

COLORADO'S DESIGN MAGAZINE

MODERN IN DENVER

ARCHITECTURE • INTERIORS • ART • DESIGN • PEOPLE



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To the Mid-Century Modernaires . . . maybe you already know the magic of living in a mid-century modern house, or you aspire to live in one someday. Or maybe you own a MCM home, but don't know what improvements to make next. Or perhaps you have just discovered the lifestyles of the Mid-Century and Modern and you want to learn more. For all of you, I am here to help. Helping Mid-Century Modernaires buy, sell, design, and preserve their homes is my joy and passion. Call or email me today, and let's talk about your mid-mod dreams!

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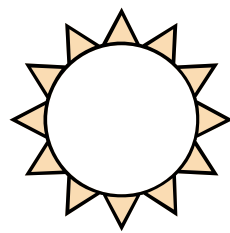


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FIELD STUDY

Our inspiring roundup of gadgets, modern accessories, and other items you didn't know you needed.

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ICONIC CHAIR:
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In 1943, Danish mid-century marvel Jens Risom created what was to become an iconic and forward-thinking lounge chair. Seventy-five years later, Knoll is re-engineering this iconic seating for the great outdoors. .

54

SUSTAINABILITY TO STAND ON

The Piran rug is so stylish that no one would ever guess it was resurrected from discarded carpet fiber and "ghost" nets fished out of the ocean. This home accessory is the ultimate in sustainable chic.

58

A LIGHT TOUCH

Inspired by nature, a new collection from Stickbulb lets you go to erector set-like lengths to design the perfect lighting for your space.

62

MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

Denver's unofficial new transit hub, Zeppelin Station, started off as another gritty RiNo-area architectural challenge and ended as a triumph for Dynia Architects and Zeppelin Development.

68

MAKING ROOM FOR THE OCTOPUS

A new Museum of Contemporary Art initiative is reaching into the lives of art-loving Denverites by lending them pieces for their homes and studios — providing "a mirror to show them what it means to live in a creative place." Hills.

74

MINIMAL MASTERPIECE

Peter Blank's new Modern Hilltop home combines simple sophistication and a collaborative effort with the element of surprise to truly breathtaking effect.

92

WHAT NEXT! SALONE ROUNDUP

Modern In Denver chose an assortment of products that debuted in April at the world's biggest furniture fair. Take a look — but we can't promise it won't make you want to break out the credit card.

112



OUR DECADE OF DESIGN

We've officially hit our double digits! Take a walk back in time for a retrospective of Modern In Design's greatest hits — and a few bumps — along the journey. Plus, check out every cover we've ever published.

138

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

The husband-and-wife team behind the 15-year-old architectural firm Rowland + Broughton are self-described "lifelong learners." That approach has earned them some challenging — and rewarding — projects.

148

HOME APPLIANCE ROCK

The availability of induction cooking and steam ovens is changing the Modern kitchen's culinary, not to mention technological, landscape. We take a closer look at how it all works and why it's worth saving up for.

156

INTRINSIC REWARDS

Brothers Brian and Aaron Ojala have innovated the heck out of suburban commercial spaces. They call it the Urban Box concept, and it marries Modern and sustainable design principles with an attainable price point for small businesses.

164

REMEMBERING FORWARD

Architect Mark Harris is using unexpected unions of form and function — think a billboard repurposed as a house — to challenge the notion of what architecture is and isn't. Read more about the "Billboard House" and Harris' other unconventional ideas that could change the landscape of our future.

174

TRAVEL BY DESIGN - CHINA

Modern In Denver headed east — far east — and found design brilliance in some unexpected spaces in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

192

GAMING THE GARDEN

An elk! A cactus! A ... Pacman Ghost? Find out how the new "Pixelated" exhibit at the Denver Botanic Gardens is "space invading" nature to glorious effect.



164



50



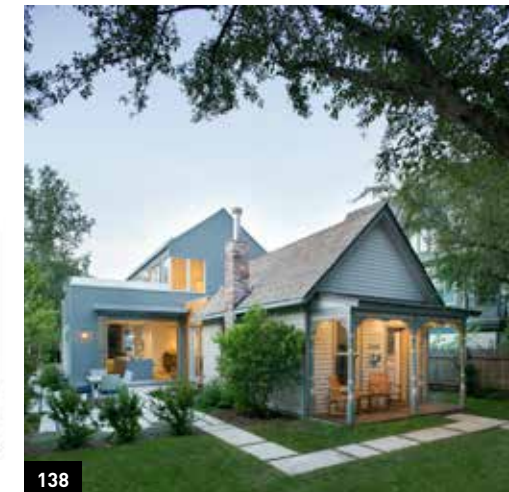
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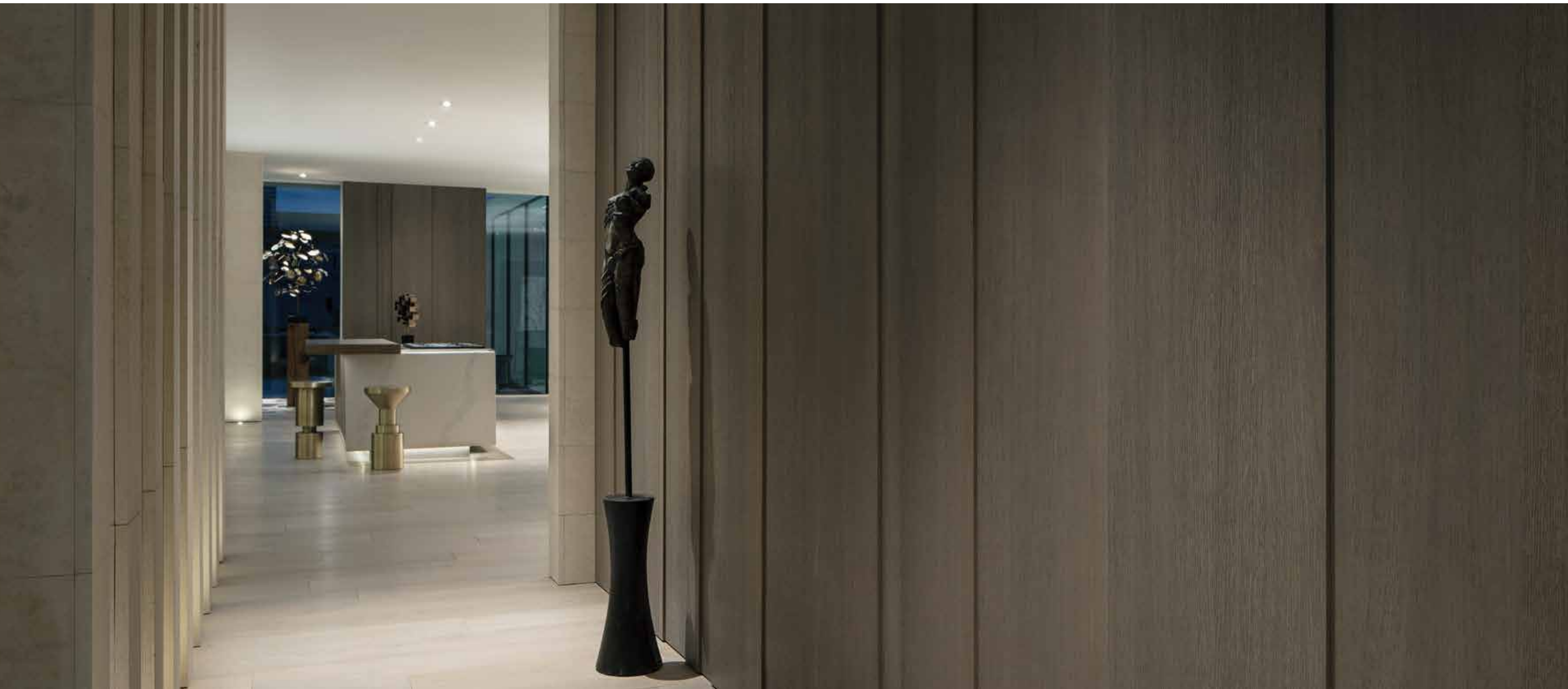
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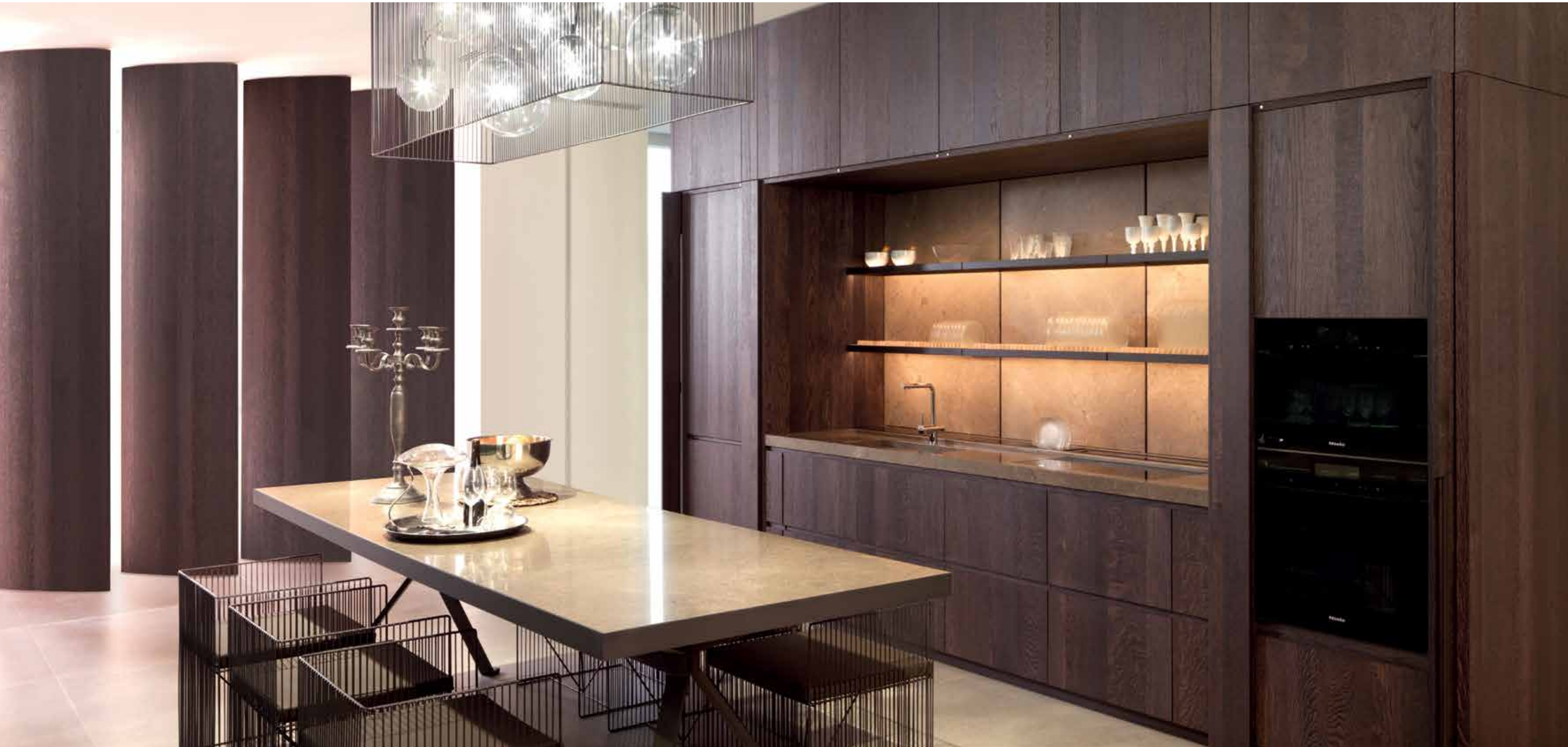
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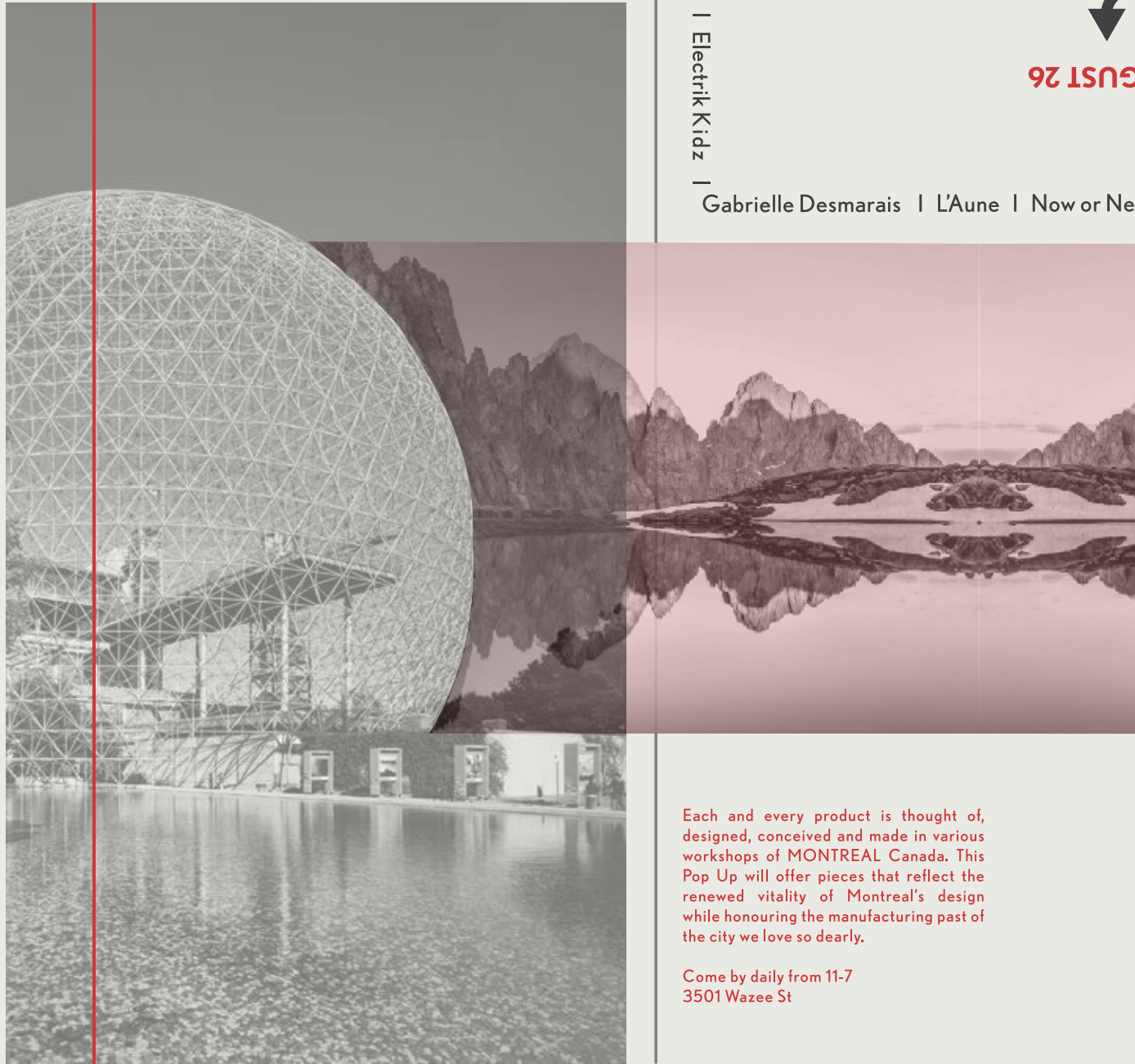
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12 BRANDS - 12 MAKERS - 12 CONCEPTS



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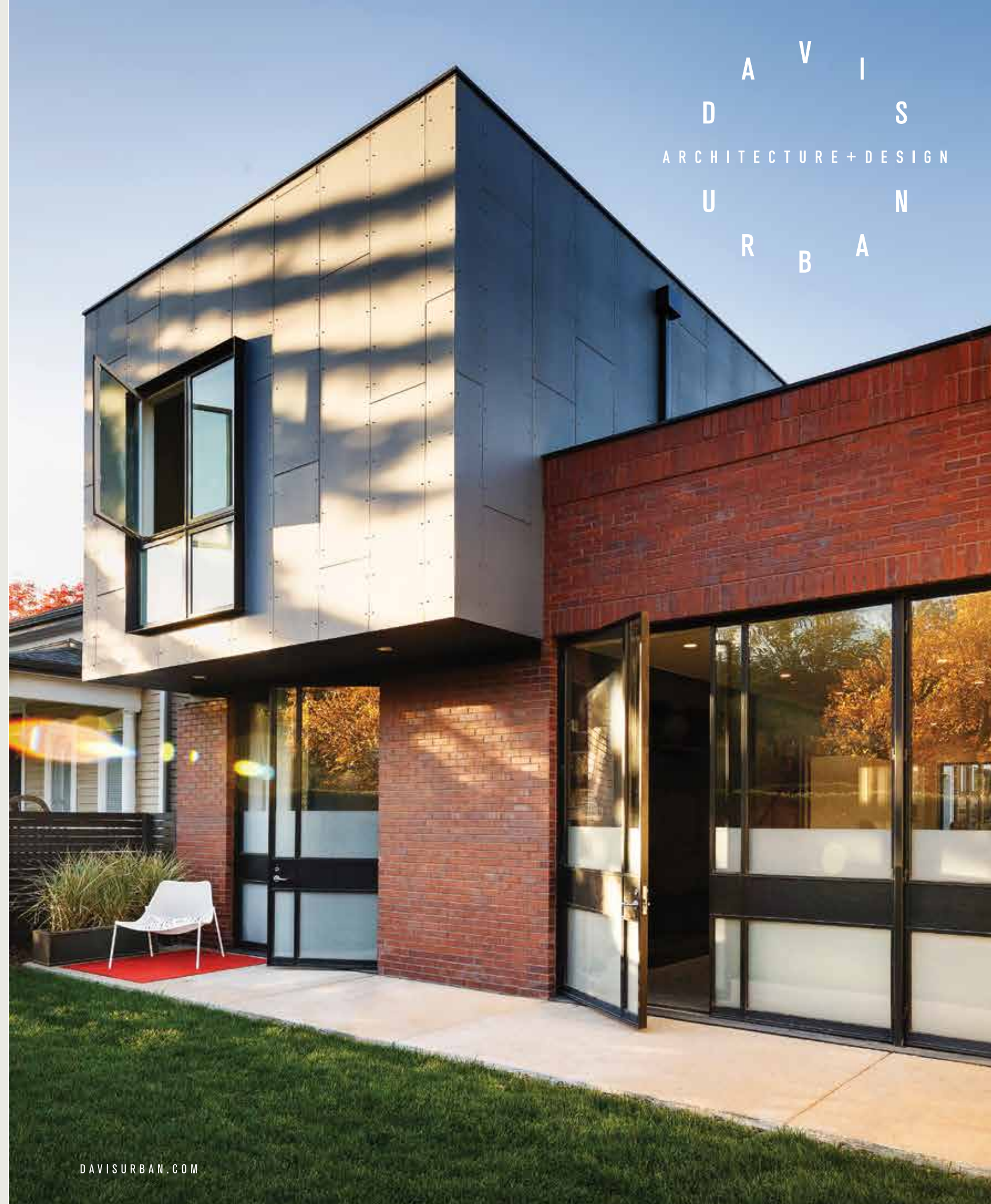
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- Talking Heads



Length, width, breadth, depth, range, reach

Distance.

While creating this issue, I repeatedly found myself reflecting on the concept of distance. How do we best measure and give meaning to our travels through space and time? How did we get HERE? The miles, the minutes, the motion and the moments. Looking backward and reaching forward. Contemplating this was inevitable considering the nature and personal significance of this issue.

This summer marks Modern In Denver's 10th year of publishing. A joyful milestone for sure, and one that has given us reason to pause, look back over the last decade and consider the distance we have come.

The journey of celebrating and documenting the accomplishments and growth of our creative community has been remarkable, and the people I have met, worked with and learned from have been life-changing.

To celebrate, we have a special section that includes an article on how our city and state have grown in the last decade and the role design has played in helping Colorado evolve into the metropolis it is today. We assembled all 53 of our covers from the first issue to this one. We selected some of our favorite images from the past 10 years in honor of all the great photographers who have helped shape the look of Modern In Denver. Writer Eleanor Perry-Smith reflects on her experience writing for us and, finally, we look forward with thoughts from Denver Design Week executive director Jason Belaire on what he feels will be necessary to elevate the role of design in Colorado over the coming years.

It is fitting that for this special issue, we are featuring the home of Peter Blank. He is a founder of Mile Hi Modern, one of Colorado's most creative and successful real estate brokerages. Ten years ago, he was also just starting his business with a unique approach to exclusively focus on modern architecture. He was one of the first advertisers in Modern In Denver and enthusiastically supported my vision well before the first issue was printed. Today, his business has flourished and he is considered a leading expert on modern real estate in Colorado. And he has never stopped supporting Modern In Denver. He also recently completed his own home in Hilltop that embodies and embraces his vision of sophisticated simplicity and believes it reflects his past 10 years of experience at Mile Hi Modern. The story starts on page 74.

The Entasis Group has also traveled quite a distance. Their award-winning residential architecture continues to impress, as can be seen in their work with Peter Blank's house. Their new project, "Urban Box," proves that they're continuing to evolve and grow. We talked to them about their vision of bringing modern urban workplace design to the suburbs and how they manage the design and development with a full-time staff of two. The last time we featured Entasis was eight years ago, and they were just getting going. Their story starts on page 156.

Award-winning firm Rowland + Broughton are also celebrating this year. They have been doing great work for 15 years now and we thought it apt to include them in our anniversary issue. A survey of their work and interview with John Rowland and Sarah Broughton starts on page 138.

Architect Mark Harris was selected to exhibit at the prestigious 2018 Venice Architectural Biennale. We talked to him about the projects selected for the exhibit and how they each transcend architecture to investigate human culture. His story is on page 164.

For our Travel By Design section, we have ventured farther than ever before with a visit to China. We wanted to explore how architecture and design are shaping the future of this massive and formidable country. And while there is certainly an abundance of giant "starchitecture" buildings done by many of the world's leading firms, it was the more intimate projects designed by the boutique Chinese studios that moved us the most. Projects that more precisely point to the future of modern Chinese design.

It also exciting to announce that we are offering our readers a chance to come with us next spring for a special curated architecture and design tour of China. It is an incredible opportunity and we hope you can join us! Details are at the end of the China article on page 174.

The distance Modern In Denver has allowed me to travel both internally and externally is immeasurable, and it would not have been possible without you the reader providing the support you have these last 10 years — **THANK YOU!**

William Logan
william@moderninddenver.com

THE COVERS



Peter Blank's Hilltop Home is the subject of one of our two summer issue covers and the focus for our story, Minimal Masterpiece. Pictured here is the home's living room, which features neutral tones and a focus on different textures that help it blend propitiously with its expansive outdoor views. "My inspiration was from classic mid-century and international design," says Blank, who founded the successful real estate enterprise Mile Hi Modern. "It was relevant then, relevant now and will be relevant 100 years from now." Turn to page 74 to read the story and see more photos.

The second cover showcases our Travel By Design: China piece. Photographer James Florio and writer Caroline Joan Peixoto visited Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, visiting locations along the journey that inspired them while learning more about the stories behind these buildings from some of the country's smaller but no-less-impressive architectural firms. Immerse yourself in their voyage by turning to page 174.



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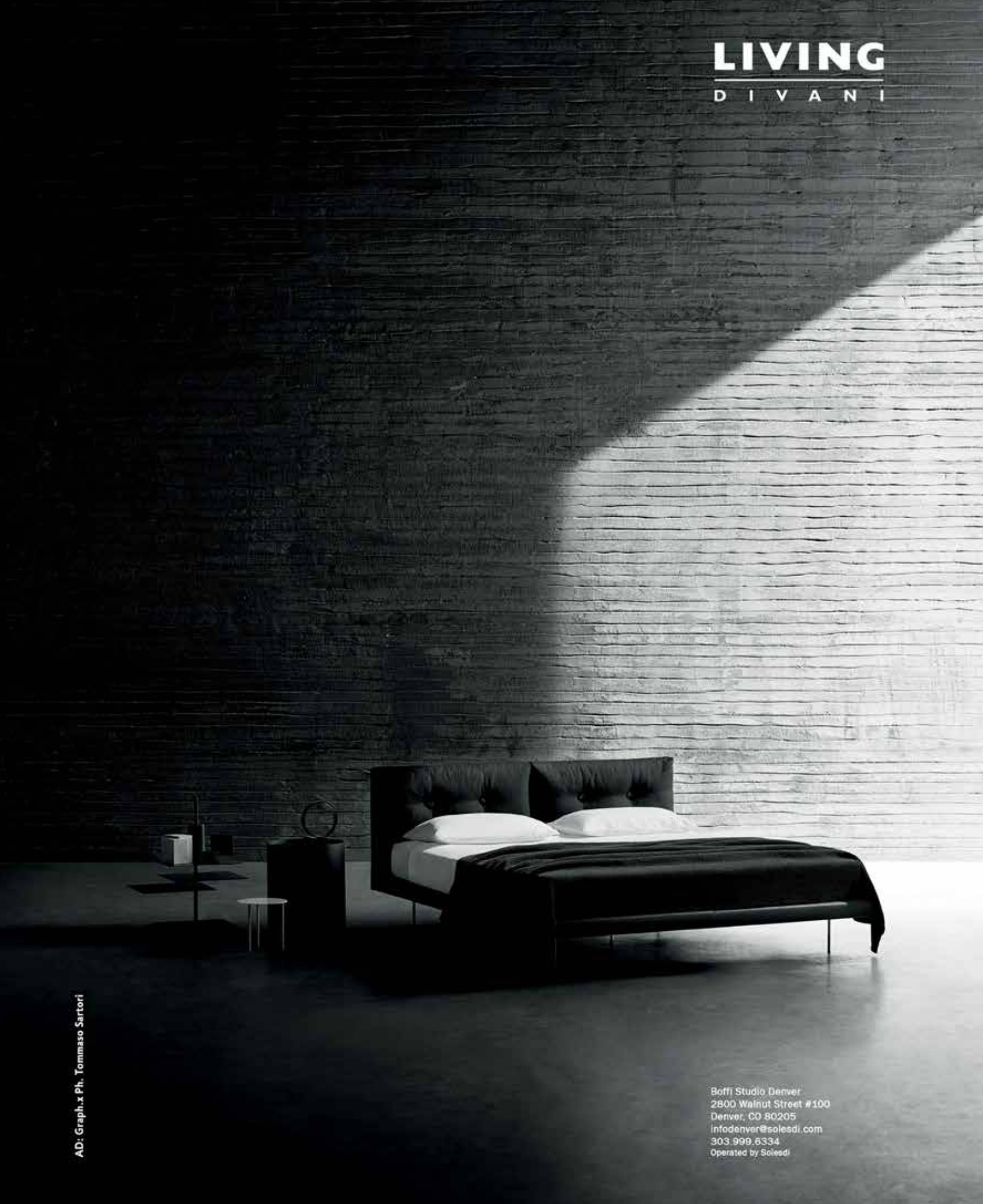
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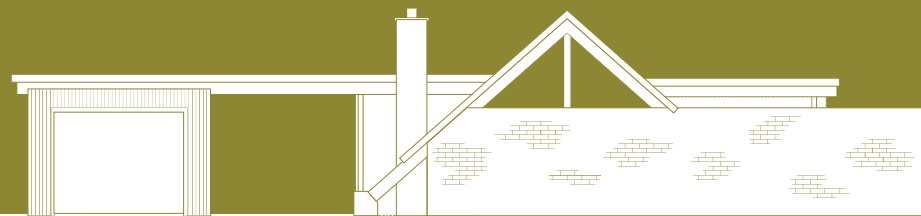


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There's a countless number of Bluetooth speakers out there but there's only one from IKEA, the Swedish retailer known for its flat packs and affordable design. The square 8x8-inch Eneby speaker can be paired with up to eight devices, mounted to the wall, or turned portable with a separate battery pack. When not in use, it also turns itself off to save energy.

[+ikea.com](http://ikea.com)



Gradual Finish

Piecing together a jigsaw puzzle is already a contemplative process. But Bryce Wilner's 500-piece Gradient Puzzle may prove to be even more meditative as each new piece gradually reaches for the color at the opposite end. Available in five gradients.

[+gnr8.biz](http://gnr8.biz)



History of Sitting

There are countless ways to build a chair. And publishing house Phaidon has selected 500 of them to showcase in "Chair: 500 Designs that Matter." There's the fluffy Cabbage Chair by artist Nendo to the simpler Zig Zag Chair by Gerrit Thomas Rietveld. Phaidon calls it "a journey" of the humble chair.

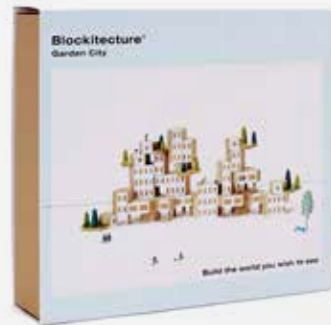
[+phaidon.com](http://phaidon.com)



City Block

Building blocks have come of age—our modern age—with Blockitecture Garden by designer James Paulius. A plethora of different shapes and sizes, plus trees and grass, allows for tall and wide structures, with levels cantilevered outward. Made from New Zealand pine, Blockitecture pieces offer the tools for any budding young architect to imagine the future of cities and what to do with the available space above the earth.

+jamespaulius.com



Groovy Slice

We're suckers for modern design that's also practical. And the uniquely shaped Field Cutting Board fits that belief. The untreated beechwood board is meant for more than just a nice presentation. Denmark design house HAY added grooves to collect bread crumbs that often fly off cutting boards. Less mess = happier eating!

+armitageandmcmillan.com



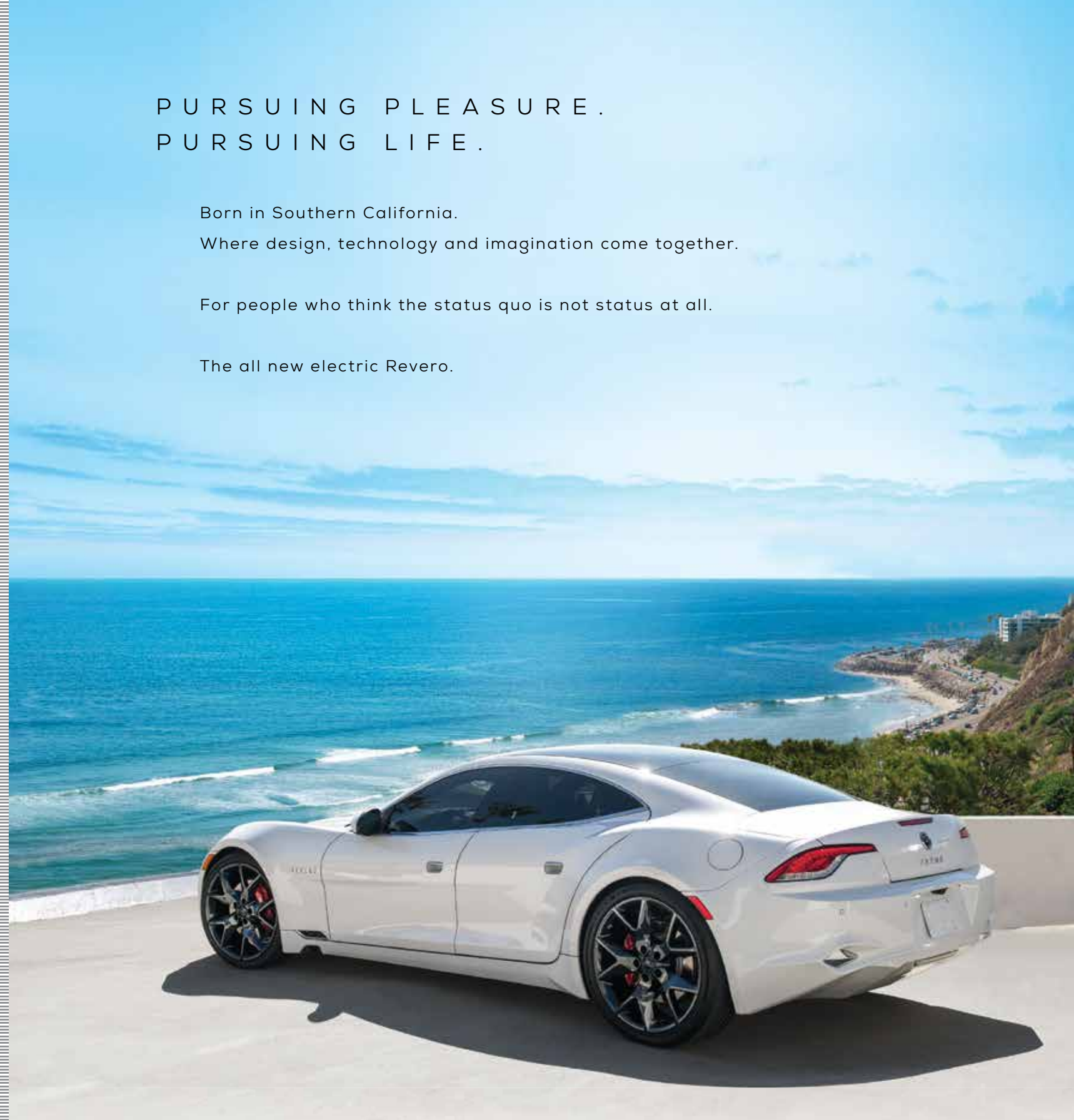
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Mobile Home

Classic Airstream trailers may be on the wish list of every mid-century modern enthusiast, and the company isn't abandoning the silver-bullet design anytime soon. But Airstream has brought in modern materials with the new Nest. Starting with a lightweight fiberglass shell, Nest includes a compact stainless-steel kitchen, Bluetooth-controlled LED lights and multiple USB ports, among other modern touches.

+airstream.com/nest



Eames Ware

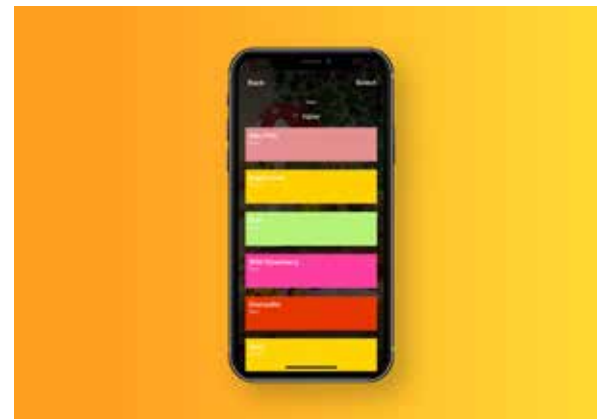
Japanese clothing shop Uniqlo has become a stop for graphic tees, especially because it partners with global artists to put their designs on a \$14.90 shirt. A recent collaborator? Eames Office. Yes, *that* Eames from iconic furniture founders Ray and Charles. SPRZ NY EAMES collection with Uniqlo began in fall 2017 and continues this year. Don't miss the Eames chair; it's now in a selection of new designs for the season.

+uniqlo.com

Swatch Shop

There's more to an exact shade of the perfect color than, well, the color. The Swatches app breaks down the color within a picture, right down to its RGB and Hex values. Developed by product designer Andrew Campoli, Swatches puts an iPhone photo to good use by also naming the nearest shade of Pantone color or the name of paint from companies like Benjamin Moore. Bonus points for adding support for the visually impaired with audio descriptions of the color types.

+swatchesapp.io



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RISOM LOUNGE CHAIR BY JENS RISOM

WORDS: *Alicia Rodriguez*



**IS NECESSITY THE MOTHER OF INVENTION?
ABSOLUTELY—IF THERE IS A VISIONARY WHO CAN
TURN CONSTRAINT INTO CREATIVITY.**

Danish mid-century giant Jens Risom is one such mind. He created his famous Risom Lounge Chair in 1943 at a time when top-quality materials were going toward the World War II effort. Faced with a lack of viable options for seat material, Risom decided on surplus parachute straps, thereby crafting the springy woven seat that came to define the chair—along with its sinuous frame, of course.

This puts Risom decades ahead of the green design movement, since he used not only sustainable materials, but materials that would otherwise have been waste (many parachute straps didn't pass necessary strength tests).

The Risom Lounge Chair was part of the 650 Line, the original designs of the Hans Knoll Furniture Company, which was founded by Risom and Hans Knoll in 1942. Besides the ingenious parachute straps, Risom's chair was

HAVE A SEAT

designed with economy in mind, as it used less wood overall (another response to wartime shortages). You can see just how compact the frames are in photographs where the chairs are stacked.

The material constraints barely register when people think of the Risom Lounge Chair because its rich wood and simple shape brought Scandinavian design into U.S. living rooms—and into our collective imaginations. The Risom Lounge Chair was easy to manufacture and easy to own. Part of the Risom/Knoll idea was to create affordable furniture that could be mass-produced using only local materials. Still manufactured by Knoll, the Risom Lounge Chair is available in maple or walnut, with straps made of cotton webbing (although it would be fantastic to see Knoll sponsor a competition in which designers had to rework the chair using only repurposed materials).

Thankfully, Knoll gave itself the necessary task of re-engineering the Risom Lounge Chair for the outdoors. The brand new Risom Outdoor Collection features the iconic chair in weather-resistant materials, including teak and Sunbrella® straps. This outside version seems appropriate, given Risom's outside-the-box thinking.

JENS RISOM

Jens Risom was born in Copenhagen in 1916 and died in New Canaan, Connecticut, in 2016, making him both a design legend and centenarian—not a typical combination.

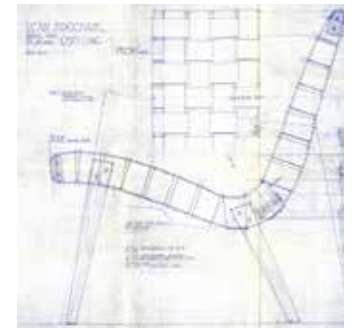
Perhaps Risom's longevity stemmed from his culture, as the Danes are known for being

reserved. The government's own "Study in Denmark" website states, "Generally, Danes avoid superficiality and hype." This might also explain why Risom focused on timeless design. He always retained a no-nonsense approach, famously stating, "I prefer design that is neutral and not center stage."

Risom emigrated to New York in 1939, at a time when modern furniture did not yet exist here. He became one of the first designers to introduce Scandinavian style to the United States, teaming up with Hans Knoll to start the eponymous furniture brand.

His designs for Knoll helped establish the brand, but just as their company was becoming successful, Risom got drafted into the Army and shipped off to Europe. After returning from the war, he established Jens Risom Design and later Design Control, focusing on furniture that was practical, elegant, and spare. Unlike other mid-century designers, he preferred natural materials. In fact, his devotion to wood eventually put him at odds with more futuristic designers who favored metal and plastics, including Florence Knoll.

Other notable Risom pieces include the T539 Magazine Table, with its tapered legs and crafty slot, and a flock of tables and desks with floating tops—all crafted from his favorite material. One of his ads explained, "Concrete and steel can be cold and impersonal. Furniture of rich, natural wood has a way of taking off the chill." ■

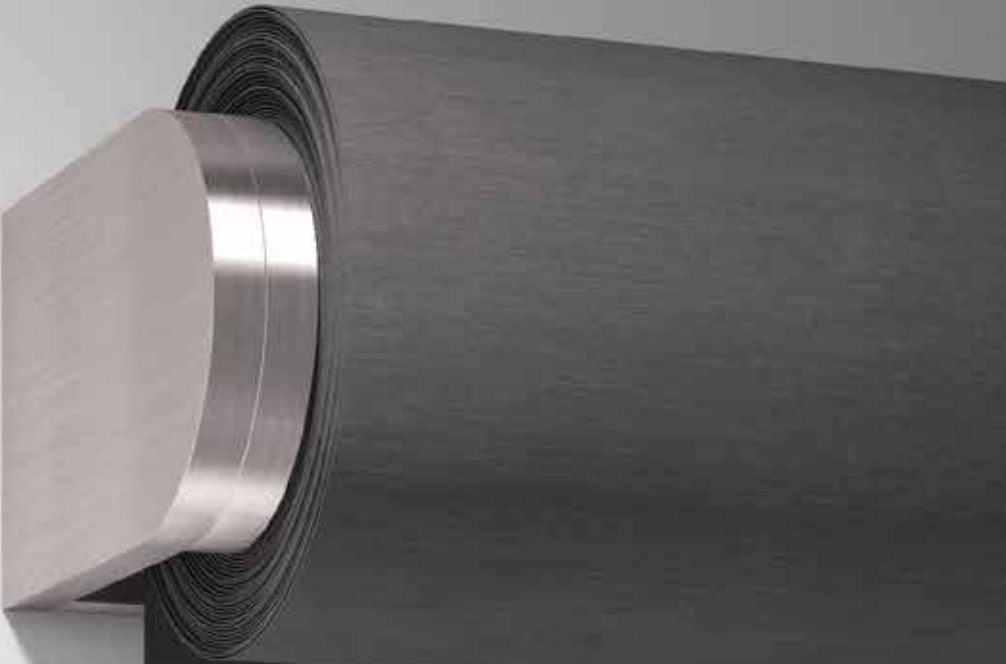


PREVIOUS PAGE: The new Risom Outdoor Lounge Chair by Knoll comes in weather-resistant teak—shown in Fern, Navy, and Ochre. **ABOVE:** Jens Risom circa 1939 and the blueprint for the 650 Line Lounge Chair (c. 1943, courtesy of the Knoll Archive). Below: Stacks of Risom Lounge Chairs (c. 1946, courtesy of the Knoll Archive) and Risom Lounge Chair with arms and ottoman.



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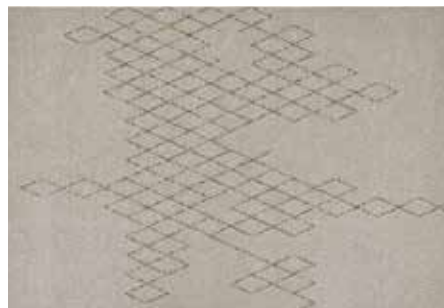


SUSTAINABILITY TO STAND ON

WORDS: *Kris Scott*

Made from discarded ghost nets, the Piran rug weaves design with responsibility

For those who appreciate timeless decor and want to be good stewards of the planet, the Piran rug is here for you. The Room & Board–offered Piran is hand-tufted by North American rug manufacturer and Room & Board partner Delos, using Econyl®. This nylon yarn is regenerated from recycled carpet that would otherwise end up in a landfill, and discarded fishing nets, also known as “ghost” nets, which pollute our oceans and often kill or maim marine wildlife in the process. The rug’s graphic pattern



The Piran’s graphic pattern is a nod to the floating, decaying fishing nets, known as “ghost nets,” that are salvaged to help create the yarn used in the rug’s construction. “It’s current but not trendy,” says accessories merchandise manager Jenon Bailie of the product design, “and not something you’ll tire of.”

is a nod to those nets, says Jenon Bailie, accessories merchandise manager for Room & Board.

Bailie was on an “inspiration trip” to Portland, Oregon, when she heard about the regenerated yarn. Immediately intrigued, she got in touch with Delos, whose headquarters are conveniently—and perhaps serendipitously—within driving distance of one of the U.S.-based Econyl® plants. After visiting the plant and being impressed by what they saw, Bailie and her Delos partners set out to “create something that is of course beautiful to our customers, but also helps use and consume some of the regenerated waste products.” The process, Bailie adds, was “both exciting and very inspiring.”

Of course, no product is truly sustainable if it doesn’t last. Econyl®, Bailie notes, has “a lot of good qualities associated with it,” including color vibrancy, durability, and stain resistance. The name “Piran” was inspired by an “aspirational” city in Slovenia, a country where much of the nylon regeneration process takes place. As a founding member of the Sustainable Furnishings Council, Room & Board has long been dedicated to raising awareness and expanding the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices across the home furnishings industry. “We want to be good partners for our vendors and good partners with the earth. We’re all about developing and designing solutions with that in mind, and it’s not something we take lightly,” say Bailie.

The Piran is available in Charcoal and Cement in standard and custom sizes. ■

+roomandboard.com



“WE WANT TO BE GOOD PARTNERS FOR OUR VENDORS AND GOOD PARTNERS WITH THE EARTH. WE’RE ALL ABOUT DEVELOPING AND DESIGNING SOLUTIONS WITH THAT IN MIND, AND IT’S NOT SOMETHING WE TAKE LIGHTLY.” —JENON BAILIE OF ROOM & BOARD



Room & Board’s Piran rug is made of Econyl®, a regenerated nylon product made from salvaged carpet fragments and fishing nets—materials that would otherwise pile up in landfills and pollute the world’s oceans. Available in 170 colors, Econyl® is touted as being as durable and versatile as it is sustainable.



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PRODUCT DESIGN

A LIGHT TOUCH

WORDS: Kris Scott

A few years back, Long Island City-based RUX Design had a pile of castoff wood cuts lying around the workshop floor. Known as a studio that “grows creative brands with ethical roots,” it charged its designers with crafting a new product from the discarded materials.

Combined with energy-smart LED technologies, Stickbulb, named for its signature sleek wood/light combinations, was born in 2012. Six years later, this play of energy-smart components and sustainably sourced wood is central to the brand’s signature designs, and the newly introduced Bough Collection is its latest display of inventiveness. Like other collections from the brand, slim rectangular wood beams in multi-foot lengths encase LED lights, and those sections are then joined together using steel connectors to create Erector Set–like adaptation and creativity. Where Bough differs is in its Y-shaped friction-fit steel connector,

which allows three beams to be connected at subtly different angles. The result is sculptural pendant lighting with beauty and complexity that become more evident as you further customize.

“Branching forms are an obvious opportunity for a brand that makes light from wood, but it took us a long time to find the right kind of branch,” says Russell Greenberg, who founded RUX with Christopher Beardsley. “Bough is an organic system that grows from minimal pendants into more dynamic geometries at larger scales.”

The collection, which was introduced in May at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York City, is available in three options—Little, Middle, and Big. The single-suspension Bough fixtures each contain three Stickbulbs ranging in length from 1.5 to 4 feet. The triple-bulb design casts light evenly, and an adjustable ball-joint stem connection allows each fixture to be tilted or held level. The new product is also available as a Double Bough in the same three sizes. This larger version uses five Stickbulbs spanning between two metal hardware connections, making it well-suited for larger, rectangular dining and conference tables.

Like other Stickbulb collections, Bough is available in a range of wood types, some named for the places they were harvested. The selections include heart pine, water tower redwood—reclaimed from demolished NYC water towers—sustainably sourced American walnut and maple, and ebonized oak in addition to a new limited edition: reclaimed heart pine from the demolished Pullman Couch Factory in Chicago. Hardware finishes include white, slate grey, matte black, brushed or polished nickel, brushed or polished brass, and hand blackened steel as well as custom options.

Whatever combination of wood and hardware, the Stickbulb Bough collection is sure to enthrall those who appreciate a marriage of minimalist modern design and dedicated sustainability. ■

+stickbulb.com



In March, a custom version of Bough, coined “Fire and Ice,” was displayed at the Collective Design Fair in New York City. The sculptural piece was made using limited-edition heart pine salvaged from Chicago’s Pullman Couch Factory, which caught fire in 2013. As firefighters doused the building in water, it turned to ice in the sub-zero weather. This custom Bough was inspired by the visual and poetic beauty created by the melding of elemental opposites.



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MAKING THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

DYNIA ARCHITECTS FIND A POETIC SOLUTION FOR A CHALLENGING SITE WITH THEIR DESIGN FOR RINO'S NEW ZEPPELIN STATION

WORDS: Kris Scott • IMAGES: James Florio



When Zeppelin Station opened in March, many touted its food hall's culinary offerings and public marketplace. While both are integral parts of the latest Zeppelin Development offering, neither could be successful without thoughtful planning prior to excavator hitting dirt.

Enter Denver architect Stephen Dynia. Ask him about the vision behind the 100,000-square-foot Zeppelin Station, and he's quick to get to the point, excited to talk about his newest project with the project's developer.

"The site characteristics were really interesting," begins Dynia. "It's on the edge of the rail corridor, which you know is not going to be filled in at any time in our lifetimes. The sense of space on the east side of the building was considerable, and we knew that to the north and west, you're not sure what's going to happen [in terms of further development]." So, knowing they couldn't control certain factors, they focused on those they could,

starting with ensuring views of the city skyline and making certain the space had "some relationship to the outdoors," says Dynia.

The solution? Terraced rooftop gardens. Each floor on the south side of the building steps consecutively farther back, like a giant staircase, with the resulting space acting as a rooftop garden for the floor above—one that will become more vibrant as time passes, notes Dynia. Those terraces guarantee a connection to the outdoors, he notes, but also "get great views of the city skyline as well as the mountains."

There were other challenges with the site's location, including noise from the nearby Union Pacific railroad tracks. While at the site, Dynia noticed rail cars going back and forth throughout the day—their diesel engines "unbelievably loud." This activity was happening on Zeppelin Station's east side, which is also where light rail users disembarking from the 38th/Blake Street station via a pedestrian bridge approach the building. He and

"THE SCREEN ILLUMINATES IN DIFFERENT WAYS AS THE SUN MOVES TO THE WEST SIDE OF THE BUILDING SO YOU GET THIS SILVERY PLANE THAT IS NICELY CONTRASTED WITH THE RED RECESSES. IT'S THE UNITY OF THE ENTIRE FAÇADE THAT REALLY MAKES THE BUILDING APPEAR TO BE A SINGULAR THOUGHT WHEN YOU LOOK AT IT FROM ACROSS THE TRACKS."

—Stephen Dynia





his team used a double wall and enhanced glass system to help tamp down the noise inside Zeppelin Station. This helped “diminish the sound of but not the activity of the rail line,” Dynia says, and that was important to his vision for the development. He finds the rail activity “a perpetual fascination. You see all kinds of things—blades from wind turbines going by, for example. And in the absence of there being an ocean or other natural features like that, the rail lines actually become an amenity to the site.”

But Dynia knew that side of the development needed something more than a bank of windows, especially since the parking structure was also visible. He wanted to create something, he says, that would be a “singular and powerful image on that side of building.” This resulted in what might be Zeppelin’s Station’s most powerful architectural statement: what Dynia calls the building’s “screen.”

After looking at many options while also aiming to stay within budget, the team struck gold with a construction “standard”—galvanized steel framing beams set in a vertical pattern spaced 16 inches apart. “This spacing was studied and determined to be economical and effective. When viewing straight on it of course looks sparse, but increasingly blends together as the angle of observation becomes more oblique—as from the passing commuter trains.”

These beams are juxtaposed with a band of sawtooth recesses set near that façade’s center and painted in the building’s signature bright red, which Dynia also used for graphics inside Zeppelin Station “to highlight certain aspects of the building.” The effect, Dynia says, “unifies the entire surface—the building skin, windows and, most significantly, it obscures the parking structure.”

The screen, he adds, is also “very poetic in the way it reflects light.” “Sometimes it looks gauzier with different light conditions, and in the evening it’s illuminated and you can roughly see the pattern of light inside the building. Studied from various views and given the spacing of these elements, I think it comes off pretty successfully.”

Dynia has worked with Zeppelin Development on more than 10 projects now, and he hopes to continue the relationship. “They have a very strong sense of what buildings can be in the city and how the collective of each building can add to how a city works. They’re interested in making more humane environments and a more interesting cityscape.”

And he’s pleased with how Zeppelin Station turned out—so much so that he moved his firm’s offices into the building in mid-April. ■

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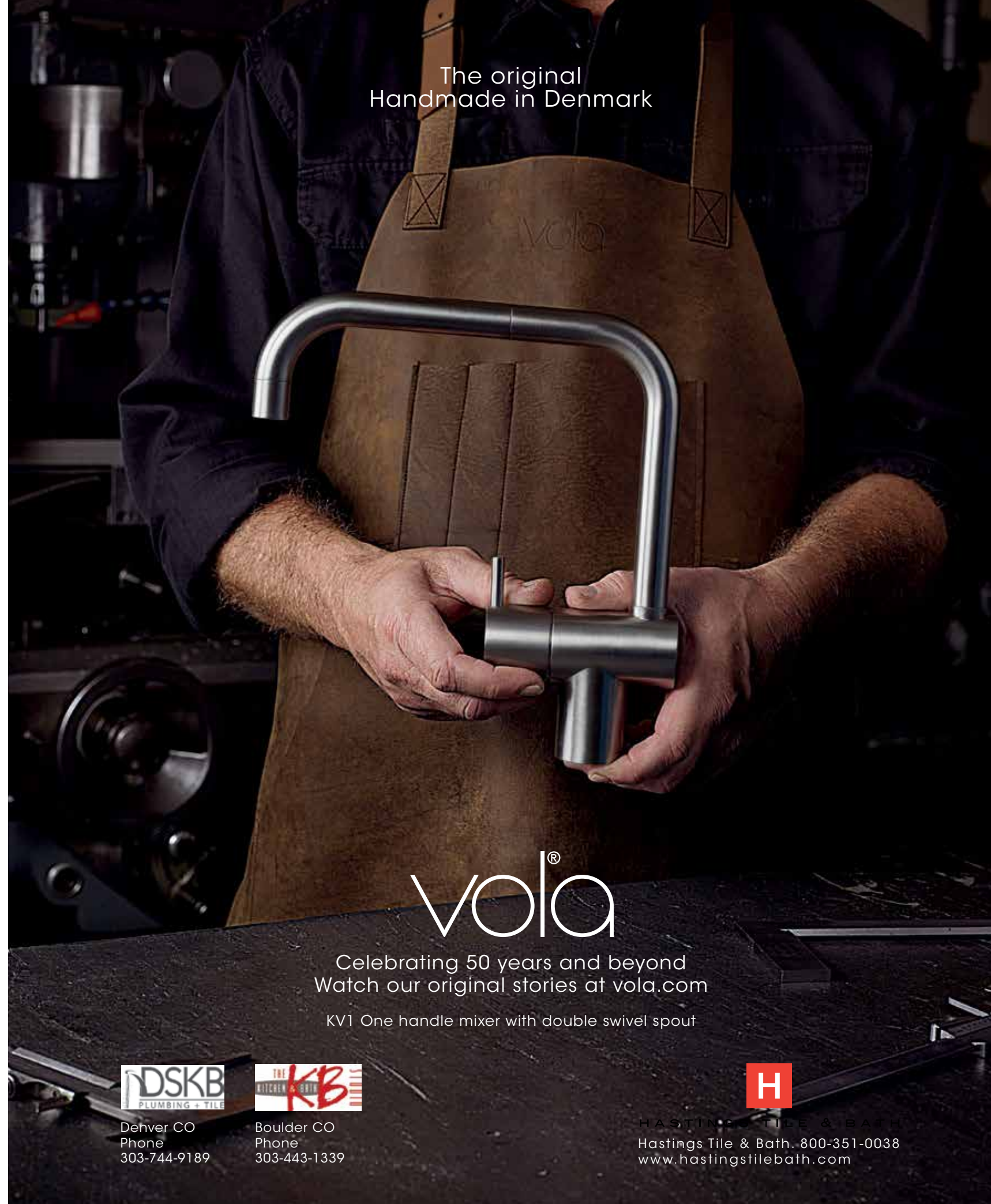


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MAKING ROOM FOR THE OCTOPUS

DENVER ARCHITECT HUNTER LEGGITT
DESIGNS A NEW SPACE FOR AN INNOVATIVE
LENDING LIBRARY AT THE MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART.

WORDS: Scott Kirkwood
IMAGES: Jess Bernstein



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART DOES THINGS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY.

Within the span of a few weeks this spring, museum visitors had the opportunity to practice their downward dog in the middle of a Cleon Peterson exhibit; attend a private concert from “Portugal. The Man”; and discuss the theme of “Art as Activism” over a meal with artist Michael Gadlin. And in April, MCA did one more thing you wouldn’t expect of a museum: It began lending art to local residents. A few weeks ago, the first of hundreds of commissioned pieces made their way into living rooms and bedrooms all over the Front Range, as part of the Octopus Initiative.

“We don’t just ask ourselves, ‘How can we create the best possible museum?’” says museum director Adam Lerner. “We ask, ‘How can we make a better city? And what is our role in bringing more vitality to the city?’ Part of that is giving people a mirror to show them what it means to live in a creative place. We try really hard to produce exhibitions of distinction, but we also to try to capture some of the energy that’s around us and feed it back to people.”

That thinking led to yet another question: If MCA sees itself as a custodian of the city’s creative culture, how can the institution help artists who are feeling left out of the city’s prosperity, to the point of being priced out of their studios and even their homes? The simple answer: Buy their art.

But the MCA has never housed a permanent collection, and Lerner wasn’t interested in changing that. Instead, every month MCA will randomly select a few lucky people to keep pieces in their own homes for 10 months. In the program’s first week, 1,300 people registered more than 3,000 requests for 150 pieces. Barring any unforeseen disasters, Lerner hopes to commission even more pieces from local artists over the next few years. (Want in on the action? See the sidebar on page 70.)

Although much of the program unfolds online, Lerner imagined a small library that could hold dozens of pieces within the building itself, to help visitors envision a specific style or color palette in their own homes—a level of consideration that rarely takes place in museums. MCA set aside a small wood-paneled room near the museum’s entrance, then started looking for an architect who could find a clever way to pack dozens of pieces into 460 square feet.

ENTER HUNTER LEGGITT

Leggitt grew up in Denver and graduated with a degree in architecture from CU-Boulder in 2003; he soon headed west, and spent the first 14 years of his career in California. There, he began working under Sebastian Mariscal learning the intricacies of design-build, before opening his own Los Angeles firm Hunter Leggitt Studio in 2009. Since then, he’s dreamt up modern homes and interactive entertainment venues, including stages for the Coachella Music Festival and other live events. By 2017,



“FOR ME, THE CHALLENGE WAS TO DESIGN SOMETHING THAT RESPECTS THE EXISTING SPACE AND RESPECTS THE MUSEUM, BUT GIVES IT A NEW AESTHETIC AND FUNCTIONAL FEEL—ONE THAT’S MORE PLAYFUL, ENGAGING, AND INTERACTIVE, TO DRAW PEOPLE IN.”

—HUNTER LEGGITT

Denver’s explosive growth beckoned, and Leggitt returned to split his time designing projects for the Rockies and the West Coast. An impromptu run-in with Lerner at Taxi eventually led to the Octopus commission.

“For me, the challenge was to design something that respects the existing space and respects the museum, but gives it a new aesthetic and functional feel to it—one that’s more playful, engaging, and interactive, to draw people in,” says Leggitt. “I wanted to bring in my experience designing for live performances and interactive events—something that goes beyond the ‘look but don’t touch mentality’ that tells people to stand behind a line. And I wanted something with a material texture to it, something with weight, something that makes you want to touch it.” The space set aside for Octopus was originally full of

HOW IT WORKS

Denver’s Museum of Contemporary Art isn’t the first institution to invite people to take art home with them—several schools including MIT and Oberlin College have allowed students to borrow from their permanent collections for years. But from what we can tell, it’s the first time members of the public have had the chance to turn their own homes into satellite museum galleries.

Here’s the deal: Each month, MCA releases approximately 20 new works of art, commissioned and purchased from up-and-coming artists in the Denver area. Residents of Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties can log onto the MCA website, pick a few favorites, and win the chance to showcase a piece in their own home for 10 months, free of charge. If you’re one of the chosen few, you’ll need to visit the museum to pick up the carrying case and mounting materials, and return it all at the end of the term. Six artists have already created the initial collection of more than 150 works, which will be trickled out month by month; museum director Adam Lerner hopes to feature a total of seven to ten artists a year, for the next several years.

Learn more at: octopus.mcadenver.org.

cabinets, open shelving, and one or two desks. Leggitt stripped it down to the floor, ceiling, and walls, then built it back up in the span of four months.

The goal was to create a storage system that married high-end furniture with functional solutions found in archives like the Clyfford Still Museum, a few blocks away. Leggitt’s team couldn’t shut down the museum for construction, so design and fabrication process took place in a warehouse in Globeville. There, Bonnie Gregory and Jordan Vaughn turned black steel, frosted glass, and walnut into 16 panels that slide in and out of four 6-foot-tall cases, all of which blend into the original space. Opposite the racks, two steel pedestals hold iPads so visitors can scroll through the catalog digitally. Cabinets with inlaid walnut detailing seem to blend into the walls, offering unobtrusive storage for the dozens of custom boxes designed to safely transport art from museum to home and back.

“If I can marry those two in exhibit design like Octopus, you should be able to see both aspects—that interactive quality and that sense of permanence together.”

Architects generally get paid to construct walls, not tear them down. But in this case, tearing down metaphorical walls was always the goal.

“Museums can become very boring places with really alienating experiences, because [curators] care so much about protecting the art that they end up keeping people away from it,” says Lerner. “If we can create a situation that really trusts visitors, that’s something special. I believe a lot more can happen if you take a little bit of a risk.” ■



MCA asked Hunter Leggitt to find a way to exhibit up to 100 pieces of commissioned art in 460 square feet, and these sliding steel panels were the logical solution.

The result is a cross between a jewel box and a walk-in humidior—a space meant to display but also to be practical. The tiny room isn’t easy to navigate, especially when more than a handful of people are sliding panels back and forth, in search of the perfect image. And that’s by design. The awkward dance that takes place as art lovers avoid one another in a gallery quickly evaporates as people are literally forced to rub elbows with one another, like shoppers at the world’s tiniest boutique.

“My work in event production has given me a better understanding of ephemeral, playful experience, whereas the architectural work makes for more of a permanent, lasting type of design,” says Leggitt.

PROJECT CREDITS:

Designer and builder: **Hunter Leggitt Studio**

Metalwork: **Bonnie Gregory**

Cabinetry: **Jordan Vaughn/Vonmod**

Hardware: **KN Crowder**

Lighting: **i5 LIGHTING COLLABORATIVE**

Electrical: **RK Electrical**



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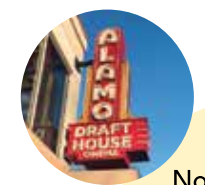


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“SIMPLICITY IS THE ULTIMATE SOPHISTICATION.”

THE MAN WHO SAID THAT, LEONARDO DA VINCI, KNEW A THING OR TWO ABOUT VISUAL IMPACT.

So does Peter Blank, whose last 10 years at the helm of Mile Hi Modern have made him a powerhouse in Denver’s emerging modern real estate scene. So it stands to reason that when Blank—who had previously lived in such mid-century modern enclaves as Krisana Park and Lynwood—decided to design and build his own sleek and sophisticated house in Hilltop, it would be the apotheosis of all he has learned and seen over the last decade. “My cumulative life and career in real estate—the design elements that have always subconsciously resonated with me—were a huge inspiration for this home,” Blank says. “I wanted to do the Peter Blank Mile Hi Modern version of a house: a light home anchored in raw materials, open but intimate.”

That is evident as soon as you walk up the broad, low, asymmetrical “Barcelona-style” steps toward the home’s entryway. “I absolutely love the anticipation of walking into a courtyard setting,” Blank says. “There’s a feeling of mystery when you walk toward a house where there is no intuitive sense of where the front door is.” Because of Denver’s strict building codes, a solid wall in front of the courtyard was verboten, so Blank opted for a custom, laser-cut bronze screen that feels artful and transparent but still cocoons the calm courtyard, encircled by pine trees.

Pass through the front door and you find yourself standing in a grand foyer that is “the size of a small apartment,” Blank says. “A lot of people thought I was nuts to have so much ‘wasted space’ there, but I wanted to make an immediate visual statement, with the space defined by a solid limestone wall on one side and a limestone colonnade on the other. There’s nothing pretentious or ostentatious, just a very strong architectural presence. And by the way, once people saw the finished entryway, they no longer thought I’d wasted space—they thought it was amazing.”

Despite the unencumbered freedom that the wide-open concept provides, the home also pulls you in. “You don’t feel lost in this house because somehow it embraces you,” Blank says.

Blank had several goals for the approach to his home, including to save the granddaddy oak, one of the oldest trees in Hilltop. Adds architect Brian Ojala: “The approach is tertiary, where it’s public, then semi-private in the courtyard, and then private when you step into the house. The cube, on the left side of the house, has no windows on the front; the light comes in from the south because the next-door neighbor actually created a small park there, between the two homes. We intentionally have clerestory windows over the main living space that the roof appears to float on.”

minimal masterpiece

THE HILLTOP HOME OF MILE HI MODERN’S PETER BLANK IS THE CULMINATION OF A DECADE OF EVOLUTION IN DENVER’S GROWING MODERN DESIGN COMMUNITY

WORDS: Jane Craig
IMAGES: David Lauer



Eschewing a television in the living room, Blank focused on the open-flame asymmetrical floating hearth and fireplace. "My inspiration was from classic mid-century and international design - it was relevant then, relevant now and will be relevant 100 years from now." He balanced the open-flame with with two pre-Columbian sculptures.

In the capacious entryway, a modern limestone take on a colonnade on one side (left) is balanced by a solid limestone wall on the other. "I found a reclaimed beam (right) that in its rusticity was offset from the limestone wall," says Blank. "It's LED lit up and down, so it appears to float. To me, it's just exquisite." Adds architect Ojala: "There is an international feel to the house, a visceral approach where the materials kind of go away and you just get this feeling from the space."



That flow can be attributed to a number of decisions that Blank, working with architect Brian Ojala of Entasis Group, made during the organic design process. "I wanted a house with no visual clutter—and that meant no doors," says Blank. "When you walk through this house, you walk into vestibules. You don't see doors to the bedrooms, you don't see doors to the basement, you don't see doors to the kitchen pantry. You just walk, and every time you turn a corner there's an element of surprise."

Though every design decision was intentional and assiduously thought out, Blank wanted a feeling of disarming simplicity throughout the home, which has 2,900 square >P.80



Blank wanted the dining room to be open concept but still have its own space. On one side is Kevin Vesel's millwork; on the other is a stacked-stone limestone wall that has a lightness to it because it does not touch the perimeter wall and also disappears up into a skylight. Though Blank has always considered himself a "natural steel guy," he opted for a brass chandelier by Lindsey Adelman, which he likes for both its warmth and the fact that it balances a sculptural brass staircase at the other side of the main floor. At left is a piece of selenite that acts as a piece of freestanding sculpture.



"My idea for the kitchen was to have it open to the living room, which is on trend," says Blank. "But I went a step further: When I envisioned sitting in the living room with friends having cocktails, I didn't want to look over at the kitchen and see appliances and the mechanics of the kitchen. I wanted an art wall, behind which all of the things like the refrigerator and the pantry are hidden. I was told it could not be done, but we did it and the living room has maintained its design integrity." The ultra-sleek kitchen cabinets are made of white rift oak, with Caesarstone countertops.

"I WAS INFLUENCED BY MID-CENTURY DESIGN. I WANTED CONTINUITY OF MATERIALS—WHITE RIFT OAK & NATURAL LIMESTONE—AND ARCHITECTURAL STRENGTH WITH CLERESTORY WINDOWS, CANTILEVERING STRUCTURES AND BROAD ROOF LINES." —PETER BLANK



Blank created a seamless indoor-outdoor experience by using disappearing glass doors that lead out to a backyard of terraces and shade sails.

feet on the main floor and an additional 2,900 square feet in the basement. “I was influenced by mid-century design,” says Blank, “I wanted continuity of materials—white rift oak & natural limestone—and architectural strength with clerestory windows, cantilevering structures and broad roof lines.” Adds Ojala: “Everything was honest about this house. Everything. There was a very limited material palette, but we focused on texture throughout. The retaining walls are a split-face stone, and then we have the millwork (by Kevin Vesel of Vesel Brand) and the oak floors. That’s essentially it. And every single turn, every detail, has a purpose.”

They also aimed for a feeling of lightness. To that end, “Everything in this house floats and is underlit,” says Blank. “In the kitchen, nothing touches the floor. The televisions appear to float in custom-designed wall cavities. In the dining room, the limestone wall doesn’t touch any other wall, and it disappears up into a skylight. It’s such a strong structural wall, and yet it seems disconnected from everything around it. You just look at it in amazement. Even the bathtubs and sinks seem to float.

“I also chose to have no baseboards, so stone goes to wood in every application, and the limestone is all from the same quarry so it’s identical everywhere, though it can look different because of how the light hits it.”

In a nod to International Design, the limestone is dry stacked inside and out. “I did not want to see any grout,” Blank says. “The beauty of the dry stacked stone is that it has a Roman/Greco aesthetic—and stands the test of time.”

Though Blank was integrally involved in every decision, he is



The custom staircase that connects the main floor to the basement level was designed by Blank to also appear to be floating. “I didn’t want to see a big ugly riser supporting the stairs, so every tread floats off of the walls.” He chose a brass custom railing to play off of the Lindsey Adelman chandelier in the dining room. “Everything feels right,” he says. “Your eye is not arrested anywhere. Everything just has this natural organic flow to it.”



Blank’s house was one of the first Denver clients for Boffi, the Italian design firm that opened a showroom in the city last fall. “Peter chose a system called Antibes that has an elm finish and is very versatile,” says Ann Hofmeister of Solesdi Boffi. “What made this project unusual is that he didn’t want any lighting in the closets, because his house is so amazing the dining room skylight wraps over into the closet.”

“THIS HOUSE IS REALLY A TESTAMENT TO MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN COLORADO, AND THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED ON IT. EVERYONE NEEDED EVERYONE. PETER AND I DIDN’T HAVE THE INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY TO BUILD A HOUSE LIKE THIS 10 YEARS AGO. IT NEEDED THE PEOPLE WE HAVE FORMED RELATIONSHIPS WITH OVER THE LAST DECADE— THE HOMES I’VE BUILT AND THE HOMES HE HAS SOLD.”

— ARCHITECT BRIAN OJALA

In the master bath, an air-jetted soaking tub from Americh sits next to a sculpture from Blank’s private collection. Because the walls do not meet in the corner, and the dining room is on the other side, Blank, who has frequent dinner parties, jokes that if he wants to have a nice soak in the middle of a meal, he can do so, simply asking a guest to pass a cocktail through the sliver of an opening.

the first to say that it took a village to make this house a reality. In addition to architect Ojala, the team comprises a who’s who of Denver’s design community, including Kevin Vesel of Vesel Brand, who did all of the home’s custom millwork; Old Greenwich Builders; Italian firm Boffi, which designed and installed all of the closets; and Harrison Home Systems, which made it a “smart” home.

“Peter and I worked together from start to finish on this house, and it was all about purity of form—the essence of space, light and material,” says Ojala. “We stripped off all of the unnecessary

components to leave the pure essentials.”

The design process was also unusually organic, with decisions being made or revised as the house was actually going up. “It was not like we said, ‘Okay, the design is all done. Here you go, builder,’ ” says Ojala. “It was ongoing napkin sketches. Peter and I would go to the site every day and say, ‘Okay, we got the shell built. How do we infill these walls? How will the millwork terminate? How does the fireplace wall look?’ It was hand sketch, hand sketch, hand sketch, always going to the next level, the next level, the next level. I probably

have 500 sketches after the project was submitted for permit. It was a living process.”

The process was also “exceptionally organic and collaborative,” says Cress Carter of Old Greenwich Builders. “At the time we built this house, the structure was probably as complex as any house we’ve ever done. Just look at how the roof cantilevers where there is no support and the wide open spaces with glass. Peter had a hand in everything—he’s excellent at interacting with creative people.”

That included some of the best craftspeople in town. “Peter had such a strong vision—he’s really a genius when it comes to the interior palette—but it wouldn’t have been successful without all the local craftsmen,” adds Ojala.

Chief among them was Kevin Vesel, who did all of the millwork, whose color he describes as “warm driftwood.” It was a challenge, but that is something Vesel is used to. “We do a lot of things on every project that have not been done before,” he says. “I bring in ideas from all over the world—I see what’s cutting edge with different vendors and different materials—but Peter’s input was extremely valuable and really showed up in the final product, which is not only unique but outstanding in terms of quality and finish. He’s a much better interior designer than most interior designers I know.”

Entering into the powder room vestibule, you see a hand-cast aluminum vessel and artwork by Blank himself, both sitting in front of a wavy “psychedelic” mirror from Porcelanosa.





Finally, Harrison Home Systems made the beautiful house smart, too. “This house was not only design-focused but technology-forward,” says George Harrison. “Peter has the ability to control everything from a single app on his phone through a home automation system called Savant; he can do it remotely or with voice control. He also has new Lutron palladium keypads, which are very clean keypads; they are unique in Colorado and can control shades and dim lights to accentuate the home’s unbelievable architecture.”

Modern, yes. Cutting edge, of course. But to Blank, the essence of the home echoes what Leonardo said all those centuries ago. “The house is classic but open, and it embraces art in all its forms. The simplicity of it is its brilliance.” ■



Blank had originally intended not to finish the basement but then inspiration struck. “I realized it could be spectacular, too.” The polished concrete floors are offset by cone-tied concrete walls, and Blank brought Kevin Vesel’s millwork down to this floor to provide continuity from above. “You know that something visual has changed when you walk down here, but it still has that connection,” he says. On the far wall is a work by New Orleans artist David Harouni.



The all-inclusive gym from Boffi (above) provides a full-body workout, which Blank chose so he would not have to fill the room with weights and other equipment. In both the gym and the entertainment room (previous page), he collaborated with artist Jeff Klapperich of New York to create the dimensional black-and-white nudes. The steam room downstairs (right) is Blank’s favorite indulgence in the house; it’s piped with peppermint, eucalyptus and lavender, and provides a “total immersive wet experience.” The shower is wrapped in white Carrera tile from Decorative Materials.



PROJECT CREDITS

Architecture
Brian Ojala - Entasis Group

Builder
Old Greenwich Builders

Lighting Design
Kate Cullen

Technology
Harrison Home Systems

Closets
Boffi / Solesdi

Gym
Boffi / Solesdi

Ledge & Honed Limestone
Materials Marketing

Bathroom Tile
Decorative Materials

Millwork/Paneling
Vesel Brand

Slab Quartz / Tile Installation
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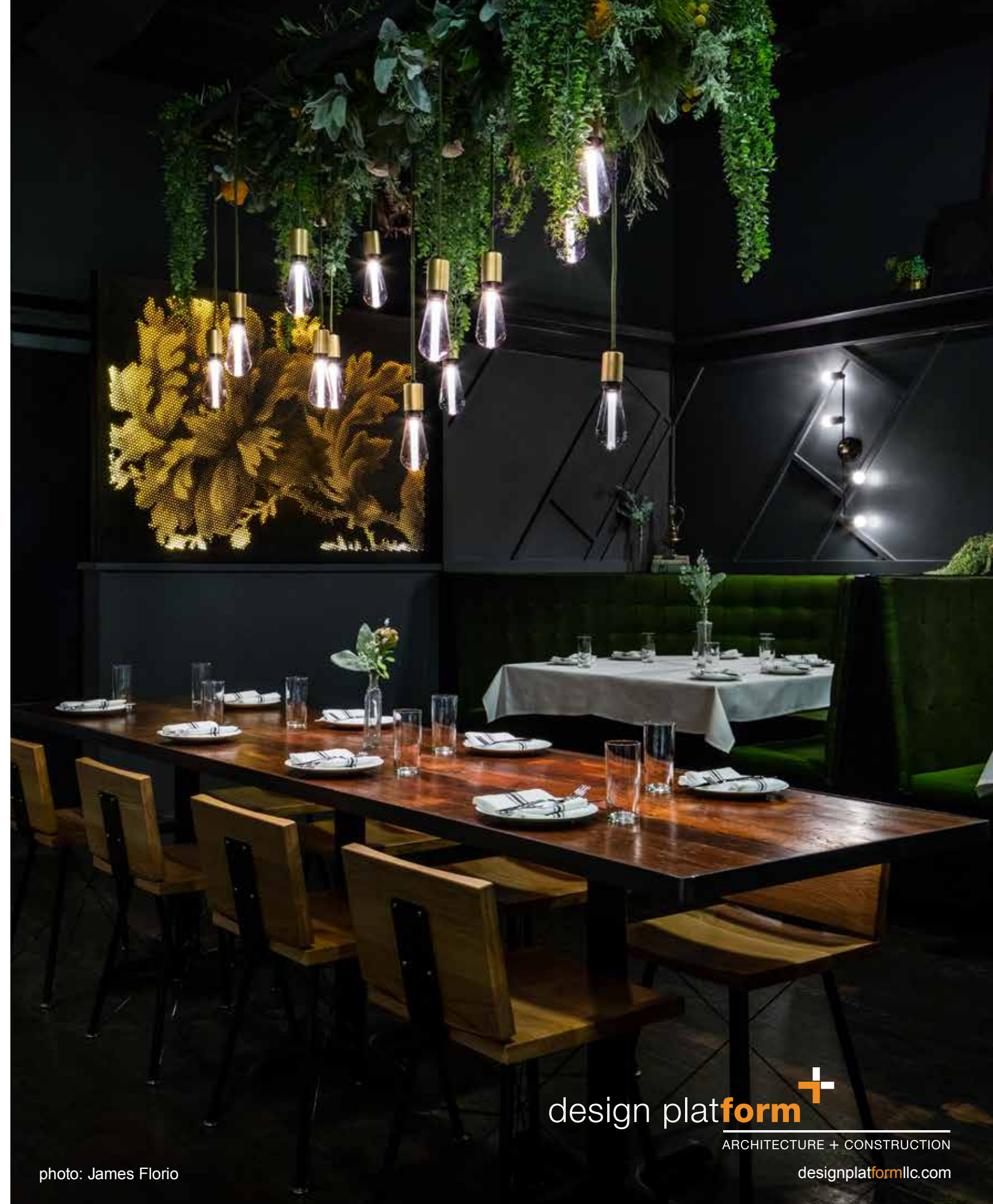


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WHAT NOW?

SHOW-STOPPING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WORLD'S BIGGEST DESIGN EVENT

WORDS: Alicita Rodriguez



In the design universe, everyone who is anyone (or wants to be) descends upon one fashionable Italian city each April for the biggest furniture fair in the world. How big? The numbers are staggering—434,509 attendees and 1,841 exhibitors from more than 188 countries. And 2018 included EuroCucina and the International Bathroom Exhibition, both biennial events. Here's a sampling of some much-discussed standouts.



PIECED TOGETHER

The Vlinder Sofa by Hella Jongerius exemplifies the designer's love of mixing fabrics and textures. A color expert, Jongerius established the Vitra Colour & Material Library, a system that enables people to combine furniture pieces across the Vitra collection. Her love of handcraft is evident in the Vlinder Sofa, which offers a quilt-like cover that seems casually thrown over the couch.

STRAIGHT AND NARROW

Basis by British architect David Chipperfield for E15 is a trestle table featuring traditional joinery techniques. The base uses solid wood trestles and beams that can be adapted to fit different space needs. Table tops are sold separately, available in European walnut and solid oak in oiled and white-pigmented finishes, as well as brown-colored glass. The sturdy legs contrast beautifully with the slim surface.





RATTAN REDUX

With its sinuous arms and back, Frames by Jaime Hayon for Expormim takes rattan to a different place. Unexpected shapes and colors update the material, “adding a layer of glamour to the rustic charm.” The collection includes dining chairs, lounge chairs, and footstools. There are also drum-like coffee tables and a capsule-shaped room divider.



OBJECT LESSON

Dynamic duo Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec collaborated with master glassmakers to create Alcova, a collection of geometric vases and objects for Wonderglass. Made by pouring molten glass into wooden molds, a “primitive” process, each Alcova piece is unique.



ALL EYES

Designer Bernhard Dessecker explains, “The first sparkle of this great idea was inspired by iconic automotive headlights.” A great ovate form, Iconic Eyes, for the ever-whimsical Dutch brand Moooi, is like a millennial incarnation of Grand Central Station’s giant elliptical chandeliers. But Dessecker’s vision is more futuristic and alienesque, like a relic found floating in space.



ANYWHERE KITCHEN

For those with limited square footage, look no further than the AM 01 freestanding cabinet kitchen by Atelier Mendini for Japanese company Sanwa. Measuring approximately 47 by 29 inches, AM 01 can be placed against a wall or in the middle of the room, where it can double as a space divider. The curved wood exterior opens to reveal a shiny interior, creating “a sense of surprise.” Interior materials include silk-screened glass and stainless steel.



WHAT NOW?
SALONE 2018
ROUNDUP



STACK THE DECK

Named after his birthplace, the Ibiza Chair by Eugeni Quitllet with Vondom transforms the traditional cane chair of his childhood into “a solid frame forever.” Thanks to its polyethylene material, Ibiza will withstand the sun and elements, although the garden chair is certainly welcome inside. Given its linear back, reminiscent of pipes, the Ibiza Chair works anywhere. And it’s stackable.



FURRY FRIENDS

The aptly named Fufy & Buky serve as animal ambassadors “promoting sustainability and animal rights in the fashion industry.” Designed by Matteo Cibic with Kein for TOYTOO, these limited-edition stuffed creatures offer whimsy and style for a good cause.

DO THE MATH

It seems everyone was taken with Ratio at this year’s EuroCucina. The idea of Vincent Van Duysen for luxury kitchen brand Dada, Ratio is a modular kitchen that uses a metal structure in concert with rich wood surfaces. Linear without being cold, Ratio strikes a perfect balance.



SMART MOVE

In a way, Chess, a collection of sheet-metal furniture conceived by German designer Konstantin Grcic for Italian brand Magis, already existed. After Grcic saw the large industrial pieces being produced in a steel factory, he reimagined them for residential use. Without changing the existing sizes or shapes, Grcic added touches like oak handles and plinth bases “that would be fitting for the domestic environment.” With drawers or sliding doors, Chess pieces can be used alone or in a set.



MIRROR MIRROR

From Living Divani comes Pebble, a desk/vanity with an unexpected combination of straight and curved elements. The metal frame is softened by leather details and organic forms. Reminiscent of stones, Pebble offers tranquility alongside vanity. Designers Lanzavecchia + Wai call it self-reflexive.



GLASS MENAGERIE

New from Italian brand Fattore, Bolle is a pouf/table made of Murano blown glass. These versatile objects come in concave and convex shapes with an upholstered seat and fabric bottom. Given its transparency, Bolle is a perfect piece for small spaces because the material does not interrupt sight lines and “evokes a clear feeling of lightness.”





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A street scene with a building labeled 'LARIMER' and a yellow brushstroke graphic containing text. The graphic is a large, stylized yellow brushstroke that spans across the top and middle of the image. The text is written in a white, cursive font. The background shows a street with a building labeled 'LARIMER' and a cloudy sky.

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- Kevin Vesel



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TEN



2008-2018

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF MODERN IN DENVER!

OUR DECADE OF DESIGN & PEOPLE

Modern in Denver started with a focus on how good design positively influences people's lives. And we still live by that. But a decade in, we've come to happily learn that the people we've met along the way are as much the focus as the art, architecture and interiors that fill our pages.

WORDS: William Logan

BREEDING LILACS.

Modern In Denver officially began in April of 2008. That was when I put together a small prospectus of my idea, printed it, and put it out into the world. Immediately, I encountered setbacks and learned a few important things. One, selling ad pages for something that didn't exist was problematic, and two, the 2008 economy was doing me no favors. More than a few kind friends and family supportively asked me, "Are you sure about this?" Turns out genuine enthusiasm and a couple pages of pretty pictures didn't initially move as many people as I had hoped.

But, it did move a few, and that was enough.

Enough to keep me knocking on doors and telling people that Colorado was ready for a publication that championed the value of good design. A magazine fueled by the belief that good design has a tangible, concrete impact on our world and can elevate the quality of our lives. A magazine that celebrated the creative people who were positively shaping our community. A magazine that was fun to read and had great pictures.

The first people who gave me their time made all the difference. Some offered support, some ideas and some even bought ads that helped get the first issue to press.

One of my neighbors back then was John Brooks. An incredibly vibrant and positive person, he enthusiastically supported my idea and patiently listened to me go on and on about it. He also owned a beautifully renovated mid-century modern house and was friends with a young architect named Brad Tomecek, who had just finished designing his own pre-fab home in LoHi. These two people and their projects became my first two features. A couple more friends led me to other stories: a modern new condo project and a beautiful Usonian house near Golden. Throw in a profile on iconic designer Jens Risom, a review of artist Nathan Abels recent work, some new product reviews and a calendar of art and design events, and I had an issue. Done. Our first 50 pages were printed and stapled.

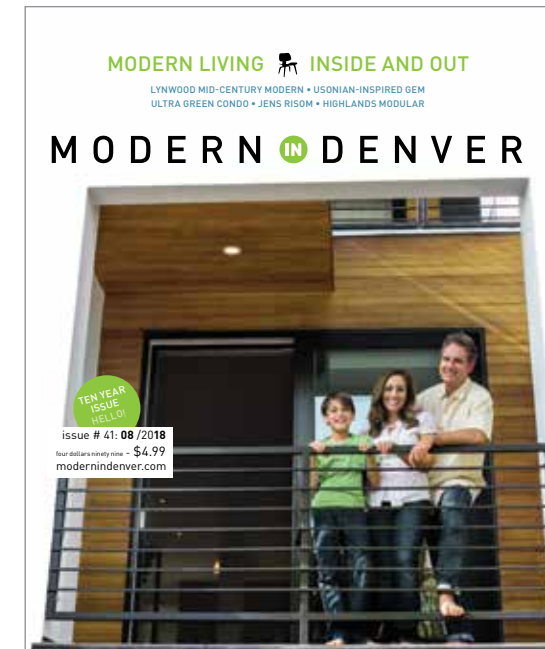
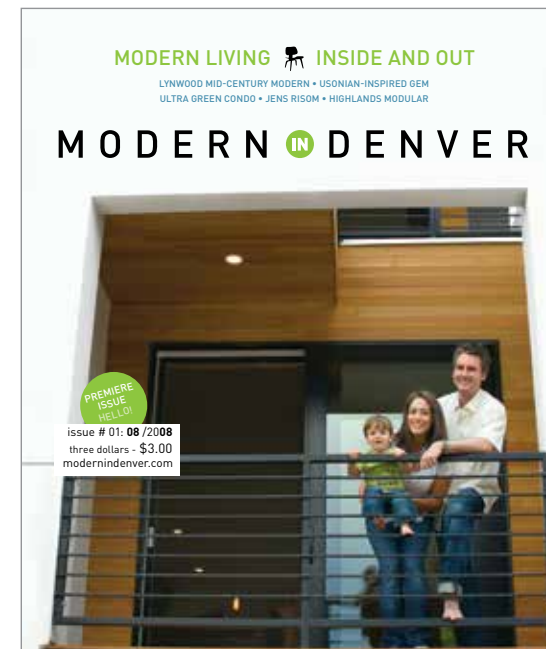
That issue led to a second and third that fall and winter. Both seemed as tough as the first to complete,



but slowly more people, some that I'd never met before, reached out to offer encouragement and support. Interesting projects and story ideas started to slowly present themselves. I was far from certain if there was a future, but it was enough to keep going.

ONE PHOTO.

Around this time, I met photographer Crystal Allen, whose talent and enthusiasm ushered in Modern In Denver's next chapter. Crystal's first project was a modern kitchens story for our spring 2009 issue. For the layout, I wanted the images to have a Julius Shulman mid-century feel to contrast with the modern bulthaup kitchens we were featuring. We found authentic '50s dresses and hired a woman who literally wrote a book on vintage hair and makeup. She magically transformed and transported our



FIRST COVER REDUX: Our first cover story was Brad Tomecek's prefab home in LoHi, built for his own family. He posed with his wife Christa and son Austin on a small deck in the front of the house, and we hit the shutter button. The image, shot from the sidewalk, took little setup and went quickly, and while we were setting it up I had no idea it would be the cover. Then I saw the photo, cropped it a little, and I knew it had captured what I envisioned for the

future of Modern In Denver: simple clean lines, modern design and, most importantly, great people. The Tomeceks were kind, generous and happy to help someone they didn't know with a magazine that didn't yet exist. We could not have gotten any luckier, and I am so proud to have had Brad and his family help us start our journey. After 10 years of publishing Modern In Denver, they still live in the same house, are still kind and generous, and still happy to

help us out. To celebrate our milestone, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to re-shoot that first cover, and the Tomeceks were all in. This time, James Florio took the image and, using the first issue as a guide, expertly duplicated the original shot. Austin was only 1 and a half when we shot the first cover in June of 2008, he's now 11. I honestly don't think anything else is different. And, for the record, we didn't photoshop Brad and Christa.

models, Crystal and my wife Azure, to 1956. It was amazing. The images Crystal shot that day were fun, brilliant and exactly what I'd envisioned. One image of Crystal, standing at a sink, made the cover and instantly elevated the magazine to another level. After it came out, more people noticed what we were doing and our audience began to grow. More opportunities presented themselves and within that first year, I definitively learned that it was not the architecture, interiors or art we were covering that was the heart and soul of the magazine — it was the people. All the them. The people who created the projects, who designed the interiors

and made the art. The people who wrote the stories and took the pictures. The people who ran the businesses that advertised in the magazine and, of course, the people who read it. They provided the ideas, the feedback, the support, the encouragement and the momentum for us to succeed.

TODAY.

Ten years later this has not changed. The magazine has continued to evolve and thrive, we now publish 200 pages instead of 50, and our reach now includes signature events such as Design In Bloom, Denver Design Week, Design Conversations and film

screenings. Yet it's still the people that make it real, make it fun and make it worthwhile.

Design matters because people matter.

Thank you for being you, for supporting our mission and for supporting your community. Here's to the next 10 years — to great design, a great city, a great state and great people. **Onward!**

41 ISSUES / 53 COVERS
PAGE ONE.

While the adage that “you shouldn’t judge a book by its cover” is certainly true, when we started Modern In Denver, we knew we were not publishing a book. People certainly were going to judge us in large part by our covers. So, the magazine’s “face” has always been very important to us. We wanted each and every one to function as a signpost and set the tone for what you will experience inside. They are also fun to work on, and a surprise we look forward to as we begin production on each issue. In fact, we love covers so much, since issue No. 30, we have printed two different versions for each issue. Here are each of the covers we’ve designed over the last 10 years.

COVERS INDEX

- 1 CAT
- 1 GIANT INFLATABLE BUNNY
- 1 FIDDLE FIG TREE
- 1 TREADMILL
- 2 UGLY DOLLS
- 2 SWIMMING POOLS
- 2 BICYCLES
- 5 SOFAS
- 9 DOGS
- 17 VASES
- 77 CHAIRS
- 92 PEOPLE



REDESIGNING A CITY

In the last 10 years, Modern in Denver has profiled the designers, architects, and artists who have shaped the city and surrounding areas. It's time to look back and see how far we've come—
AND EXACTLY HOW WE GOT HERE.

WORDS: Scott Kirkwood, Gigi Sukin
IMAGES: James Florio

WE'VE ALL HEARD THE TALKING POINTS USED TO PROMOTE DENVER: 300 DAYS OF SUNSHINE, ACCESS TO THE MOUNTAINS, AND A CLIMATE THAT LETS CYCLISTS TAKE TO THE ROADS MERE HOURS AFTER A SNOWSTORM.

But those facts were all true 100 years ago. Now that Denver sits atop lists of “Best Places to Live” alongside Austin, Portland, and Washington, D.C., it's time to acknowledge the city's own residents who had a starring role in this evolution. Just as the Great Recession was gripping the nation and *Modern in Denver* published its first issue, Denver was emerging as the Next Big Thing.

In the last 10 years, we've designed more walkable neighborhoods, opened more bars and restaurants, and unveiled more museums and art galleries, welcoming nearly 200,000 new residents and turning the city into a cultural destination for millions more. Too often, the impact is attributed to a handful of icons like Union Station, Coors Field, and the Rocky Mountains, but it's so much more. And it's time to take a look at the collective impact of it all.

THE HISTORY

Denver isn't entirely unique: Around the world, people have been gravitating to cities for roughly 20 years. But a growing number of writers, designers, artists, and architects are distinguishing the Mile High City from dozens of other metropolitan areas with similar populations. A city that was once known for its football stadium is now known for its art museums, its restaurants, and its microbreweries. And a lot of those opportunities can be traced back to pivotal decisions made by the city's leaders more than 20 years ago.

In the 1980s, tumbling oil prices sent Colorado reeling, and Front Range real estate quickly followed suit. Denver's office vacancies jumped to 30 percent, turning the newly built Republic Plaza, at 1801 California St., and the Cash Register Building into “see-through skyscrapers.” Once home to roughly 75 percent of metro-area residents, Denver saw its first shrinking census figures in 1980 and 1990, as residents fled for the suburbs.



In the midst of the tumult, then-Mayor Federico Peña had an usual idea: Invest millions of dollars into a new airport to spur economic activity, put people to work, and improve access to one of the most isolated cities in the country. At the same time, the city's leaders began pursuing a Major League Baseball team and made plans for a new convention center. Meanwhile, Lower Downtown was declared a historic district by the narrowest of margins, preserving dozens of old brick warehouses in perpetuity.

“From parks and rec to transportation to city facilities and cultural facilities like the Zoo, the Denver Art Museum and the Central Library, Peña kicked off investment in everything we think of as a civic asset—and Denver voters embraced it all,” says Ken Schroepel, founder and editor of *DenverInfill* and a professor of urban planning at CU Denver.

“When the loft movement spread across the country in the late '80s and people were looking for high ceilings, exposed brick, and big timber beams—which describes 24 square blocks of LODO—the area just took off like a rocket,” he says. “And once the city announced the construction of Coors Field, it was like pouring gasoline on a fire. At the same time that massive civic projects were starting to opening, people were starting to rediscover old neighborhoods like Highlands, Curtis Park, and Washington Park, and putting lots of money into rehabilitating and restoring those old homes. And the trajectory from that period hasn't stopped.”

THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Denver's renaissance goes well beyond a few square blocks, but some of the most stunning impacts of design can be found in LoDo, Highlands, and RiNo, where residential buildings mingle with commercial developments. Although Coors Field brought millions of people to LoDo as early as 1995, the neighborhood may owe even more to a \$500-million investment in Union Station, which kicked off construction in 2010. The original 1914 structure

“I AM 100 PERCENT CONVINCED THAT HIGH DESIGN GETS A BETTER FINANCIAL RETURN. GOOD DESIGN STARTS WITH PREMISE OF SURPRISE AND DELIGHT, FORCING PEOPLE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO PAUSE AND ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT'S THERE. WHO'S NOT ATTRACTED TO BEAUTY? WHO DOESN'T WANT TO SIT IN A SPACE THAT'S WELL DESIGNED, THAT JUST FEELS RIGHT?” - PAUL TAMBURELLO

was being reshaped just as the country was slowly emerging from the Great Recession, and in the summer of 2014, it was ready for its close-up.

“I often think of the first impression that someone might get if they jumped on the train [at DIA] and got off at Union Station,” says Dana Crawford, the Grand Dame of Denver developers whose legacy is written all over Larimer Square and LODO. “People must walk onto the plaza, look at the city, see the low-rise historic district, and think, ‘This is pretty unusual—this is a city that cares about itself.’”

Crawford can testify to the power of preservation which has turned 19th-century buildings into 21st-century icons, thanks to equal parts imagination, courage, and collaboration: “Walter Isenberg and I wanted everything about Union Station to represent good design,” she says of her partner in the project and co-founder of Sage Hospitality Resources. “We wanted every piece of carpet, every work of art, [and every piece of furniture] to be comfortable and welcoming.” As a result of that handiwork, the once-sleepy train terminal is now called “the city’s living room.”

And that’s just one neighborhood.

In the last 10 years, the city of Denver added 4,000 hotel rooms, 12,000 residential units, and 5 million square feet of office space, according to the Denver Downtown Partnership. In the same span, the number of licensed architects in Colorado has risen 17 percent, from 2,900 to 3,500, with no shortage employed along the Front Range. In 2010, the entire state generated \$8 billion in restaurant sales, a number that was expected to top \$12 billion



“WALTER ISENBERG AND I WANTED EVERYTHING ABOUT UNION STATION TO REPRESENT GOOD DESIGN, WE WANTED EVERY PIECE OF CARPET, EVERY WORK OF ART, [AND EVERY PIECE OF FURNITURE] TO BE COMFORTABLE AND WELCOMING.”

- DANA CRAWFORD



in 2017. And those see-through skyscrapers are all but a distant memory: This March, Denver’s fifth-tallest skyscraper opened at 1144 Fifteenth Street, with 65 percent of its office space already leased to the likes of Unicom, Optiv, and Gates Corporation.

Although the Lower Highlands is devoid of serious skyscrapers, developer Paul Tamburello always had big plans for the urban district, including popular restaurant projects like Root Down and Linger and his own Little Man Ice Cream.

“When I first started working in Highland in 1997 it was a really rough place— neglected, overlooked, not a place where people wanted to come,” he says. Tamburello saw the potential early on, and applied the “barbell” theory of real estate development, which suggests looking for an underdeveloped spot that connects two flourishing areas—in this case, West Highland and the Central Platte Valley. He considers the Denver Millennium pedestrian bridge stretching over I-25 a catalyst—an “umbilical cord” connecting the 16th Street Mall to Commons Park at the foot of the Highland neighborhood. Indeed, that infrastructural investment, built in 2002, was the world’s first cable-stayed bridge, using post-tensioned structural construction. There, an awkward parcel of land quickly became a neighborhood gathering place: Inspired by a book of roadside attractions, Tamburello purchased a 28-foot-tall metal can, and turned a hobby into the city’s most popular ice cream shop. It’s that type of bold design decision that turns neighborhoods into destinations, something he wants to see more of.

“I am 100 percent convinced that high design gets a better financial return,” he says. “Good design starts with the premise of surprise and delight, forcing people to take a moment to pause and acknowledge what’s there. Who’s not attracted to beauty? Who doesn’t want to sit in a space that’s well designed, that just feels right?”

According to Tamburello, the Highlands have always been a gateway neighborhood welcoming Italians, Germans, and Mexicans—a diverse community anchored by its many churches. In the ’80s and ’90s, the Navajo Street Art District would be defined by

galleries like Pirate, Edge, and Zip 37. Rising rents forced the first two to relocate to Lakewood, but artists had already been looking to RiNo, which would serve as the next empty canvas for the city of Denver.

“Eight or nine years ago, RiNo was a sleepy industrial area with no sidewalks, no street lights, and poor access—street art hadn’t even come to the fore yet,” says Jamie Licko, executive director of the RiNo Arts District. “A lot of industry was leaving the area, so there were plenty of huge, cheap buildings that were perfect for artists.” A few people suspected that things would change, simply because of the neighborhood’s location, Denver’s overall growth, and the rail station set to open in 2016.

Against that backdrop, a group of eight artists formed the RiNo Art District in 2005, with the hope of celebrating the area’s industrial roots and welcoming working artists. In 2010, a couple of artists found property owners willing to offer up their walls as canvases, which gave birth to Crush, a celebration of street-art that brings dozens of artists to the area for a few days every September.

“While artists were doing all of this, developers like the Zeppelins were buying property, and instead of knocking it down, they were building Taxi and Freight and The Source, repurposing these old buildings and even keeping some of them a little gritty and industrial,” says Licko. “And at the same time, we were seeing people’s consumption habits change from shopping in malls to wanting a different experience—for RiNo, a lot of it was just the perfect intersection of time and place.”

THE FUTURE

In many big cities, artists move to an area like RiNo, turn it into a hip, lively enclave, and are promptly priced out. But Licko and her small team got ahead of the game, advocating for artists and other long-time locals with the intention of retaining the spirit of the neighborhood.

Case in point: As more developers began drafting ideas for high-rise construction adjacent to the new rail station, Councilman Albus Brooks teamed up with Licko and others to revamp zoning restrictions that would allow for that vertical growth while requiring more affordable housing, ground-floor space devoted to restaurants and retail, and even reasonable workspace for artists.

“Policy is a great tool to drive affordability and design throughout the city, but we’re also trying to steer developers in the right direction by creating design guidelines, encouraging people to hire artists to put murals on their buildings, and showing how easy it is to buy local art for the interior of your building,” says Licko. “Just about everyone supports the idea of artists in the community, but a lot of people just don’t know how to work with them. Our role is to help people understand [how

“TRADITION IS WHAT BINDS ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER AND WE NEED TO DEFINE A REALLY ROBUST TRADITION OF DESIGN IN THE CITY” - PAUL TAMBURELLO

to help] the creative people who really shape our places.”

“Tradition is what binds one generation to another and we need to define a really robust tradition of design in the city,” says Tamburello.

“The design community in Denver needs leadership and mentorship. We need people to support good design, to call out good design, to encourage good design, and to hold forums to discuss what good design is all about. We desperately need that level of leadership, because we’re starting to see people who want to build their bank accounts rather than building a great city. And I sincerely believe the two can happen together.”

It’s already happening. Buildings like the Clyfford Still Museum, the Kirkland Museum, the Hotel Born, and Central Market might have seemed out of place just five or ten years ago—now they’re setting the tone, redefining a landscape that’s less like Charlotte, Cleveland, or Milwaukee and more like Boston, Chicago, or San Francisco. Denver now has a creative economy that welcomes James Beard award-winners like chefs Jennifer Jasinski and Alex Seidel, draws industry events like the Great American Beer Festival and Outdoor Retailer Expo, and hosts sold-out shows everywhere from the symphony hall to Red Rocks. The city is no longer a pit-stop for skiers headed to the mountains—it’s a destination in its own right. And if the dozens of construction cranes dotting the landscape are any indication, there’s reason to be optimistic for the next ten years ahead. ■



10

Congratulations Modern In Denver on an incredible decade! I look forward to what the next 10 years will bring. It's been a great pleasure to work with such a talented and creative staff. Well done!

Christian Musselman



cheers.

10 years with modern in denver magazine

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TEN YEARS, HUNDREDS OF PLACES, PRODUCTS, PEOPLE, AND THOUSANDS OF IMAGES

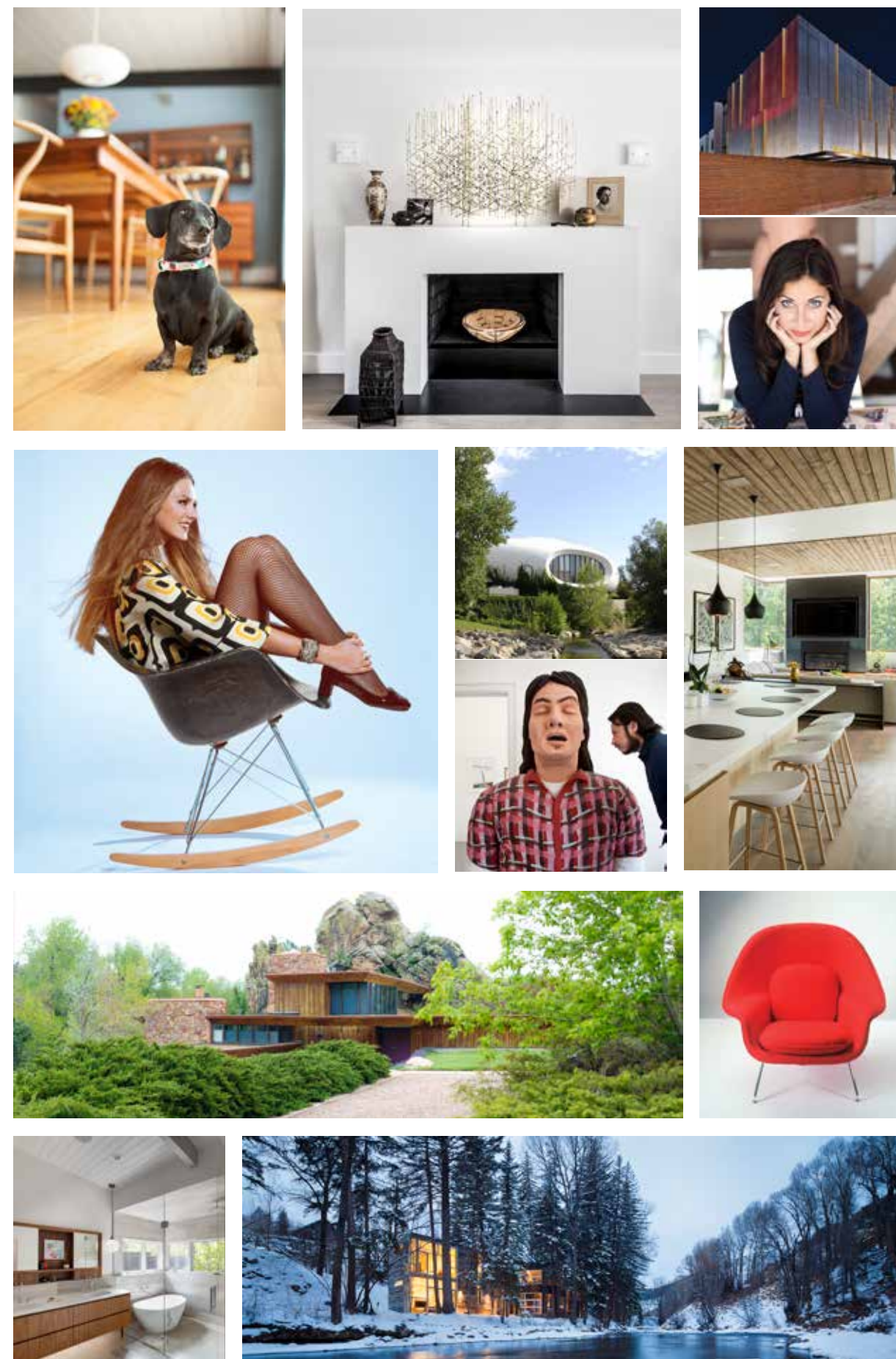
OUR DECADE OF DESIGN: THE PICTURES

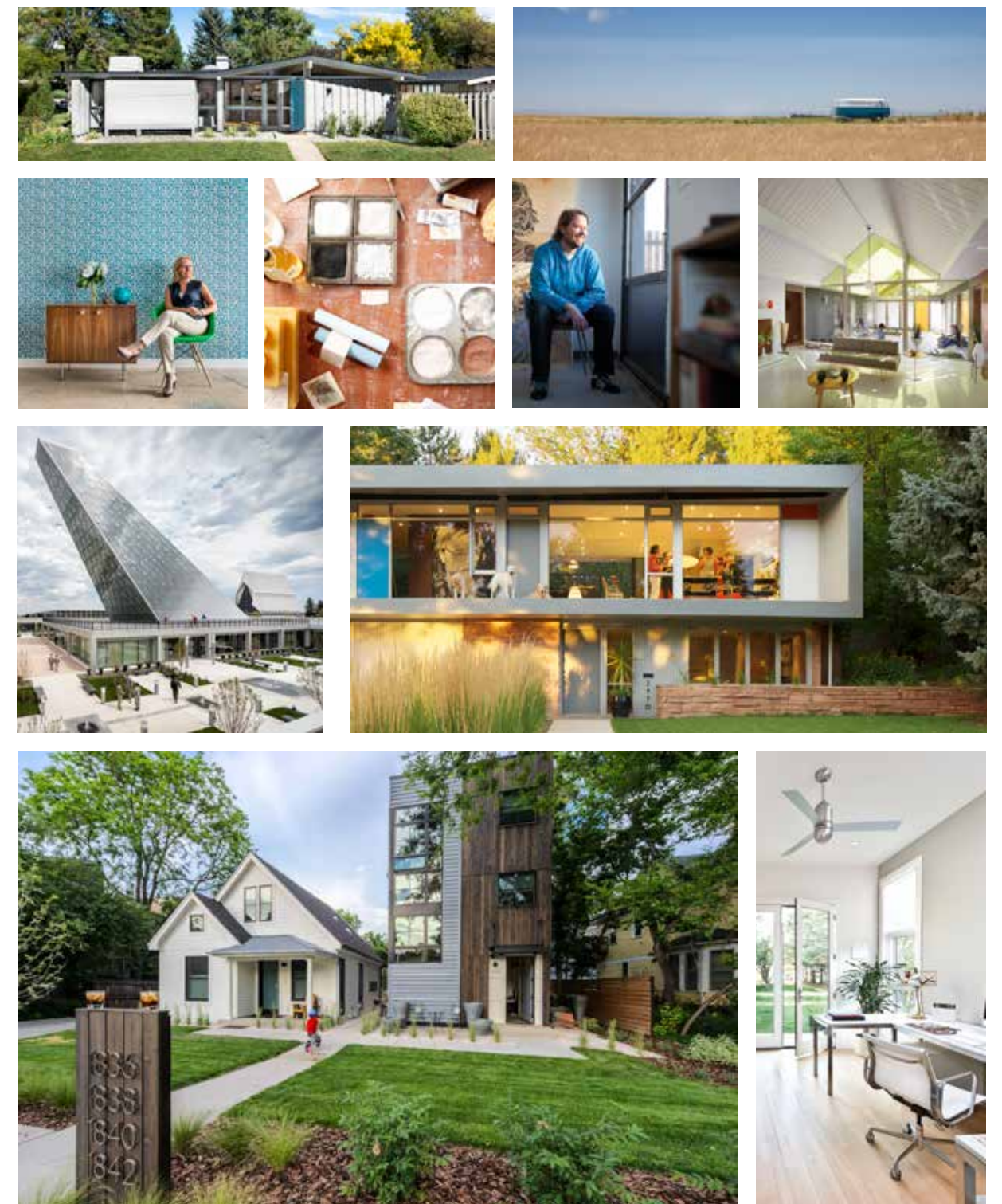
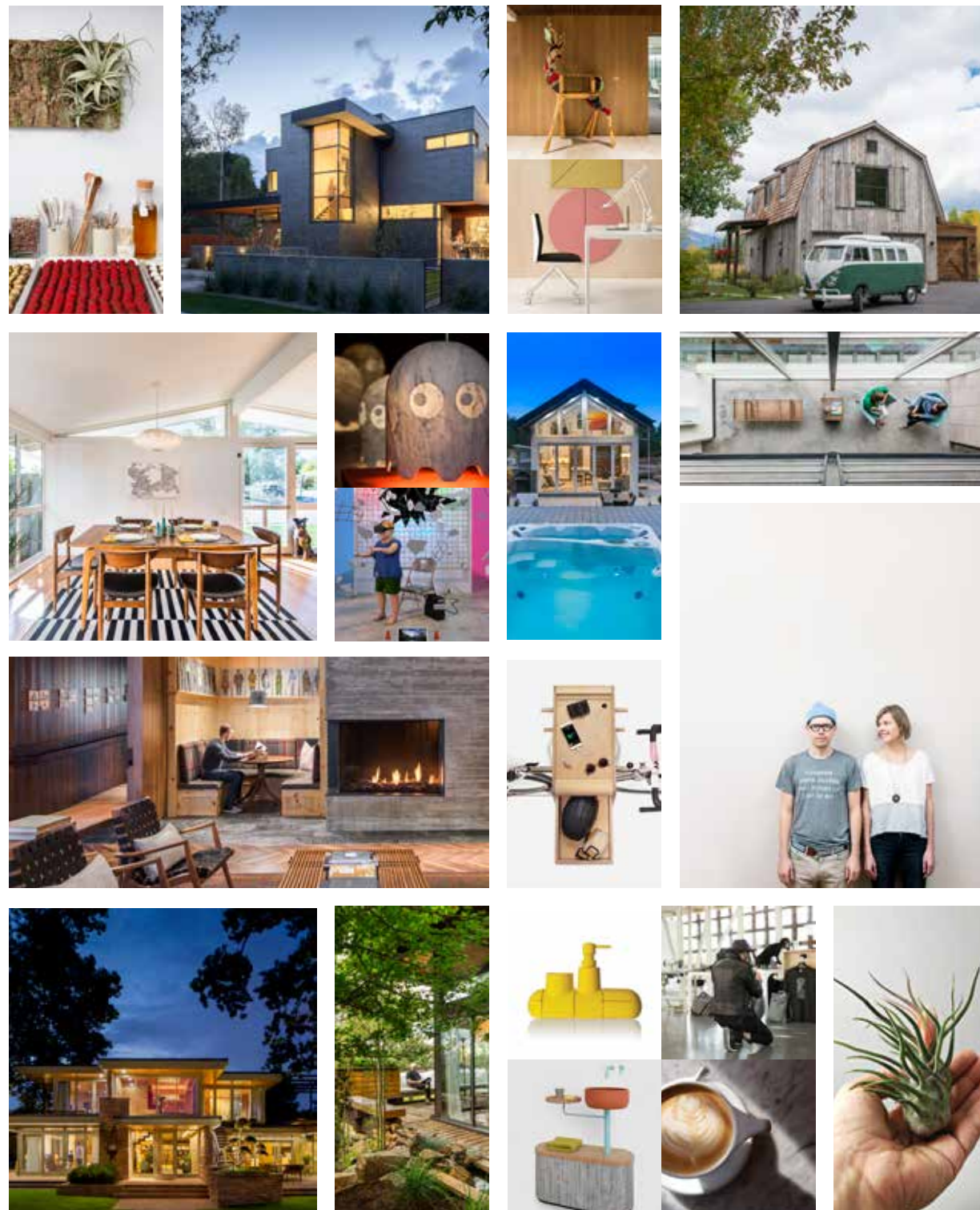


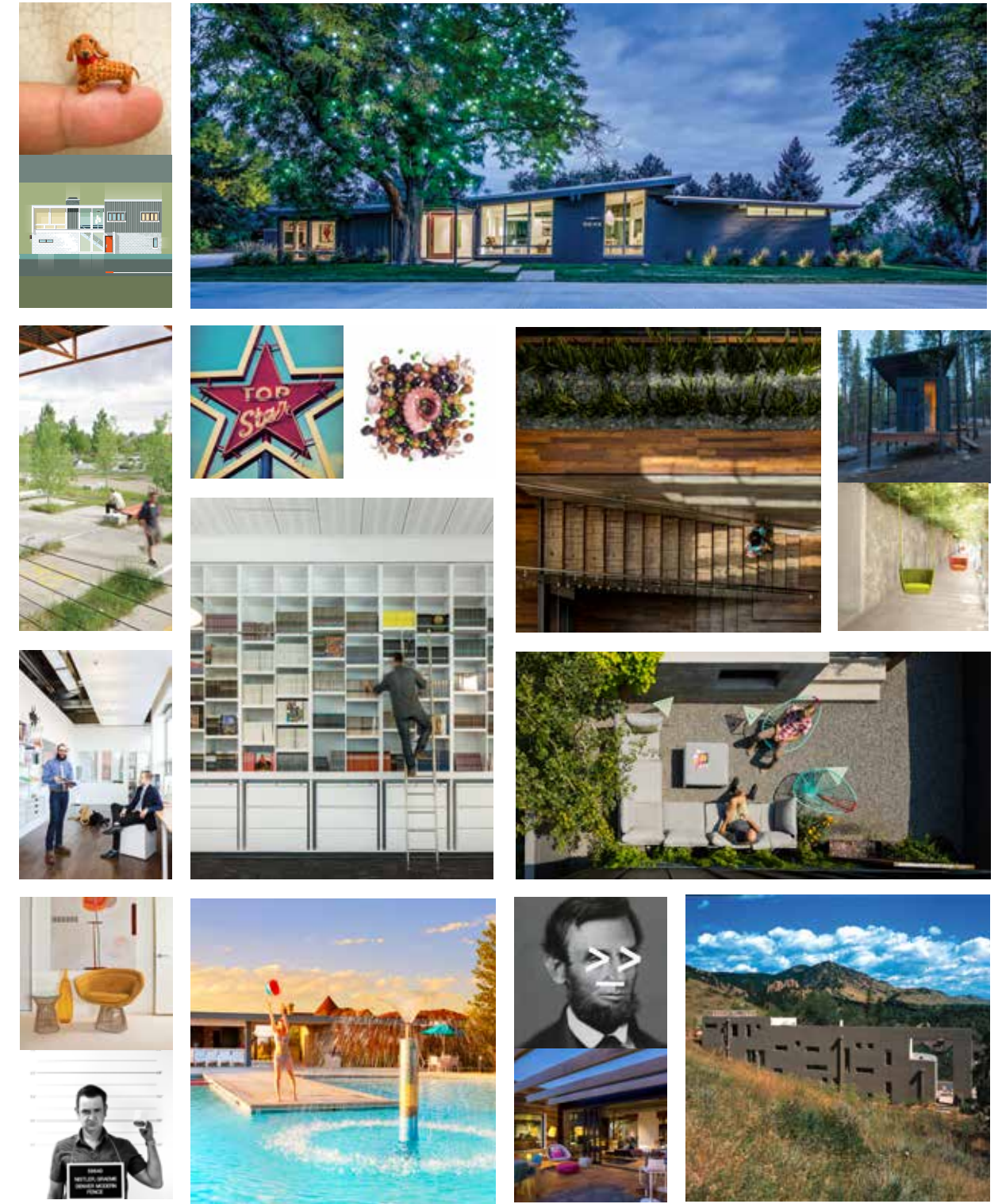
WORDS: William Logan

Some of my first exposure to the power and role that architecture and design can positively play in our lives was through the work of photographer Julius Shulman. He demonstrated that great photography not only documents but tells meaningful stories — stories that can connect us and inspire. His work and the prospect of collaborating with talented photographers were a driving force in starting Modern In Denver. In the last 10 years, we have covered hundreds of projects, products and people and have literally published thousands of images that have illustrated, illuminated and helped us tell our stories so much better than I could have ever imagined. Working with the talented and dedicated photographers who have contributed to Modern In Denver has absolutely been a highlight of creating the magazine. To celebrate and show all of the great photos we have had the privilege to publish would take more than a hundred pages, but we have gone through the archives and gathered a selection of photographs that we think capture the spirit and energy of our story.

Out of the dozens of talented photographers that have contributed to Modern In Denver over the last 10 years, there have been a handful that have truly helped shape our vision, and I want to give special thanks to those people. These photographers went above and beyond to get the shots we needed, no matter how crazy or difficult. They have been inspiring and I am grateful for their creativity and dedication. **THANK YOU:** Crystal Allen, James Florio, David Lauer, Daniel O'Connor, Trevor Brown Jr., Paul Winner, Andrew Pogue, Ron Pollard, Jennifer Koskinen, Raul Garcia and Hans Osheim.







CHANCE ENCOUNTER

AN INK SLINGER REVISITS HUMAN HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ARCHIVES

WORDS: Eleanor Perry-Smith

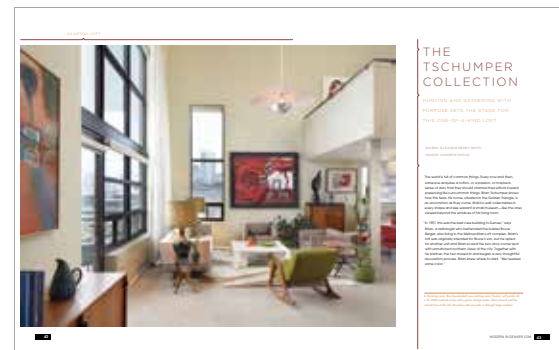
WHEN LEGENDARY PUBLICATIONS ARE DROPPING FROM THE SKY LIKE AVIAN PLAGUE, WHO DECIDES IT'S A GOOD TIME TO START A MAGAZINE?

In the melee of 2008, *Modern In Denver* went to press just as I graduated with a master's in journalism that no one cared about. Talented writers were being laid off in bulk, so who would want to hire an inexperienced 23-year-old to hack at their copy? Precisely nobody.

Still, I love magazines and wanted to write about art. So I held close my professors' predictions that national magazines would suffer while the hyper-local would thrive. They were right.

For the past decade, *Modern In Denver* has brought the region's creative minds together to celebrate the work of our hands. I am grateful I had some small part in it. I also appreciated that after years of writing about anything except art—mortuaries, prison sentences, football, red meat—the magazine assigned my first two arts features in the spring of 2012.

In one story I profiled South Korean artist Hong Seon Jang. He had an upcoming exhibition at David B. Smith gallery in LoDo. Jang told me about his two-year mandatory military service in his home country, and how he did not appreciate being controlled. He said control renders one speechless.



After all, art requires speech as it explores the boundaries of communication. And what is communication but a vehicle for connection? Covering stories about visual language has connected me to our city in ways I'll never forget or take for granted. Sure, we're all professionals in our respective industries, and a magazine presents a polished take on these roles, but at the end of the day, we're simply humans. Through *Modern In Denver*, I've met some memorable ones.

There's Brian Tschumper, whose personal array of art and design pieces I covered for the Spring 2013 issue. As a radiologist, Brian wanted to use his resources to support local artists and amassed a fantastic collection. The next summer when I broke my ankle, I had to laugh as I noticed the radiologist's name on my medical chart.

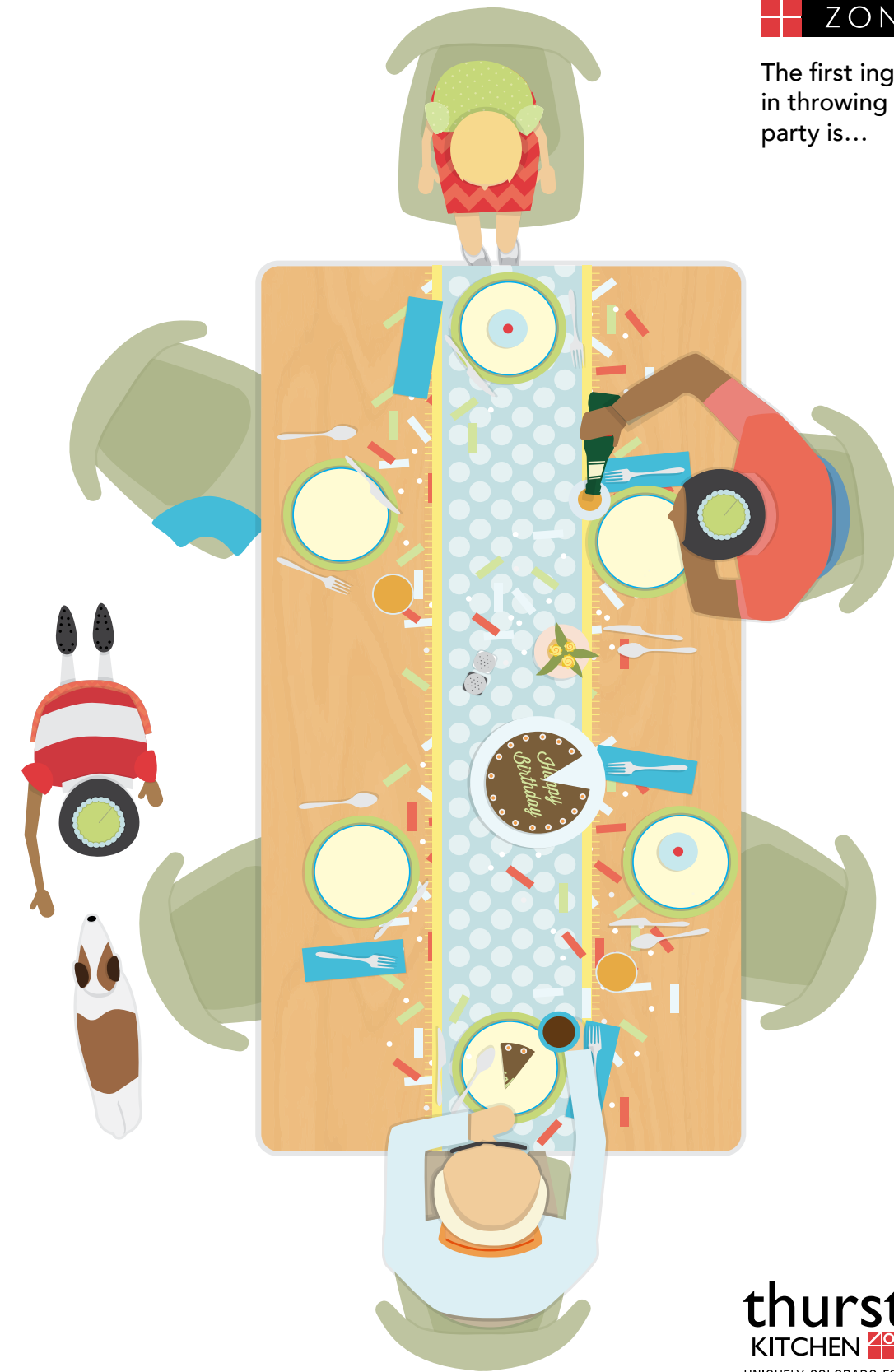
COVERING STORIES ABOUT VISUAL LANGUAGE HAS CONNECTED ME TO OUR CITY IN WAYS I'LL NEVER FORGET OR TAKE FOR GRANTED.

Aside from touring some wonderful homes, I've had the pleasure of visiting artists' workspaces. For the Summer 2012 issue, I interviewed illustrator and painter Jill Hadley Hooper at Ironton Studios. Her studio felt like a clandestine outpost back then, but is now smack in the midst of RiNo's robust development. Whenever I visit My Brother's Bar, I think of Jill when I spot the sandwich named after her on the menu. Skip the meat and try the Hooper sometime.

On downtown days when I duck into the tiny yet resplendent Little Owl Coffee in the SugarCube building, I recall owner and gracious host Seanna Forey from the Fall 2013 issue.



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CHANCE ENCOUNTER

These places conjure faces, and that's what makes Denver feel like home, even when I can hardly recognize it at times. Magazines have a similar effect. They shrink the world's feast to a chewable size. While *Modern In Denver* does not capture the entire city, it certainly offers an avenue of thoughtfulness and beauty.

Another valued contributor to Denver's, and my own, creative momentum is Plus Gallery owner Ivar Zelle. Ivar generously introduced me to William Logan in my nascence. He also connected me with artist Allie Pohl, whose work in the Summer 2013 issue inspired my favorite introduction to any story I've written. It's delightfully crotchety.

Then there's William, who will likely not want to see his name outside the masthead of his magazine, but I hope he lets me keep this paragraph anyway. He is the founder, editor, publisher, and fire in the furnace of this community. Aside from my mom, I've never met an adult with such



childlike enthusiasm for work. When we toured a gorgeous Boulder home years ago for *The Art of Living* feature, I won't forget William's giddiness over the basement collection of vintage Eames Time Life Executive Chairs. It was like a kid discovering a cool forgotten toy. His joy for design spills into the pages of this publication, and he's the main reason it has thrived against all odds.

Regarding the childlike, my final and favorite MID moment was when William asked me to come up with an essay on modern living inspired by one of William's favorite books from his childhood, *Andrew Henry's Meadow* by Doris Burn. In essence, I supported that successful societies make intentional space for creativity. That's exactly what *Modern In Denver*, and all of you, have accomplished.

As I prepare to welcome my firstborn into our city, I hope he or she will be as lucky as I've been to talk shop with Denver's grown-ups who never forgot the importance of imagination and the value in just giving a kid her chance. ■

...the perfect kitchen



Congratulations Modern In Denver on 10 years of celebrating and promoting great design in Colorado. Enjoy!



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WHERE WE'RE GOING

THE NEXT TEN

NEW WAYS TO CONNECT AND COLLABORATE WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO ELEVATING THE ROLE OF DESIGN IN THE NEXT DECADE

WORDS: JASON BELAIRE

“TO COMPETE AND SUCCEED OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS, GOVERNMENTS, MUNICIPALITIES, SMALL - MID SIZE COMPANIES AND SERVICE-BASED CONSULTANCIES WILL HAVE TO BUILD AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE EMPLOYEES/STAFF HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO AUTONOMOUSLY PROTOTYPE IDEAS, FAIL AND TRY AGAIN WITHOUT FEELING THAT THERE WILL BE REPERCUSSIONS IF THEY DON'T SUCCEED THE FIRST TIME (IMPLYING THAT THERE IS AN INVESTMENT TO BE MADE).”

OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS “DESIGN” HAS BEEN MARKETED, DISCUSSED AND SOMETIMES IMPLEMENTED AS A CORE PILLAR FOR BUSINESS PRACTICE.

The overuse of certain design terminology can actually impede progress when the terms slip into catchphrases and jargon without implementing any real change. With the rapid change of technology, Silicon Valley throwing billions of dollars into “failure”— knowing that the math will prove to be to their advantage, and mergers/acquisitions defining what is considered a commodity vs. a value proposition — many of us are left to decipher the lexicon of design and wondering how it directly affects us. Is design merely a selling point or a strategy to make life better?

We have seen a variety of companies such as, Google, GE, Haworth, Intuit, PepsiCo, Hewlett Packard and the Marriott Hotel Group who have fully implemented design thinking processes into each department of their respective company and have advanced into a true “Innovative” force, the profits are there to prove it. This adaptation has taken place in Top Down models with creating CDO (Chief Design Officer) positions and also from bottom up; employees creating sub-cultures and presenting their change models for success to upper management. Albeit, the latter can be a battle at times, it is a result of human intuition to improve broken systems. Therefore pulling each of us into situations where we can create positive change and have a greater ROI for the efforts put in.

Major cities on the East/West coasts have quintessentially been viewed as the representation of TOP design output. It is visible with the attention to public art, inner city design programs and creative opportunities for dialog. As one of the fastest growing cities in the US, Denver is well on

SO WHAT DO THE NEXT 10 YEARS LOOK LIKE FOR OUR CREATIVE CULTURE? THERE IS A NEED TO “STEAL” PROCESSES FROM ONE ANOTHER AND FROM INDUSTRIES OUTSIDE OF OUR CURRENT NETWORK. TO LEARN HOW TO BRING OTHER LANGUAGES OF DESIGN INTO THE RESEARCH PHASE OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT.

its way to being the CENTER hub of design for the world to observe.

However, despite our best efforts to educate corporations internally and our client base, one thing is for sure, “Design” still needs abiggeer seat at the table.

So what do the next 10 years look like for our creative culture? There is a need to “steal” processes from one another and from industries outside of our current network. To learn how to bring other languages of design into the research phase of product development. We must implement “empathy” as a core conduit to filter out what is simply considered problem-solving versus just another “X.” We must differentiate or deal with the consequences of a cannibalistic outcome that only lessens the experience and shortens the longevity of product “X”. Potentially resulting in the loss of brand authenticity.

How can you grow your company/market shares when technology is rapidly changing our experiences and our attention spans? How do companies develop business plans to connect with the aspirational millennial while not loosing their footing with existing consumers. How can you compete when start-ups are popping up everywhere? Even KickStarter is well on its way to becoming its own monetary system in the near future.

To compete and succeed over the next 10 years, governments, municipalities, small - mid size companies and service-based consultancies will have to build an environment where employees/staff have the opportunity to autonomously prototype ideas, fail and try again without feeling that there will be repercussions if they don't succeed the first time (implying that there is an investment to be made). Also to understand how to collaborate in NEW ways with sometimes difficult creative languages to understand. Occasionally, to have to remove sources that counter these efforts in order to ensure optimal success for your team and/or company. In general, to have a place to gather, to discuss, to be inspired and to grow their professional acumen.

Denver Design Week has grown into this region's most highly regarded “Design Experience” for all creatives. A catalyst for open dialog, futuristic thinking, process sharing, and networking. This experience is enabling all of us to gain real time knowledge in order to be marketable, while directly enhancing the bottom line.

Mark your calendars for this year's DDW for October 12-19 and start planning your future with us.

*Jason Belaire is the executive director for Denver Design Week.
jason@denverdesignweek.com*



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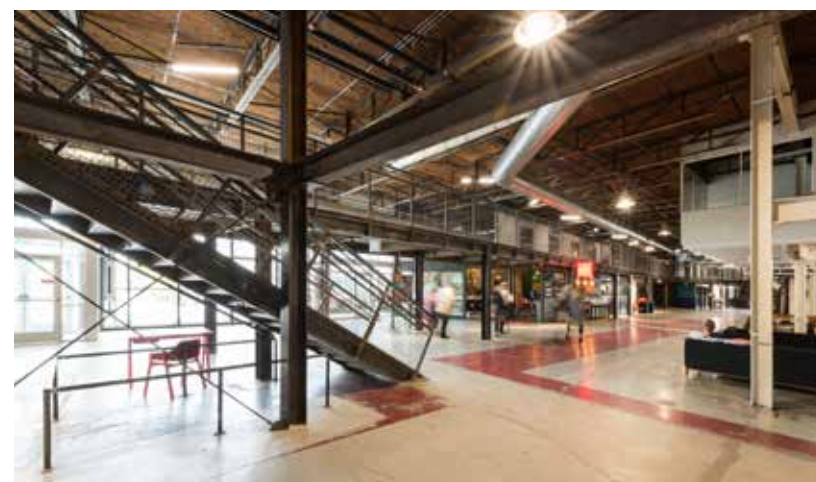


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AHEAD OF THE CURVE

THE ASPEN-DENVER ARCHITECTURE FIRM OF ROWLAND + BROUGHTON IS MARKING 15 YEARS OF MINDFUL, CONTEXTUAL MODERN DESIGN.

WORDS: Jane Craig
IMAGES: Brent Moss



GREAT MINDS DON'T ALWAYS THINK ALIKE—AND THAT MAY WELL BE ONE OF THE SECRETS BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF THE ASPEN-DENVER ARCHITECTURAL FIRM ROWLAND + BROUGHTON, THIS YEAR CELEBRATING ITS 15TH YEAR OF INNOVATIVE MODERN DESIGN.

In fact, its founders, John Rowland and Sarah Broughton, believe that true collaboration—the vigorous exchange of diverse ideas between clients and architects—is the sine qua non of great design. One consistent goal: To get to the “why” of a project.

“We often say that we look for clients who mentor us as much as we mentor them,” says Rowland. “This means that at the end of a project, we have all learned from each other and grown collectively. Our clients come from all over the world. They are art collectors, design mavens, business owners. Our satisfaction comes from the collaborative journey with our clients where there is a common quest for design that is truly unique.”

Broughton, who describes Rowland and herself as “lifelong learners,” says: “We never walk into a project with a predetermined style. So part of our process is really dissecting the parameters and opportunities of a project—we call it Sherlock Holmes-ing. How do we learn constantly and get better? It comes down to collaboration with our clients and a humbleness as we go on this journey together.”

The firm’s husband-and-wife founding partners, who met in 1993 in their first design studio class at CU Boulder, were well matched from the start. Even then, Rowland says, “We pushed and influenced each other—and we shared this collaborative approach to design thinking, which was fun. So it was very natural to take the next step and start our own company together.”



MINING MODERN

Rowland + Broughton worked closely with the homeowner and the Aspen Historic Preservation Commission for the sensitive renovation of this delightful home (pictured on page 144, too), which seamlessly combines a 1982 miner's cabin with a two-story addition. Above left, a view of the sleek, modern kitchen from Valucine. Above right, a rear view. Below, the master bath features a Hastings Chelsea tub and mountain views.



Both had been interested in design since childhood. Broughton grew up in a classic 1920s Tudor in Portland, Oregon, and was, she says, “spatially aware” from a young age, drawing floor plans by the age of five. Rowland, who loved Legos as a child in Cincinnati, recalls his parents taking him to Homearama, “the latest and greatest modern houses that were being built,” and visiting construction sites to watch homes being built.

After graduation, the two worked on competing Olympic Village designs in Sydney, Australia (Broughton’s firm won), then worked for architectural firms in New York for several years before moving to Aspen in 2000. After several years at separate firms there, they decided to launch their own. “We felt that we needed to prove ourselves and create a body of work,” says Broughton, “so it was build, build, build. Our motto was slow, steady growth. We worked 16 hours a day out of our condo, and our kitchen table was our conference room. But we loved it. We still love what we do.”

David Mosteller of Skyport Development Company, for whom Rowland + Broughton has designed numerous restaurants, concurs. “They have the same passion today as the day they opened their doors,” he says. “They travel a lot and they get inspiration everywhere. Their palette is pretty much anything, and they’re very good at reading people and guiding them through the thought process in an efficient way.”

Today, the firm has 40 employees in its Aspen and Denver offices. “We say we’re one studio with two locations and a long hall,” says Broughton. Working on both residential and hospitality projects (hotels and restaurants), 80 percent of it in Colorado, the firm is proud to say that 60 percent of its clients are repeat customers.

“We have a pretty organic process,” says Broughton, “where often both John and I will be heavily involved at the beginning of a project, then one of us will be the principal all the way through. But at some firms, the principals design a project and it’s up to the team to execute it. We’re not like that. Our designs are very holistic, and everybody on the team, down to junior interns, can contribute. Our view is that the people at Rowland + Broughton bring 100 percent every day, and there are no bad ideas. We think this kind of collaboration tests conventional thinking.”

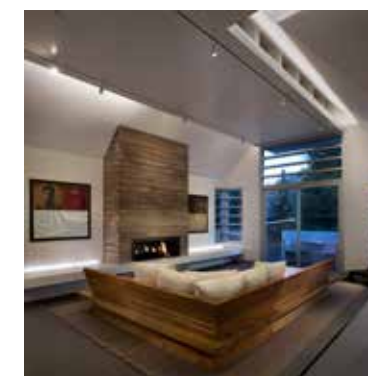
To that end, the firm has an MMM (Monday morning meeting) every week involving the architects and designers in both offices. The meetings, led by junior members of the Aspen-

“WE OFTEN SAY THAT WE LOOK FOR CLIENTS WHO MENTOR US AS MUCH AS WE MENTOR THEM. THIS MEANS THAT AT THE END OF A PROJECT, WE HAVE ALL LEARNED FROM EACH OTHER AND GROWN COLLECTIVELY.”

—JOHN ROWLAND



Rowland (left) and Broughton met in 1993 while both were architecture students at CU Boulder. After several years in New York City, they moved to Aspen in 2000, founding the firm several years later.



FORM HOUSE

Originally built in Aspen in the 1990s in a neo-Victorian style, this reconfigured 5,750-square-foot home maintains the original gabled forms but adds modern elements. Designed to capture the site’s 360-degree views, the house pairs modern detailing and warm materials, including reclaimed teak, on both the interior and exterior. Stacking windows and mullioned details were inspired by the artist Donald Judd, and consistent use of glass and other materials creates an inside-outside flow.

“THEY ARE VERY CREATIVE. THEY THINK ABOUT UTILIZING THE SPACE AS IT EXISTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND THEN TRYING TO BUILD SOMETHING TIMELESS.” —CLIENT BLAINE WESNER



photo: Adam Larkey

Denver team, hooked up via audio and video, have either a practical focus (going through the nuts-and-bolts progress of projects on the table) or an inspirational one (which may entail anything from watching a TED Talk or a “Sixty Minutes” episode to discussing discoveries on a recent trip abroad).

As Rowland + Broughton has evolved, so has modern architecture in Colorado. “When we arrived in Aspen, there were only a few architects seriously practicing modern architecture,” says Rowland. “There was a strong influence of the mountain lodge style, then a shift to a more refined mountain modern style. Now we are seeing a huge acceptance of modernism, which we believe is an outgrowth of online design sites as well as magazines such as Dwell, Metropolis and Wallpaper. But it pains us to see new buildings that completely disregard their surroundings—we call it the UFO phenomenon.”

For Rowland + Broughton, environment is always key to the process. “We want our designs to respond

MATSUHISA

In order to remain true to the Japanese culture, Rowland+Broughton collaborated with Nobu Matsuhisa and the ownership team for the design of Matsuhsa Denver in Cherry Creek. The muted natural palette of reclaimed Indonesian teak unifies the design of the floor, many walls, the ceilings and the bar. The textural façade of the bar emulates a flowing river, and the sloped acoustic ceiling is reminiscent of the Rocky Mountains.

to their context and celebrate the sense of place,” Rowland says. “We embrace a concept-driven approach to design that is influenced by local culture, environment, climate change, history, technology, all of which challenges our clients to view ‘place’ in a more enlightened way.”

Part of that sense of place involves the state we live in. “Even our modern work feels comfortable and very warm,” says Broughton, “which goes back to the Colorado environment. We like to use natural wood because it feels good. It’s grounding and speaks to our environment. We also have amazing blue skies and 300 days of sunshine a year, but it’s really important to use that sunlight properly and balance the light from all directions.”

And always, the status quo is anathema. “We often reflect on the quote from Wayne Gretzky, ‘Don’t skate to where the puck is now, skate to where it’s going to be,’” says >P.145

SOPRIS RANCH

Situated beneath a significant cottonwood tree in Carbondale, Colorado, Sopris Ranch is a modern translation of historic Colorado agricultural architecture. The organization style, called a “breezeway cabin,” connects kitchen, dining, living and sleeping areas under a single extended roof form, which also unifies indoor and outdoor spaces.



“WE EMBRACE A CONCEPT-DRIVEN APPROACH TO DESIGN THAT IS INFLUENCED BY LOCAL CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY, ALL OF WHICH CHALLENGES OUR CLIENTS TO VIEW ‘PLACE’ IN A MORE ENLIGHTENED WAY.” —JOHN ROWLAND



VICTORIAN SQUARE

Victorian Square celebrates the dynamic spirit of downtown Aspen's rich history. A lapped brick façade at the base grounds the building to the site; a single mass inspired by the local surroundings cantilevers over the edge. Timeless architectural details respect the craftsmanship of the past, while sleek, fresh lines speak to modern technology and design.



Rowland, who says a restlessness permeates the firm's design process. “We prepare for the future with our processes. We also always talk in the studio about what value we are bringing to the table.”

“Nothing is cookie cutter with their designs,” Mosteller says. “I've seen many, many homes and buildings that they've done. You look at what they did at three hotels in Aspen—the Little Nell, the St. Regis and the Jerome—and they're all so different. And now they're going to do the W hotel in Aspen. They've come in with unique designs for all of them.”

Blaine Wesner, for whom Rowland & Broughton has done a residential remodel, a rebuild and recently a new build in Aspen, says: “They are very creative. They think about utilizing the space as it exists in its environment, and then trying to build something timeless. One problem I've had with other modern architects is that sometimes you get things that are interesting at the moment but won't likely stand the test of time. That's never a concern with Sarah and John. It's also nice to have architects who are really listening and trying to get to an outcome that is timeless in the architectural sense but also serves the immediate needs of the client.”

And it's axiomatic that their designs are inspired by influences far and wide. “They are well informed. Not all architects are as attuned to what's happening globally, but both Sarah and John are students of the game, and teachers of the game,” says Wesner. “They travel extensively and see projects and materials in all parts of the world, so they bring a truly globally informed perspective to Colorado.”

For Rowland and Broughton themselves, there's a deep satisfaction in the process. “I think we both honestly believe that through good design, we can make the world a better place,” says Broughton. “And that's what drives us; that's what we feel is our obligation.” ■

BLACK MAGIC

Nestled in the woods, yet offering magnificent views, this Aspen home's black metal, corrugated skin makes a bold statement. The upper level's open floor plan, which includes expansive glass walls, gives a feel of penthouse living in a mountain environment. The home's clean lines and interior palette align with the natural surroundings. Neolith Estuario countertops are paired with a white back-painted glass backsplash.

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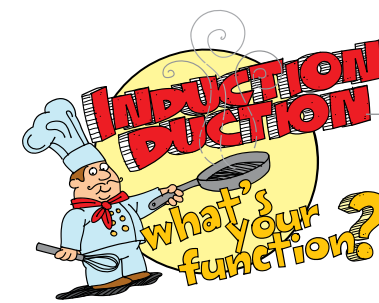
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INNOVATIVE MATERIALS, THOUGHTFUL FINISHES AND OPTIMIZED LAYOUTS PROPEL MODERN KITCHEN DESIGN TO NEW HEIGHTS. BUT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ENHANCEMENT TO OUR COOKING EXPERIENCE COMES WITH THE INSTALLATION OF HIGH-TECH APPLIANCES. THROUGH GOURMET GUIDED COOKING, HIGH-SPEED FUNCTIONALITY, AND QUICK-CLEANING SURFACES, THE SLEEK INDUCTION COOKTOP AND STEAM OVEN PROVIDE ACCESS TO A LEVEL OF COOKING ONCE AVAILABLE ONLY TO RESTAURANTS.

Meal preparation has gotten faster, healthier, and more enjoyable. Mimicking smart phone iconography with finger swiping and quick touch controllers, residential kitchen appliances mirror other technology designed to make our lives easier and more efficient. However, when it's 6:30 and all you want to do is bake the damn pizza, you've got no bandwidth left to read an instruction manual. Well, here's everything you need to know about how they do what they do to cook successfully and happily with induction and steam ovens.

WORDS: Beth Pilar Strongwater, ASID, NKBA
ILLUSTRATIONS: Christian Musselman



INDUCTION COOKTOPS

What is it and how does it work?

An induction-cooker element (much like a burner) is made up of high-frequency electromagnets, where powerful electronics under the unit's ceramic surface generates electromagnetism. When a magnetic material—such as a cast-iron skillet—is placed in the magnetic field that the element is generating, the field transfers, or induces, energy into that metal. That transferred energy causes the metal—in this case the cooking vessel itself—to become hot. By controlling the strength of the electromagnetic field, you can control the amount of heat being generated by the cooking vessel, and change that amount instantaneously. The fields are localized, and in any event the cooking vessel absorbs virtually all of the field energy (and if there is no cooking vessel on an element, it won't turn on).

Today's slick glass-surfaced induction cooktops have come a long way since their debut when the Frigidaire division of General Motors introduced them at the 1933 Chicago's "World Fair." With a breakthrough in 2000 using snap together design for integrating the electronics with induction coils, European manufacturers produced induction generators with more compact, cheaper and reliable design. As a result, the market exploded in Europe, landed back on our shores and is now giving gas a serious run for its money.

Sounds interesting, but why should I like it?

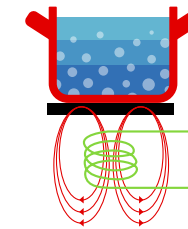
WELL, IT'S REALLY EFFICIENT

Gas uses only about 40% of the energy produced, and the waste heats up the kitchen instead of the food in the pan. Since energy is supplied directly to the cooking vessel by the magnetic field, almost no ambient heat is produced during induction cooking making it about 90% energy efficient. And while the cooking vessel and the food itself will radiate some heat into the surrounding area, compared to gas or electrically powered cooking, induction makes for a much cooler kitchen to live in.



Induction turns the cookware itself into the heat source. The heat generated in the cooking vessel is transferred to the vessel's contents. Nothing outside the vessel is affected by the field—as soon as the vessel is removed from the element, or the element is turned off, heat generation stops.

"You invest so much into the aesthetics of the kitchen, but performance is just as important. Induction outperforms gas on so many levels, and it fits with the cleaner lines and sophisticated design of today's modern kitchens." - Ann Hoffmeister, Boffi / Soelesi



The element's electronics power a coil (green lines) that produces a high-frequency electromagnetic field (red lines). That field penetrates the metal of the ferrous (magnetic-material) cooking vessel and sets up a circulating electric current, which generates heat. (Courtesy of <http://theinductionsite.com>)

AND SUPER SPEEDY

Since induction turns the cookware itself into the heat source, it is faster than the hottest professional gas stove, requiring little preheating and reducing total cooking times. Most induction manufacturers claim that water will boil in 90 seconds; it is about 50% faster than gas. This is especially effective in high altitude locations where boiling temperature takes longer to reach, or gas lines are harder to install.

HOW ABOUT THAT CLEANABILITY!

Speaking of saving time, induction's glass ceramic cooktop is easy to wipe down after cooking, and you don't have to wait until they cool down to do so no more baked-on spills.

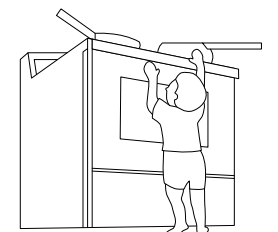
YOU JUST CAN'T BEAT THE PRECISION AND RESPONSIVENESS

To serious cooks, the most important advantage with induction is that you can adjust the cooking heat instantly and with great precision. Its transition from high power to a low simmer is unbeatable. By producing a very weak magnetic field in delivering very little electricity, we can produce a very low steady accurate heat. A gas turned down to its lowest flame can only burn so cool.

Induction can do everything a gas can do, like blistering peppers, and blackening tortillas. You can even use a flat-bottomed wok directly on the induction, and with some manufacture's boost features, easily create wok-style cooking. Ok, but what about the cooking purists who demand the authenticity only produced with a round bottomed wok pan? Well, Gaggenau's 400 Series Vario Induction Wok module provides an incredibly intense center heat for use with a round bottomed wok on a ring that is engineered to achieve perfect results. Automatic pan detection and the booster function temporarily increases the power by 50 percent, allowing intensive searing.

DON'T FORGET THE SAFETY FACTOR

With no open flame, red-hot coil, nor other radiant heat source to emit fumes or burn little hands, the risks of dangerous accidents are significantly reduced. Kids can participate more in the cooking.





AND, IT MINIMIZES VENTING

Induction technology does not produce carbon monoxide, nor residual heat like traditional gas cooking where heat escapes up the sides. Therefore, your venting needs are reduced: no need for a professional level hood, and you can successfully downdraft an induction product.

Advancements in electronics technology via auto-pairing between your cooktop to your hood allow for easy connectivity (no more forgetting to turn on the ventilation over the frying pan!). And, monitoring of ventilation through smart phones is now possible with manufactures like Dacor's iQ Kitchen Connect, for example.

PLUS, IT JUST LOOKS GOOD

With modern kitchen design the appliance blends in, becoming practically invisible. Induction aesthetics are clean, without protruding knobs. They install flush with countertops, with a dark-when-not-in-use control panel integrated right into the cooktop's surface, offering innovation rather than shouting it. They are slimmer, without a boxy carcass to house chunky burners and internal parts.

"Induction stoves allow you greater flexibility in kitchen design as it can reduce the need for an overhead hood. When the kitchen is integrated into the living space you don't want a huge hood, that's where down-drafts work really well to move the heat/steam out of the space." - Brian Pignanelli, Rifugio Modern



With 11 oval inductors divided into three cooking zones, Thermador's "Liberty" model offers more space and flexibility by accommodating pots and pans from 4" to 10", as well as 16" long teppanyaki grills.



Gaggenau's 400 Series Vario Induction Wok Module speaks to the purist: engineered to achieve perfect results, its incredibly intense center heat is used with a round bottomed wok.

Dacor's unique VirtualFlame™ intuitive LED light displays "blue flames" that adjust in sync with the heat to provide a familiar visual cue that the heat is on.



COOKWARE

Technically, all you need is a ferrous pan to use on an induction surface. (Try placing a magnet on the bottom and if it sticks, it'll work.) More and more cookware manufactured today is induction-ready. That said, not all pans are created equal. Since your pan

actually becomes the source of heat, even more than with gas or electric, the quality of the cookware is salient with induction. Look for cookware with a stable core like cast iron or multiple-ply stainless steel. Any humming or clicking noises should not be attributed to the cooktop. That phenomenon is caused by using thinner pans, with less pure metal content, or pans with riveted handles that may come loose and cause vibrations. And if you've invested in thoughtful kitchen design, it might be time for a new set anyway.

In any case, on the horizon is the development of all-metal technology (meaning that the pots don't have to be magnetic) which has already been introduced. So, don't worry, you will soon even be able to use your grandpa's original stovetop popcorn maker!



Cast iron pans like those from Le Creuset, have a high iron content that offers superior heat retention. Belgian manufacturer, Demeyere, produces 5- and 7-ply stainless steel pans with an extremely stable base using TriplInduc, a unique combination of three alloys that claims up to 30% more efficiency on induction.

STEAM OVENS

What is it? How does it work?

Remember those stovetop baskets? Made from reed or bamboo, these gadgets first appeared in ancient China and have since been utilized over water-filled hot woks to cook food. In recent decades, professional chefs and bakers have been using commercial steam ovens to cook food quickly and keep it warm until service, and recently, several residential appliance brands have made this technology accessible to the home cook by producing built-in steam ovens.

A steam oven cooks food in the same way as those baskets but with much more efficiency and control, by drawing water from a manually filled reservoir or a plumbed water line and heating it electrically. When the water reaches 100°C, it turns into vapor – called steam – which is forced into the oven cavity and heats the food. The residential category includes lesser priced steam-only wall ovens (operating at 100% humidity only), and the combination convection-steam ovens. The latter combines the browning functionality of a traditional convection (dry) oven with a steam oven, offering the options of cooking with dry heat, wet heat or a combination of the two, and the ability to control the amount of steam (from 0-100%) used during cooking.

What is all the hype about? Why should I get one?

For one, food just tastes better with steam. Using dry and wet heat in combination produces food which is golden brown and crispy on the outside, and incredibly moist on the inside. As the food is not sitting in water, the goodness does not leach out and its inherent flavor comes through even without seasonings.

WANT TO EAT HEALTHIER?

Cook healthier with steam. It is undeniably the healthiest cooking method available because it retains more vital nutrients and minerals of the food instead of baking them out as radiant cooking does. Your food will have a lower fat content because you don't have to use oil to keep the food moist when cooking. Although combination steam ovens are still relatively niche, they are arguably the fastest growing category in high-end kitchen renovations and are on track to replace microwaves. It does everything better, except it won't reheat your coffee or pop your corn. Reheating with steam is inherently different than a microwave which changes the molecular structure of your food – for the worse (does dry and flavorless next-day pasta ring a bell?). Reheating with steam actually restores moisture to your food which tastes as good as it did when first cooked. People don't have to change what they eat, but they can enhance how what they eat is prepared.

BUT WHY DO I NEED TO SPEND \$4K+ ON AN OVEN JUST TO COOK VEGETABLES?

This is an oft heard question in appliance showrooms. The initial cost of these secondary ovens can initially put some people off. But these ovens offer far more versatility: you can cook, roast, grill, steam, defrost, proof and bake bread, custards and cakes, as well as warm those leftovers (and this is just to name a few). The addition of a broil or grill element which Gaggenau and Miele units offer, make these ovens some of the most versatile appliances in the industry.



It's an easy and impactful transition from surface cooking to oven steaming. A constant supply of fresh steam prevents any transfer of aroma or flavor, so you can cook sweet and heavily spiced foods together without the risk of flavor contamination. And the results are a quicker cook than a traditional oven can deliver because water molecules conduct heat more efficiently than air. For busy cooks who want to cook many dishes simultaneously, steam technology is a game-changer.

BACK TO THAT CLEANABILITY

Steam ovens are the easiest appliances to clean because with the presence of steam food splatter on the cavity walls wipes off in a jiffy. Think of its interior like the cavity of a dishwasher.

"The amount of things you can do with steam is endless! Including: bread, canning, making yogurt, sous-vide, sanitizing medical devices; Wolf even has a spa mode to warm up stones and towels."

-Hanna Cilli / Roth Living



Leaders in steam oven cooking by sheer sales volume, Miele offers the broadest range of steam ovens, and arguably the largest by cubic feet cavity available in the US with their XXL models. Both plumbed and reservoir units are vented so that undercounter installation is possible.



STEAM OVENS CONT.

"We are seeing a definite increase of specifying steam ovens in this market. The movement away from processed (microwavable) foods reflects that people are paying more attention to what they're eating and a healthier preparation."

-Matt Smith, / Studio Como



Gaggenau's handle-less 400 Series combi-steam oven with touch-to-open side left or right hinged door design is as sleek as it gets. Available plumbed or tanked, with a glass ceramic roof with grill/broiler feature, the units are also fully self-cleaning – and drying.



Dacor offers the uncommon feature of a dual-fuel freestanding 48" range oven which incorporates a convection steam oven alongside a regular convection oven. Unique to this model is a 7" LCD Culinary Control Center, with an iQ Kitchen app and integrated Wi-Fi with 15 pre-loaded videos of recipes, with the customization teaser that one day consumers will be able to load their own recipe.

Wolf offers a "Gourmet" mode—users can simply tell the appliance the type of food they are putting in the oven, and the sensors detect its volume, shape and consistency, and then adjust time, temperature and humidity accordingly for consistent guesswork-free results.

AND FOR THOSE WHO WANT A LITTLE GUIDANCE

The challenge with any new technology is the learning curve. In the case of steam ovens, putting in the time and effort to learn all that they can do for you is well worth it. Many models have guided gourmet cooking settings, and menu driven controls. A wired probe takes the guesswork out of cooking and will turn the oven to keep warm after your food reaches the desired temperature. Many of these functions can be monitored by an app on your phone. Unique to Dacor, videos displayed on the control panel are loaded with pre-programmed recipes literally teach you step by step how to make an omelet.

While no single appliance can do every kitchen task well – yet – could these combi-steam ovens edge out your conventional oven and become your one and only? The limited cavity size (even in the industry's largest Miele's 2.4cl) is still the biggest hurdle for that. However, once you wrap your arms around how it works, you will likely use your new steam convection oven more than your main oven.

Let's Recap!

The induction cooktop and steam oven speak to those who delight in all things new, and who place a high value on technology that offers user friendly interface. If the kitchen is the hub of the house, it is the logical space to serve as its technology center. To this end, the appliance industry has doubled-down on research and development to raise the efficiency of their products and to incorporate sophisticated features in order to accommodate our cultural push for technological innovation. Such efficiencies are speaking to our pursuit of wellness, time saving activities, and an enhanced experience of cooking in our kitchens. What is standing in the way of embracing these technologies fully? Just the investment of a little study time upfront, and an open mind to changing habits. A physical demonstration of these units is really the only way to grasp their greatness. For the advancements in induction cooktops and steam ovens have the capacity to dramatically changing the way we cook, eat, and inhabit our kitchens. ■

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INTRINSIC REWARDS

Brothers Brian and Aaron Ojala merge award-winning modernist design with an inventive construction and building approach to create a unique development firm that is elevating suburban commercial workspaces. Meet the Urban Box.

WORDS: Sean O'Keefe



photo: Ron Ruscio

SURROUNDED BY A SEA OF SAMENESS, ENTASIS STANDS APART. EMBEDDED AMONG A COLLECTION OF LOW-SLUNG, INDUSTRIAL OFFICE PARK PROPERTIES WITH LOADING-DOCK SIDE WALLS ALONG THE 124TH VEIN OF SUBURBIA, THE OFFICES OF BRIAN AND AARON OJALA AREN'T HARD TO FIND. PURPOSEFULLY PLACED JUST BEFORE THE ROAD'S ONLY BEND, THE SLEEK MODERNIST OFFICE BUILDING THAT SERVES AS BOTH BUSINESS CARD AND INVESTMENT PROPERTY IS AS DISTINCT AMONG ITS CIRCUMSTANCES AS IS THE BRAND BEHIND THE NAME.

“Aaron and I are modernists, commercial developers, builders, and brothers,” says Brian Ojala, summarizing the multipronged business entity, which has been nationally recognized yet remains fluid and semi-amorphic. Brian has been working in design since the mid-nineties, when he cut his teeth alongside Aaron at their father’s development firm. As Brian worked as a drafter/designer while he earned a master’s of architecture degree from CU Denver, Aaron’s instinctual skill set had him on the hands-on side of construction, first as a laborer, then as a superintendent, and finally as a project manager. Together, they learned the tricks of the trade from a profitability perspective while helping their father erect a tilt-up empire of concrete industrial offices along the Denver-Boulder transit corridors. “We started our own thing in 2003 because we wanted to be doing more than simple utilitarian buildings,” says WHOTK. “We were looking for cool design on a tangible scale.”

Tangible-scale cool meant securing small commercial and residential commissions while looking for a chance to do something dynamic. The Ojals put everything they had into finding an ideal property on which to build a custom home on spec, eventually purchasing a piece of land in Evergreen. The project paid off handsomely—turning a decent profit, establishing their business model, and drawing the attention of custom-home clients across the country. Recognition included a Custom Home of the Year award in 2009 by the Home Builders Association as well as an AIA Colorado Citation Award.

Today, Entasis remains a two-man show with no other full-time employees beyond the brothers themselves. Yet they have created a commercial architecture and development firm that is a leader in every aspect of finance, design, and construction management required to deliver speculative office properties, custom homes, or whatever else makes sense without the need for approval beyond their own and regulatory requirements. One recent success, Urban Box, consists of 10 for-sale office units along with their own offices perched in the top front corner of 1501 West 124th Avenue in Westminster. Part workspace, part portfolio piece, part investment, Entasis’ Urban Box delivers modern, simple, industrial design sensibilities to the edge of “out there” at a purchase price that allows small business owners to replace a lease with equity.

en•ta•sis - (n) ARCHITECTURE a slight convex curve in the shaft of a column, introduced to correct the visual illusion of concavity produced by a straight shaft.



photo: James Florio

THOUGHTFUL IN EVERY REGARD: The Urban Box orients itself toward the horizon. Operable windows offer cross ventilation and daylight. Passive solar is achieved through integrated overhangs calculated to the azimuth of the sun, so sustainability is second nature.



photo: Christian Ojala

“Our Urban Box concept was about creating an opportunity to own well-designed space on a small-business budget. There are a lot of technical details, but we engage a very limited material pallet, mainly concrete, wood, metal, drywall, travertine, glass, and paint. Nothing trendy, just the classics.”

—Brian Ojala



photo: James Florio

“Our Urban Box concept was about creating an opportunity to own well-designed space on a small-business budget,” says Brian. Achieving the refined, high-end design style the Ojals prefer at a price point that fits is the essence of Entasis’s “less is much, much more” interpretation of building materials. “There are a lot of technical details, but we engage a very limited material pallet, mainly concrete, wood, metal, drywall, travertine, glass, paint. Nothing trendy, just the classics.”

The combination of raw, exposed materials, precise, crisp lines and transparent view planes in Entasis’s office is furnished with

a select collection of classics by Eames and Le Corbusier. The condominium units, which extend the length of the building, all sold quickly; the opportunity to own high-quality design made them an easily appreciable business investment. Simple finishes in polished concrete, exposed metal, glass, and marble attract businesses ranging from lawyers to lighting designers, software engineers, and metal workers. The office units benefit from an east and west orientation to harvest passive solar energy and natural daylight while facilitating cross ventilation through operable windows and roll-up rear doors. Units also include a loft-like

mezzanine level, some of which function as fully furnished office environments or storage, while others are sublet to provide income to owners.

“Design always has cognitive consequences and we know that things like daylight, fresh air, passive energy, and natural building materials improve productivity and comfort,” says Brian. He doesn’t see the need for much distinction between living environments and workspaces, adding that many of the details used in their office can also be found in his own home, located about a half mile down the bike path from the building. “Multiple

CONSCIOUS PROCESS: Brian and Aaron Ojala readily agree they would rather build something cool and lose money than suffer creative stagnation for financial gain. Their offices embody clean composition and relentless independence.



photo: James Florio

“We are interested in originality, functionality, performance, and passivity. We have to make an investment in our work for it to be great.” —Aaron Ojala

layers, careful use of materials, and patience with the process all contribute to insightful, transformative spaces.”

By compressing their business model into a single source, the Ojalas control the destiny of their designs down to the dollar. They admit, in fact, that truly pushing the envelope is an expense few developers are willing to pay for.

“We could have shaved two hundred thousand dollars off the cost of this building, but

that’s not what is important,” says Aaron, who takes the reins on cost and constructability on every Entasis project. “We are interested in originality, functionality, performance, and passivity. We have to make an investment in our work for it to be great.”

For Entasis, achieving greatness often means design elements such as kitchens, fireplaces, or custom walls within their projects that are fully built only to be promptly reassessed, removed, rethought, rearranged, reassembled, and reconsidered. It could continue

through several cycles. Though Brian is the architect, he credits builder/comptroller Aaron for a greater willingness to push the process at the expense of profit. Operating as owner/designer/builder allows Entasis to draw and submit merely the bones and guts required to get a building permit before engaging what Brian calls an open-source approach to developing the details.

“We work exclusively with boutique-scale subcontractors with the same agenda,” says Brian of the select group of craftsmen

engaged to deliver their projects. Metal workers, carpenters, and glass contractors are all given enough direction to build the work and enough latitude to be creative in making choices that enhance the design. Entasis’s conference room tables, for example, were fabricated by the metal worker installing hand railings when the Ojalas gave him free rein and the non-prescriptive design direction of “it better be cool.”

Moving from the Urban Box to their next endeavor, Fluid, Entasis is now developing in a campus-type conglomeration of units just around the bend from their own space. Currently in construction, *Fluid* has already secured an anchor investor, a New York company relocating 65 employees to Colorado to cash in on a favorable economy of scale and this area’s magnificent everything.

“We’re attracting a certain kind of investor who is thinking about a lifestyle,” says Aaron. “These offices are really designed for people who want to slow down, enjoy their work, and enjoy their lives. Brian and I are proud to be delivering high-quality construction and thoughtful spaces offering intrinsic rewards.” ■

CONTEXTUAL COMMUNITY: Makers themselves, the Ojalas craft with simple materials and minimal plans. The tactile, unrefined materiality of their design-build collaboration at the Urban Box seems to attract those who both conceive and do, rather than one or the other.



photo: James Florio

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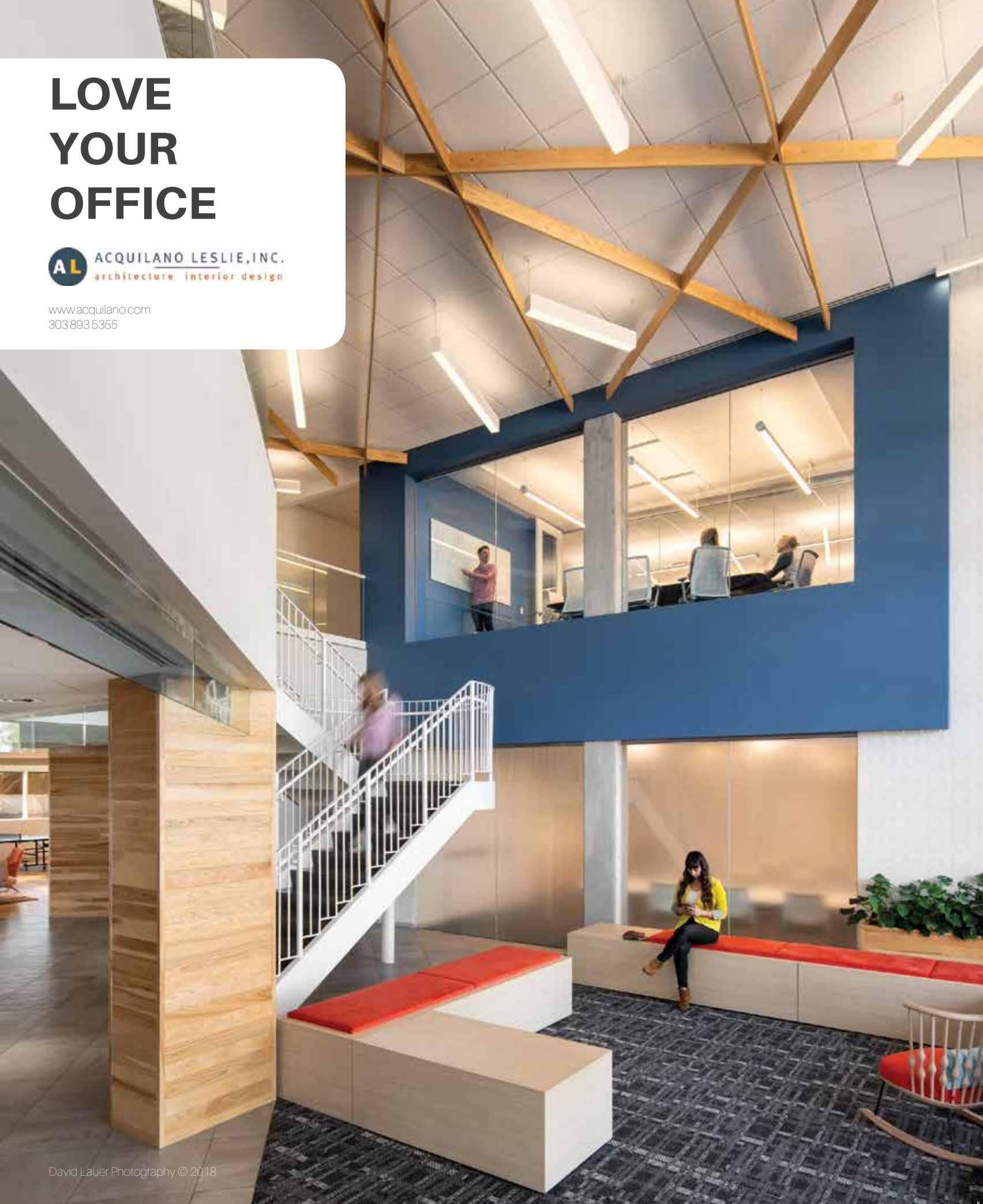




photo: James Florio

Colorado-based architectural provocateur Mark Harris pushes the boundaries from what is to what can be with his exhibit at the 2018 International Venice Biennale. Each project in the exhibit transcends architecture to investigate human culture with an optimistic vision of our 'future future,' depicting a world of possibilities merging creation with what already exists in radical and innovative ways.

REMEMBERING *FORWARD*

WORDS: Beth Mosenthal, AIA

IMAGINE going home from work, and rather than pulling into a driveway or parking garage, you park at the base of a repurposed billboard. After exiting your vehicle, you press a button at the base of the structure. Elevator doors open at the ground level of the steel tube supporting the structure above. Upon arrival at "Level 2," you enter your residence, an ambiguous space within a billboard's frame. Suddenly you are inhabiting a space that is an unexpected combination of the familiar and the unfamiliar - a space which blurs the lines between home and found urban object, between architecture and infrastructure.

If people choose to live in small apartments within walk-up or high-rise buildings, why not repurpose a prolific piece of urban infrastructure of similar height and square footage—the billboard—as a home?

"Billboard House", the internationally-awarded invention of Colorado-based architect Mark Harris, exemplifies his pursuit of how unexpected pairings of function and form can challenge preconceptions related to what is and isn't architecture—as well as how, in Harris's words, architecture may be leveraged "as a new form of social science, one that seeks a broader purview both about ourselves and the world around us."

In the case of Billboard House, Harris explores the relationship between architecture and consumerism. "Houses, in many ways, are billboards. Can't your standard McMansion be seen as a billboard for a person's social and financial status? Inversely, can we also ask if a billboard is even architecture? Are the buildings on Times Square architecture, or just armatures for media? At what point do objects within our built environment cross the line between consumerist objects and architecture?"



Harris's exhibition at the Biennale, "Memories of the Ruined Landscape: Hybrid Architectures for the 21st Century," will be exhibited in two rooms in the historic Palazzo Bembo in Venice. The conceptual rendering of the "Social"-themed room above proposes an exhibit comprised of four distinct architectural projects, represented through physical model and renderings, that address socio-political issues in unexpected and thought-provoking ways.

Harris thinks so, and has the chance to share these ideas through six equally provocative projects as an exhibitor at one of the world's most esteemed cultural events; the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale. Since late May, Harris's exhibition, "Memories of the Ruined Landscape: Hybrid Architectures for the 21st Century," has been on display at the Biennale, a celebrated event showcasing thought-provoking work in art, architecture, cinema, dance, music, and theater by invited participants from across the globe. Equally dazzling as the selected work is the Biennale itself, a world-class network of exhibits and pavilions situated throughout Venice's mythical, floating city.

The 2018 Biennale, open to the public until November 25th and drawing crowds as large as 600,000 people over the duration of the event, will include 71 architectural projects that fall within the theme of "FREESPACE," and

63 International Participants who will present their work in "Collateral Events"—exhibits and presentations that are admitted by the curator and "offer a wide range of contributions and participations that enrich the diversity of voices

HARRIS—IN MANY WAYS AN OUTLIER AS A SMALL-FIRM PRACTITIONER BASED HERE IN COLORADO, WAS CITED AS AN INVITED GUEST BECAUSE OF HIS WORK'S UNIQUE ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY ARTICULATE AND ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

that characterize the Biennale." Harris's work will be included in the Collateral Event category. His exhibition, comprising six projects displayed in two rooms in Venice's Palazzo Bembo which is next to the famous Rialto Bridge, will be exhibited alongside world-renowned architects such as Kengo Kuma, SOM, and the architect of the Denver Art Museum, Daniel Libeskind.

Harris—in many ways an outlier as a small-firm practitioner

based here in Colorado, was cited as an invited guest because of his work's unique ability to effectively articulate and address the challenges of architecture in the 21st century. Rene Rietmeyer, a jury member/curator at the

Venice Biennale, explains, "Architecture today talks about sea changes, but in the end the work itself is basically the same old thing dressed up in a new lexicon. This work [Hybrid Architectures], however, delivers. This is new work, substantially different from what we normally see today, executed with a new set of attitudes and approaches. This work is truly unique, and it questions everything, from the role of the architect, to the role of architecture in the 21st century, >P.169



PUNK

AN ALTERNATIVE MUSIC VENUE LOCATED WITHIN AN ABANDONED ROOFTOP WATER TOWER



The idea of habitable space within the confines of an abandoned water tower expands our ideas about the rituals of habitation and the narratives between architecture, landscape, use, and alternative atmospheres. Like its cousin project, Billboard House, PUNK is less a "natural" setting for occupation, and therefore gives itself much more readily to the contemplative setting of de-familiarization. Although PUNK does not defamiliarize the spaces and events that take place within, it does defamiliarize our normal behavior and calls attention to our own need to abstract what might otherwise be "natural" activities.





BILLBOARD HOUSE

LOCATED WITHIN AN ABANDONED DOWNTOWN BILLBOARD STRUCTURE

Billboard House reaches for density in its multiple readings within a very compact project. At once seen as a reclaimed found urban object (a billboard), it is also a dialogue on consumerism and the nature of extroverted manifestations of introverted desires and intents. Both a study in gender within architecture and a study of the relationship between object and context, Billboard House claims neutral ground in being both and neither at the same time. As such, it provokes a wide range of social, cultural, and architectural topics.



After producing the exhibit content in Colorado, Harris and his team shipped the entire exhibit to Venice in two large crates in an "IKEA"-like format. Produced strategically as a series of components quickly assembled on site, Harris and two of his employees met the crates in Venice, where they were installed in a matter of days instead of the two weeks allotted by the Venice Biennale curatorial staff. Pictured above and to right is Sam Friesema, one of Harris's co-workers, installing wall models in the "ECO" portion of the exhibition.

"ARCHITECTURE TODAY TALKS ABOUT SEA CHANGE, BUT IN THE END THE WORK ITSELF IS BASICALLY THE SAME OLD THING DRESSED UP IN A NEW LEXICON. THIS WORK [HYBRID ARCHITECTURES], HOWEVER, DELIVERS. THIS IS NEW WORK, SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE NORMALLY SEE TODAY, EXECUTED WITH A NEW SET OF ATTITUDES AND APPROACHES."

—RENE RIETMEYER

to the relationship between architecture and urban design in the 21st century, to our relationship with the natural environment, and, most importantly, with our relationship to each other. It's one of the few exhibits out there that represents the 'real thing'—something that actually has the courage to tackle important issues and that provokes the meaningful dialogue we so desperately need today."

When Harris talks about his career trajectory, it's clear that his dedication to pursuing an interdisciplinary practice that blends his personal and professional beliefs has helped lead to this exciting opportunity.

Having spent his early years working for Antoine Predock, winner of accolades such as the AIA Gold Medal, Harris quickly learned that architecture is a personal endeavor that requires a great responsibility. "Many believe that you are not supposed to put yourself into a project. That's not

really possible when you really think about it, and a city like Venice proves this point. To do this, you must ask yourself, What do I believe? What an architect does affects many people for a very long time, consuming many resources along the way. To this end, it must be responsible on all levels, which requires a full commitment on all levels."

Having been in business for over 30 years, Harris has spent his career balancing architectural practice with academics, teaching and lecturing while building a portfolio that includes a variety of schools, residences, historic renovations and interior commercial remodels.

Amid the recession, Harris took a sabbatical in which he explored avenues for reframing his practice. After speaking with contemporaries, including architect and scholar Aaron Betsky, Harris decided that he wanted to expand his practice to Europe. "I was repeatedly told by groups such as the European >P.173



US/MEXICO WORK VISA BORDER CROSSING



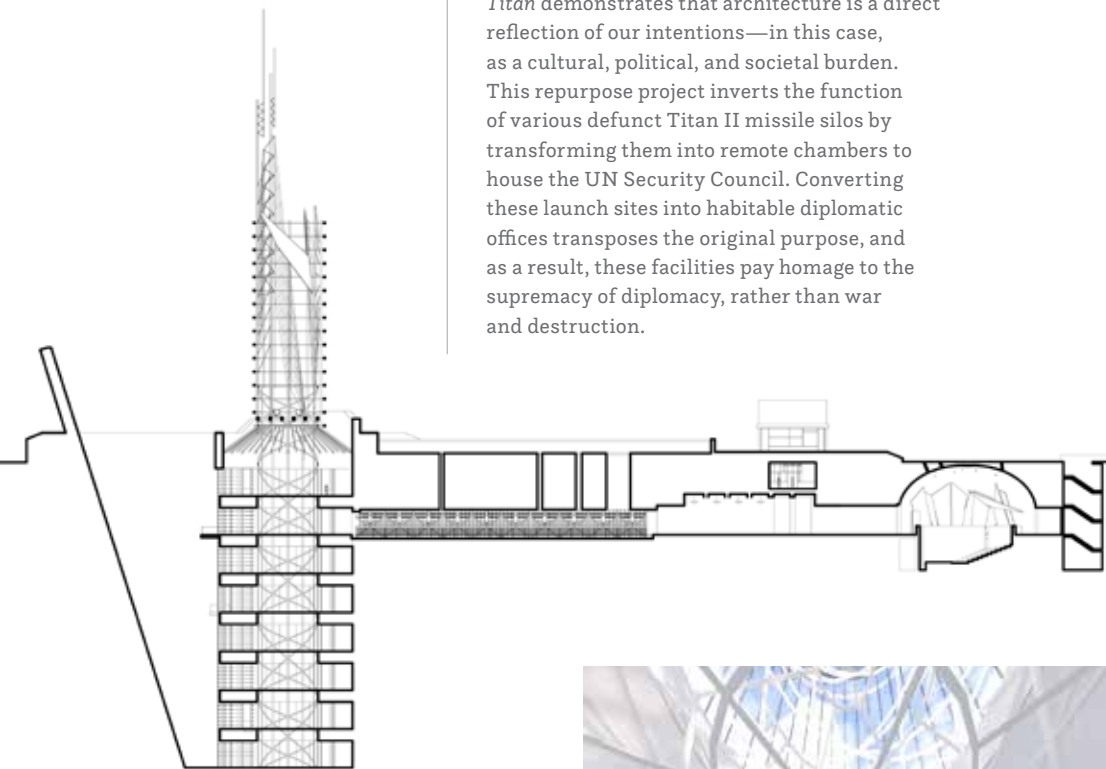
ARCHITECTURE AS GEOPOLITICAL POLICY

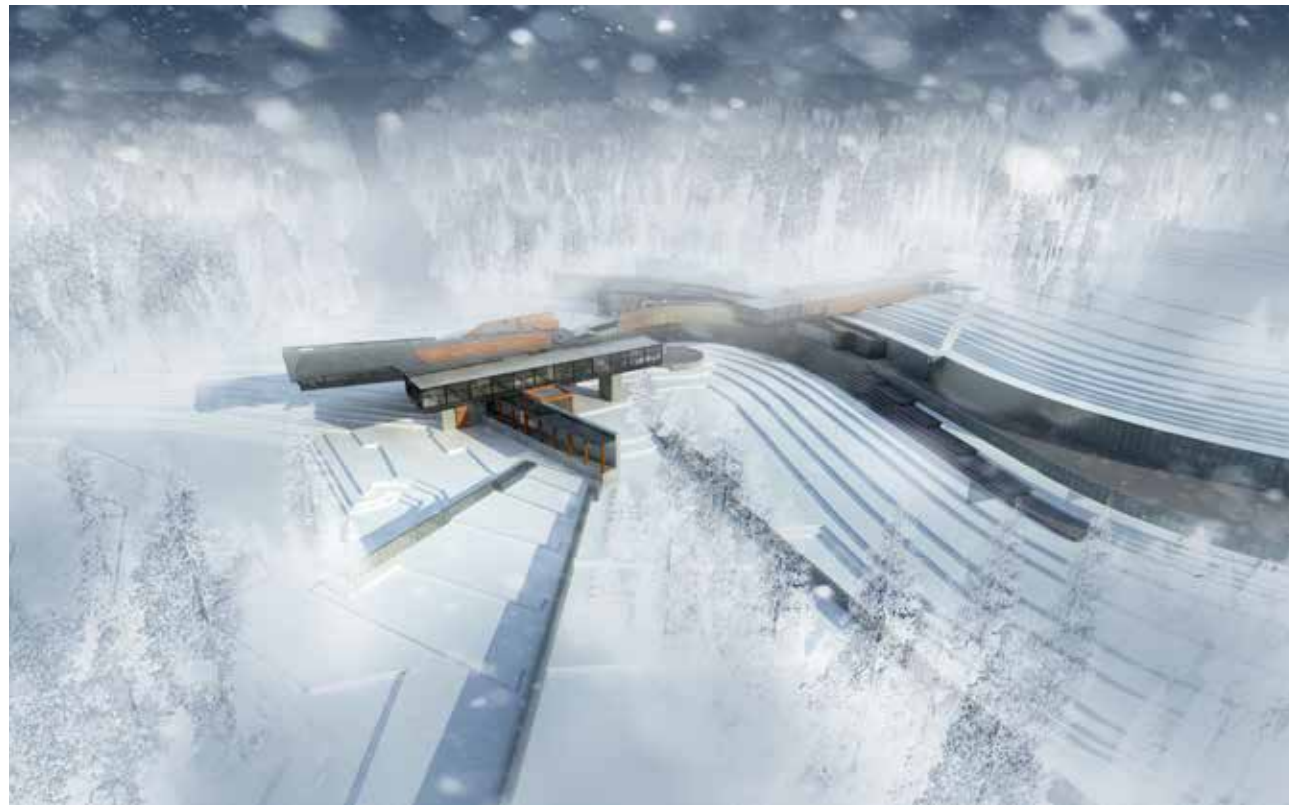
Socially, politically, culturally, and architecturally, *Border* questions the notion of boundaries. Similar to *Billboard House* and *PUNK*, the architectural object itself is not the focus, but instead the erasure within the architecture itself. While this project carefully avoids taking sides on current US foreign and border policies, it does question conceptual sovereignty. Should the so-called pragmatic concerns of commerce, trade, and immigration eclipse the ideals of “neighbor” and “good will between nations”?

TITAN

REMOTE UN SECURITY COUNCIL CHAMBER

Titan demonstrates that architecture is a direct reflection of our intentions—in this case, as a cultural, political, and societal burden. This repurpose project inverts the function of various defunct Titan II missile silos by transforming them into remote chambers to house the UN Security Council. Converting these launch sites into habitable diplomatic offices transposes the original purpose, and as a result, these facilities pay homage to the supremacy of diplomacy, rather than war and destruction.

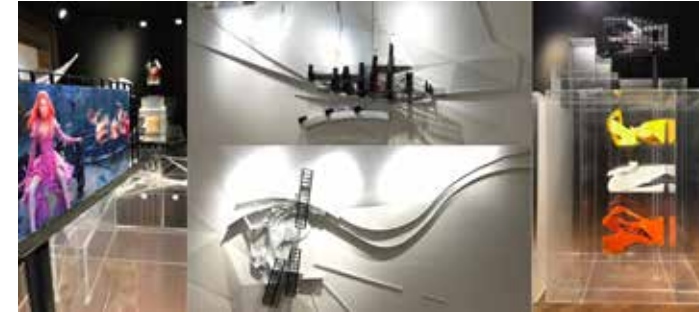




ATHLETICS HIGH SCHOOL + INSCRIPTIONS K-8

NEW MODELS FOR EDUCATIONAL DESIGN

For the first time in our history, the notion of “ethics” extends beyond solely human concerns. Today we must build with a consciousness that the object and context of our construction are equal, as if a narrating pen is writing its own inscription, or necessitating a sense of reflection while forging a future. These unique models for educational design are forward-looking, merging the technosphere of our design and creation with our biosphere, namely, with the world we have inherited, and striving to sustain it with our decisions on how we choose to build and inhabit our world.



The final exhibition is a mixed-media illustration of architecture’s versatility; both as a practice and way of thinking about the present and future. The inclusion of models illustrating physical spaces configured in unexpected ways, paired with dynamic renderings and thought-provoking video and audio create exhibition environments that invite analysis, intrigue, and ultimately, reflection.



Cultural Center that the average person in the European Union [EU] sees cities and buildings as a work of art, and that the average US citizen sees cities and buildings as infrastructure. To me, architecture is infrastructure, but it is also art.” Harris began pursuing projects that challenged architectural norms, including charter schools locally and speculative work abroad, which he began to submit for awards—and quickly started to win. “I would submit four awards and win four awards. The EU burst open for me. You can’t submit for the Biennale, you have to be asked, so that’s how [the invitation to participate] came about.”

During exhibition prep in April, Harris shared that designing,

fabricating, and shipping the pieces that he and his team of two employees would assemble on-site prior in Venice would be no small feat. Because his exhibit is self-funded, Harris explains, “Like all of our built projects for clients, we’ve been careful with how we spend money...we’ve merged the latest technologies such as 3D printing, ABS plastics, and acrylics, with lower-tech materials such as laser-cut crescent boards.” Instead of shipping finished models to Venice, he decided to pack everything into two crates, saying at the time: “Just like your cell phone, car, or computer, it’s a series of components that are quickly assembled on-site. When we arrive and unpack the crates, everything is numbered and meant to go together very quickly,

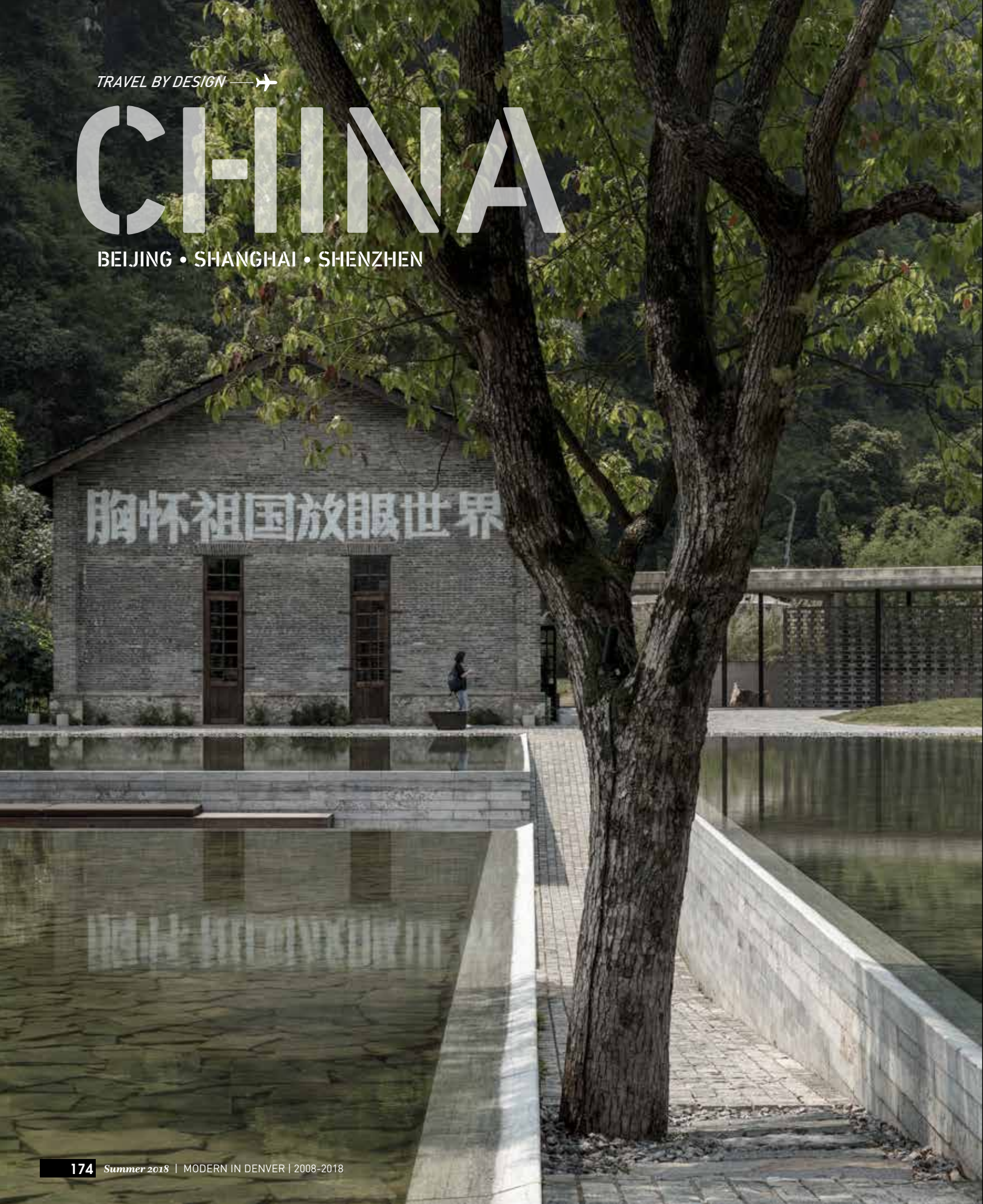
similar to unpacking a table from IKEA.”

The design of the exhibition is displayed in a manner Harris refers to as “a scientific study that manifests itself as an art exhibit.” The exhibition consists of two rooms celebrating projects with different themes, ECO and SOCIAL. Each room has a distinct design supporting the overall message and intended visitor experience. While ECO will include large-scale models and interpretive video of two projects related to rethinking how schools are designed and assembled, the SOCIAL room will have models and a single image related to four projects, Billboard House, PUNK, Remote United Nations Security Council Chamber, and US/Mexico Work Visa Border Crossing, that explore our relationship to the natural and built environment as well as one another. “The goal of this exhibit is to provide an optimistic glimpse into our ‘future-future’; a world of possibilities where our buildings and cities are armatures for greater meaning in the on-going human experiment,” writes Harris.

While Harris’s work may appear as purely visionary, each is the result of a real project awaiting realization. Interestingly, due to a uniquely integrative approach to design and construction, most price below typical market values. Perhaps some attendee of the Biennale seeking 21st century solutions to 21st century problems will desire to realize one of these projects - a chance to see into our ‘future future’. ■

CHINA

BEIJING • SHANGHAI • SHENZHEN



OFTEN LITERALLY CONSTRUCTED IN THE SHADOWS OF THE MASSIVE AND ICONIC WESTERN-DESIGNED STRUCTURES, A UNIQUE CHINESE FORM OF MODERN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE HAS ARRIVED. BY DESIGN, IT IS ORGANIC, SUBTLE AND TRUE TO CHINA.

C

China is in a golden era of design. For years after the Cultural Revolution ended in the mid-1970s, government-organized firms led the narrative on what was built and how. In the early 21st century, more Western design firms came onto the scene and resulted in several iconic buildings, including the Dutch firm OMA's CCTV building. But in its most recent history, with the opening of borders and economies, smaller, local firms are most noticeably contributing to the scope of the country's design, creating spaces that marry the culture's reverence for history and tradition with its command of technology and construction.

Take, for example, the Alila Yangshuo resort in Southern China's breathtaking Guangxi province. Its story is captivating. Once a Communist-era sugar mill that had been abandoned during the country's Cultural Revolution, today it is an

elegant and exquisitely designed 5-star hotel. To get there, Alila Hotels and Resorts enlisted the help of Beijing-based firm Vector Architects to reimagine the space. Vector principal Gong Dong, who led the project, used the mill as a base — not to mention a metaphor for the nation's turbulent sociopolitical history — and surrounded it with modern buildings to bridge old and new.

Comfortably wealthy, and with a desire to showcase its newfound economic power, China has brought architecture to the forefront of avant garde design, resulting in spaces that are truly spectacular. We visited the cities leading the charge: capital city Beijing, rife with tradition and commerce; Shanghai, the cosmopolitan center of art and culture; and Shenzhen, a former fishing village turned city that's redefining design for the country of 1.3 billion.

WORDS: *Caroline Joan Peixoto*
IMAGES: *James Florio*



Tucked into the idyllic setting of karst mountains that rise high and fall fast, Vector repurposed the former mill's various factory buildings into specific resort areas. Sugar pressing rooms, for example, became the bar and restaurant. A former loading dock was deconstructed and transformed into an outdoor pool. A new structure built to house guest rooms was fabricated with concrete covered in a latticework of custom-made hollow bricks created from local materials.



BEIJING - ANCIENT FOUNDATIONS

“History is my inspiration,” says ArchStudio’s Han Wenqiang. “In this city, you are never without a story, never without an angle.” Indeed, Beijing is a many-layered, always-expanding urban jungle, its history stretching back millennia.

Today, skyscrapers designed by top architects sit among centuries-old neighborhoods built in an ancient tradition. The hutongs, a seemingly endless network of alleys, courtyards and homes, are unique to Beijing. Their modern-day counterparts — high-rise apartments, imposing government edifices and avant-garde cultural buildings — are equally endless in this city of 21 million.

Despite its density, Beijing carries with it a sense of calm. Traffic moves easily on the wide streets and highways, and the public transit system is efficient. “This is a very old city,” says our translator. “People are comfortable in their routines, and yet — because times are moving so fast — excited for what can happen at any moment.”

MAD Architects, led by Beijing-born Ma Yansong, is one of the most widely acclaimed Chinese architectural firms that has manifested in this new generation. Founded in 2004 with the intention of binding futuristic design and cutting-edge technology with the Eastern affinity for nature in its design, their humble beginnings have led to some of the most highly anticipated projects in the world. Recently, MAD won and broke ground on George Lucas’ Museum of Narrative Art in Los Angeles.

Another MAD project that has caught the eye of the international design world is the recently completed Chaoyang Park Plaza, a mixed-use skyscraper. The plaza is magnificent in size and shape, at first glance resembling an alien space station. Sleek and modern, it has become an emblem of Beijing’s commitment to pushing the boundaries of technology and design.

It is this balance between nature and modernity that Wenqiang works to perfect at ArchStudio. “Traditionally, Chinese homes are only ever on one floor, allowing inhabitants to receive energy from the qi that passes through the ground to their feet. But because of modernization, people have begun to live in apartments — in the air — and lose their connection to the earth. I want my designs to connect humans to nature through the architecture that surrounds them.”

Wenqiang studied at Beijing’s Central Academy of Fine Arts and was an architecture professor in 2005 before starting his firm in 2010. “ArchStudio was created out of necessity — it became a place where students could practice what they were being taught, and to give my conceptual ideas a platform on which to be seen. It became a way to add my own layers to Beijing.”



MAD’s Ma Yansong created Chaoyang Park Plaza to be a bridge between the natural world and the urban world. With its placement on the lake’s edge in Beijing’s largest public park, the structure’s shape mirrors the soft curves and undulations of its surroundings. Pine trees, bamboo, rocks and ponds weave throughout the 10-building plaza, its two towers soaring high above the rest like the Chinese mountains they mimic. These towers are defined by vertical fins on the exterior facade of black glass, giving the impression of a skin pulled smoothly over its bones.



Formerly a brothel and bakery near a famous and historic pedestrian street in Beijing known as Qianmen, The Layering Courtyard now functions as a boutique hotel and events space, honoring the traditional structure while incorporating modern comforts. The original building above had been abandoned for years when a Beijing-based hospitality group reached out to ArchStudio for collaboration.



“WE WANT TO BLUR THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN NATURE AND THE ARTIFICIAL, AND MAKE IT SO THAT BOTH ARE DESIGNED WITH THE OTHER IN MIND” - Ma Yansong, MAD Architects



“I want my work to represent the feeling of going into a historic, traditional Chinese space, but with all modern forms.”

-Han Wenqiang, ArchStudio



“I try not to look ahead, but to stay present. I don’t have a big vision, what I have is in front of me. What can I do with that? This is what is interesting.” -Han Wenqiang, ArchStudio

TRAVEL BY DESIGN - CHINA

Another Beijing ArchStudio project is the Hotel Twisting Courtyard. Walking through the traditional shutter doorway, one is instantly swept away from the chaotic, noisy life of Beijing’s hutongs into a poetic and quiet scene. Comprised of four small individual houses and linked by a cobblestone pathway that winds its way through each building, the lines between outdoor and indoor are blurred. Sliding wooden doors, soft white curtains and green walls of live bamboo separate the spaces that can be rented individually or as a single residence.



“From outside, it looks like a weathered rock that is pure and solid; but inside, what it contains is the rich feelings and experiences.”

-Gong Dong, Vector Architects

The Seashore Library and Chapel, designed by Vector Architects, are located in an exclusive resort community known as Aranya, a three-hour drive east of Beijing on the Yellow Sea in Qinhuangdao. Unlike anything else in the world, the Seashore Library sits directly on the beach, only a few hundred feet from the current. Made of concrete and locally sourced wooden beams for contrast, the library's collection focuses on maritime and historical books. Inside, the ocean-facing wall is made entirely of glass and all seating faces the sea, creating a unique and inspiring reading spot.





The Chapel building is a short walk from the library and is open to all faiths. With its sharply pitched gable, it stands out on the beach like a boat swept ashore. Constructed of poured concrete and whitewashed walls, the cutouts inside allow light to naturally fill the space, and the pews face not a pulpit but a wall of glass — the only thing between you and the meditative ocean.

“We imagine the Seashore Chapel as an old boat drifting on the ocean a long time ago. The ocean receded through time and left an empty structure behind, which is still lying on the beach. When the tide rises, this space will be submerged by water. At that moment, the imagery of the drifting boat emerges out of the chapel.” -Vector Architects



SHANGHAI - DIVERSE INFLUENCES

If Beijing is uniquely Chinese, Shanghai is uniquely multicultural. The city of 24 million — one of the world's largest cities — is vibrant in its diversity both in population and design. "You must have diversity to survive," says Wutopia Lab founder Yu Ting. "Without diversity, without complex systems, without color, a city — or a design — dies."

Ting, who is proudly and fiercely Shanghainese, began Wutopia Lab in 2013 after two decades of working in a government-run architecture department. He'll tell you he experienced an awakening and, turning from his standardized, state-dictated designs, articulated a philosophy of his own. This philosophy and its resulting colorful, complex and playful designs have manifested in truly innovative works that capture global attention.

Shanghai's cosmopolitan energy is divided by the Huangpu River, the banks of which locals describe as "the Bund." The

river is lined with high rises, skyscrapers and towers. Beyond the riverwalk lies neighborhood after neighborhood, each bustling with individuality.

Walk through the neighborhoods of Jing'an or the French Concession, and you'll find tree-lined streets teeming with life, and small boutiques, cafés and restaurants that abound with charm and character. Here Shanghai stands in its truest form: full of antiquity and layered with foreign influences, its architecture mixes traditional Chinese, French colonialism, and a new frontier of Modern design.

"We have been building and developing for centuries," says Ting. "We have an incredibly rich history to work from. I am constantly learning and gathering information. From wandering the streets of my neighborhood to what I see on the internet, I am always keeping my mind open to receive."



"There is always an antithesis in the paradigm of design. When you create a space, you must also give life to the antithesis of the space. Design is and must be complex. If I create a space, I must consider what is working against it. There is always an underside to something, and it must be taken into account, hence this paradigm of antithesis. Without this consideration, we cannot have balance."

-Yu Ting, Wutopia Lab



In this home for renowned artist Li Bin, Ting had the freedom to explore the antithetical paradigm that is central to his design philosophy. The living quarters and his art studio are linked only by a walking bridge, and the interiors are painted in bright, contrasting colors.



Zhongshuge Bookstore is renowned in China for its complex and extravagantly designed brick-and-mortar locations, and each retail store's form is unique. At this Suzhou location designed by Wutopia Lab, a colorful gradient of perforated aluminum sheets spans the length of the 15,000-square-foot space. The colors undulate softly as you pass through the store, and the sheets allow for private reading spots in an otherwise public space.

"Sometimes I will forget something for many years, but then, when I stand in the surroundings of a new site, memories come back. Maybe a piece of a film, or a photo, or some gossip or a sensation. When I put myself in the space, the mind will choose to make connections, and the design is born." -Yu Ting, Wutopia Lab





The West Bund Art Center sits on the Bund River's southern edge, a newly developed area that makes for a perfect day of visiting galleries that curate a wide array of art from local and international artists. The complex includes 16 small buildings designed by several design firms. Pictured **above** is the Chi She gallery, its brick facade constructed with robotic fabrication technique for absolute precision. **Below** is the Fab-Union gallery, a four-storied space made of a soft concrete that weaves itself around the staircases and through the floors. Both galleries were designed by Dr. Philip Yuan, who leads the Shanghai-based Archi-Union Architects founded in 2003.



The Long Museum West Bund opened in 2014 to great acclaim. Atelier Deshaus, led by Liu Yichun, reworked former coal wharves to house the impressive private art collection of husband and wife team Liu Yiqian and Wang Wei. The area contains not only four floors of art and exhibits, but a cafe, library, children's center and several shops. The intent of the owners was to create a space where art is integrated seamlessly into the routines of the Shanghainese.





The walls that form the borders of the museum are referred to as the "vault umbrella," with concrete columns that curve toward the top, appearing as separate halves of an arch. This freedom of form provides an ample feeling of space while also paying homage to the space's original industrial roots.



Ideas Lab is the first of its kind of co-working sites in Shanghai, with its space dedicated to research and development, information technology, virtual reality, and commercial development. The nearly 12,000-square-foot area's design, designed by X-Living, blends the industrial revolution with the age of technology. The entire space has a utilitarian feel, with elevated walkways, massive pipes running through the rooms and metal fittings. Though sleek and modern, X+Living's Li Xiang added a playful contrast of pink to the interior. "I never want to follow the crowd," she says. "I want to bring an entirely different quality to my clients and to provide something visually entertaining."



"I don't want to be attached to any one style, and I definitely don't want to follow a trend. With each individual project, I want my values to be conveyed through the design. We want to match functionality with entertainment. A design shouldn't be for the sake of a design, but to bring positive energy in to its society."

- Li Xiang, X+Living



On any given Sunday, Shenzhen's parks — which are lush and extensive — are filled with young families. Children fly kites while adults sing karaoke. The library is bursting at the seams and museums are free to the public. The central plaza is pulsing with dancers, skateboarders and friends taking selfies. The energy of the city is eager and excited.



SHENZHEN - FORWARD THINKING INSPIRATIONS

It is in Shenzhen that one really begins to understand what China is capable of as a nation and as a leader of design. In 1979, the city was a small fishing town of 30,000. The government wanted to experiment with an open economy and designated the city as a "Special Economic Zone," allowing for foreign investment and exports. By 2008, the population reached 12 million, and today serves as China's design capital. "Shenzhen is a young city," says Rita Chow, "Here, Chinese designers have more chances to put their creative ideas to practice."

Chow founded Sunshine Public Relations in 2016 to serve the thriving design and architecture industries. Sunshine is the first firm of its kind in China, and a dozen or so 20-somethings — fluent in English and tied to their smartphones — are busily working over their desks. "We have an opportunity here," says Chow, "We are growing so rapidly, and the world is noticing. Why not show them our best work? Why not share how unique our designs are?"

Shenzhen's wealth and young status has allowed for the quick development of property and cityscape. "A few decades ago, European styles were what was popular and what was being built," Chow adds. "Today, we are exploring our own design style based on our rich culture. Now, it's being expressed in a contemporary way, and we have a lot to look forward to."

TOP: The new Design Society building by Dutch firm MVRDV, where the industry has a place to call home in this exhibition, events, gallery and retail space. **BOTTOM:** Shown here is the Shenzhen Cultural Center, a meeting place of East and West that includes the Concert Hall and Library by Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, the Museum of Contemporary Art and Planning Exhibition by Austria firm Coop Himmelb(l)au.

Shenzhen will also be home to the future Shimao Shenzhen-Hong Kong International Centre, a nearly 2,200-foot high tower, which would make it the world's second tallest when completed in 2024. That project is being managed by China's own Shimao Group.

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WHITING THE GARDENS

A PLAYFUL 'PIXELATED' PLANTING OF
13 SCULPTURES MAKES FOR A WALK IN THE
PARK BY BELOVED ARTIST MIKE WHITING.

WORDS: Gigi Sukin • IMAGES: James Florio



THE BLACK-AND-WHITE AMERICANA TV FAMILY, IN WHICH A
QUINTESSENTIALLY COMPOSED MOTHER BECKONS HER RESTLESS
OR ROWDY CHILDREN TO “GO PLAY OUTSIDE,” FEELS LIKE A DISTANT
MEMORY SINCE THE ADVENT OF THE VIDEO GAME.

But it's easy to return to that fantastical, innocent wonder as you mosey through the Denver Botanic Gardens' 2018 exhibition featuring California-based artist Mike Whiting's "Pixelated" figures, which draw inspiration from digital amusements.

"Gardens are, in their own way, virtual spaces—carefully created environments," says Whiting. "They have the power to transport you, to give you the feeling of faraway places. Similar are the digital environments of video games."

Spread throughout the landscapes are 13 large-scale steel sculptures in 11 sites, four of which were exclusively produced for the Gardens. Whiting's aesthetic is that of eight-bit retro video games like Pac-Man and Space Invaders.

The geometric works can, at first, seem at odds with the manicured nature in which they currently rest. But Whiting's intent is to instigate a dialogue about the representation of nature, and our relationship with technology in tangible spaces.

"When you think about it, Mike's work represents a human-mediated way of looking at the natural world," says Jen Tobias, Denver Botanic Gardens' associate director of exhibitions. "It's a hybrid of nature and man-made."

For more than a decade, the 24-acre refuge in Cheesman Park has invited the visual arts into its backdrops in an effort to strengthen connections between visitors and the natural world.

Tobias says when planning exhibitions for the grounds, she looks for artists who present a "formal contrast, but a conceptual connection."

"Pixelated" marks Whiting's first large-scale outdoor solo show, but it isn't his first public display in Denver. Whiting is responsible for the RiNo Art District's iconic blue rhinoceros, and, in the same neck of the woods, Pinky and Mr. Green—male and female characters that face one another, "frozen in eternal conversation." The latter two are currently featured at the gardens.

Whiting's work explores the visual relationship between minimalism and early video game forms. It appeals to both casual onlookers and art enthusiasts alike, thanks to its bright colors and lightheartedness.

"You have to work to figure it out," Whiting says of his intent to strike a balance between abstract and representational sculpture.

The featured artist grew up without a television in his childhood home in West Covina, California. He recalls trips to the arcade, where he and his siblings would spend hours entranced by Pac-Man. At his grandmother's, he'd plop himself on the couch and immerse himself in the games of Atari.



At the entrance to the Denver Botanic Gardens, a playful and familiar diptych, titled "Ghost and Castle," (2016) greets guests. The two pieces are made from paint and steel, as are all 11 of artist Mike Whiting's sculptures in the gardens. They are "the opposite of each other," Whiting says, representative of his signature, minimalist form. The pieces are related to the game Castles.

But there's more to Whiting's sculptures than wistfulness for his and other's youthful exuberance. His public works—which have, through the years, been tagged with graffiti and vandalism—illuminate how urban environments interact with the natural world. There are elements of time, technology, and place called into question. And what better location for the public to unpack these tenuous topics than at the second-most-visited public garden in the country.

"The way the gardens do their exhibitions, they want it to be a narrative," says Ivan Zeile, Whiting's exclusive dealer and the principal of Denver's Plus Gallery. Zeile has worked with the headliner since 2002, and pushed for this exhibition for several years as well.

The new sculptures manufactured specifically for "Pixelated" are the cleverly titled "Garden Gnome" as well as the blue and yellow "Ghost and Castle," which greet guests upon entry to the Gardens. Whiting says the twosome, inspired by Pac-Man and Super Mario Bros., respectively, are a "visual palindrome," meaning the same shape but flipped on its head.

"Cactus" was influenced by Whiting's pre-exhibition trip to the Gardens. "There was this little cactus in the back corner of the Cactus and Succulent House, and it looked so sad; it only had one little nub that came off to the side. So I decided to make a friend for it."

Meanwhile, "Bird" has landed at Marnie's Pavilion, standing 11 feet, 4 inches, and 4,083 pounds.

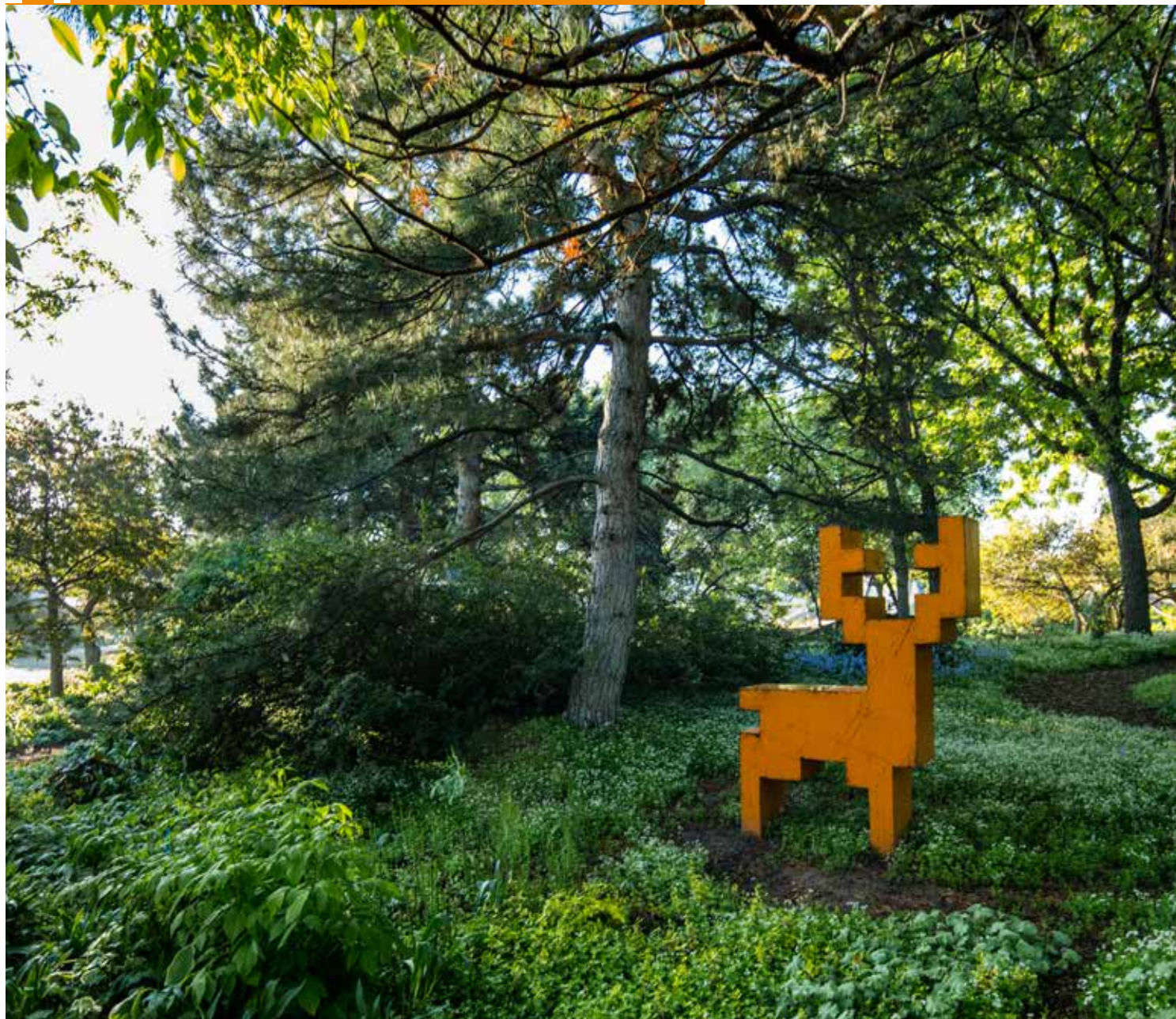
"If you think about video games as moving avatars, you take something virtual and make it something in our world," Whiting says of "Buck," a deer with a full rack located in a clearing under a patch of trees. "It's a natural space with a virtual character. The patina shows its history."

Before Whiting begins the fabrication process, he uses the vintage Microsoft Paint program on his studio computer to expand the view by 800 percent and develop representations pixel by pixel. "For him, the pixel is the building block for all his work," Zeile says.

Then, using rolled sheets of quarter-inch plate steel, he compresses and smooths the metal, cuts each puzzle piece and welds the individual sides together. After construction of the rudimentary figures, he paints multiple coats—typically in one



One of four new pieces specifically crafted for the "Pixelated" exhibition is "Cactus," planted in the Rock Garden. The metal sculpture was influenced by a visit artist Mike Whiting took to the Denver Botanic Gardens before the show, modeled after a similar plant he saw in the cactus house. There's also a cactus-based video game installation in the Gardens' Science Pyramid for the summer.



“GARDENS ARE, IN THEIR OWN WAY VIRTUAL SPACES – CAREFULLY CREATED ENVIRONMENTS, THEY HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSPORT YOU, TO GIVE YOU THE FEELING OF FARAWAY PLACES. SIMILAR ARE THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS OF VIDEO GAMES.” —MIKE WHITING



“THE WAY THE GARDENS DO THEIR EXHIBITIONS, THEY WANT IT TO BE A NARRATIVE.” —IVAR ZEILE

bright color—and distresses the finish with sandpaper, cinder blocks, or by pulling the piece behind the back of his truck.

“As an undergrad, I had this teacher who was a big steel guy,” Whiting says of his foray into the fabrication process. “He showed us how to weld, and then we figured it out along the way. It’s always been the right medium for what I wanted to do.”

Whiting recalls that professor saying the reason steel was his medium of choice was that “it obeyed him.” To date, Whiting admits, “It doesn’t always obey me. It wants to do its own thing.”

Zeile says that Whiting has developed his own style over time, advancing the complexity of his forms.

Loyalty to his pixels is derived from two inspirations: technological limitations of the early video games from the 1980s—the era of Whiting’s young life—and artistic minimalism. In the early days of video games, programmers could not develop more detailed imagery, which restricted how they could depict a particular image. With Whiting’s work on the whole, there is intentionality

and narrative behind the craftsmanship, and the artist proves limitations are only impediments if we allow them to be.

Of the public nature of his art, Whiting says, “Once it’s given away, it’s not mine any more,” paying little mind to the scratches, weathering, and doodles passersby have added.

Tobias says the goal of the Denver Botanic Gardens’ exhibitions is to better connect “people to plants.”

“We always want to enhance, rather than detract from, the Gardens,” Tobias says, “both scientifically and aesthetically. With ‘Pixelated,’ there’s a fun opposition to play with in those spaces. There are organic shapes and colors that really do go into those natural spaces.”

Whiting adds that putting his work in a “manmade setting” as beautiful as the nature inside the gardens is ideal. “It’s a very controlled, virtual space, much like the homes from which these objects came.” ■

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A NEST OF COLOR

A daring collaboration to jazz up new Wash Park project, *Red Owl*, turns a set of apartments from least favorite to must have.

WORDS: Gigi Sukin • IMAGES: Trevr Merchant

LAST YEAR, nearly 100 creatives enlisted to paint the town polychrome for the RiNo Art District's annual weeklong alleyway festival, Colorado Crush; this year, the same idea was reinterpreted, when CF Studio Architecture + Development commissioned five local artists to embellish its new West Wash Park apartment complex.

Called *Red Owl*, after an earlier tenant, the Red Owl grocery store at 90 S. Logan St., the newly constructed complex abuts Alchemy Creative Workspace, an adaptive reuse two-story bow truss warehouse, also the brainchild of CF Studio.

Chris Fulenwider, architect and president of the firm, and Travis McAfoos, purchased the property more than three years ago, with an imaginative vision for a mixed-use project that would incorporate the 1920s façade alongside a new build.

"I wanted to save the building," Fulenwider recalls, referring to what is now Alchemy, a collaborative work environment. "It would have been a shame to tear it down."

But in late 2017, following the apartment's construction, he realized his design had a flaw: The north-facing edge of the new building was bathed in the shadows cast by *Red Owl*, and thus starved of direct sunlight.

"I wanted to make the building into a home," Fulenwider says. "Even on an overcast day, I wanted it to be vibrant."

Inspired by stunning and skillful street art, Fulenwider called Yianni Bellis to help him find and select five creatives—one for each unit—to improve the gloomy northern edge of the masonry wall.

"It shares the feeling of public art with the intimacy of a private installation," says artist Tony Zellaha, describing his style as "whimsical." For his mural, Zellaha included a nod to "Where the Wild Things Are," with a hairy cartoonish creature donning a red owl mask.



"IT SHARES THE FEELING OF PUBLIC ART WITH THE INTIMACY OF A PRIVATE INSTALLATION." —TONY ZELLAHA



"For tenants or viewers, I wanted something they would want to enter to be part of a story," Zellaha says.

Though the Wash Park pocket of the Mile High City doesn't scream edgy, Fulenwider was confident in the splash of cerulean and modern design he would infuse into the neighborhood. He was "pretty hands-off" as the artists got to work.

Nearby, Patrick Kane McGregor sketched freehand for his corner unit contribution.

"My style is realism and portraiture combined with a vigor of graffiti roots and advertising," says McGregor. "I usually incorporate a portrait pertaining to the subject or geography, and if I can't think of one, I immortalize my bulldog, Bouguereau, who has become my muse."

Indeed, the dweller of that unit will get at least one year with McGregor's illustrated pup.

"The neighborhood is primarily single-family homes," Fulenwider says, adding he tried to give his complex a complementary exterior shape, scale, and rhythm. Other features include picture-frame windows to let in an abundance of natural light, and bamboo shoots used as privacy instruments, expected to grow nearly eight feet tall. Functional indoor-outdoor space is incorporated into each of the 46 units in the donut-shaped structure.

For now, Red Owl is more than three-quarters occupied, and the five homes with art installations have all been rented. ■

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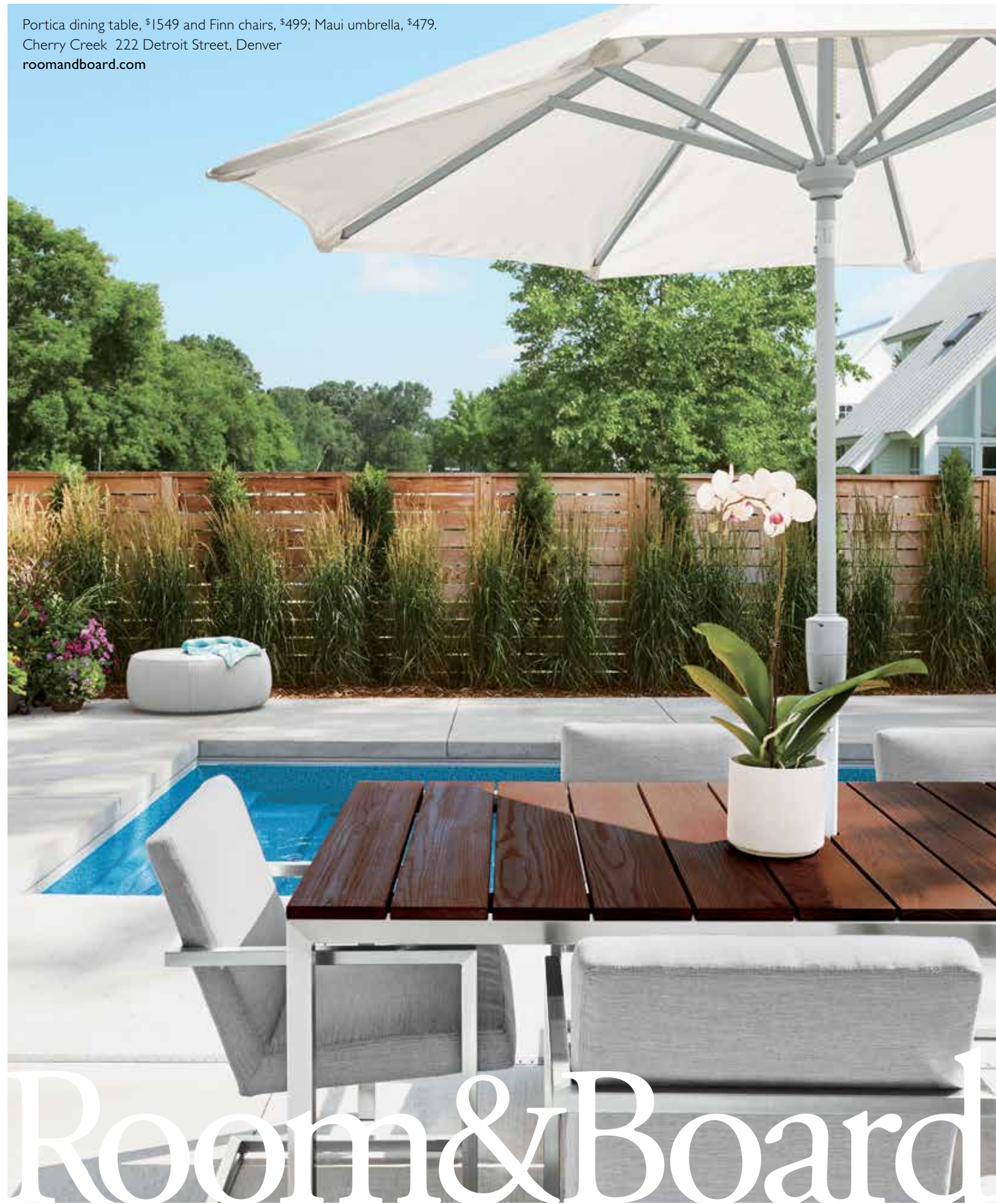
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