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DIALOGUE ON DESIGN

\$8 FALL 2014

Empathy, Fire and Spades

FEATURE EDITOR
Brian Boram

32.2

**DESIGN
FOR SOCIAL
INNOVATION**

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN OBSERVER

DESIGN KICKFLIP

Repurposing Skateboards
into Boutique Guitars
David Einmo

PERSPECTIVE

TO STEAL THE NATURE

Studio Notes from Louis
Kahn's Master Class
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BOOK REVIEW

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A HEREDITARY KINSHIP WITH NATURE

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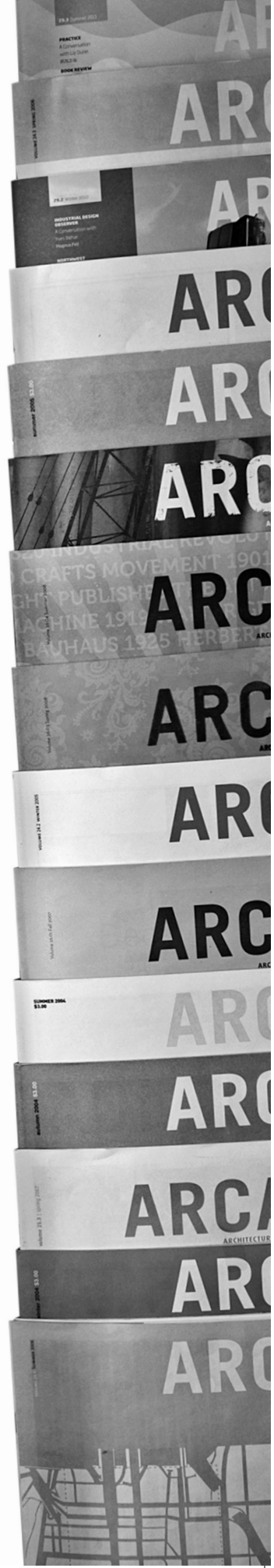
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From City Dwellers: *India Shining V (Gandhi with iPod)*, 2008, Debanjan Roy, Indian, b. 1975, fiberglass with automotive paint, 66 × 32 × 36 in., Collection of Sanjay Parthasarathy and Malini Balakrishnan. © Debanjan Roy, Photo courtesy Aicon Gallery.





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—**Catharina Manchanda**, Jon and Mary Shirley Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Seattle Art Museum

Disillusioned, from the *Definitive Reincarnate* series, 2003, Nandini Valli Muthiah, Indian, b. 1976, color photograph, 40 1/4 x 40 x 1 in., Collection of Sanjay Parthasarathy and Malini Balakrishnan. © Nandini Valli Muthiah



Untitled (Godrej Typewriter Factory), 1984, Sooni Taraporevala, Indian, b. 1957, digital print, 11 1/2 x 17 in., Collection of Sanjay Parthasarathy and Malini Balakrishnan. © Sooni Taraporevala



Untitled, from *Sleepers*, 2007–2012, Dhruv Malhotra, Indian, b. 1985, color photograph, 24 x 30 1/4 x 1 1/2 in., Collection of Sanjay Parthasarathy and Malini Balakrishnan. © Dhruv Malhotra, Photo courtesy PHOTOINK, New Delhi



Gopa Ray and Mother and Daughter, from the *Ladies of Calcutta* series, 2008, Dayanita Singh, Indian, b. 1961, gelatin silver print, 41 3/8 x 41 3/8 x 1 1/2 in., Collection of Sanjay Parthasarathy and Malini Balakrishnan. © Dayanita Singh

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Empathy and Algorithms

AN INTERVIEW WITH OREN ETZIONI,
THE ALLEN INSTITUTE FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

BRIAN BORAM

Curious about design developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and human-machine interaction, I asked Oren Etzioni, CEO of the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence (AI2), to contemplate a world where empathy and algorithms come together to achieve a higher social consciousness.

Brian Boram: Going back to the early days of computer science, advanced AI was always the Holy Grail. In the years since, we've created machines that are better than humans at chess and many other tasks. Why is artificial intelligence important now? Are we at a tipping point in AI science?

Oren Etzioni: I think artificial intelligence has always been important. Today we have tools and resources we did not have before but only because we stand on the shoulders of giants to see farther. However, it is not the case that AI will finally emerge as ubiquitous in the next five years. The problems are still extremely difficult, and the days when robots will keep humans as pets are not in the foreseeable future. I have a four-year-old who is far more sophisticated and a far better learner than any program we can write today or will be able to in the near future. I have more and more respect for the human mind and human creativity—we call it “wetware.”

Because of Hollywood and the fantastical visions of certain artists, are mainstream notions of human and machine interaction arguably ahead of the science?

I think there have been some significant misunderstandings of AI; I do not believe that robots and intelligent machines will be taking our jobs. Nor do I think that is the objective trend, as aesthetics is one of the most difficult things to formalize and teach a computer. This is the last bastion—even if in some distant future robots take up half of our jobs, designers will be the last ones standing.

Have you seen the movie *Her*?

Yes, we made it into a field trip. We felt obliged to see it, so off we went.

What was your takeaway?

I really enjoyed it. Like much of science fiction, the movie is really about relationships, and it uses science as a tool to explore them. From an AI point of view, it is way overblown, but there is this crazy gleam to the ideas in the film. I got into this field when I was young and naïve, and now that I'm older and still naïve, I think this notion of a computer reaching a tipping point at which it starts to learn on its own, then accelerates and starts to collaborate with other computers, is really exciting. The result of that will be better science, better medicine and a better chance to deal with huge problems like climate change. In the movie, things evolved to a point where they were proceeding at the speed of light, and the computer mind separated from us. What I see as a much more likely scenario is a situation in which these challenges we've been grappling with as humans, like cancer, will benefit from collaborative entities working together at mind-boggling speed to study the problem. A doctor might say to an AI medical assistant, “Look, you read at ridiculous speed, you can keep up with the literature; I am seeing patients all day; let's talk about the side effects of this drug.” I see huge collaborative and social potential but not the way Hollywood described it in *Her*.

The similarity between humans and robots depends not only on anthropomorphic appearances or sophisticated algorithms but also on the capability for empathetic interaction. How is robotic interaction an integral part of your AI research?

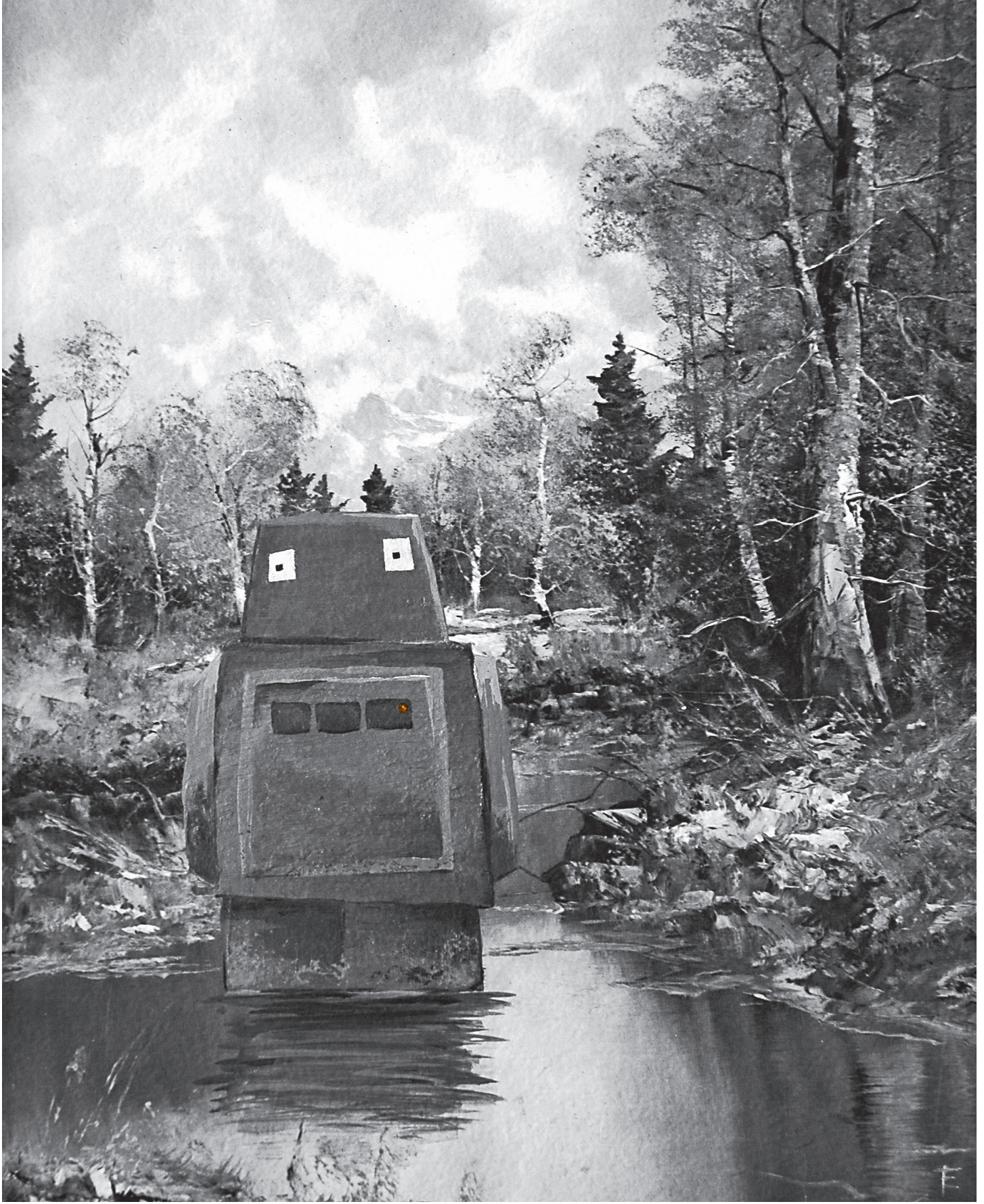
I personally do not work on that issue, but your question is dead-on. One of the things that emerged as robots became more commonplace is the field of human-robot interaction. Whether it's in the factory, at the office or in elder care, we see that robots can do more to help us, but we have to work out the interactions. At Microsoft Research they are exploring the question, “When can a robot interrupt?” To enable a robot to embody our basic social conventions and nuances is the challenge. If you brought a person from the jungles of Borneo into the modern office environment, they wouldn't quite know to knock before entering.

Aesthetics is one of the most difficult things to formalize and teach a computer.

Why would a robot know that? This is something we're working on fixing.

What opportunities for social innovation do you believe will come from your research?

Well, take politics as an example: Our algorithms for making statistical predictions have become increasingly sophisticated as computers have gotten more powerful. Those algorithms are very closely tied to artificial intelligence—a prediction based on historical observations is one of the hallmarks of intelligence. That means that with the use of computer models, somebody like Nate Silver is able to predict who is going to win an election with very high accuracy. It means that because these algorithms are now sitting in the Democratic and Republican National Committee headquarters, these groups are doing



very targeted political outreach and advertising based on very sophisticated models of who you are and what will influence you. And those models are built—for better or for worse—using the kind of technology we developed in the field of AI. So that's politics for you.

Now that Paul Allen has an institute for both brain science and artificial intelligence, what should we expect from this adjacency? Could a human brain be transferred to a computer?

Paul Allen is an amazing individual. Here is a guy who has given a huge amount to Seattle. He provides tremendous passion, resources and intellectual input to the institutes. I do think down the road there will be more and more collaboration; Allan Jones, CEO of the Allen Institute for Brain Science (AIBS), sits on the AI2 board, and I have given talks at the AIBS conference. As far as downloading human minds to the computer—which, of course, is a chance at a kind of immortality—I think it is a fascinating notion, but I am not counting on it happening in my lifetime, or even my children's. It's beyond the horizon.

What are the big questions for AI going forward? What do designers need to know?

The big questions in AI are based around general intelligence. We've built savants who can win at *Jeopardy* and chess, but what is elusive is the general intelligence of a three-year-old. The big question we are all attacking in different ways and at different paces is how to build general intelligence and common sense.

For designers, I believe even the most artsy person should know how to write a simple computer program. This digital literacy would help to demystify computers for the better.

In what way can AI transform our lives with smart design in social settings?

A great example is Nest, which took elements from Apple and algorithms from AI and coupled them with insights about interaction to design an elegant thermostat: "What's the most annoying thing in your house?"—the smoke alarm—"Let's fix that with a sprinkle of intelligence." [See *nest.com* for more info.] I like to talk about the "raisin bread" model of AI, in which the intelligence is the raisin, and all that other stuff is the bread. If you do not have raisins, it is not raisin bread, and if you do not have bread, it is just a bunch of raisins. So you really need these things to come together. I believe an exciting future lies in these intelligence interactions in the home and office.

When we first spoke, you mentioned that these are hectic times. Have you considered designing a super-intelligent proxy that can act on your behalf?

Hey, I am trying to design a four-year-old. So I have absolutely considered that, but it is still a ways out.

What inspired you to study AI?

Douglas Hofstadter and his book *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, which speaks interestingly about the connection between art, mathematics and computers. When I was in high school, it was a big bestseller and a very inspiring book for me.

What is the most common question you get asked at dinner parties? What is a favorite question?

"Can you fix my Mac?" People think that because I am an expert in computers, I can actually be a helpful support technician.

I believe even the most artsy person should know how to write a simple computer program. This digital literacy would help to demystify computers for the better.

I love the questions you are asking. We're all craftsmen and practitioners spending our time with our heads down working on our trades, and these big questions force me to take a step back and think about AI's social implications and our grand future. I wish I had more time to spend on them.

How do your vast talents in computer science translate to your hobbies or other interests?

My favorite hobbies involve being with people, whether in a social setting or playing basketball or chess. I enjoy people as an antidote for my work. 🗨️

"Oren Etzioni is an American entrepreneur, professor of computer science, and CEO of the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence. . . . Etzioni was the first student to major in computer science at Harvard University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1986. He earned his PhD from Carnegie Mellon University in 1991. . . . In May 2013 Etzioni was voted 'Geek of the Year' through GeekWire." —*wikipedia.com*

Brian Boram is the founder and principal of RMB Vivid. He is also the editor of this issue's feature, "Empathy, Fire and Spades: Design for Social Innovation" (pg. 27) and a member of ARCADE's Board of Trustees.

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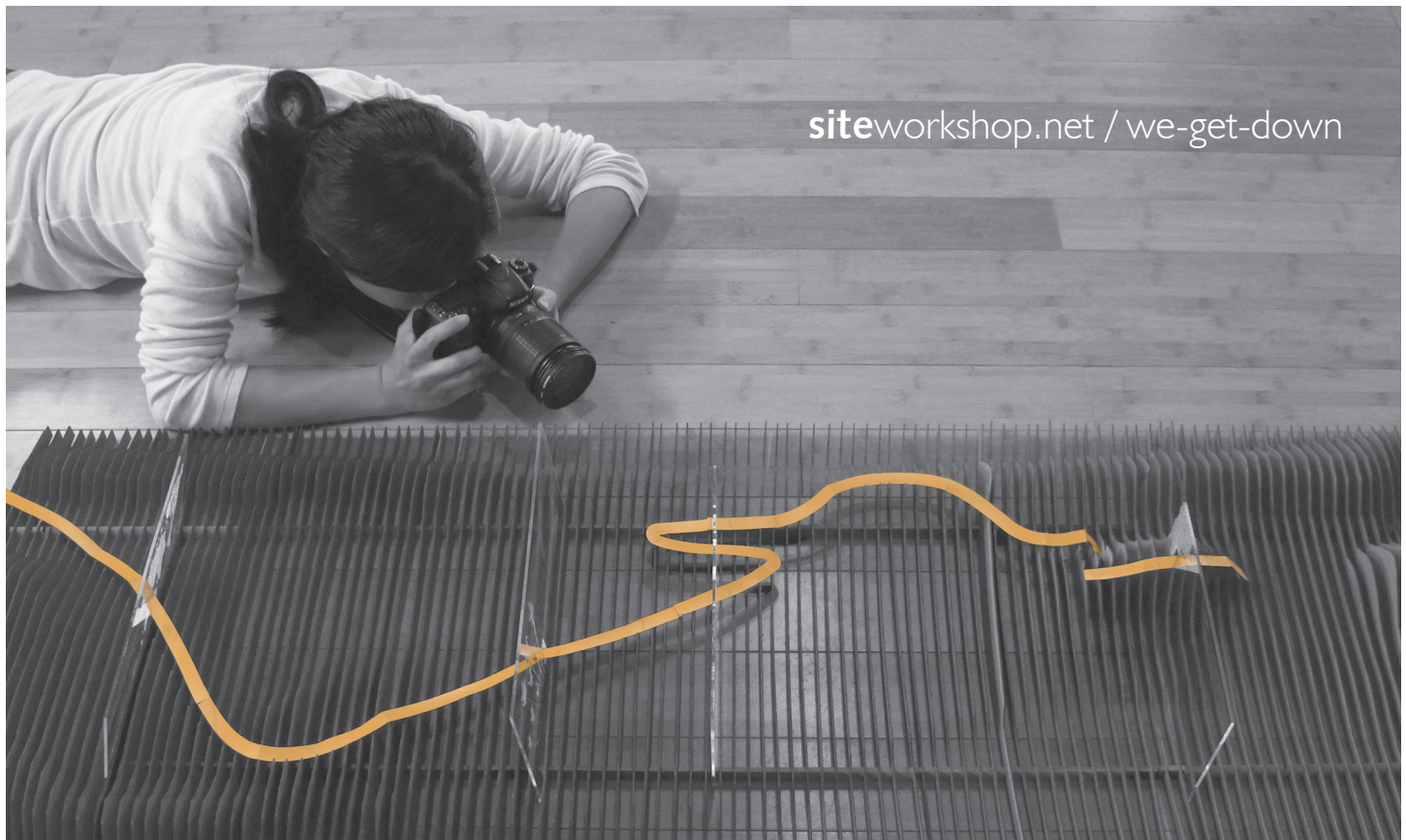
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Designing the Whole Idea

AN INTERVIEW WITH AVROKO

BUILD LLC

Last fall, BUILD sat down with three of AvroKO's four partners at their recently opened Gotham West Market in Manhattan. With current work in 15 cities across seven countries, the design-and-concept firm tackles everything from architecture and furniture to graphics and fashion. BUILD and AvroKO discussed continuity of design, self-propelled projects and why it's important to glue things down in a restaurant.

BUILD: In addition to designing physical spaces, AvroKO has become a pioneer in creating full branding packages for restaurants, bars and retail shops. How did this come about?

Kristina O'Neal: William and I had concept branding backgrounds while Adam and Greg came from architecture. When we joined forces, we wanted to complete the whole idea of a project by putting our heads together to do everything.

Adam Farmerie: It started with the idea that we should remove the constraints from the traditional model of doing projects. We also took a look at whether or not we should always be working for clients, and that led to a series of self-propelled projects that included everything from launching our own restaurants and bars to creating a clothing line, furniture lines, home-ware and book design. It's a constant evolution of thinking—the studio is about “what if?” We allow ourselves the freedom to experiment.

William Harris: There's also a psychological and emotional thread of continuity with this way of working. To be able to manipulate all the different media that goes into a project as a whole is very important to us. It allows us to keep a singularity and authenticity of concept. Not tackling every angle of a project seemed rather antithetical to our goals.

You've taken on the disciplines of architecture, interiors and graphic design, and you've even designed clothing for the servers in restaurants like Beauty & Essex in Manhattan. Is there more territory you'd like to stake out?

KO: We're now looking at different models that would allow us to do a whole building from top to bottom. This might include being the



Public, New York, NY. Photo: Michael Weber

architects and developers of a 20-unit residential complex, creating the attached restaurant, doing the structural work—everything. In the next decade, we're putting our minds to real estate development and possibly owning and operating a hotel brand. Rather than continuing to work in the same project model, we'll continue to stretch ourselves.

New York fell in love with AvroKO's very first restaurant, PUBLIC, of which you're still part owners. What factors contributed to your early success in perhaps the most competitive restaurant scene in the country?

KO: When PUBLIC came along, we looked at it and said, “This is how we would love to work as a group.” It established a precedent that our projects would be concept driven rather than

goal specific. This method of designing united ideas with form and materiality, and because we didn't have a client, we were able to focus on our own way of working and create a process. To this day, I think our process was formed through that project.

The food and drink industry is notorious for paying the bills in meals. What advice do you have for designers who want to work in this industry and make money?

KO: Bill often, bill regularly and stop working when you don't get paid on time. Because everyone in the restaurant industry is on a tight timeline, the design team often ends up working ahead of the billing cycle to keep everyone happy. Under these circumstances, a designer's time can easily extend beyond the point



Saxon + Parole, New York, NY. Photo: Daniel Krieger

Our projects would be concept driven rather than goal specific. This method of designing united ideas with form and materiality.

at which the project runs out of money. Then there's nothing but apologies and free meals. It's a matter of training your clients, and we have been fortunate to establish good relationships with restaurants.

What tests does a potential client have to pass in order to work with AvroKO?

KO: Our first step involves very basic discussions about concept, timeline and budget. If a potential client can't respond to pieces of that equation, we know we may not have the right partner. We like people who are organized, particularly with the hospitality industry. If a group is organized upfront, we find that results are better in the end.

AF: A well-organized restaurant will run better

and be more successful and, in turn, the design will look better when it's filled with a lot of people. We try to determine if the client is going to be successful or if the restaurant is going to close in a year despite all the time, energy and passion we've put into it. The food tastes better when the space feels great, and the space looks better when the food tastes great. Those two things go hand in hand, and they're both dependent on how the restaurant is organized.

WH: So much of it comes down to the client's experience—whether they understand and respect the design process or if they're just fishing for the lowest fee or something glitzy. We also have to be passionate about the project, and we want to have fun working with the client. We look to partner with clients that want to push boundaries and be innovative.



European Union, New York, NY. Photos: above, Michael Weber; above right and top, Yuki Kuwana

Are you able to hang out in your restaurants and enjoy yourselves, free from the experience of design and construction?

AF: Once a project is complete, if I was the lead, I can't go in for a while. It's just too emotional. It takes me a little while to come back to the decisions that I made. At first, I can't see the forest for the trees—there's just too much struggle in the design and construction process.

WH: At some inherent level, we all hate our own projects when they open. We know that 99 percent of the issues bugging us aren't seen by anyone but ourselves, but it's still hard to kick back and have that glass of wine.

AF: The other three partners—those who didn't lead the design—can walk into the space and feel awesome about the finished product, though.

What risks should architects and designers keep in mind prior to taking stake in a restaurant?

AF: In all honesty, don't expect to get your money back. We've been very fortunate that the investors in our restaurants have all been well looked after and paid out within a reasonable amount of time. Subsequently, they keep funding additional projects of ours. But on average, restaurants fail more often than they succeed in New York. In the restaurant industry, the odds are more likely that you'll back a horse that won't

win. However, there are benefits to the restaurant industry beyond finances alone. The social advantages are important, and some investors also use the establishments as showpieces.

On your website, you describe your projects as being "characterized by a unique convergence between the ideals of the past and an offbeat, forward-looking sensibility." What ideals of the past do you find most significant?

KO: It's *our* version of past ideals—a narrow piece of the past that we find idyllic. No matter the concept on which we're reflecting, we try and find something that's just sideways of that original idea. For us, being forward-thinking means that we're reinterpreting, looking to design in a space where the present, past and future all meet.

WH: We find ideals that will give a certain aura to a project, asking ourselves how can we re-present that concept in a modern way.

Found, vintage objects play an important role in most of your work. How do you coordinate finding and securing these objects?

WH: We're always searching in different markets and small towns; our eyes are always open, and our staff is always on the lookout for found objects. Our whole endeavor in Asia began with trips for sourcing items to ship back to Las Vegas and New York. We have a couple

For us, being forward-thinking means that we're reinterpreting, looking to design in a space where the present, past and future all meet.



Quality Meats, New York, NY. Photos: Michael Weber

of people who search full-time for objects with unique and bizarre qualities. Our dream is to have a big warehouse someday to stock and pull items from. It's always painful to pass on an item that resonates with us, but we can't pull the trigger if we don't have a project for it at the moment.

Do the highly coveted objects in your projects ever grow legs and walk off?

AF: Absolutely. A gentleman was caught trying to take an 18-inch-tall blown-glass horse from one of our restaurants. He tried to walk out of the restaurant with the horse's head sticking out of his messenger bag. Luckily, the restaurant staff was able to intervene. Now we're better at bolting, gluing and cementing down every last thing.

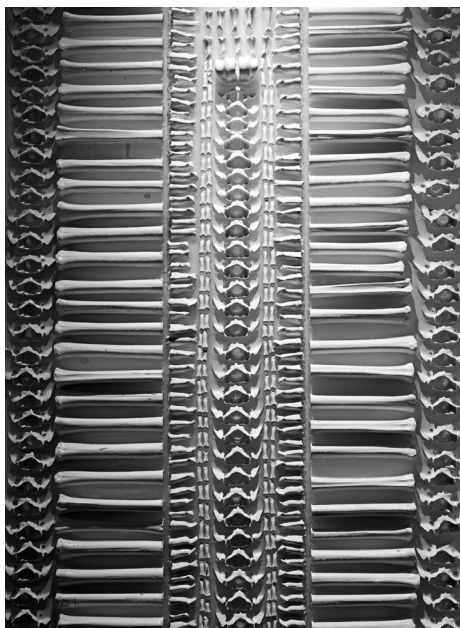
WH: Part of the inspiration for providing small complimentary soaps in the bathrooms was to include something special that was meant to be stolen. It acted like insulation against the loss of more valuable items. While we engineered this in a certain way, odd things still occur. An older lady once dropped her purse in the middle of the dining room, and 30 soaps exploded out onto the floor. Fortunately, at three cents per soap, it wasn't a big deal.

The Hurricane Club, bone wall detail, New York, NY.
Photo: Michael Weber



With the careful curation of your projects, are there certain details you wish people would notice more often?

KO: Downstairs at the Hurricane Club in Manhattan we inset 1,000 real bones into European wallpaper patterns on the walls. Everything about it was handcrafted and hand set; it was a really elaborate process to get the intended result. It's one of my favorite details that we've ever done and probably the one that's overlooked more often than it should be. 🍖



New York-headquartered design-and-concept firm **AvroKO** is led by four partners: **William Harris, Greg Bradshaw, Kristina O'Neal** and **Adam Farmerie**. The firm is equally adept at the varied design disciplines of architecture, furniture, graphics and even fashion. AvroKO currently has offices in NYC, Bangkok and San Francisco, and their active portfolio of architecture projects includes restaurants, bars, hotels and retail around the world. Their "self-propelled" projects include several restaurants and bars that are wholly conceived, designed, owned and operated by the company. These include PUBLIC, The Daily, Saxon + Parole, Madam Geneva and ROADSIDE, all in NYC; The Thomas in Napa, California; and Saxon + Parole in Moscow. avroko.com

BUILD llc is an industrious design-build firm in Seattle run by Kevin Eckert and Andrew van Leeuwen. The firm's work focuses on permanence, sustainability and efficiency. BUILD llc maintains an architectural office and is most known for their cultural leadership on their BUILDblog. blog.buildllc.com



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Empathy, Fire and Spades

DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

BRIAN BORAM

IT IS SAID, “NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED.” Simply put, good actions may result in unwanted or negative outcomes. While the sentiment is a warning to the well-intentioned, it also underscores the hesitancy of individuals in our society to act freely on their benevolent impulses. Sure, unintended consequences are a fact of life, but a culture that inhibits transformational ideas is the death knell for many of our greatest social innovations. So why not be optimistic rather than pessimistic about outcomes and fervently challenge prevailing views? After all, optimism loves company just as much as misery does. In the following feature section, “Empathy, Fire and Spades: Design for Social Innovation,” we examine the inherent, powerful role community plays in the design process. We find that through a potent mix of collective action, creative thought and unbridled experiences, we can inspire each other to reach higher levels of social consciousness and ingenuity.

Albert Einstein said, "It is nothing short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry." This quote from a 1949 *New York Times* article about scholastic endeavors provides commentary on the state of education at the time. It also reminds us how far we have come in redefining curiosity, passion and resourcefulness as important means to challenge, deconstruct and reimagine the status quo. In the realm of design for social change, a case in point is the work of firebrand Lonni Tanner. In her following essay, she shares how she immersed herself in the world of NYC probation centers and inspired a team of designers to reimagine what a waiting room could be.

Yet, to define "design" by its physical end-product is limiting. Though not always included as part of the formal design process, a transformational experience is often the source from which great design blossoms. Select articles in this issue explore ideas of collective experience that are shaping a still unwritten future. Sebastian Jones recounts an outing with the Midnight Ridazz, a growing community of Los Angeles cyclists in it for the thrills but aware of the influence they have on the city. In Greensboro, Alabama, we discover how "thinking wrong" at Project M leads a group of young designers to imagine bikes as engines for social and economic progress.

We also learn of communities where people are rolling up their sleeves and taking spade in hand to realize challenging projects together. In one article, we visit Braddock, Pennsylvania, once the model for a company steel town but now down on its luck. In this hardscrabble community, we find the old Carnegie Library standing in all its faded glory, simultaneously telling a story of the past and inspiring a new generation to remake the town. Just a short walk from the library, Kevin Sousa's Superior Motors is shaping up to be the sustainable model for revitalizing this Rust Belt community. In another essay, Lauren Iida shares how she inspired her artist friends and colleagues to work side-by-side to design culturally relevant reading material for

a small Cambodian community she knew and loved, helping students gain important English language skills. And from close to home in Seattle, we hear a story of hands-on commitment and dedication in

We have come far in redefining curiosity, passion and resourcefulness as important means to challenge, deconstruct and reimagine the status quo.

designing and building housing for the homeless—where common decency and long-term thinking is putting the cycle of homelessness to the test.

And in the spirit of solidarity, we've included a look at the design mani-

festo. Andrew van Leeuwen's taxonomy of 20th-century architectural design manifestos provides a glimpse into the social and cultural underpinnings that shaped design over the last century. This fold-out infographic presents in-depth research for design aficionados and the uninitiated alike. And of course, pondering this history inevitably brings into question the future of design manifestos in a time when community voice can set the agenda instantly through our ever-expanding social media channels.

As a young boy, I loved to play with fire. Though my family generally discouraged this behavior, under the watchful gaze of my grandfather, I was allowed to tend the campfire. Fortunately, his ability to refocus my potentially dangerous obsession into something useful resulted in many wonderful fireside meals and the best s'mores ever. Thinking back, his willingness to help me turn what could have been a negative into a positive was one of his ways of getting to know me. My grandfather's show of empathy was most likely a response to a grandson's need for attention. But more simply, I wonder if his curiosity in my plight is what transformed my experience?

So, as we gather around the fire to recount tales of derring-do and best laid plans, let's get down to the business of cultivating our good intentions—naysayers and skeptics move aside. And if "no good deed goes unpunished," then the optimists must prevail—fear be damned! ▶

Brian Boram is a designer and an optimist. He is the founder and principal of RMB Vivid and a member of ARCADE's Board of Trustees.

Saving the World

A NEW MFA PROGRAM PREPARES STUDENTS
FOR COURAGEOUS ENDEAVORS

CHERYL HELLER

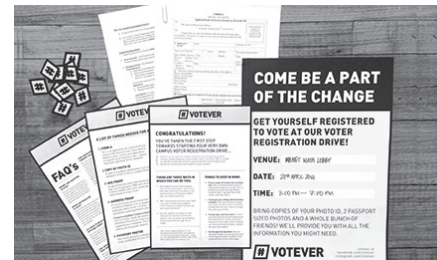
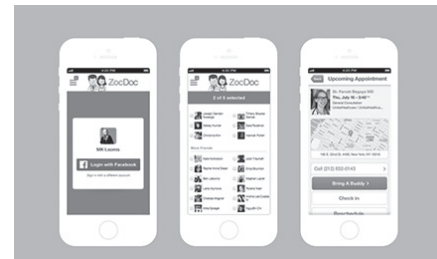
THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS (SVA) IN NEW YORK HAS CREATED a new master's program offering the first MFA degree in Design for Social Innovation (DSI). The program was founded to create a path for people who want to work at a strategic level within business, government and the social sector using design to innovate to help solve the major issues of our time.

Coming from 19 countries, students with diverse experience are learning to turn traditional design on its head. In the program, no longer are designers seen as outside experts or solely creators of artifacts; design is imagined as the ability to invent better realities, at a systems level, leading companies and communities to co-create their own futures.

Three of the first DSI graduates are launching their own businesses, and others are already working in the corporate world at creative agencies and NGOs. Whether their work deals with food, the built environment, health, education or poverty, they share a big ambition to make a lasting difference in the world.

Design has the potential to be the single integrating force we need to take on the challenges we face—systemically and sustainably. DSI at SVA is committed to proving that. 🗨️

Cheryl Heller is the founding chair of the first MFA program in Design for Social Innovation at the School of Visual Arts and the founder of Common-Wise. Learn more about the program at dsi.sva.edu and follow the latest on their blog. dsi.sva.edu/blog



Images courtesy of SVA



Ingenuity Isn't Expensive . . .

REIMAGINING NEW YORK CITY'S PROBATION CENTERS

As the former New York City Department of Design and Construction's chief change officer and founder of See Change NYC—a joint (Bloomberg) Mayoral initiative—Lonni Tanner has been waiting in waiting rooms for almost four years, studying food stamps offices and shelters, senior and probation centers. We're talking thousands of hours at hundreds of service facilities and the neighborhoods they touch: observing, interacting, listening. And then intervening—in some small but pivotal way that shakes up a place, changes behavior, makes waiting sane, pushes people forward. And then she waits some more. Intervenes. Waits. Intervenes—or not. At some point, even rooms have to live on their own.

I approached Lonni and asked her to share her "diary" about the challenges that come with making "change"—even the smallest transformations—in a City environment. Her personal journey—its ups and downs—has eventually led her to a City agency that takes to her "wrong" thinking: the NYC Department of Probation. Meet Lonni:

I am now a baker without an oven. Mayoral support and interest for my program has come and gone. With a budget the size of an ant, I make up a better title for myself and my program and use the Mayoral "stamp" to get in front of City agency officials. I look for partners. I count on my imagination to win them over, the backing of designers, the ability to generate donations to prove I can add value to whatever problems they're solving. Even with all that, it's slow going.

I keep at it: peddling solutions—not rehabs. Maybe I need a cart.

Eventually, someone has to bite. Right?

Name calling: I am the crazy one during introductions. *She wants to pay clients to play Maitre D' in the dining hall, concierge for the shelter? A sideways playground on walls at a food stamps center, is she crazy?* One staffer says, *Meet the woman who's like the guy who keeps trying to roll the rock up the hill. What's his name?* I hate the word crazy.

Before: the state of a juvenile probation center. Photo: Lonni Tanner



Finally, a taker: I hear through the grapevine that the Department of Probation—already in the midst of a sea change—has money that fell from the sky at the end of the fiscal year. It's use it or lose it. The goal: Revamp their 22 probation centers. Time to do it? Almost none. I want in.

Fear Is.

LONNI TANNER | EDITED BY JOHN BIELENBERG

A ticking clock makes me salivate. Is it because I want to be a hero?

The Department of Probation proves to be a rare partner in the world of City agencies. The commissioner, a maverick. We need more mavericks. Is a maverick just someone willing to fail?

I cut to the chase, bringing in Biber Architects to do the probation center revamping. Jim Biber does killer interiors, is a superb problem solver and an ace under pressure. \$5k is all I can pay him, but he relishes the challenge: Turn probation centers into un-probation centers.

Biber brings on James Victore for the graphic design piece—to create new posters, new language, a new typeface, new tone. Victore is smart as a whip. He agrees to work for peanuts too.

We go on a road trip to look at probation sites. Everything is broken. And I'm not just talking about the furniture. I leave one and throw up.

Even though things are humming along, this is usually when money gets pulled—without notice, without care for how far along a project is, or understanding of how much work designers have put in and manufacturers donated. Where the money goes, why it goes, is a mystery. But it happens, often.

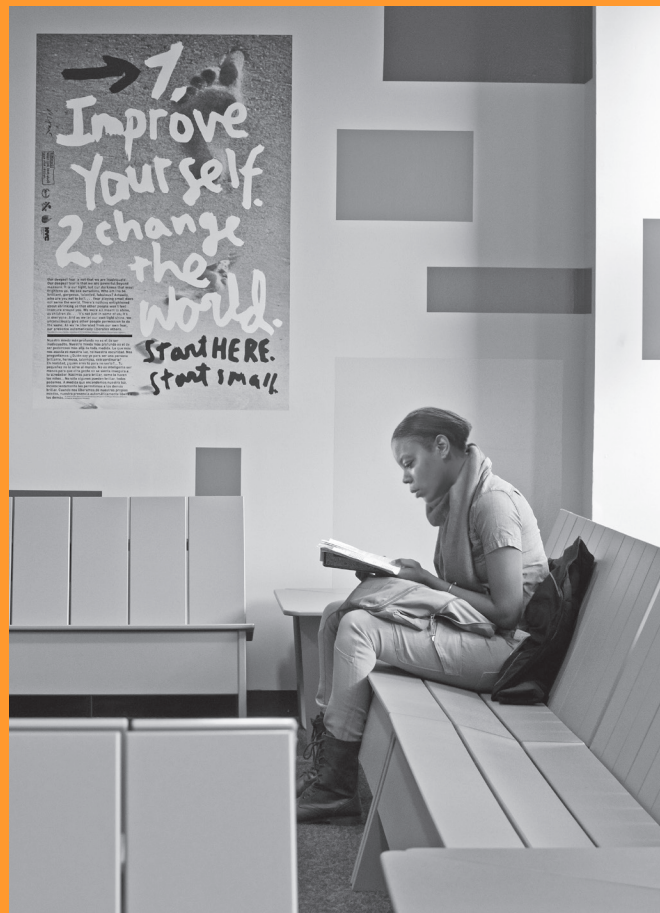
A new model for probation center waiting rooms features posters designed to serve as conversation pieces. © David Sundberg / Esto

Here we go again: The money starts to dwindle. Overhauling 22 probation centers becomes 12, then 6, then 1. Thankfully, Biber and Victore are designing a blueprint that can be replicated if, and when, the money comes back. (It does: Later we shake up 8 more sites.)

Baby steps.
Fuck that.
Start small,
don't think
small.

We present our plan to a roomful of probation staff. The neon sign *crazy* starts to glow on our foreheads. One of Victore's posters—a riff on *hang in there*, with a kitty hanging from a branch—gets killed off. I see the word *doubt* start to glow on staff foreheads. Make it go away.

Biber makes smart but simple moves to change-up the probation center environment. Every move is purposeful and inexpensive. He removes the bolted-down chairs to increase trust, adds carpet to soften, installs new ceiling tiles to brighten, replaces bulbs instead of fixtures. Chairs now accommodate wider seats, but he cuts down the number of seats to add breathing room. Pops of color—like the bright green outdoor benches—rid the room of the institutional feel. (Green is not a gang color? Wrong. They all are these days.)



Bulletin boards are meant to display important information and discourage taping notices to walls. Sign-in boards are hung on the wall rather than strewn across a desk. Victore's typeface creates order. His posters: stunning, original, unexpected. A new canvas starts to take shape. And it cost peanuts. Donations keep the cost down.

Below: Positive tone, access to resources.
© David Sundberg / Esto



It's friggin' hard to buy things at the last minute. City Procurement is a killer.

Ingenuity isn't expensive. Fear is.

A *Welcome* sign is now the first thing clients see when they walk into a probation center—instead of the word *NO*.

Above: Outdoor benches offer breathing room and replace rows of bolted chairs. © David Sundberg / Esto

One month in: The new environment hasn't created the expected havoc. Probation officers were leery of the lightweight chairs. *Now it will be easier to throw a chair through a window, throw it at us, throw it at another client.* And the benches: *We don't like people sitting across from or near each other. They'll stare each other down, start fighting.* They were right to be apprehensive, but it hasn't played out—yet. If it does, I'll take the hit. Can't it be a teaching moment? Maybe I'm naïve.

Is a "nice" space a right or a luxury?

The probation center feels so different post-rehab, I wonder if clients notice or care. Some staffers say there is less acting out; clients are calmer. Some clients say, *I just wanna get out of here.* Some come over (as I am a fixture) and say, *You do this?* Yup. *Thank you.*

What does success look like?

When budgets are tight, where do you invest: the places where people have to be, want to be, need to be? In what do you invest?

Where does technology fit in?

Though the waiting room has changed, the culture isn't changing at the same speed. The staff needs time to adjust. Not only to the room.

Fuck. Clients are sleeping. Do something.

I start handing out kids' books to dads, poems by ex-cons. I walk around with baskets of bananas and bottled water. Some brush me off. Some want to talk. They want jobs working with their hands. I pretend their stories don't bother me. The staff tell me not to believe everything I hear.

Some call the waiting room *Romper Room* because of the bright colors. Some say it looks like a daycare center. In visits to hundreds of waiting rooms, I see a mishmash of old furniture, a barrage of notices. *Dilapidated* and *dreary*. You like that better?

Three months in: no graffiti—yet (but gum hides under the benches). The shock of bright green brings me back to life. I think of my friend's backyard in Seattle. A living room. What I wish the back offices looked like.

Cafe atmosphere reduces tension at a model juvenile probation center. © Albert Vecerka / Esto

The Victore posters: I ask a client to read the Langston Hughes poem. *What do you think it means? Why do you care?* he asks. The guys around him laugh. A client comes over with an answer. Who knows, maybe he pities me. Conversation pieces, that's what the posters are for.

More snoring. Wake-up, damn it.

Stale bread: Since opening, after six months the info on the bulletin boards hasn't changed. Why?



Note to self: Can we hand over TV programming in probation centers to National Geographic or Animal Planet? Maybe Sundance: Movies about overcoming obstacles. Can clients run the show? After all, they're the ones who have to watch while they wait. People forget: TV is a place.

I see a mom, her baby and little girl sprawled on the green benches. The girl is coloring while probation officers shout names and the security guard barks orders. Will this day stick in her memory?

Clever graphic designer Paul Sahre repeats the word *well* 50 times in a poster that hangs at one of the newly rehabbed juvenile probation centers (by Biber Architects). It means, *All's well that ends well*. Is it? Does it? For who?

I head to the lobby—again. Dismal, me and the exit. God, it's ugly. But that's another project. I walk out into the cold. ☹️

Applause: Biber Architects, James Victore Design, Carin Goldberg Design, David Weeks Studio, The Office of Paul Sahre, Jon Burgerman, The Painter's Union, DC9, FLOR, ESTO, Albert Vecerka, David Sundberg, Dave Johnson, Lutron, Armstrong Flooring, NEW, Kamco, Rubenstein Technology Group, The Center for Economic Opportunity, The Young Men's Initiative, and NYC's Departments of Probation, Design and Construction, and City-wide Administrative Services.

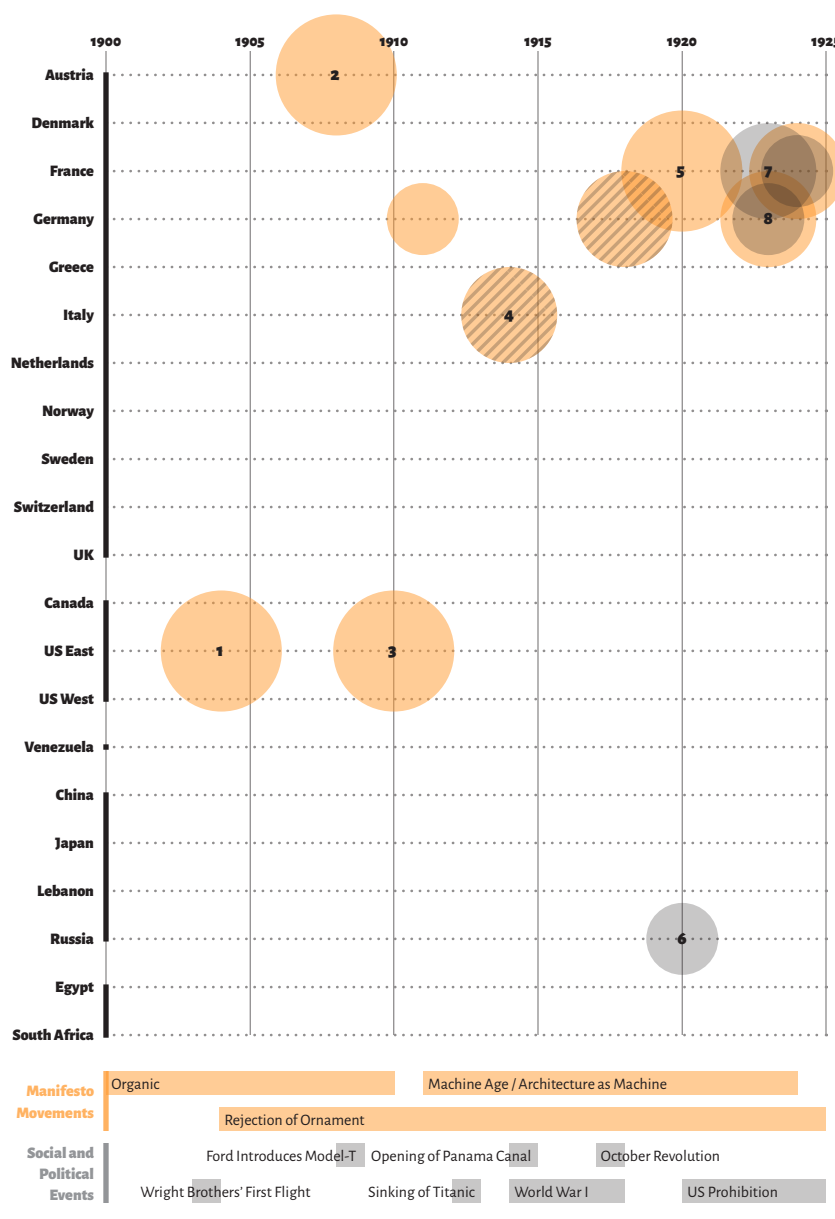
Lonni Tanner is a shaker-upper. Before joining the City, Lonni was an imaginator for 11 years at the Robin Hood Foundation. She was also on the launch team of City Year. Among her awards: a Lyndhurst Prize and Loeb Fellowship. Secretly, Lonni hopes this article persuades Seattle to steal her away from NYC. Follow her on Twitter at @LonniTanner. seechangenyc.org

What **John Bielenberg** does best is help people find the courage and the sense of humor to consider "wrong" ways of accelerating positive change in the world. In 2011, John collaborated with Alex and Ana Bogusky and Rob Schuham to form COMMON, which supports those designing a new era of socially minded enterprise. Most recently, John has partnered with long-time collaborator Greg Galle to launch a new firm called FUTURE that unlocks ingenuity to solve our greatest challenges.

Mapping the Modern Manifesto

110 YEARS OF
ARCHITECTURAL
DECLARATIONS

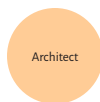
ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



110 manifestos are represented above, with a few highlights:

Graphic Key

Profession of author(s)
Size denotes influence and popularity



1 The Art and Craft of the Machine

Frank Lloyd Wright
... the machine was the great forerunner of democracy.

2 Ornament and Crime

Adolf Loos
The evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament from utilitarian objects.

3 Organic Architecture

Frank Lloyd Wright
In Organic Architecture then, it is quite impossible to consider the building as one thing, its furnishings another and its setting and environment still another.

4 Futurist Architecture

Antonio Sant'Elia & Filippo Tommaso Marinetti
What is called modern architecture is a stupid mixture of the most varied stylistic elements used to mask the modern skeleton.

5 Towards a New Architecture

Le Corbusier
The Engineer's Aesthetic and Architecture are two things that march together...

6 Basic Principles of Constructivism

Naum Gabo & Antoine Pevsner
... space can only be modeled from within outward in its depth, not from without inward through its volume.

7 Manifesto V

De Stijl
Art and life can no longer be separated.

8 Working Theses

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
The maximum effect with the minimum expenditure of means.

9 Principles of Bauhaus Production

Walter Gropius
Modern man, who no longer dresses in historical garments but wears modern clothes, also needs a modern home

appropriate to him and his time, equipped with all the modern devices of daily use.

10 La Sarraz Declaration

CIAM
Architecture must be set free from the sterilizing grip of the academies that are concerned with preserving the formulas of the past.

11 Ideological Superstructure

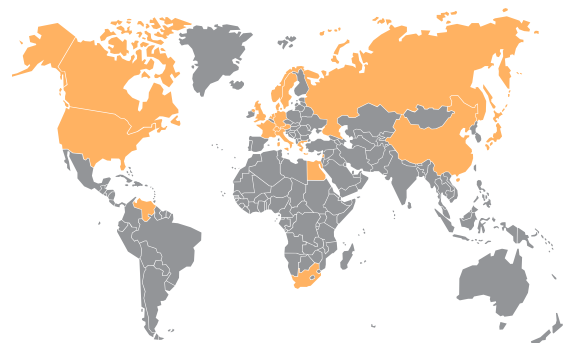
El Lissitzky
War has been declared on the aesthetic of chaos.

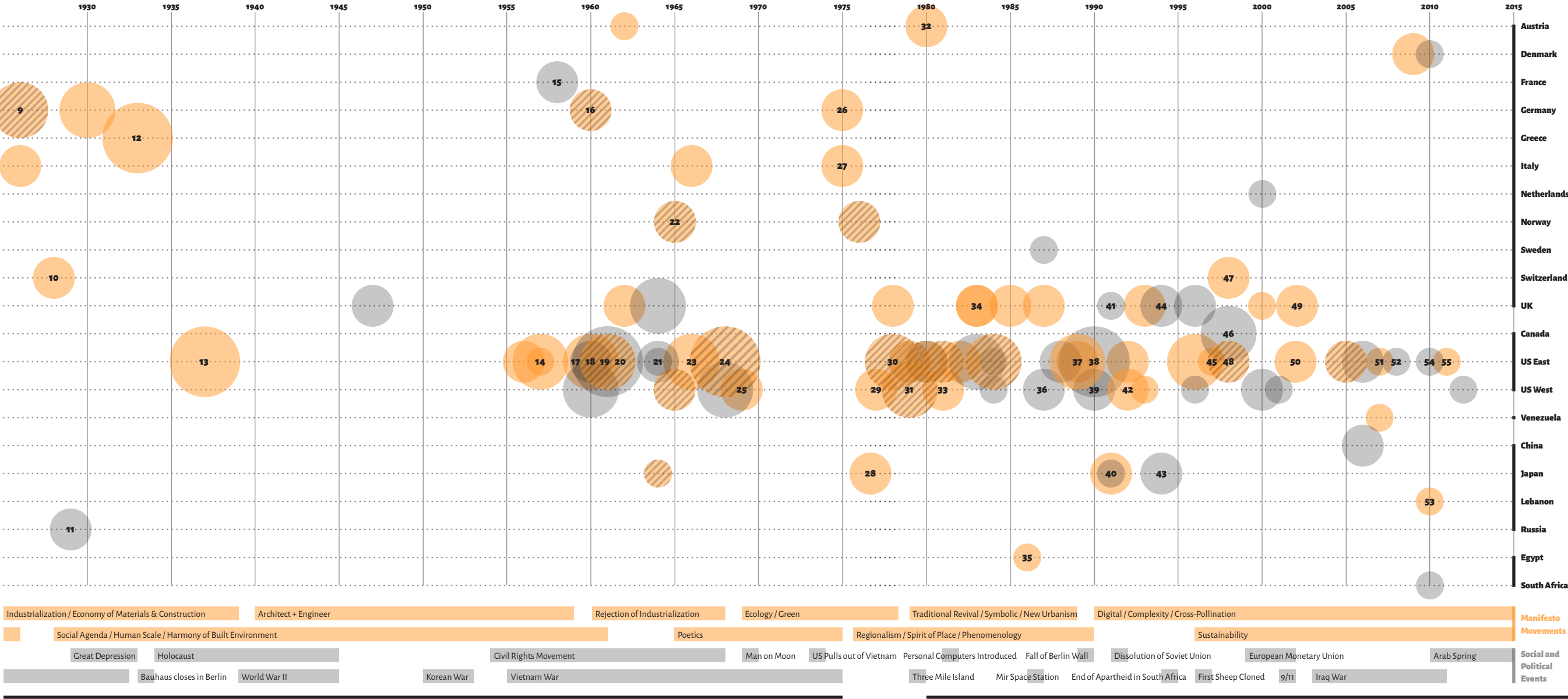
12 Charter of Athens: Tenets

CIAM
The city no longer serves its function, which is to shelter human beings and shelter them well.

13 Manifesto Source Unknown

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
Less is more.
(Above date signifies Mies moving to US.)





14 The Seven Crutches of Modern Architecture
Philip Johnson
They say a building is good architecture if it works. Of course, this is poppy-cock.

15 The Poetics of Space
Gaston Bachelard
If I were asked to name the chief benefit of the house, I should say: the house shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace.

16 Towards a New Architecture
Reinhard Gieselmann & Oswald Mathias Ungers
If we pursue the methods of technological, functional "architecture" the result will be uniformity.

17 Order Is
Louis I. Kahn
Order does not imply beauty.

18 International Manifesto
Situationists
Architecture must advance by taking as its subject exciting situations rather than exciting forms.

19 The Architect as World Planner
R. Buckminster Fuller
I propose that the architectural departments of all the universities around the world be encouraged to invest the next ten years in a continuing problem of how to make the total world's resources serve 100% of humanity through competent design.

20 The Death and Life of Great American Cities
Jane Jacobs
... there must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street ...

21 Architecture Without Architects
Bernard Rudofsky
There is much to learn from architecture before it became an expert's art.

22 Intentions in Architecture
Christian Norberg-Schulz
So far modern architecture has had the character of a "belief" rather than a worked-out method based on a clear analysis of function, sociological, and cultural problems ...

23 Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture
Robert Venturi
I am for messy vitality over obvious unity.

24 Operating Manual for the Spaceship Earth
R. Buckminster Fuller
Take the initiative. Go to work, and above all co-operate and don't hold back on one another or try to gain at the expense of another. Any success in such lopsidedness will be increasingly short-lived. These are

the synergetic rules that evolution is employing and trying to make clear to us.

25 Arcology: The City in the Image of Man
Paolo Soleri
... land conservation will succeed only if and when man creates beautiful cities wherein he will feel it a privilege to be, live, and work.

26 Urban Space
Rob Krier
We have lost sight of the traditional understanding of urban space.

27 Statement
Piano + Rogers
The aim of technology is to satisfy the needs of all levels of society.

28 Metabolism in Architecture
Kisho Kurokawa
... human society must be regarded as one part of a continuous natural entity that includes all animals and plants.

29 Body, Memory and Architecture
Kent C. Bloomer & Charles W. Moore
We will care increasingly for our buildings if there is some meaningful order in them.

30 Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan
Rem Koolhaas
The fatal weakness of manifestos is their inherent lack of evidence.

31 The Timeless Way of Building
Christopher Alexander
... every place is given its character by certain patterns of events that keep happening there.

32 Architecture Must Blaze
Coop Himmelblau
You can judge just how bad the 70s were when you look at its super tense architecture.

33 The Power of Limits
Gyorgy Doczi
... limitations are not just restrictive, but they also are creative.

34 The Eighty-Nine Degrees
Zaha Hadid
We can no longer fulfil our obligations as architects if we carry on as cake decorators.

35 Natural Energy and Vernacular Architecture
Hassan Fathy
Successful solutions to the problems of climate did not result from deliberate scientific reasoning. They grew out of countless experiments and accidents and the experience of generations of builders who continued to use what worked and rejected what did not.

36 For an Architecture of Reality
Michael Benedikt
A building with presence is not apologetic, but asserts itself as architecture, having a right to be there, to bump off a few trees, to take up its position as a new entity in the physical world.

37 Traditional Neighbourhood Development Ordinance
Duany + Plater-Zyberk
Until the advent of postwar zoning ordinances, traditional neighbourhoods were commonplace in the United States. Many survive as examples of communities which continue to be practical and desirable today.

38 Rappel à l'Ordre, The Case for the Tectonic
Kenneth Frampton
... the term [tectonic] not only indicates a structural and material probity but also a poetics of construction.

39 A Black Box, The Secret Profession of Architecture
Reyner Banham
[The tribe of architecture] could permit itself to be opened up to the understandings of the profane and the vulgar, at the risk of destroying itself as an art in the process. Or it could close ranks and continue as a conspiracy of secrecy, immune from

scrutiny, but perpetually open to the suspicion, among the general public, that there may be nothing at all inside the black box except a mystery for its own sake.

40 Beyond Horizons in Architecture
Tadao Ando
Human life is not intended to oppose nature and endeavor to control it, but rather to draw nature into an intimate association in order to find union with it.

41 Green Architecture
Brenda & Robert Vale
A building should be designed so as to minimize the use of new resources and, at the end of its useful life, to form the resources for other architecture...

42 A Report from the USA
Thom Mayne
It is necessary for architecture to be based in the present and to aspire to that presence.

43 Wabi-Sabi
Leonard Koren
... a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete.

44 The Role of the Engineer
Peter Rice
I would distinguish the difference between the engineer and the architect by saying the architect's response is primarily creative, whereas the engineer's is essentially inventive ...

45 Thoughts on the Everyday
Deborah Berke
We exist in a culture where heroes have been replaced by celebrities, and fifteen minutes of fame are valued over a lifetime of patient work.

46 An Incomplete Manifesto for Growth
Bruce Mau
Don't enter awards competitions. Just don't. It's not good for you.

47 Thinking Architecture
Peter Zumthor
The building, city, house, or street seems consciously placed. It generates a place. Where it stands, there is a back and a front, there is a left and a right, there is closeness and distance, an inside and outside, there are forms that focus and condense or modify the landscape. The result is an environment.

48 The Rural Studio
Samuel Mockbee
The professional challenge, whether one is an architect in the rural American South or elsewhere in the world, is how to avoid being so stunned by the power of modern technology and economic affluence that one does not lose sight of the fact that people and place matter.

49 Informal
Cecil Balmond
The informal is opportunistic, an approach to design that seizes a local moment and makes something of it. Ignoring preconception or formal layering and repetitive rhythm, the informal keeps one guessing.

50 Versioning
SHoP
[Versioning] allows architects to think or practise across multiple disciplines, freely borrowing tactics from film, food, finance, fashion, economics and politics for use in design, or reversing the model and using architectural theory to participate in other problem-solving fields.

51 Manifesto #31
Joshua Prince-Ramus
The media sells simple, catchy ideas; it reduces teams to individuals and their collaborative work to genius sketches. The proliferation of this false notion of "starchitecture" diminishes the real teamwork that drives celebrated architecture.

52 Manifesto #42
Paola Antonelli
I want to teach people to observe, enjoy, and have opinions about things, from shoes to buildings to interfaces, and voice them. I want people to be able to tell real design from expensive decorative art you can sit on.

53 Anti-Manifesto
Bernard Khoury
By perpetuating universal recipes, architects have become passive actors of a falsified history and a dictated future.

54 With Love
ATOPIA
Architects and designers have spent too long in the service of powerful elites making very good lives even better.

55 The Mythic Modern
Travis Price
Our quest is to evoke a mythically driven Modernism: to create forms that are driven by a city's collective unconscious. ...

AT ITS ROOTS, THE MANIFESTO IS A PUBLIC DECLARATION of intent presented plainly so that it can be easily understood. It's a fascinating document because it encourages the author to state their convictions (past, present and future) in a solitary statement. Equally important is that the author projects this declaration to the world as a strategy for practice—it is a roadmap, publicly announced. In its advanced forms, the manifesto becomes a call to change, often rallying against common conventions, criticizing earlier movements and, if effective, proposing an alternative trajectory. Throughout history, the infectious manifestos have enrolled advocates, sparked further manifestos and rallied the like-minded into tribe-like cultures. Traditionally, the manifesto addressed political or artistic issues, with architecture, landscape architecture, industrial design and graphic design as subcategories. Today, the manifesto can apply to any subject worthy of an opinion.

This study maps 110 design manifestos from 21 countries written over the last 110 years, and in order to create a manageable collection of data, several guidelines were used in the selection process. These manifestos focus specifically on architecture and are limited to documents available in English. Also, as a bar to entry, and to cope with the transient nature of Internet data, the manifestos represented also exist in physical form. As the design world proceeds further into theoretical pursuits, the manifesto can challenge a wider spectrum of ideas. It can also more easily fall victim to hyperbole, rhetoric or theater for its own sake. Admittedly, this study favors down-to-earth, practical manifestos that often relate directly to the nature of building, occasionally at the expense of excluding the academic or theoretical.

Graphically mapping this data allows for a different (and hopefully insightful) lens through which to view the nature of the architectural manifesto, distinguishing clusters and identifying outliers. There are patterns to recognize, diamonds in the rough to discover and notable world events to correlate.

With any luck, this study illustrates the significant impact the architectural manifesto has had on civilization and the built environment; it teaches us that the principles and conventions we take for granted in our present time were hard-earned victories, the outcome of social struggles fought throughout history by determined architects and designers. These manifestos propose that it is important for us to declare our beliefs in design and pledge them to the community. And they advocate for a continued effort of exploration and diversity, adding to the plurality of ideas and actions. 🗨️

Andrew van Leeuwen is lead architect and partner at BUILD llc, whose design manifesto can be found at buildllc.com/manifesto. He holds a Master of Architecture degree from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Washington State University. He directs the popular BUILDblog (blog.buildllc.com) and writes an interview series for ARCADE.

Design assistance by **Thomas Eykemans**.

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QUOTE REFERENCES

QUOTE #	REFERENCE #
1	1
2–12	2
13	no reference
14	3
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16–19	2
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53–55	18



25 Bikes, 25 Miles

A SOLO BICYCLIST JOINS AN L.A. GROUP RIDE

SEBASTIAN JONES

LOS ANGELES SHOULD BE AN IDEAL PLACE TO RIDE A BIKE. IT'S flat, it rarely rains and almost everything is paved. The problem is, when I get on my bike, it's as if I become invisible. Even if I wear so much reflective clothing that I resemble a lightcycle from *Tron*, I'm still not as interesting as an iPhone, a lap dog or any number of other things that regularly distract LA drivers.

Increasingly, there are official efforts to make LA a more bike-friendly city. Near my home is a brand new designated bike lane. Setting aside the fact that it's only two blocks long and nearly impossible to get to, this is a "win" for bicyclists and a definite step in the right direction. There are also more and more "sharrows"—streets marked with bike symbols to remind drivers that bicyclists are permitted to use the full lane; the intention is good, but honestly, I've only noticed the signs when I'm on my bike. I've never noticed them when I'm in my car, fiddling with my iPhone.

Fortunately, some brilliant social innovators have been busy increasing bicycle visibility using a classic theme: strength in numbers. Critical Mass and other organizations regularly host "group rides"—informal gatherings of bicyclists, ranging in size from a half dozen to over four thousand, taking over the streets of LA in grassroots pelotons. Not only do they command attention with their sheer numbers, they also tend to be populated with happy, smiling, laughing people. Tiring of my gritted-teeth solo rides, I decide to join them.

I find a number of excellent sites listing group rides. Midnight Ridazz, an organization that's been around for at least a dozen years, offers a calendar of upcoming rides. Hosts offer brief descriptions. Occasionally, there are restrictions like "a hustle" (fast-paced) or "fixies only," but most rides make a point of inviting everybody and anybody.

After a quick survey, I boil the choices down to two: "PoPPycoCK" and "The Passage." Words that randomly combine upper and lower-case letters make me feel old, so I go with "The Passage," short for "The Passage of a Few People Through a Rather Brief Moment in Time" (more details at thepassageride.com).

The directions are simple: Meet at California Donuts #21 near the corner of 3rd and Vermont at 9:00 P.M. I fill my backpack with water and power bars and pedal off to the neighborhood Google Maps calls "Little Bangladesh."

By 8:45 there are roughly 25 cyclists gathered, an incredibly diverse group, with riders ages 18 to 67. The only common denominator is that they're all friendly. As we get close to departure, most people stretch and check equipment. One guy eats two crullers, drinks a beer, burps, then lights a cigarette. I make a mental note, "If this is a race, I can take this guy."

9:00 P.M. arrives. Someone yells "rolling" and we're off. Where? Only our leader knows. We're asked to keep our eyes open and enjoy the ride. Someone reaches into their bag and turns on music—smooth, down-tempo ska.

The group ebbs and flows. It clusters at red lights, and then, when it gets moving, can stretch out over blocks and blocks. Because of our size, we earn a respect and visibility that could never be achieved on a solo ride. We own entire lanes on busy streets. People yield to us. Pedestrians shout encouragement. We're not invisible! We're a stealthy parade with the soundtrack of squeaking brakes and laughter. Of course, there's the occasional honk and yell from a disgruntled driver—*always* an SUV. What's up with that? Norma, a young woman on a fixie, tells the SUV driver to suck her dick. Problem solved.

This particular ride, "Reading, Riting, Rithmatic," has an end-of-school theme and takes us on a looping tour west toward UCLA, visiting all types of schools along the way. We take a combination of backstreets and major arterials. When we get to Beverly Hills, we ride through a complicated and beautiful network of alleys. Alleys! I had no idea there were this many alleys in BH! Apparently, when cool/interesting routes are discovered, other leaders "remix" them into future rides.

Eventually we end up at the UCLA campus where we ride single file through parking garages, around fountains and ultimately to a large quad with an excellent view. We dismount and take 10. That dude who was

smoking earlier? He's ridiculously fast. I can't keep up with him. And he's smoking again.

Break is over. We wrap up conversations and start heading east, back toward where we began. We pass some students:

Student: "What ride is this?"

Me: "Passage Ride. You can find it online."

Student: "See you next week!"

It's obvious how this movement has grown over the years. Hearts and minds, hearts and minds.

The ride back takes us through posh areas of Bel Air and Beverly Hills, slightly grittier parts of East Hollywood and Koreatown. Cigarette guy passes me *while* smoking. Eventually we make it back to California Donut #21. It's 1:00 A.M., we've ridden 25 miles. I have the best donut of my life and say my goodbyes. I start on my short ride home and instantly realize that I am, once again, a solo rider, invisible and defensive. I no longer have the luxury of 24 other cyclists making me impossible to ignore. At least not until next Wednesday at 9:00. 🍩

Sebastian Jones was born and raised in Seattle. For the past 25 years, he's been living in Los Angeles writing sitcoms, riding bikes and funny third thing.

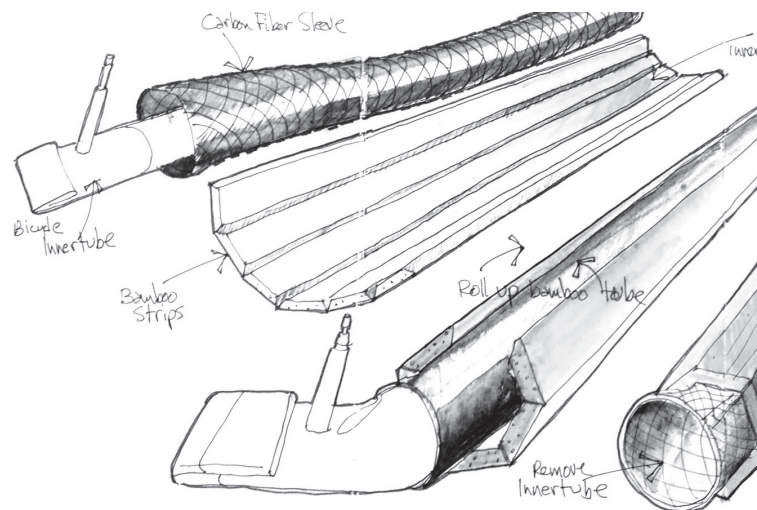
Wanted for Hire

BAMBOO BICYCLE BUILDERS
IN HALE COUNTY, ALABAMA

BRIAN BORAM

BACK IN 2007 WHEN HERO LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO ASSIST poor residents in Hale County purchase water meters, it was on the cusp of changing the way a community comes together to create positive change. As stated on their website, HERO (Hale Empowerment and Revitalization Organization) “works as a catalyst for community development in the Alabama Black Belt to end rural poverty.” To this end, helping residents gain the most basic necessities, such as access to public water supplies, was a first step. Next came the idea to bring the community together through food; soon Pie Lab opened, a pie shop located in Greensboro, Alabama, (the heart of Hale County) that was designed to inspire community engagement. After a hearty helping of pie, another fitting idea took root—promoting a culture of bike riding. Given the health benefits of cycling, the ease of transportation it provides and the possibility it offered to support a small bicycle industry in Hale County, creating a project with bikes became a favorable concept.

Working with HERO, Project M instigated the water meter campaign and Pie Lab as an outcome of its yearly, two-week immersive design program in Greensboro. With projects around the world, Project M is designed to encourage young creative professionals to use their skills for good. The M’ers were brainstorming with HERO about more ingenious ways to engage the community when the idea to focus on bicycles emerged. During one session, Project M’s founder, John Bielenberg, led students to ask: “How can we catch and ride the fixie wave to get more people on bikes for everyday transportation?” Inspired by HERO’s mission to provide economic development, the design team sought to make bikes relevant to Hale County through job creation, the use of a local renewable resource, such as bamboo, and communicating the benefits of bike riding to the community. HERObike, an offshoot of HERO’s social and economic development initiatives, was born.



Above photo and sketch: © Lance Rake, Industrial Design, University of Kansas

In the South, bamboo grows easily and quickly. To take advantage of this resource as a manufacturing material, the team needed expertise. They enlisted the University of Kansas’s Lance Rake from the school’s industrial design department. Lance’s skill in combining natural commodities like bamboo with durable fabrication processes, coupled with his interest in bringing high design to craft-based industries, made him a natural fit as a collaborator. Utilizing clever fabrication techniques, such as combining carbon fiber and bamboo into hexagonal tubes, the group was able to design a durable yet beautiful bike. After a year of experimentation and prototyping, in 2014 the team launched HERObike’s first model, The Semester. With a recent successful Kickstarter campaign, HERObike hopes to hire employees as they begin to market the new bike. Still in startup mode, they are focused on stocking up tools, building out the shop, located in Greensboro, and teaching workshops on building the bamboo bikes.

Today in Greensboro, Pam Dorr, the executive director of HERO, sees how design bridges social and economic divides: “Partnering with design programs helps bring new perspective and talent, creating new opportunities for rural areas. Universities can bring technology and expertise. Working together we can support change in communities that need it most.”

Brian Boram is a designer, a cyclist and the editor of this issue’s feature.

Opening Minds and Apertures

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

TRINA GADSDEN



Photos: Kate Porter, Youth in Focus Program Director

EVERY DAY THE YOUTH THAT I HAVE THE HONOR OF SERVING come through our doors with an emotional “backpack” filled with some situation they want to escape. I witness as the camera lens becomes the magical tool that enables them to find relief from whatever problem haunts them.

Youth in Focus's mission is “to empower urban youth, through photography, to experience their world in new ways and make positive choices for their lives.” We teach at-risk youth how to turn negatives into positives through our youth development photography program. Our youth come from different situations: Bullied in school, now living under a freeway; a homecoming queen being abused at home, or a youth trying to grasp their sexual identity. Their stories begin to unfold through their images as they share pieces of themselves. And when I look at their pictures, I begin to understand and feel what they do.

Their smiles show that they feel safe and supported in our community, yet when I look closer at their work, I see the chains binding their trapped emotions, unable to be expressed, or their attempts to fit into an imperfect world. Or perhaps their work reveals the solitude of loneliness, as they hide behind a mirror, hoping no one sees what's really going on inside them. Every once in a while, a photo appears in which I see a glimpse of the direction that they want their lives to go: Down a clear path, into the woods, where the birds sing and the things that hold them down blow softly away in the cool breeze. I see their hopes for tomorrow. 🍂

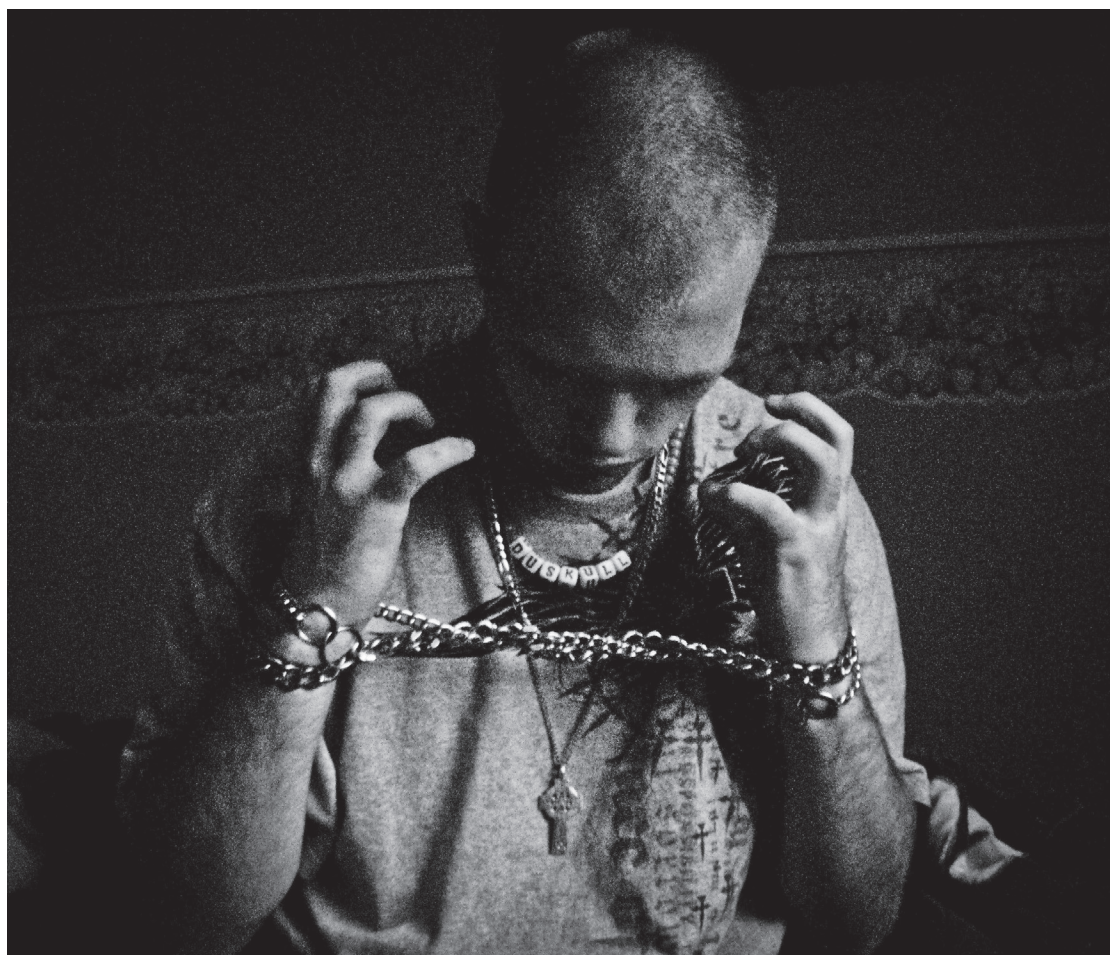


Christine, Jules (Julianna) Tomei

"My inspiration for the image came from a photo by Francesca Woodman that resonated with me. The photo is a homage to that photographer and how her work has inspired all of my work. This photo also represents identity and how we are all reflections of things we've admired."

Chains, JJ

JJ has been in Youth in Focus since 2010 and has taken every class he can except for last quarter; he got kicked out of school for fighting and had to drop out of Intermediate Black and White. He lives a good distance from Youth in Focus and takes a few buses and a train to get there but is dedicated to being part of the community. He feels that Youth in Focus makes him happy and helps him have an outlet to escape the stress in his life, while getting him out of the house.





Aevum, Chris Powell

"Through this image, I wanted to evoke a sense of vastness and infinitude. When taking the photo, I consciously placed the beginning of the bridge outside of the frame, allowing the viewer to wonder where it begins. The lines of the bridge converge at the center of the frame, seemingly continuing in perpetuity. This photograph's title is *Aevum*, a Latin word meaning 'eternity'."

Youth in Focus's mission is "to empower urban youth, through photography, to experience their world in new ways and make positive choices for their lives."

Youth in Focus's executive director, **Trina Gadsden**, is living her passion of serving and empowering at-risk youth through her love of photography and how it fosters connection.

For 20 years **Youth in Focus** has had the honor of putting cameras in the hands of almost 3,000 low income, at-risk youth. The organization's programs "place youth in a challenging environment surrounded by high quality, talented teachers and nurturing adult volunteer mentors, creating a strong community of support. Through photography, the students find their voice, identity and creativity, and gain new confidence in their worth and abilities." —youthinfoocus.org

Turning a Page in Cambodia

USING AN ARTS-BASED
CURRICULUM TO OFFER
NEW OPPORTUNITIES
FOR YOUTH

LAUREN IIDA

"In my village, the morning always comes. / It is bright and noisy . . ." From *In My Village*. "Morning," hand-cut paper, by Laruen Iida, 2014.

THE PEOPLE OF PRASOT VILLAGE HAVE HAD THE SAME WAY OF life for hundreds of years. Families turn the fields with hand-made wooden plows dragged behind water buffalo and cut each stalk of rice by hand. Despite their poverty, they take great pride in their close ties with nature and subsistence farming lifestyle.

There are just over 200 children enrolled at the Prasot village public school, where they learn basic Khmer subjects and some very rudimentary English language skills. The school's programs are extremely limited due to Cambodia's severe lack of public education funding. Because quality education is unavailable, most parents take their children out of school to help on the farm. Teens end up working long hours for minimal pay, often forced to relocate to the capital city of Phnom Penh or take a job in a garment factory where occupational hazards and risk of human trafficking are high.

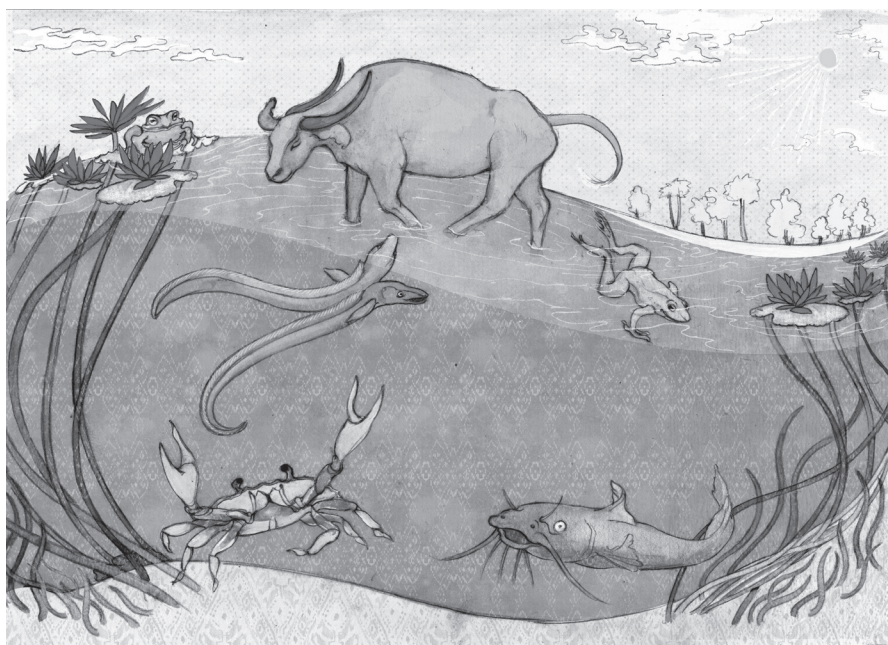
The ability to speak English in Cambodia many times means the difference between a lifetime of poverty and opportunities to prosper financially. Employees with English language skills are highly sought

after to work in the growing industries of tourism and foreign development, at non-profits and more. Starting salaries for English-speakers are often two-to three-times higher than for those who don't speak English.

Visiting my friends in Prasot village, they have often shared their goals for providing literacy education for their children in hopes of decreasing poverty for future generations. As I finished up my BFA at Cornish College of the Arts, I decided to start an organization that could teach English literacy in Prasot village through an innovative, arts-based curriculum. I founded The Antipodes Collective in June 2014 with a three-point mission: establish a children's library, teach ESL for young artists and publish quality, culturally relevant books to supplement their learning.

Right away the Prasot community offered the second floor of a village home to house the children's library. Through the generosity of Seattle families, we have gathered 1,000 gently used children's books to fill it. This library is the first of its kind in the area and will be free and available for use by all.

I founded The Antipodes Collective in June 2014 with a three-point mission: establish a children's library, teach ESL for young artists and publish quality, culturally relevant books to supplement their learning.



"Water buffalo wade in the cool mud. / The water twinkles in the morning and is still at night. / In my village, there is a pond where the children fish." From *In My Village*. "Pond," gouache, by Heather Elder, 2014.



Top: Fourteen-year-old Davit tends his water buffalo after class. Above: Friends style each others' hair in a village home. Photos: Lauren Iida

In January 2015, classes will commence in the village specifically focused on English language literacy, supplemented daily by fine arts projects. Weekly themes will connect the literacy classes, taught by an ESL teacher, with the visual art projects in the classes I teach. The basics of the language will be put into practice through creative kinesthetic learning, forming an experiential learning environment.

Because the Khmer Rouge regime of the 1970s devastated Cambodia's artistic and literary community, very few children's books are available which have content relevant to rural Cambodian life. Our first publication, *In My Village*, is a collaboration between nine Cornish-affiliated artists illustrating in various mediums, including woodblock printing, cut paper, paint and match smoke. I wrote the book with Cornish professor and writing consultant, Carolyn R. Hall, and it will be published later this year. The Antipodes Collective continues our work to create and make available books for Cambodian children that reflect their own culture through relevant storytelling and creative learning.

The Antipodes Collective is the culmination of my love for Cambodia, my desire to contribute positively to the lives and prosperity of the people of Prasot village and my goal to collaborate with artists from around the world to create effective, quality arts-based curricula and learning materials. 🗨️

Lauren Iida is a Seattle working artist, a recent graduate of Cornish College of the Arts and the director and founder of The Antipodes Collective. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of *In My Village*, sponsoring a student, donating books or becoming a volunteer, please contact Lauren at contactiida@gmail.com or visit theantipodescollective.org.

Old Bones Made New

REBUILDING COMMUNITY LANDMARKS
ALONG THE RUST BELT

ERIN LANGNER

THE RUST BELT TOWN OF BRADDOCK, PENNSYLVANIA, HAS AN unusual collection of structures within its modest cluster of a downtown. At the oldest end of the spectrum are buildings that witnessed the rise of the borough's population to over 20,000 citizens during the American steel industry's peak in the 1920s. Remnants of the town's once thriving economy include the twisting compound of the Edgar Thomson Works, Andrew Carnegie's first American steel mill, residing at the town's heart since 1872; the tiny, white building that houses Bell's Market, a butcher shop in operation since the 1890s; and the 1889 Braddock Carnegie Library, the first of over 1,500 libraries built by the tycoon and philanthropist.

Downtown Braddock's other set of buildings accommodate organizations that emerged under the leadership of Mayor John Fetterman in the wake of the severe economic decline that has been decimating the town since the 1970s, leaving it home to fewer than 2,500 today. These include a community center occupying the shell of a former Presbyterian church, a set of razed lots that were turned into beds for an urban farm and a convent that was converted into a hostel. Absent

are the things most would expect to find in even America's smallest towns: local shops, a grocery store, a full-service restaurant.

In fact, a restaurant is the next initiative in the works. Overseen by Fetterman in partnership with nationally recognized chef Kevin Sousa, Superior Motors is slated to open in 2015 inside a former car dealership of the same name. There is no question that Braddock could benefit economically from a restaurant, but what the town really needs are places that envision a future for a community with both a challenged present and a deeply rooted past. Superior Motors ambitiously aims to address this need by extending itself well beyond the confines of a standard fine-dining establishment. For one, it will offer food at a significant discount to residents and provide culinary training and jobs for local youth. And nestled among Braddock's other young organizations, it will utilize produce from the nearby farm and house visitors assisting with the restaurant's development at the hostel. Promising a place representative of Braddock's past, present and future, Sousa articulates, "I don't mean that every plate is going to be the kind of food that steelworkers ate when they worked here.



What the town really needs are places that envision a future for a community with both a challenged present and a deeply rooted past.

When I say ‘representative,’ I mean the food is going to be prepared by people from here, who are giving things back to Braddock . . . it’s a restaurant that can only exist here.” He concedes that creating a restaurant for a community in desperate need of one—among so many other things—is far from straightforward. While Superior Motors should slide seamlessly into the newer side of Braddock, it remains to be seen whether it can connect with the old Braddock that is still so present in both the buildings and the memories of longtime residents.

Sousa maintains that Superior Motors was conceived without referencing any particular model, but its multifaceted approach has a 125-year-old predecessor that sits just a few blocks away. Behind the 1888 building’s deceptively traditional stone façade, the Braddock Carnegie Library once contained a bathhouse, an unusual feature provided for workers coming from the mill to shower. Other amenities added in 1893—a music hall, swimming pool, sauna and barbershop, among others—further established the library as an uncommonly diverse resource. While these personal touches make the building seem tailored for Braddock, its early relationship with the community was complicated by the coupling of its opening with unwelcome changes at the Edgar Thomson Works, including a move to 12-hour workdays and the end of its union.

Despite the questions of morality embedded in its genesis, the library ultimately evolved into a place owned by Braddock citizens, in the most literal sense, when a self-organized group rescued the decaying building from demolition in 1974. In more recent years, the library has returned to its previous, more dynamic definition of use, though in more contemporary forms. Among other updates, local artist collective Transformazium turned the sauna into a screen-printing stu-

dio that attracts dozens of local participants every week, meeting practical needs for birthday invitations and greeting cards in a town devoid of a business district. Transformazium’s Dana Bishop-Root explains, “Screen printing is a powerful tool because it is an inexpensive process, it is easy to learn and it is a transferable skill . . . The library was an obvious host site for the shop because of its purpose as a communication source and its history as a multi-use space.”

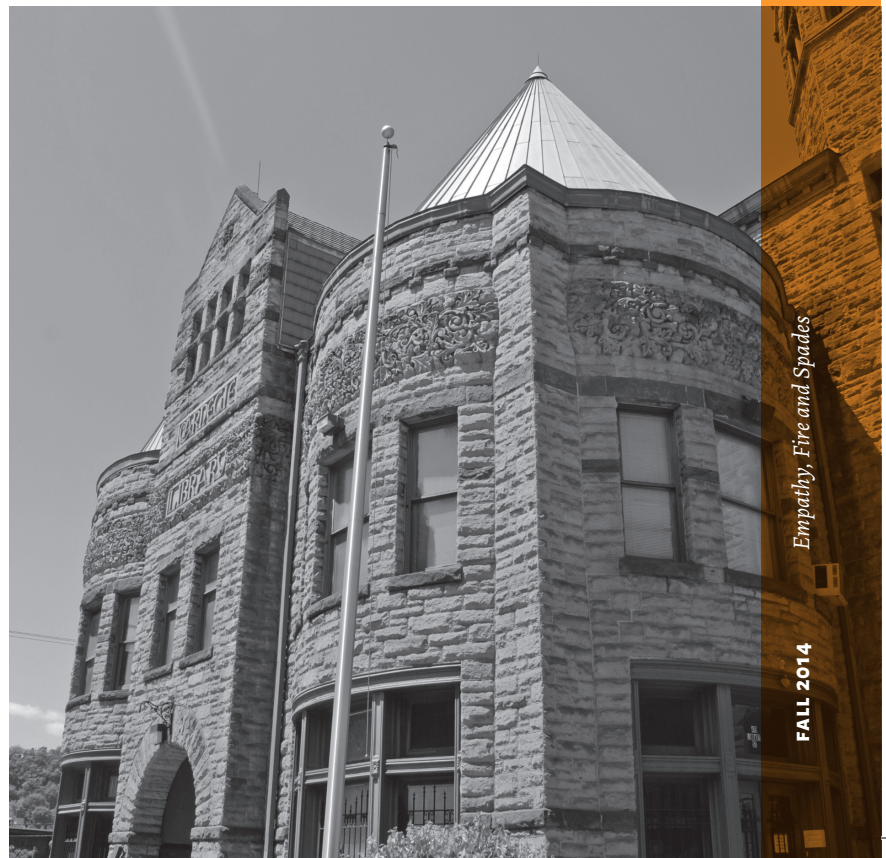
While the print studio is only one addition to a building that has shifted its shape for over a century, it reflects the library’s overall success at staying relevant to a town on the brink by remixing its history into a place that resonates in the present. Ideally, Superior Motors will find similar success integrating local resources into a space that speaks to both old and new Braddock. Then, it may also become a model worth revisiting 100 years from now. 🗨️

Erin Langner is an arts writer and museum professional. She has written for the *New American Paintings* blog and *The Stranger*. She is also at work on her first collection of essays.

The Braddock Carnegie Library once contained a bathhouse, an unusual feature provided for workers coming from the mill to shower.

Left
Edgar Thomson Steel Works, Braddock, PA. Image courtesy of Superior Motors/ Kevin Sousa

Right
“The Carnegie Library in Braddock, PA.” Photo by flickr user Kristen Taylor, available under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 License



A Place for Grace

THE HUMANITY IN HOUSING FIRST

RUMI TAKAHASHI



Designed by Weinstein A+U, Nyer Urness House draws on single room occupancy and co-housing typologies, including efficient sleeping quarters with emphasis on communal living. The building's cladding, heating and plumbing systems were selected for durability, lowest operational costs and minimal maintenance. Photo: Lara Swimmer

It's 3:00 a.m. on a January night as I walk Seattle's Shilshole Marina. It is quiet. All I hear are distant foghorns and barking sea lions. I am seeking, and hoping not to find, people sleeping outside. I am one of hundreds of volunteers attempting to quantify the homelessness epidemic in Seattle and the Northwest. According to the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, this year's One Night Count numbers are up from 2013: 3,123 people were found sleeping outside, a 14% increase in King County.

SEATTLE'S POLITE SOCIETY, WHEN CONFRONTED WITH HOMElessness, will give their pocket change, buy a cup of coffee or a sandwich, write a check to a favorite charity and lament the homelessness epidemic. But what if homelessness could be eliminated through planning, compassion and thoughtful design? What would that be worth?

THE EVOLUTION OF HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

Homelessness reached a crisis level in the 1980s when the Federal Government de-invested in local communities by cutting budgets for housing and social services. In the 1990s, despite a healthier US economy and funding through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (1987), widespread homelessness persisted. The 2000s saw a broadening of the homeless demographic to include more families, veterans, LGBTQ community members and the mentally ill. Frustrated by the shortcomings of stopgap measures such as overnight shelter and barriers to entry represented by clean and sober housing, providers needed a model that could offer a pathway out of homelessness for their clients. Enter Housing First.

THE EMERGENCE OF HOUSING FIRST

Housing First recognizes that the root causes of homelessness (mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence and trauma) can only properly be confronted once a person has stable, supportive housing. Its core principles include providing housing without pre-conditions of sobriety or treatment, wrap-around supportive services, harm-reduction approaches to addiction while supporting residents' commitments to recovery, and legal tenant protections.

Because of early and ongoing successes, Housing First emerged as the gold standard for addressing chronic homelessness. New York City's Pathways to Housing, widely credited with Housing First's creation, has housed over 600 people with an 85% retention rate. The Chicago Housing for Health Partnership program was the subject of a four-year study that found that Housing First residents had 29%



Through the provision of shared spaces such as meeting rooms, lounges, a dining room, computer lab, a clinic and outdoor terraces, the architecture encourages impromptu and planned social interactions. Photo: Lara Swimmer

fewer hospitalizations and 24% fewer ER visits than individuals receiving standard care for homeless persons with chronic illnesses. Canada's At Home / Chez Soi study evaluated Housing First against more traditional housing for homeless people and found that every \$10 invested in Housing First services yielded an average savings of \$9.60 for high-need participants. These programs demonstrate that housing a person in Housing First utilizes a fraction of the services the same person living on the streets would need. People in stable, supportive housing are less likely to require emergency services or incarceration, thereby lowering costs for taxpayers.

However, in order to be successful, Housing First requires long-term investments in residents and providers. Critics argue the commitment has such a long future trajectory that its sustainability cannot be assured, particularly when considering the unpredictability of public opinion. Coupled with constant pressure on providers to stretch scarce resources, the argument for Housing First can be a difficult one to make.

SO WHY BOTHER CREATING HOUSING FIRST BUILDINGS?

Some may consider it a fool's errand to suggest greater resources be spent creating Housing First buildings. But it is not a giant leap in logic to grasp that spending more initially for high-quality, durable materials and systems pays long-term dividends through lower operations, maintenance and repair costs. It also allows providers to focus on stabilizing their tenants, rather than calling maintenance. If you could extend Housing First's savings through high-quality design and construction, why wouldn't you? Beyond the quantifiable benefits, thoughtful, rational and efficient design contributes to a person's sense of well-being. People appreciate well-conceived, bright, peaceful spaces. These are the contributions the design community can make.

HOUSING FIRST IN SEATTLE: THE HOUSE THAT NYER BUILT

Nyer Urness House, an 80-unit Housing First building in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood, is owned and operated by Compass Housing

Alliance (CHA), a Seattle-based organization providing services and housing to people struggling with homelessness. Nyer Urness was CHA's chaplain from 1989 to 2006 during which time he ministered to the homeless with care and humility. Retired CHA executive director Rick Friedhoff says about the reverend, "Nyer made people feel comfortable and valued regardless of their station in life. He created a place for grace."

In creating Nyer Urness House, the design team was tasked with meeting the essential programmatic elements of a Housing First building, creating a durable, efficient building that would save money, and capturing the spirit of Nyer's ministry. Only time will tell if the building meets its ambitious design goals, but after a year in operation, only 3 out of 80 inaugural residents have left.

In a recent CHA video, when asked about his home, one Nyer Urness House resident says:

When I moved in here, I was so deep into alcohol, I'd just hide in my room for days, have seizures and think nothing of it. After living here a month I came to a point where I said, "I have to do something. This is sick." Then after I quit drinking, I would hide in my room because I didn't know how to handle myself . . . I would come in here and find solace, solitude. I wouldn't be sober today, I don't know if I would even be alive, the way I was drinking before I got in here. This is it—Home Sweet Home.

After the funding applications are submitted, the budgets established, the design completed and the building built, people's lives have a chance at getting better. So, what is it worth? It is worth the effort. 🍷

Rumi Takahashi lives, plays and works in Seattle. She's blessed with a wonderful family and great colleagues, currently at SMR Architects, and formerly at Weinstein A+U, where she worked on the Nyer Urness House.

The Homeless Remembrance Project

CLARK WIEGMAN

THE HOMELESS REMEMBRANCE PROJECT IS AN ONGOING EFFORT in Seattle by a group of homeless and formerly homeless women, social workers and clergy to recognize the lives of those who died while homeless. Created by the group, *The Tree of Life* and *Leaves of Remembrance* are the world's only public permanently-sited memorials for the homeless. 🍂

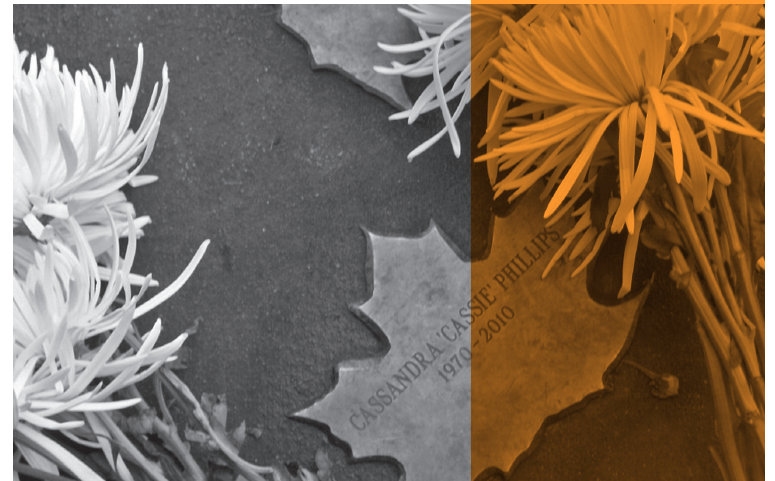
For more information, visit homelessremembrance.org and fallenleaves.org.

Clark Wiegman is an artist who has created numerous projects throughout North America over the past 25 years.



Tree of Life

Seattle's Victor Steinbrueck Park provides the setting for *The Tree of Life*. Clark Wiegman, Karen Kiest and Kim Lokan worked with the Homeless Remembrance Project Committee, their community and five City departments to create a gathering place within a park noted for its viewpoints and hospitality to all citizens regardless of background. The "tree" is a focal point, with missing commemorative "leaves" scattered on sidewalks throughout the city in the *Leaves of Remembrance*. Photo: Pamela Kliment



Leaves of Remembrance

The placement of each grouping of leaves involves partnering with social service agencies, churches, shelters and businesses who act as site hosts for leaf-laying ceremonies in which the lives of the fallen are commemorated. Photo: Michele Marchand

SIGNAL ART, REDMOND CENTRAL CONNECTOR
Art by John Fleming



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Edited by JEFFREY KARL OCHSNER

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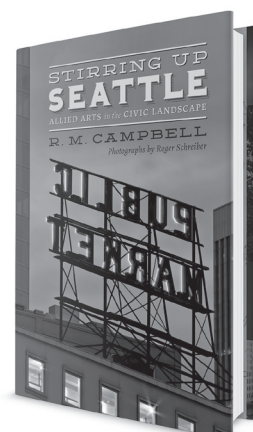
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STIRRING UP SEATTLE

Allied Arts in the Civic Landscape
R. M. CAMPBELL

In the 1950s, Seattle began transforming from a provincial outpost into the vibrant, cosmopolitan cultural center it is today. During this pivotal period, Allied Arts, a raucous band of intellectuals, was a champion of historic preservation, cultural institutions, and urban livability. In our current burst of development, we are reminded that the Seattle visual and cultural landscape is not guaranteed but must be fought for, and *Stirring Up Seattle* shows us how.

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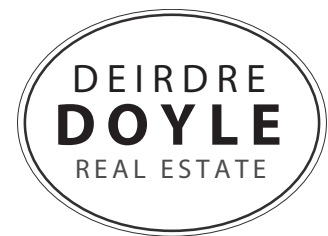
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REPURPOSING SKATEBOARDS INTO BOUTIQUE GUITARS

DAVID EINMO

THE DESIGN OF THE MODERN ELECTRIC guitar is based on tradition. The smooth curves, cutaways and balance of today's instruments look remarkably similar to the original electric guitars of the 1930s. Pop music has boldly evolved since Big-Band era musicians began experimenting with electrically amplifying their guitars to be heard above uproarious horn sections, yet the modern electric guitar's design has remained surprisingly time-honored.

However, Argentinean guitar maker Ezequiel Galasso and pro skateboarder Gianfranco De Gennaro aim to change that by building guitars out of reclaimed skateboards. Together, they have formed Skate Guitar.

At first glance, retired skateboard decks cracked and chipped from slamming against concrete-walled skate parks do not appear to be the ideal material for guitar manufacturing. But Galasso is fascinated with industrial design, and Skate Guitar, he says, is an extension of his passion to distance himself from replicas of established brands.

"Ever since I began constructing guitars ten years ago, I've had a fondness for industrial design. I constantly search for new ways to infuse industrial design into the construction of instruments," says Galasso through a Spanish interpreter. "During this time period, when Giani came to the shop and we became friends, the idea of reusing the decks made from maple (a wood commonly used by luthiers) to make guitars began to make more and more sense."

The individuality of each skateboard deck provides unique design opportunities for each guitar, Galasso says. Rather than shy away from the cracks and scratches of the reclaimed skateboard decks, Galasso and his team of builders embrace the attributes of each piece.

"We usually try to arrange the decks in a way that makes use of their wear-and-tear to

increase the guitar's own character," says Lewita Malizia, Galasso's assistant and guitar builder at Skate Guitar. "Each one of them is carefully matched with a corresponding neck to create a sound and visual impact that shows both the history behind the decks and the design that went into it."

However, the unique character of each hand-built guitar also creates a manufacturing challenge, explains Galasso. Skate Guitar uses two repurposed skateboard decks to build each instrument: one for the body, and one for the neck. Developing a process for building such a non-traditional guitar required the veteran luthier to consider new ways to design and fabricate these instruments.

"By reusing these all-wooden, maple decks that otherwise would end up hanging on a wall, or in the trash, a new way of thinking about the guitar-building process was born," says Malizia.

Each skateboard deck is different, so the Skate Guitar team had to devise a step-by-step plan for each part of the manufacturing process. Figuring out how to build the guitar neck from one skateboard deck was especially challenging, says Galasso, who called it "a long process of trial and error before reaching a desirable result."

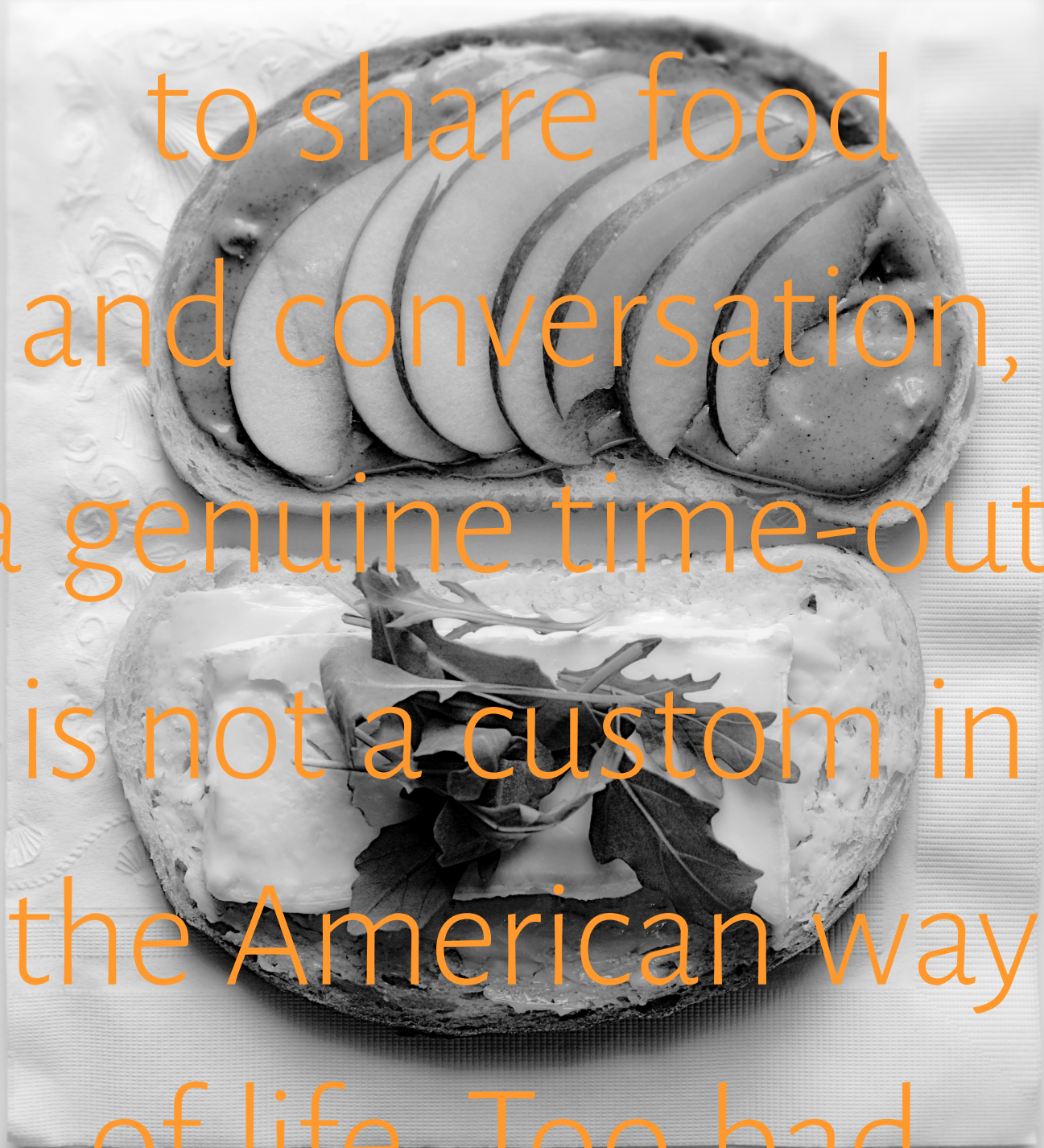
Galasso and his team appear to have achieved the result they desired. Currently, they have more orders than available Skate Guitars. They are, however, resisting the temptation to mass-produce the instruments. Instead, they plan to continue employing their handcrafted method from their small shop in Buenos Aires. This philosophy runs counter to the mass-produced guitars of major brands. For Galasso and crew, design and adherence to Skate Guitar's original handcrafted philosophy are more important than profit. In some economic circles, this might be viewed as a lost opportunity. For Galasso, it's about staying true to his original plan.

Considering the way that Galasso explains Skate Guitar's ethos, it's easy to draw comparisons to skateboarding's rebellious counter-culture and rock music's defiant personality. Skating and rock music share an emotional, visceral intensity that's been further immortalized by pop imagery. We've all seen the iconic photos of rebellious rock stars destroying their six-string instruments on stage: Jimi Hendrix lighting his Stratocaster on fire, Kurt Cobain pummeling his Mustang into a stack of amps, Pete Townshend windmilling a Gibson Les Paul to the ground. Maybe someday we'll see tomorrow's rock god ollying on his Skate Guitar before kickflipping it into the crowd. 🍌

David Einmo is driven by the passion to create. When he's not writing, Einmo is busy recording music in his studio (frequently wearing a panda costume) and touring as Head Like a Kite. headlikeakite.com



A midday pause
to share food
and conversation,
a genuine time-out,
is not a custom in
the American way
of life. Too bad.



Lunch at the Shop

BOOK REVIEW

55

A LETTER TO PETER MILLER

GORDON K. WALKER

Peter Miller is an institution in Seattle's design community, having been a purveyor of design books through his store for 35 years and counting. Now, Peter has written something of his own: *Lunch at the Shop: The Art and Practice of the Midday Meal*. A cookbook of sorts inspired by Peter's habit of making lunch—and *making time* for lunch—every day at his store, it is his first book and hopefully not his last. *Lunch at the Shop* is not just about food—it is a tribute to Peter's way of life. Both his recipes and practices are worth embracing.

*Lunch at the Shop:
The Art and Practice
of the Midday Meal*
BY PETER MILLER
Abrams, 2014

Dear Peter,

What a dandy book! I was asked to review *Lunch at the Shop*, and I feel honored to write about it! However, not being much of a writer, I puzzled over how to tackle this assignment. A background sketch seemed appropriate—a look at the fundamental influences in your life that have led to your prominent position in the Northwest design community.

I have been your friend since the mid-'70s, dating back to Miller/Mungo Books in your then-new store in Pioneer Square; you had recently moved from the University District, and architecture and design books had not yet become your specialty. You presented a strong character, a man for all reasons and seasons. You were, and still are, stimulated by intelligence, people, politics, food, merchandising and opinions.

Your journey from Hartford, Connecticut, to Seattle in the early '70s left behind a successful haberdasher father and two sisters. You had excelled in academics and sports, graduating from Williams (their quarterback) and from Harvard with a master's in English literature. Then the late '60s and early '70s let loose your creativity—your unique “head of steam”—and your very particular magic was born.

But restless you became, and an adventure out West was your ticket out of Hartford. Why did you leave? Being the son of a merchant, from a prominent family with a “blue blood” background and fiercely independent, why not establish yourself away from home base? During your travels, you picked up carpentry as a way to pay the bills and learn a trade. I've never been quite certain how or why you got to Seattle from Hartford, but you did in the now famous “Mr. Truck,” which is still operational, even though it's held together by rust.

In Seattle, your original roots—merchandis-



Photos: thecanalhouse.com

ing, books and people—landed you in the book business. It was a brilliant move to sense the need in the local market for architecture and art books. I've always felt one's destiny was guided by talent, discipline and luck. Our community is honored to have you here. And you can cook, too!

So, what about food? As long as I've known you, sharing food, wine and opinions has been your forte.

And what about writing? Writing something special and more intimate was often harder for you to do. When it did come, however, it was always something noteworthy. Whether it was Christmas cans of tomatoes (with oblique messages) or your articles in *Crosscut*, your strong opinion radiated.

You have been serving lunch in your shop for as long as I can remember. I think it began in the mid-'80s, around the time you acquired a Chilean toad—a gift along with an aquarium. “Jet,” as he was called, lived under the sand in the front window of your bookstore all week, until Fridays when *lunch at the shop* brought him a perky, small white mouse. Jet arose from under the sand and devoured the mouse in seconds before retreating back under. As the local supply of small white mice withered, you resorted to a

larger variety. Jet was no small toad, but this was a contest. They chased each other around the aquarium all weekend, with Jet never getting his Friday lunch. Many notes were posted on your front window, so that version of *lunch at the shop* ended with Jet going to the zoo.

A midday pause to share food and conversation, a genuine time-out, is not a custom in the American way of life. Too bad. While I haven't fully adopted the practice, I'm trying to do so at least once a week. In fact, today, while writing this missive, I prepared your #2 recipe for lentils; this is my third batch in as many weeks and they're great! I call this “learning from Peter.”

Regards,
Gordon K. Walker

P.S. Colleen's sketches are a magical interlude in your book and your life. Stay vital. ●

Gordon K. Walker has been practicing architecture in Seattle since 1962 and has been instrumental in establishing a modern aesthetic in the Pacific Northwest. Gordon has worked for Ralph Anderson, co-founded Olson Walker Architects (now Olson Kundig) and was a principal at NBBJ. He founded Walker Architects in 1992 and is currently a consulting principal at Mithun.

Putting Our Ingenuity to the Test

USING WOOD TO CREATE A NEW URBAN
LANDSCAPE FOR THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

HANS-ERIK BLOMGREN

I AM A STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. THAT IS TO say, I am responsible for designing the primary elements, the *bones*, of a building to ensure it achieves adequate strength and safety. In my work, I like to pursue opportunities that advance the design of the built environment that range from reducing the environmental impact of construction materials to improving construction efficiency. But implementing projects can be difficult because ingenious structural design is not simply about innovating around a single component, but rather at the core of the building's system.

Over the past decade, researchers and practitioners across the globe have made incremental advancements in building system technologies that employ large-dimension engineered wood beams, columns and panel elements. Commonly called *mass timber*, these wood products and systems are allowing designers and builders to create larger scale, higher performing structures for commercial use. The use of mass timber also represents a fundamental shift from the ubiquitous 2×4 stick-framed construction methods associated with residential construction, which are limited in strength and fire resistance. The most recently developed mass timber product is cross-laminated timber (CLT). CLT comprises wood boards that are stacked and glued cross-

wise to create a single, large unit—a thick, solid timber panel up to 10-feet wide by 45-feet long and 1-foot thick. In the past five years, in many parts of the world, there has been an emergence of schools, libraries, office buildings and apartments that have been constructed using CLT. For urban centers similar to Seattle, mass timber buildings have proven themselves suitable for 8- to 10-storey buildings as well—something unheard of when using conventional stick-framed wood construction.

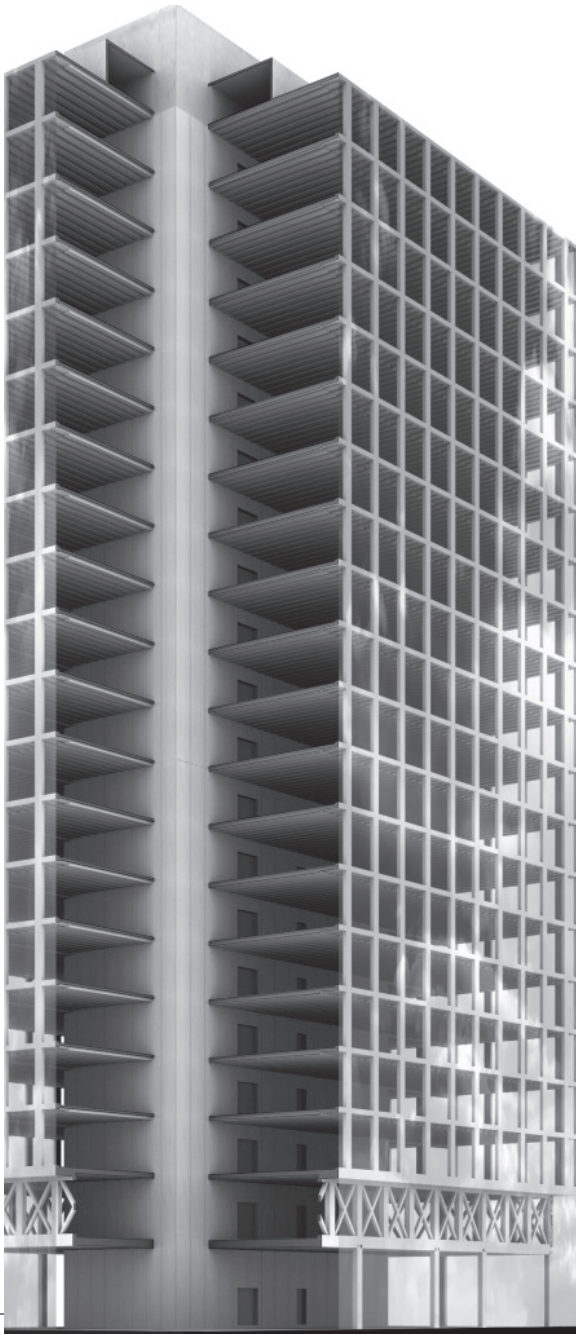
The primary drivers behind this renaissance of wood construction center on the efficiencies attained through state-of-the-art mass timber fabrication methods, rapid prefabricated construction and reducing the environmental footprint of building materials. Wood is an eminently versatile material: It is easy to cut, connect and transport and can be readily used for beams, columns, floors or wall panels. Coupled with this, wood is a 100-percent renewable resource available locally to us here in the Pacific Northwest and literally made by solar power. In addition, through the growing process, wood biomass actually sequesters a significant quantity of carbon collected from the Earth's atmosphere.

Over two years ago, architect Joe Mayo and I were studying the global precedent for utilizing mass timber and jointly saw the need to help realize these new building types in Seattle. Deciding to take action, in 2012 we made a presentation to members of the Seattle City Council at their Planning, Land Use and Sustainability Committee meeting. Our presentation conveyed the following: Mass timber buildings are well-suited to help Seattle achieve its goal of increasing urban density in an economical and environmentally friendly way, while also stimulating the state's rural economy by developing a manufacturing industry around high-value tim-

Left
LifeCycle Tower. In 2009, Arup developed a case study for a 20-storey structural timber system, which laid the groundwork that validated the technical feasibility for building taller with wood, including timber-concrete composite floors, fire testing, lateral stability, and measuring the embodied carbon reductions of the structural system. Photo: Arup

Opposite Page
LifeCycle Tower (LCT ONE), Dornbirn, Austria.

Photos: top left, Cree © Zumtobel Lighting GmbH; top right, Cree © Darko-Todorovic | Photography | adrok.net; bottom, Cree © 2012 Norman A. Müller





ber products. Our message was well received. Since then, Joe and I have been contributors at the CLT workshop meetings at the Seattle Department of Planning and Development. In the fall of 2013, Seattle formally adopted CLT into the City's building code, becoming the first jurisdiction in the United States to do so.

Last March, I had the honor of traveling to Washington, DC, to witness the White House and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) formally announce that they will support the use and development of innovative, sustainable wood building-materials to protect the environment and create jobs. For designers, the most interesting component of this announcement is that in early September the USDA will launch a national design competition that will award at least \$2 million towards a tall wood project that exhibits the architectural and commercial viability of this new mass timber building type.

My study of advanced mass timber systems has indeed affirmed the reality that developing new structural bones for the built environment can be a disruptive process that requires a commitment from all project stakeholders. The good news is that the necessary groundwork is being laid by engineers, researchers and policy-makers—and the Pacific Northwest is poised to lead the nation in implementing these new systems. I'm quite optimistic that our ingenuity will prevail. 🍌

Hans-Erik Blomgren, PE, SE, P.Eng., Struct.Eng., is an associate at Arup, a global multi-disciplinary consulting firm, and a lead structural engineer in their Seattle office. Hans-Erik is currently serving as a team participant on a National Science Foundation research grant titled "Engineered Timber Structural Systems for Seismically Resilient Tall Buildings."



A SOCIAL DESIGN PROJECT IN IRAN

SHAGHAYEGH GHASSEMIAN

Photography: Reza Ravasian

IN 2013 I JOINED THE FLYING CLASSROOM, a volunteer project started by designers passionate about social activism and art. Through the program, designers travel to underdeveloped parts of Iran to hold arts workshops for children.

For The Flying Classroom's second project, 11 of us from Tehran went to Tokhme-Baloot, a rural village in Ilam, one of the most neglected provinces in the country. Ignored by the government both in terms of infrastructure and cultural support, Ilam has a high rate of unemployment, poverty and drug use. People there used to make their livelihoods farming and ranching, but now this way of life is threatened by constant famine. The situation for children there is poor. Boys who don't do well in school must start work after eighth grade. In Ilam's patriarchal culture, where women have no say in society, girls who don't do well in school stay at home doing chores or get married.

The name Tokhme-Baloot means "oak seed." Because our research before the trip led us to believe there were massive forests around the village, we planned our project concept around oak trees and squirrels, and fostering the children's appreciation for the beauty of the environment.

However, when we arrived at the village and stepped down from the bus, we saw that where there once had been huge trees, there now were only flat, dusty grass fields. We also found that Tokhme-Baloot was far less developed than we had anticipated. The village of 1,200 had only gotten gas and electricity four years earlier, and it was sometimes interrupted in the winter. There were two grocery stores, one mosque, two schools, a small clinic and no recreational facilities. After seeing the village and the surrounding area, the best concept for the project that we could think of focused on respect for nature.

On our second day in the village, we began

working with the students. Children started painting the school equipment in bright colors. In workshops, they made fabric squirrels and origami cranes. We led a storytelling session in which students worked together to create an improvised narrative about trees and nature. My colleague Zoya and I cut a dead branch we found that morning into pieces and painted it to recreate a tree inside of the school, a symbol of nature saved by children, and on it we hung the squirrels and cranes.

During our time in Tokhme-Baloot, we learned that girls do much better in school than boys and, if their parents let them, continue to higher education because it's the only way to change their social situation. At one point I spoke with the schoolteacher's 22-year-old daughter, who had studied her whole life while also fulfilling a village woman's duties and fighting with a patriarchal society. Now that she was getting her BA in economics, her father had decided that she must marry her cousin, a farmer living in the same village.

On the third and final day of our visit, the director of Ilam's Ministry of Education was there watching us finish, along with people from the educational system, the schoolmistress and teachers. He told one of our group members that when we left, he was going to knock the tree down.

Projects like ours are viewed skeptically by Iran's government, and during our trip we were interviewed twice, once by the army and once by Basij, a paramilitary militia. They came to the school with no prior notification and talked to our group's founder, Reza Bahraminejad, about the project, questioning him about its purpose,

who supported it, who our members were, etc. After the trip, we feared that The Flying Classroom might be stopped, but fortunately, it wasn't.

. . .

The work we did on our trips through The Flying Classroom had the immediate effect of exciting the students and bringing life to their dull environments. The children were engaged, met new people and were exposed to new ideas and attitudes. Yet I can't help but wonder—are we fully aware of the consequences of our work? The Flying Classroom is praised for working against ignorance, oppression and injustice, but will the children of the school have to pay for what our project delivered? What if, after we left Tokhme-Baloot, the director of Ilam's Ministry of Education had destroyed the students' tree, as he had threatened to do? How would that have affected the children?

The children we work with have no prior knowledge of the concepts we provide. How can it help them

that after only three days of exposure to new ideas and experiences, we then leave them in their critical, ill-informed situation? I'm not saying that just because a society is parochial that we should leave it that way. But what is the use of exposing people's minds to new possibilities and ways of understanding if there is no follow-up or support afterwards? Do we create expectations that cannot be met and might create greater disappointment?

What does The Flying Classroom do? It teaches children how to make their environment look more beautiful, helps them recognize their abilities, engages them in a productive activity



In a doll-making workshop, students learned to make fabric squirrels.

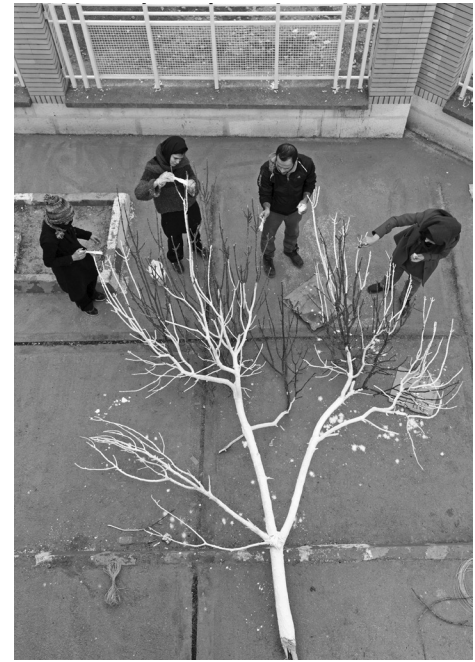


Top: The entrance hall of the school before our workshops.

Bottom: We left the school in bright colors with objects to inspire the children's imaginations.



During origami workshops, children learned to make cranes out of paper.



After cutting a piece from this branch, we painted it white and put it in the school's entrance hall.

and opens their eyes to a new world of ideas they didn't know before. What *should* The Flying Classroom do? To be honest, I don't know because I believe that there are questions yet to be answered, such as, "Is The Flying Classroom currently doing what it's supposed to do?" and "In trying to solve problems, does The Flying Classroom actually create new challenges?"

We, socially responsible designers from big cities where our basic needs are met, think of lofty goals and problems to solve. We want to bring cultural growth to people living in a neglected village while they are still in need of fundamental essentials. After this project I was left wondering whether designing for underdeveloped parts of the world is so complex that it's very difficult—if not impossible—to know what's best to do.

We never followed up to see what happened after we left Tokhme-Baloot. Did our tree and our statement on the wall about nature make any difference in the way the students treated their environment? Did they ever talk about it at home with their families? Do they even remember it?

What's the use of all of these temporary joys and responsible acts if we don't know the results of what we've done? If we don't take responsibility for our work, I would call it "design for feeling good" instead of "design for social good." I'm not trying to degrade what we did in The Flying Classroom. We believed in what we were doing. The sensitivity of the situation is what I want to

draw attention to: the thin line between helping people and feeling good because you think you are helping people.

. . .

In Horst Rittel and Melvin M. Webber's "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," a 1973 paper on the difficulties of confronting social policy issues, they describe "wicked" problems as those that are difficult to resolve due to their complex, interconnected, hard to define natures.

There is always a chance for designers to do better because, as Rittel and Webber point out, the nature of wicked problems is that they need to be discovered in order to be solved. This learning and solving cannot happen separately.

The Flying Classroom is a young project—about two years old. To be frank, it's one of the few of its kind in Iran. It takes a lot of courage to start such a challenging project and a lot of effort to do it at such high quality. I think that after two years of hard work, The Flying Classroom has a great portfolio to review as the group reflects more about what it should be doing. 🍌

Shaghayegh Chassemian is a Tehran-based designer who is now studying to receive an MDes in interaction design at the University of Washington. For 27 years she's lived in a complex society where she's been exposed to different problems, therefore most of the projects attractive to her involve sociopolitical complications.

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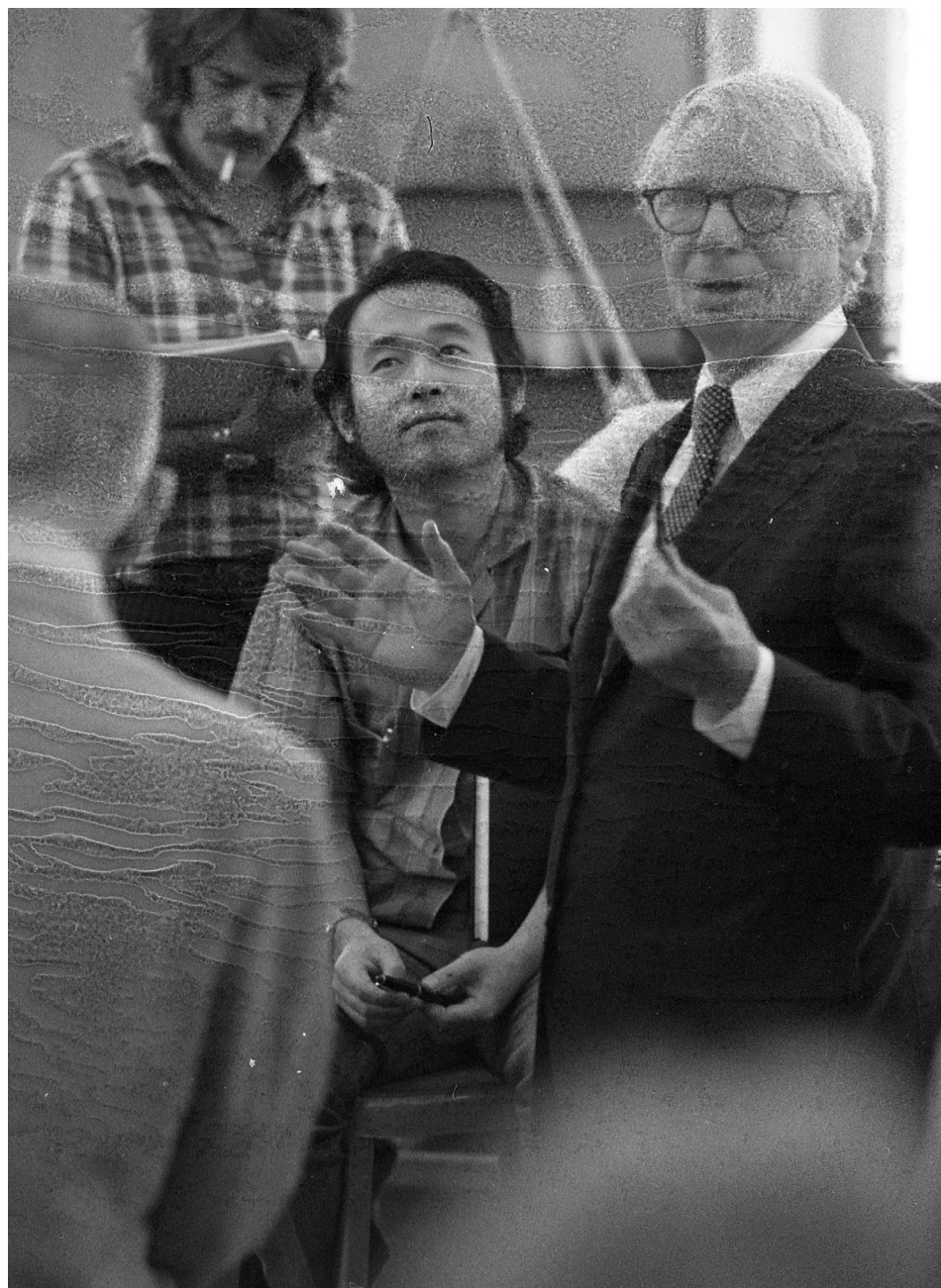
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STUDIO NOTES FROM LOUIS KAHN'S MASTER CLASS

JM CAVA

In spite of his position as one of the greatest architects of the 20th century, Louis Kahn always considered himself a teacher first and an architect second. After an early stint at Yale, he taught a master class at the University of Pennsylvania for over 15 years in a light-filled, double-height Beaux-Arts studio above the art and architecture library designed by Frank Furness.



These notes are my near-verbatim transcription of Louis Kahn's comments from his fall master studio in 1972 prior to his sudden death the following year. These comments were addressed to students, outside visitors and his co-teachers, Norman Rice and Robert Le Ricolais, and are presented here in approximate chronological order. In the studio, students worked primarily on a library for the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, a project then in Kahn's office; a more abstract program of shorter duration—simply entitled "A Room"—was given near the end of the term. The following notes are from the introductory section from the first week or two.

ONE MUST HAVE THE FEELING THAT what you are undertaking is something of extreme importance; it must be worth all of your attention and effort in a valiant, combined effort. If it is not worth this, then it is not worth the slightest glance.

The land and climate of a project determine, in part, the character of the building. In Bangladesh, for instance, the monsoons affect people's attitudes towards water and rain. It is at one and the same time a wished-for blessing and a dreaded evil. And there is the character of the people themselves to consider . . .

It is never necessary to have a consistent "style" in your work, for then you are conceding or conforming to other more superficial factors than the search for the nature of the thing at hand.

The wall of a building is of necessity an organic entity, much like the wall of a human being or any animal, which has layers of fat on the outside for protection from the heat and layers of fat on the inside to insulate from the cold. Thus, a wall is the organic *skin* of the building.

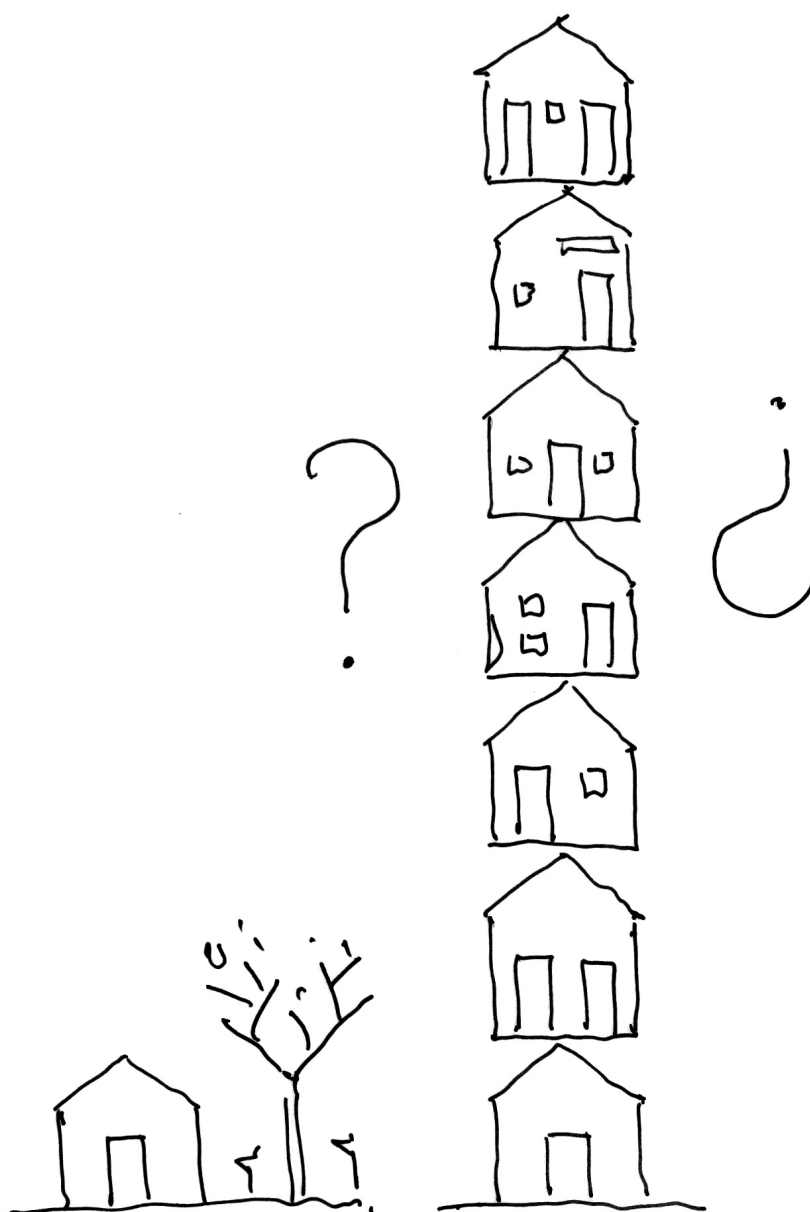
Photos: James F. Williamson Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, photos by James F. Williamson

If I love natural light, I will be determined to have it at any cost and by any means necessary. If I cannot have natural light, I would perish in the gloom.

In order to begin to search and to build, the process is like that of a farmer starting a new field of crops. He must look about and choose exactly the right piece of land and get to know it thoroughly. He has to lovingly prepare the land—only then can the vegetables grow.

A truly great artist is someone who reveals the nature of whatever material he is working with by means of his point of view. Everyone has their own point of view, their own angle from which they view the world, but this aspect of the artist's work is only secondary. Of primary importance is that the painter, for example, reveal the nature of paint, of color, and that the musician similarly reveal the nature of music. The music of Beethoven is not beautiful because it is Beethoven's but because it is music. "Ah," I say, "so *this* is what music can be . . ." Once the nature of the thing has been revealed, and once I am able to grasp it, I become released from the artist's point of view. I no longer need Beethoven, for I have stolen from him (through his generosity) the very nature of music. To feel the freedom is to steal the nature and run away with it.

Point of view is a way of reaching the nature of the truth. There is a difference between getting across the nature of something and having information about it. For someone or something to be considered useful, it means that they are inspiring, helping one to realize the essence of the thing. I don't want to be "informed," I want to have the thing itself—not to *know about* it but to simply *know* it.



Sketch by JM Cava, after a blackboard sketch by Louis Kahn.

The structure of the Room, its nature, is defined by the light, which is defined by the structure of the Room. One should not be forced to move from one room to another to be able to see the structure. The light will reveal the structure, which will in turn, reveal the light.

Referring to diagrams of a house vs. a stacked house drawn on the chalkboard by Kahn:

A very "poor" man lives here [single house diagram]; so-called "poor" because he has no

money. He has, however, a dog, a deer he gave shelter to, a garden, a tree and so on. And he is always able to have such things, perhaps making him not so poor after all. How can this "poor" man's luxury be preserved in this [high rise]? How can each person have their own tree, garden and animals? How to make each dwelling belong to its owner?

I must honor the materials that I use, which come from natural sources. I need to be aware of their sources, how far away they had to come



The space must be endowed with a particular *presence*, a sense of always being aware of its surroundings and not falling asleep on you when you're not looking.

for me to use them and how well their new surroundings will respect them.

What distinguishes one space from another? The *nature* of those spaces. The space must be endowed with a particular *presence*, a sense of always being aware of its surroundings and not falling asleep on you when you're not looking. The Room must be radiating its *undivided attention*, which will stimulate the same in whoever is in that Room. Such a space must be one that inspires. If it be a home, it will inspire living. I would enter that space and immediately feel that I would like to live there, because it is truly a space for living in; it is conducive to living. It inspires that quality and no other.

by the space. This is architecture, as opposed to the work of a contractor, who haphazardly throws together odd assorted spaces. You want to feel that the space is your own private shelter; the light inside is *your* light . . .

Why does one feel at home in some spaces and not in others? In *this* space I can work, but in this one I cannot. The associations are limited

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

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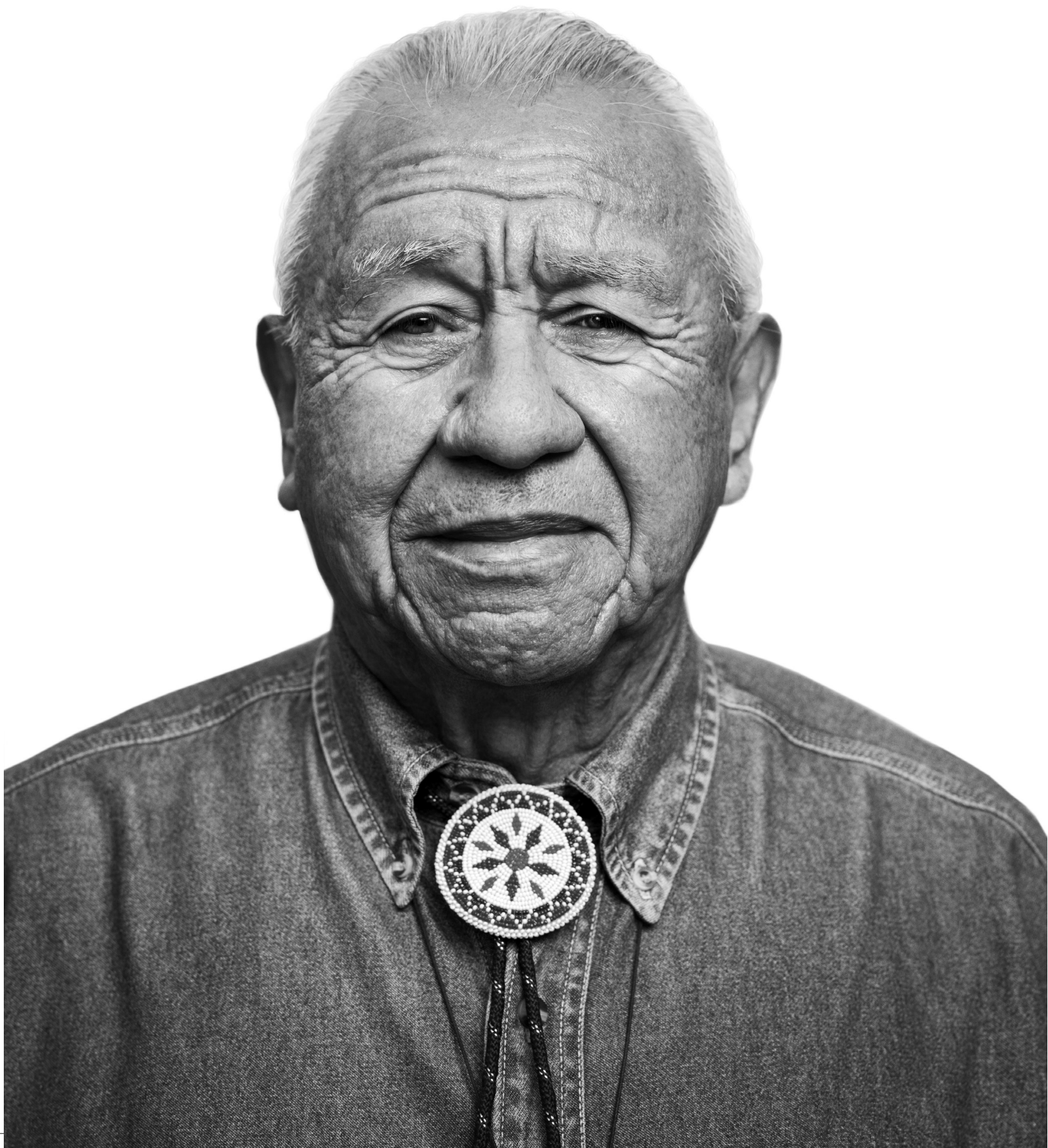
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Big Leaf Mfg, founded by Roy McMakin in 1998 to fabricate his furniture and sculpture, is now actively seeking to work with other artists, architects, designers, and contractors. With Roy's departure from Seattle to Southern California, Scott Graczyk (who has managed Big Leaf since its inception) and the talented team will maintain the shop's operation in central Seattle. While Big Leaf will continue as fabricators of Roy's art and furniture commissions, the shop is now available to collaborate with others on projects of all scales and scopes:

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A Hereditary Kinship with Nature

THE LIFE OF BILLY FRANK JR.

MARTHA KONGSGAARD

"I don't believe in magic," Billy once said. "I believe in the sun and the stars, the water, the tides, the floods, the owls, the hawks flying, the river running, the wind talking. They're measurements. They tell us how healthy things are. How healthy we are. Because we and they are the same. That's what I believe in. Those who learn to listen to the world that sustains them can hear the message brought forth by the salmon."

SO SAID THE LEGENDARY TRIBAL ELDER, the moral lodestar and unflinching advocate of the tribal sovereignty movement nationally, an Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Prize winner, the chair of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, "uncle" to thousands, and a founding Leadership Council member at the Puget Sound Partnership, Billy Frank Jr., who passed away on 5 May 2014 at the age of 83. He was on that day, as most days, on his way to a meeting about fish and tribal treaty rights.

For many, it can take a lifetime to know what you mean and to convey it unambiguously, to have your first essential audience, your people, understand the meaning of the lesson—the life lesson. Not so for Billy. His demonstrable kinship with the natural world is a phenomenon he did not work at. It is something that was imprinted on his character "prehistorically"—long before the battles at Frank's Landing or the triumph of the Boldt decision or the wonders of bringing children into this world. It is this hereditary kinship with nature and his ancient heritage that kept him vigilantly at this work until the end.

Sometimes a person and their story, their history, can suffice for a family or a generation or an entire people, emblematically, for a way of life, a struggle. For the tribal people of the State of Washington and indeed nationally, Billy's is the culmination of an era in this specific place on Earth, the Salish Sea, specifically Frank's Landing on the banks of the Nisqually River, and a time in our state's history—its "aggressive adolescence," to paraphrase Tim Egan—when native peoples' access to their treaty-given rights were circumscribed by a lack of understanding, clashing cultures and virulent racism.

What was it in Billy's cultural and inherited DNA, passed to him from his father, Willie Frank Sr., and generations of tribal elders before him, that created this deeply decent partner,

both a proud bearer of Indian tradition and a willing translator across cultures? Billy was a fearless advocate for what was good for his people's interest and the planet's interest, which in the end he argued was good for the greater public's interest, seven generations out. Working unsentimentally but with great humanity, humility and without rancor, Billy Frank was the rare leader—more quiet than shrill, more discreet than brash, more serious than trivial, but relentless—who worked at the intersection of one of the nation's seminal civil rights battles and beyond as warrior, peacemaker, consensus builder and finally: visionary.

Billy was a long-term optimistic thinker and strategist. He was the personification of what it means to be courageous. Not brave. Bravery is temporary; it's the rising-to-an-occasion not necessarily of one's making. It is a kind of daring but not enduring. Courage, on the other hand, is a disposition, a quality of character. It lasts. Central to the word courage is of course "coeur," meaning "heart." Heart was Billy's defining feature. He knew no stranger, was alien to no injustice.

At the Salish Sea Tribal dinner, the Thursday before he died, Billy assured us that he would be here for at least another decade—he had so much work to do. He mentioned that his father lived to be 104, and his mother 96, and that he hoped to split the difference. He was on fire, naming names, calling us all to the cause, to come together. He was as powerful as any in the room had ever heard him. After his talk, he was blanketed in thanks.

At the end of the dancing, a shaman from Greenland, Angaangaq Angakkorsuaq, chanted a hair-raisingly powerful and hauntingly beautiful prayer. And then, unsuspectingly, the healer briskly descended the stage stairs as the assemblage was setting to leave and singled out Billy, who stood up from the elders' table. Holding two

wind drums, amplifying his immense tenor, he sang and chanted an unearthly closing prayer, practically cupping Billy's head in the drums. The room froze. Time froze. It blasted Billy. It was clearly a benediction.

It had to have been resonating in his ears even as he woke up several mornings later to go out on a typical Monday to cajole, inspire or hold accountable some agency or other. He got dressed after his shower and sat back down on the bed and didn't get back up. His son Willie found him some moments later. The rhythm of the work that was so deeply imprinted on him, that came to define him, came to a halt unwillingly that morning, 5 May 2014.

Those of us who were lucky enough to hitch our wagons to the audacity of his long-view optimism and tenacity know that there is still so much work to do. Let's help lay him to rest by getting back to work. And to the extent that we can get our work done in a way that respects one another, the rule of law and nature's limits, we will be working on Billy's legacy. We owe it to Billy to come together, to protect his people—all people—and the planet we all depend on.

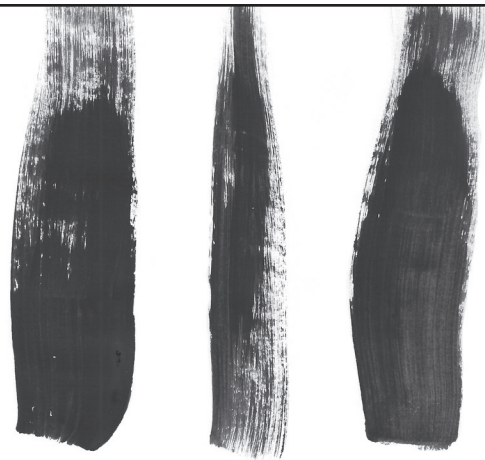
Peace. Shalom, friend. 🍓

This tribute first appeared on the Puget Sound Partnership website on 6 May 2014.

Martha Kongsgaard is a fifth generation Californian, born and raised in Napa to a family of jurists, grape growers and cattlemen. Martha, an attorney, co-founded the Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation in 1988 with her husband Peter Goldman, which gives grants to a variety of nonprofit environmental, social justice and arts organizations in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. She has spoken broadly about philanthropy and the environmental movement to wide and diverse audiences for the past 20 years and has won numerous awards including the Environmental Hero Award from the Washington Environmental Council. Martha currently serves as chair of the Leadership Council of the Puget Sound Partnership, the agency she has been dedicated to since its inception in 2007.

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