic images like golden sections, Fibonacci spirals, Doric columns... Seemed funny to me...

BULL MARKET CHRISTMAS

SUNG TO THE TUNE OF WHITE CHRISTMAS

Kelly thought this song would kill the holiday spirit. Are you kidding? With verses like:

*I'm dreaming of a bull market Christmas,
Just like the one in '08,
With a steady job and gifts I didn't rob,
And overtime I really used to hate...*

*I'm dreaming of a bull market Christmas,
Just like the one in '06,
When my clients had the cash, until they had to dash,
Cause the feds found out their dirty tricks...*

For this article I even proposed an annual "ARCADE Economically Challenged Holiday Virtual Sing-along," but you guessed it... another Kelly reject.

SHOULD BAD DESIGNERS HAVE THEIR ARCHITECTURAL LICENSES REVOKED?

Over the years I have taken potshots at different design firms in the region. I like to think that I am only putting down in print what others tell me after a few beers. In this article, I would inevitably have to point some fingers, which would make Kelly cringe, so we both have been procrastinating on this one.

BAR PICK-UP LINES FOR ARCHITECTS

Though I have been happily married for over two decades, I admit that I have considered this subject. If I was a single architect and wanted to pick up a hotty designer, how would I impress her? "Hey, come over here and let's increase our urban density?" "No, that's not a Mayline in my pocket, I am just excited to meet you." "You look so good you are increasing my carbon footprint." OK, I get the message, pretty "preposterously sophomoric."

As much as Kelly can be a Side Yard killjoy for me, this column owes everything to her. She has given me the structure, grammar, the tough love and encouragement to keep nibbling at the paradoxes and quirks of the architectural profession. No, architects aren't riotously funny people, but I think there might be a few more good topics in me for Side Yard. Now tell Kelly you want to hear about the world's worst client! ■

If I was a single architect and wanted to pick up a hotty designer, how would I impress her?

RON VAN DER VEEN is a principal at DLR Group and Side Yard's longtime and faithful columnist. rvanderveen@dlrgroup.com



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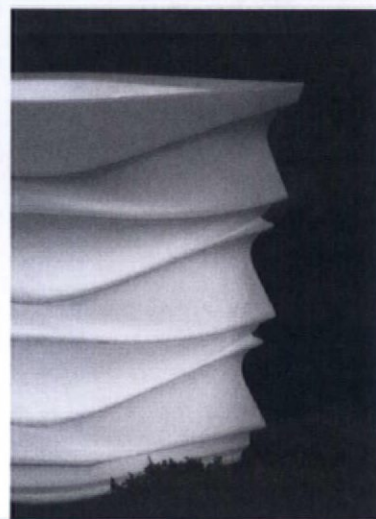
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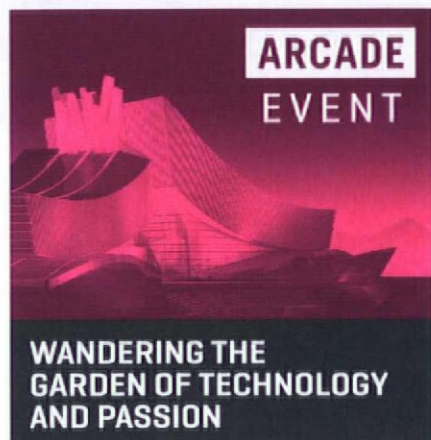
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ARCADE + SAM

10 MAY, 6 - 7:30PM

In the 20 years since the rise of digital design, a number of strategies have emerged to generate architectural forms; the static geometries coming from the drafting board have been under siege, then questioned, and finally replaced. This panel discussion aims to assess the ebb and flow of the digital offerings, latest developments and upcoming trends influencing where current architecture and computing, its closest companion today, are going to lead the architecture of tomorrow. Panel will include Pierluigi Serraino, John Marx and Chris Yessios.

SAM Downtown, 1300 First Ave. Seattle

THE FUTURE OF ASIA'S CITIES: DESIGN, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH

SATURDAY UNIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES /
SAM'S GARDNER CENTER FOR ASIAN ART AND IDEAS

THROUGH 7 APRIL, SATURDAYS, 9:30 - 11:00AM

The rapid growth of Asia's cities is a critical global issue of our time; in this series, architects, landscape architects and global health and development experts will address this complex topic. Speakers include China's pre-eminent landscape architect Kongjian Yu (pg. 35), Gates Foundation program directors, UW faculty from the College of Built Environments and more.

Seattle Asian Art Museum, Volunteer Park, 1400 E Prospect St. Seattle
seattleartmuseum.org/gardnercenter

FORCES OF NATURE THE HELLO POSTER SHOW

OPENING: 5 APRIL, 6:00PM

Forces of Nature, the latest exhibition from The Hello Poster Show, features over a dozen all-new, 2-color silkscreen posters from designers across the country. All proceeds from the sale of the posters benefit Youth in Focus, a Seattle nonprofit.

Cupcake Royale on Capitol Hill 1111 East Pike St. Seattle
hellopostershow.com

JONAH LEHRER: HOW CREATIVITY WORKS PART OF TOWN HALL'S SEATTLE SCIENCE LECTURES WITH PACIFIC SCIENCE CENTER AND UNIVERSITY BOOK STORE

9 APRIL, 7:30 - 9:00PM

Jonah Lehrer, author of the bestsellers *Proust Was A Neuroscientist*, *How We Decide* and the new *Imagine*, explores the science of creativity (brainstorming meetings are a terrible idea, for example) to reveal the deep inventiveness of the human mind and its role in our increasingly complex world.

Town Hall Seattle, 1119 8th Ave., at Seneca St. Seattle
townhallseattle.org/science-jonah-lehrer-how-creativity-works

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS

HOW TO MAKE A BOOK NORTHWEST FILM FORUM

9 MARCH - 15 MARCH nwfilmforum.org

UPRISING

BY RICK ARALUCE AND STEVE PETERS / SUYAMA SPACE

THROUGH 13 APRIL suyamapetersondeguchi.com/art

GAUGUIN AND POLYNESIA: AN ELUSIVE PARADISE SAM

THROUGH 29 APRIL seattleartmuseum.org

BEATRIZ COLOMINA LECTURE

BELLEVUE COLLEGE INTERIOR DESIGN STUDENT ASSOCIATION

31 MAY, 6:30PM

Rm N201 at Bellevue College, 3000 Landerholm Circle SE, Bellevue

The Hello Poster Show presents
AN ALL NEW SILKSCREEN POSTER EXHIBITION:
FORCES OF NATURE

OVER A DOZEN
2-COLOR SILKSCREEN
POSTERS!



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Call for Entries due:
Saturday March 10th

Let your creative prowess run wild in
creating a poster that fits into the broad
theme of **FORCES OF NATURE**.

Exhibiting in April 2012
at Cupcake Royale

OPENING: Thursday, April 5th, 6pm
1111 East Pike Street
Capitol Hill, Seattle WA

VISIT WWW.HELLOPOSTERSHOW.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION

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 FACEBOOK.COM/HELLOPOSTERSHOW

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