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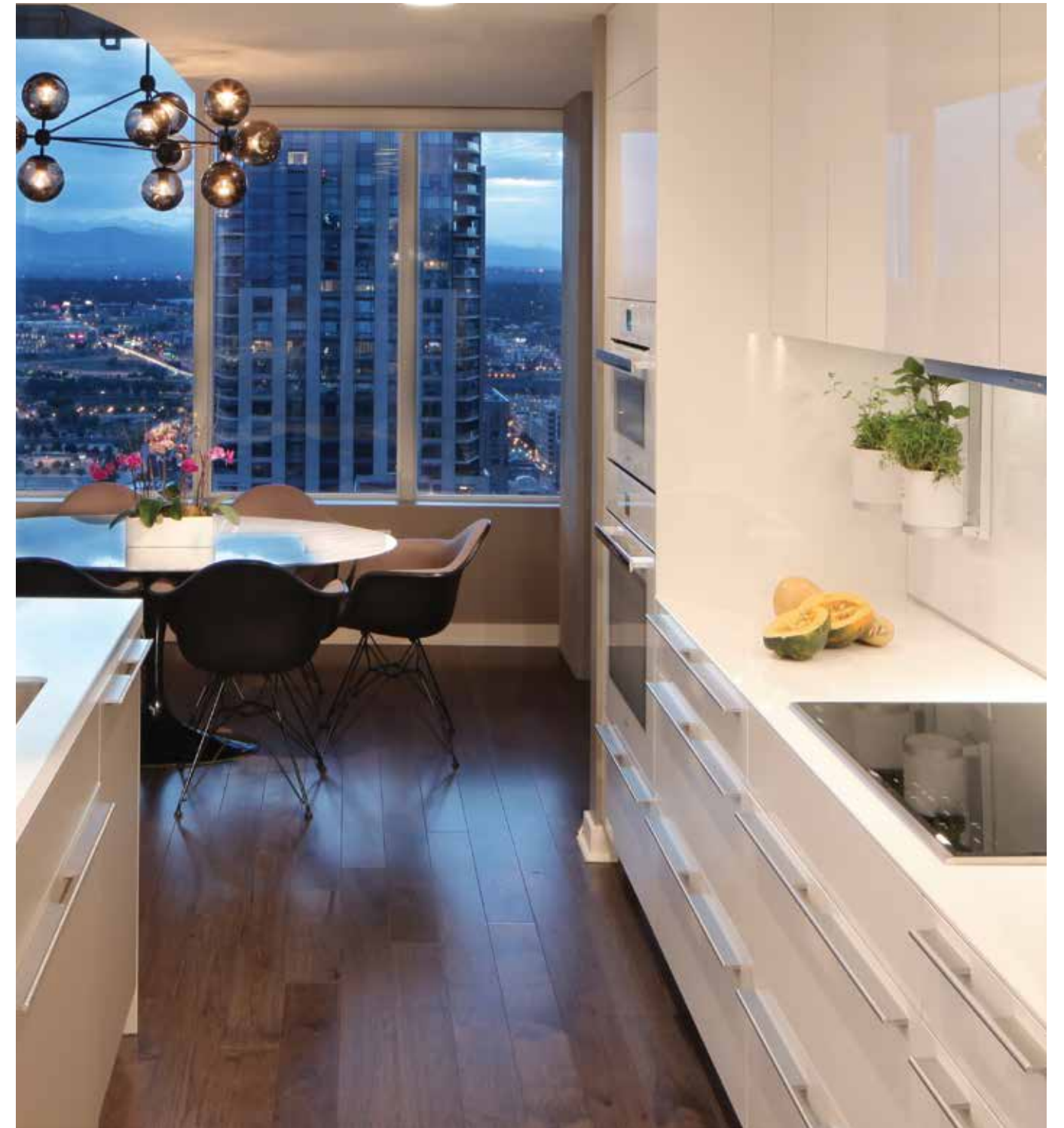
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GOOD MORNING SUNSHINE!

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What is the metaverse, who's designing it, and why? From a nebulous theoretical space to a nearing reality, the metaverse has been showing up in architecture and design discourse for decades. Now, it's closer than ever.



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The late architectural critic Michael Sorkin provides the basis of our yearlong inquiry into the ins and outs of the field with his *250 Things an Architect Should Know*.



SUMMER 2022

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The Air Force Academy's Air Garden, designed by renowned landscape architect Dan Kiley, gets a ground-up renovation after being decommissioned for half a century.



MODERN IN DENVER

82 TURNING THE TABLES

What does an expert bulthaup designer choose for his own kitchen? Jed MacKenzie walks us through the kitchen redesign in his LoHi home.



89 MORE THAN A MOMENT

Architectural modernism is the focus of *Rocky Mountain Modern*, a new book by John Gendall that illustrates the movement's lasting influence on contemporary alpine residences.



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MORE CONTENT

MESSAGE / MATERIAL / TEXT / IDEAS - **SUBSTANCE**

96 WITH A TWIST

HMH Architecture + Interiors designs a simple, clean, and bright modern home—with a show-stopping steel staircase—on a prominent corner of Sloan's Lake.



MODERN IN DENVER

106 GIMME SHELTER

Tomecek Studio Architecture and Design Workshop collaborate on pavilion design throughout the Front Range, providing several parks a place of shelter, shade, and aesthetic enjoyment.



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Interior architecture firm Acquilano brings a sense of place, purpose, and point of view to Healthpeak Properties' new DTC headquarters.



SUMMER 2022

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Bringing a circular kitchen and sunken bathtub into the 21st century, Arch11 sensitively restores a south Denver ranch house designed in 1958 by William Muchow.



130 MAKING IT REAL

LINK Product Development offers full-suite services for turning back-of-the-napkin sketches into real-life products. Here's their formula for success.



LAZY-CRAZY-HAZY-DAYS

137 DECKED OUT

Our roundup of new patio furniture invites you to think of your outdoor space as a playground for good design. Let's take this outside!



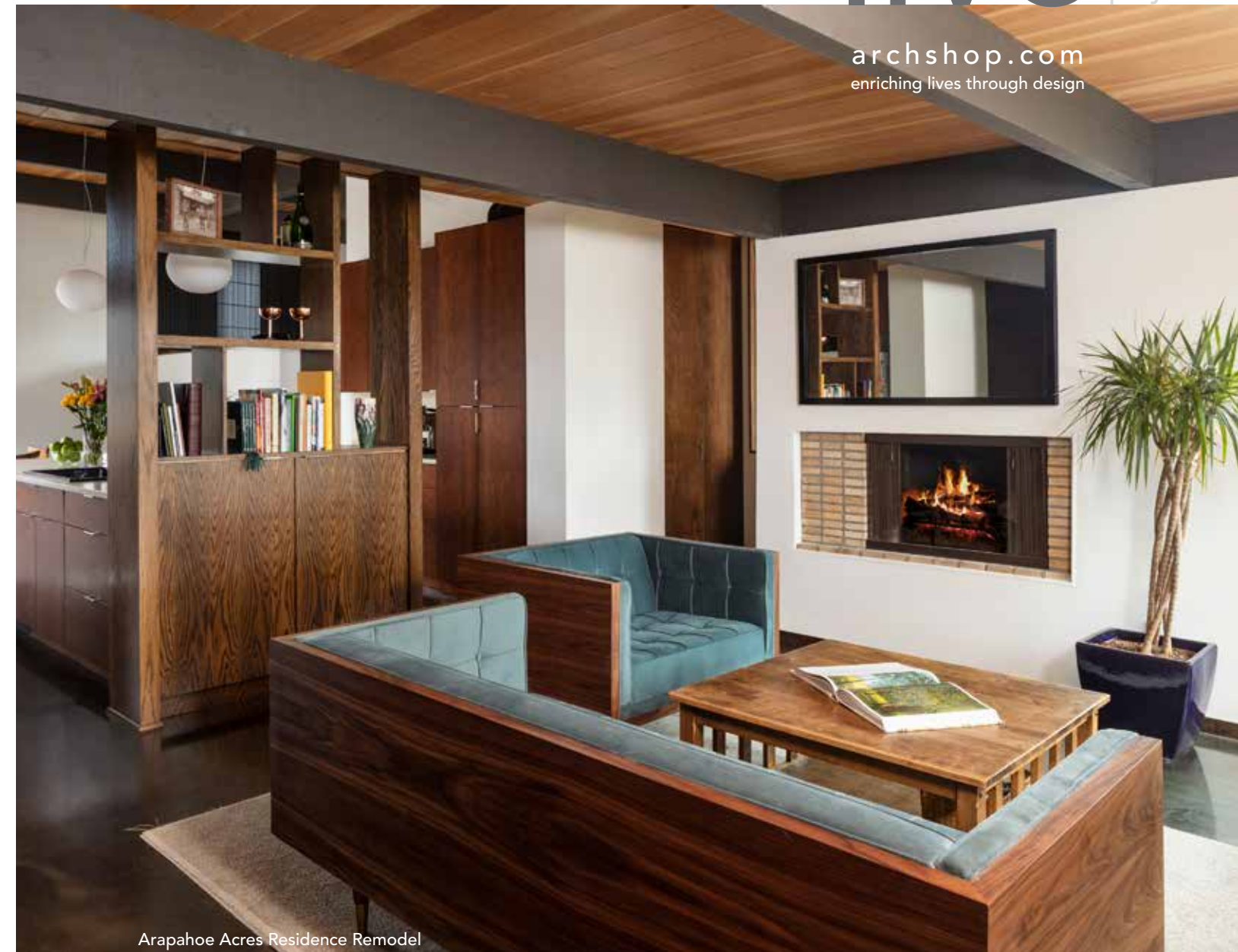
144 ONE LAST THING

Technics SL-1200, the turntable that defined 50 years of musical innovation, celebrates a milestone anniversary with a limited-edition release.



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" AS AN ARCHITECT, YOU DESIGN FOR THE PRESENT, WITH AN AWARENESS OF THE PAST, FOR A FUTURE WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY UNKNOWN." - Norman Foster

I believe architecture and design are at their best when they are allowed to fully and dynamically embrace historical contexts while simultaneously finding a voice that speaks to the present and future. The best architects and designers continually cultivate this fluid conversation; they refine their ability to interpret and understand what is important, what can be edited, what can be evolved, and what can be discarded. It's a fundamental conversation that infuses the best work with an essence that endures.

The staying power of good design shows up in several of our summer issue's stories. Our cover story features architecture firm Arch11's successful engagement with a mid-century home designed in 1958 by renowned architect William Muchow. Muchow was a prominent architect in Colorado in the mid-20th century and many of his designs are held up as exemplars of modern architecture. For this home, the team at Arch11 needed to update the design to accommodate a contemporary family's needs while staying in harmony with Muchow's intentions. The result is a beautiful, open, and fresh space that perfectly balances the best of then and now. You can read the story on page 122.

Another type of dialogue with the past influenced a newly designed home near Sloan's Lake. After learning what the homeowner wanted—a minimal, open interior with room to showcase art and tuck in technological enhancements—HMH Architecture + Interiors went to work, bridging architectural theory and current day applications. HMH principal architect Harvey Hine is well versed in 20th-century European modernism and knew the work of Le Corbusier and Richard Neutra would provide excellent inspiration for this project. Together with lead architect Neal Evers, he created sleek and sparse interior spaces with floor-to-ceiling windows,

multiple outdoor spaces (including a yoga room on the top floor), and a showstopping sculptural staircase to connect it all. This story is on page 96.

A third piece in the issue that looks to regenerative design efforts is our article on the recent resurrection of the Air Garden at the historic Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. The Academy's original mid-century-modern campus included a series of pools and fountains designed by notable landscape designer Dan Kiley; however, in the early '70s the water feature maintenance was deemed too costly and they were decommissioned. Thanks to recent donations from USAFA alumni groups, the pools and fountains have been restored in step with Kiley's exacting design, now boasting updated materials, technology, and mechanical systems that should see the Air Garden well into the future. That story is on page 72.

Other stories in the issue include: a report on architecture and design in the metaverse (page 44); design profiles on Alfonso Verduzco, who's bringing the ancestral artisanship of his native Mexico to a new line of handmade tiles (page 58), and local product development and prototyping studio LINK (page 130); tours of bulthaup designer Jed MacKenzie's redesign of his own LoHi kitchen (page 82), and Healthpeak Properties' industrially elegant office space designed by Aquilano (page 112); and an overview of the raw and honest pavilions born out of collaboration between Tomecek Studio Architecture and Design Workshop (page 106).

We finish out this issue with a selection of the best outdoor furniture made by leading designers (page 137) so you can find the perfect lounge to kick back in and read during one of our warm summer afternoons—something that never goes out of style!

William Logan
william@modernindenver.com



THE COVER

The cover of our summer issue features a photograph of architecture firm Arch11's renovation of a 1958 ranch house originally designed by William Muchow. This image, captured by photographer Justin Martin, shows the home's main living space, including a raised portion the homeowners, Amanda and Steve Gurr, call "the stage." A large glass wall was implemented in the redesign to open up views of the neighboring Wellshire Golf Course. Read the story on page 122.

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Eclissi, Italian for eclipse, projects a clean, modern beauty. The Eclissi bath collection is inspired by the astronomical phenomenon when our two planetary luminaries align. Unlike their celestial inspiration, these faucets are never obscured; instead they're designed to shine in whatever space they make their own.

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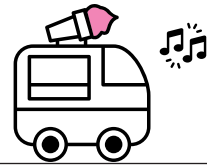


Summertime

"We thread our way through a moving forest of ice-cream cones and crimson thighs."

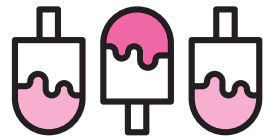
- Jean-Dominique Bauby -

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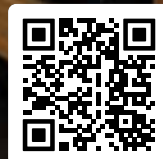
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TOWEL TAPESTRY

Tapping numerous artists from Brooklyn to Zurich for designs, ZigZagZurich's new line of blankets and towels is bold and colorful and a special treat. Each piece, woven in a sustainable mill, is actually two in one. As the technique of woven cotton jacquard goes, one side is picture perfect while the other offers a photographic negative effect. Go ahead, compare.

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



SPIN ME ROUND

Designer Fabian Geyrhalter, an avid vinyl record collector, puts a unique twist on music storage with the Toneoptic, a wall-mounted cube stuffed with an overachieving shelf. The shelf slides out to display the records two ways: by their bindings, like a bookshelf, or with album covers faced forward for easy flipping, like in a record store (that's Geyrhalter's preference).

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



MULTIFACETED SEAT

The artisans behind Masaya & Co say the colorful Masaya Lounge Chair takes a cue from San Geronimo, the patron saint of Masaya who Nicaraguans honor with a months-long festival every year. But the chair is more than just a celebration of Nicaraguan culture, it is Nicaraguan culture—from the local artisans who designed its low-slung style and handmade materials to the sustainably sourced hardwood grown locally or exported from a tropical forest destroyed by Hurricane Felix.

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WEE POTTER

The adorable Uniek portable pottery studio helps amateurs sculpt even more adorable tiny pots and vases. Just flip the switch to start the mini wheel spinning, then add clay and colors. Novelty? Perhaps. But the '50s retro design vibe and colors—a soft swimming-pool blue or sunny coral—make it an appealing object in its own right, in case it spends more time on the shelf than in a maker's hands.

+unieklife.com

SIMIAN STYLE

The Monkey, designed by German firm RSW for Palomar, may seem like just another portable sound system with speakers, FM radio, and Bluetooth for streaming via a connected device. But it has a little design tweak that turns, er, tails. Straight up, it's an antenna, but bend the flexible steel-spring ribbon and it slaps onto your wrist like a bracelet or becomes a hook for hanging it from a nearby limb. Clever little monkey!

+palomarweb.com



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Architecture is inhabited *sculpture*

FRESH BREATH

Cleaner air is something we can all use more of, but tools like air filters require HEPA filters, which aren't recyclable. What to do, what to do? Enter the Briiv Air Filter, which uses biodegradable filters made of coconut fibers, lichen, wood carbon, and silk nanofiber to suck in odors, fine dust, and other tiny particles—and cleans out the gunk so you don't breathe it in. This tiny contraption, which looks more like a potted plant, cycles through the air in a 20' x 20' room in one hour.

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PIN POINT

Sure, you can stick a pushpin into a wall map to commemorate every locale you've visited. But make that map 3D, like this DearWorld, and you get a better global perspective of the distances traveled. The cardboard globe starts 2D and turns multidimensional in seconds. It includes 50 red pushpins too! Safe travels!

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As workers head back to the office, many companies are allowing hybrid schedules of a few days in, a few days at home. That, of course, presents its own challenge: remembering to pack office essentials. Orbitkey took on the case and built a sleek caddy, with adjustable slots to fit chargers, cables, adapters, and office whatnot. Everything has its place in the Orbitkey Nest, including the case itself, which turns into a wireless charging station for compatible devices.

+orbitkey.com



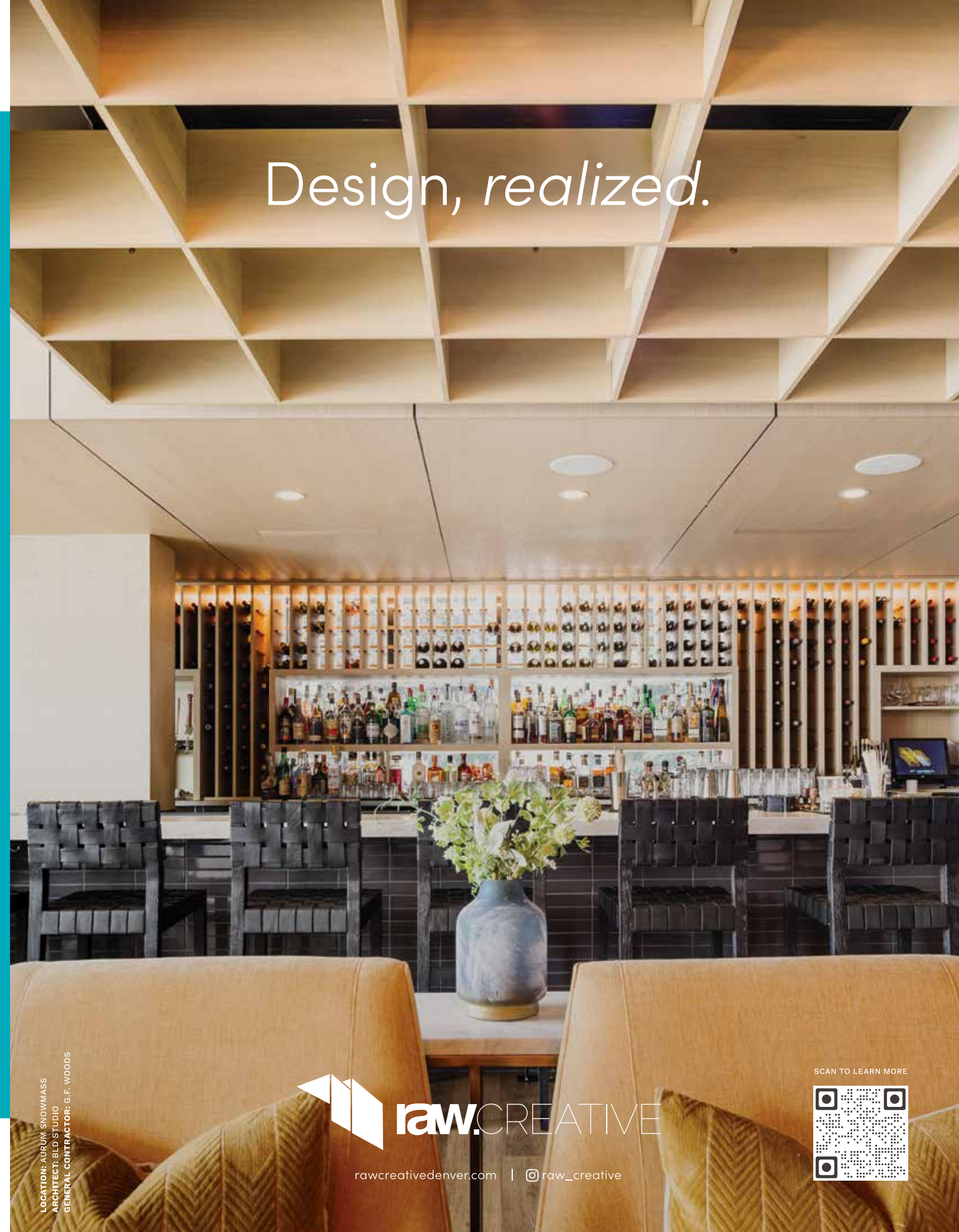
FINGER FOOD

Add some whimsy to any dish with Serving Friends, a set of wooden spoons shaped like spring foliage, tiny hands, or wrinkled forks. The serving utensils, designed by Selena Liu, are made from oiled beech and are just too fun to ignore. Maybe you can make friends with salad?

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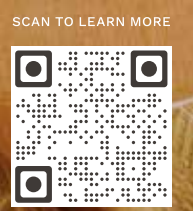
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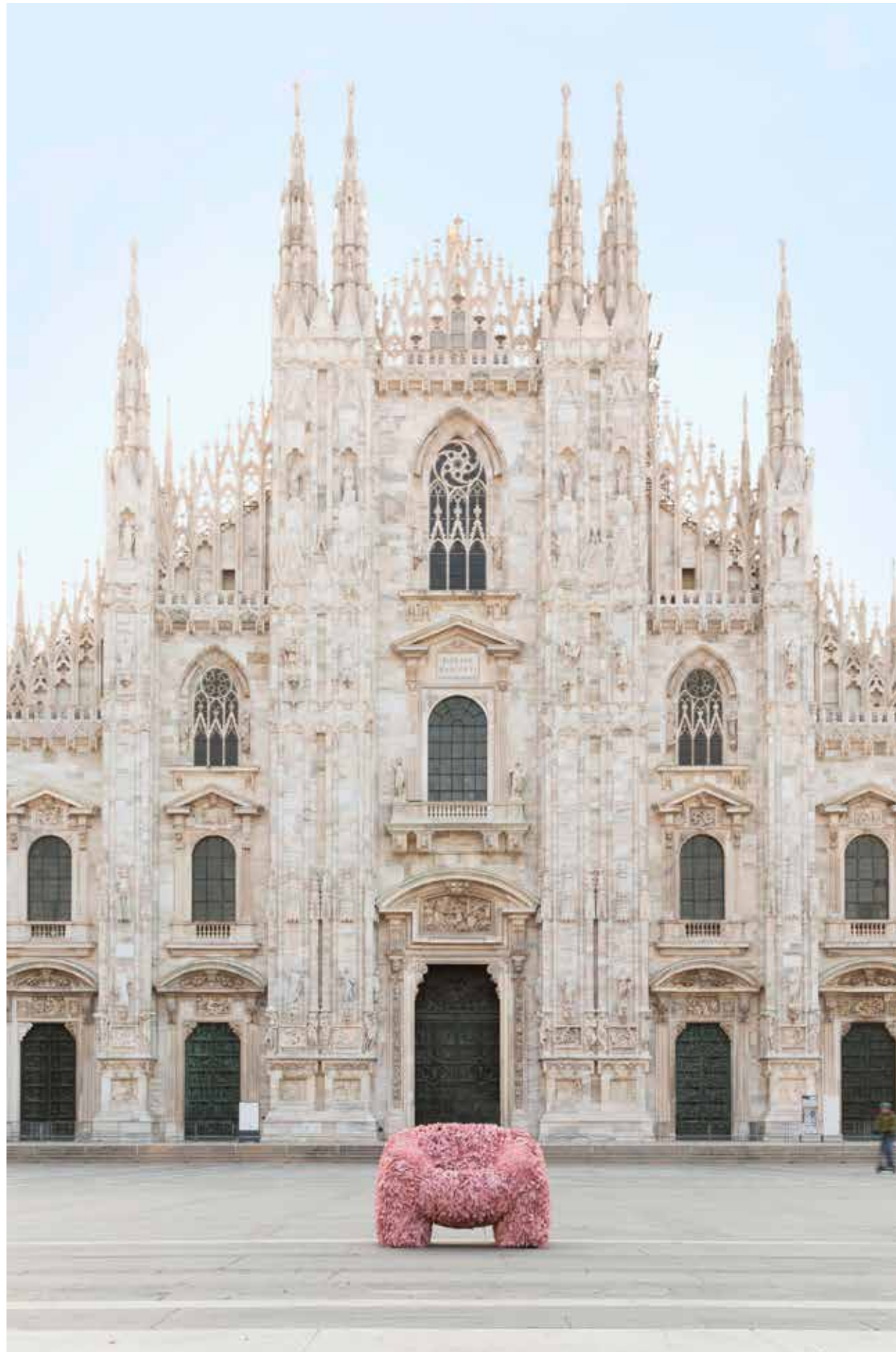


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ON THE VIRTUAL HORIZON

Architecture and design in the metaverse are closer than you may think.

WORDS: Kristin Kirsch Feldkamp

To understand the metaverse, it helps to think of the moon. Architect and University of Colorado professor Marianne Holbert teaches a class on modern and contemporary architecture. One of the projects her students examine is SOM firm's out of this world (literally) Moon Village. And she sees parallels between designing for the moon and the metaverse.

Creating office buildings and homes for the metaverse is more a small step than a giant leap for humankind. Holbert reasons that although moon habitation and the metaverse seem otherworldly, normalization over time could happen just as it did for the world wide web. Holbert adds that the metaverse "might feel foreign as a term, but designers often work in a digital realm."

What if you aren't entirely sure what the metaverse is? You are not alone. Explanations are nebulous and expansive. In *Wired*, technology journalist Eric Ravenscraft writes, "the technologies that make up the metaverse can include virtual reality ... as well as augmented reality that combines aspects of the digital and physical worlds." Ravenscraft then spends more than 1,500 additional words describing the metaverse.



OPPOSITE: Old and new worlds collide in this photo of the Hortensia chair sitting in front of the iconic Duomo di Milano. Construction on the Duomo began in 1386; choosing Candoglia marble was revolutionary and made the Duomo an idea-exchange hub for engineers and architects from across Europe. Hundreds of years later, the Hortensia chair similarly represents a revolution in design and instigates the exchange of ideas globally. Photo courtesy of Moooi and Mattia Greggi.

ABOVE: The Hortensia chair was part of a group of ten NFT furniture pieces by Andrés Reisinger auctioned online in 2021. Named *The Shipping*, the pieces sold in under ten minutes and earned over \$450,000. Photo courtesy of Andrés Reisinger Studio.



FOUNDERS STAND WITH

"I UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITY THAT GOES INTO SOMETHING THAT FEELS, ON PAPER, LIKE IT'S EFFORTLESS. THE METAVERSE, IN A SENSE, SEEMS LIKE IT SHOULD BE EFFORTLESS, AND I THINK WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OR EVEN HUMAN LABOR RELATIONSHIPS, NOTHING IS EFFORTLESS."

Whichever way one conceptualizes the metaverse, a lot of capital—human and financial—is being spent on development. Using an avatar, meeting at a virtual office, and owning a digital home might sound futuristic, but the future is not far off.

Microsoft and Meta are investing heavily, as are celebrities and art investors. Snoop Dogg is building a Snoopverse in Sandbox. Christie's sold an NFT by digital artist Mike Winkelmann, known as Beeple, in 2021 for \$69.3 million.

What about architects? British firm Zaha Hadid Architects is designing a metaverse city. Its name, Metaverse Liberland, is a virtual nod to the real-life micronation Liberland, with whom Zaha Hadid Architects has

ABOVE: Andrés Reisinger recently collaborated with architect Alba de la Fuente to design Winter House, a modern virtual home surrounded by a winter landscape. Pink hues warm both the snowy backdrop and the clean-lined interior.

Photos courtesy of Andrés Reisinger Studio.

GLOSSARY

Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983) — an American architect, author, designer, inventor, futurist, and systems theorist known for popularizing the geodesic dome.

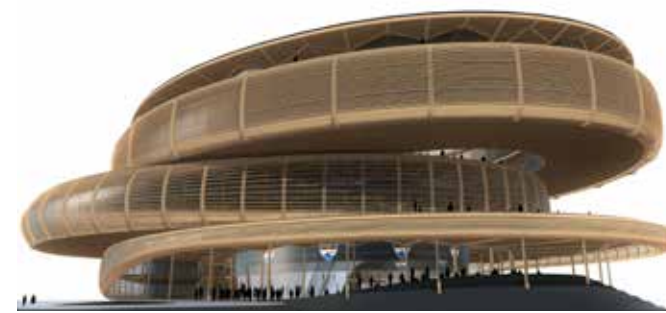
Decentraland and Sandbox — leading metaverse platforms.

Ephemerization — a systems term Buckminster Fuller coined meaning accomplishing more with less.

Futurist architecture — an architectural movement born in Italy in the early 20th century that evolved from Futurism, an early 1900s art movement. Futurist architecture glorified the machine age and modern city, embraced new materials and methods, and favored long horizontal lines to suggest speed and urgency. Futurist architecture went out of style after World War II but reemerged several years later slightly altered with the Space Age and Googie architecture. It also influenced the Neo-Futurism of the 1960s and 1970s.

Gaetano Pesce (1939–) — an Italian architect and design trailblazer.

International Style — an architectural style developed in the 1920s and 1930s with close ties to modernism. It emerged in Europe and was the dominant architectural style worldwide until the 1970s. According to the Getty Research Institute, the style is known for its "use of lightweight, mass-produced, industrial materials, rejection of all ornament and color, repetitive modular forms, and the use of flat surfaces, typically alternating with areas of glass."



partnered on the project. Danish architecture studio BIG designed a virtual headquarters in the metaverse for Vice Media Group. The building, named Viceverse, is in Decentraland.

Referring to the BIG project, Holbert says she is intrigued by the "idea that we could have a world with all these buildings, spaces, exchanges, like a social stratum, and that we have essentially constructed physically almost nothing."



Liberland Metaverse City Hall, Exhibition building, and master plan. City Hall and Exhibition building renders are by Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA). The master plan render is by Mytaverse.

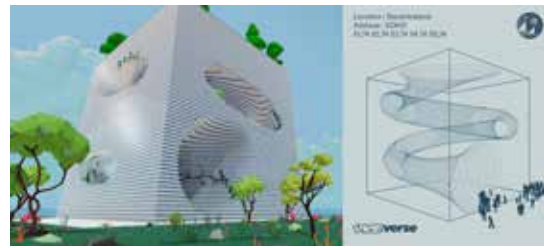
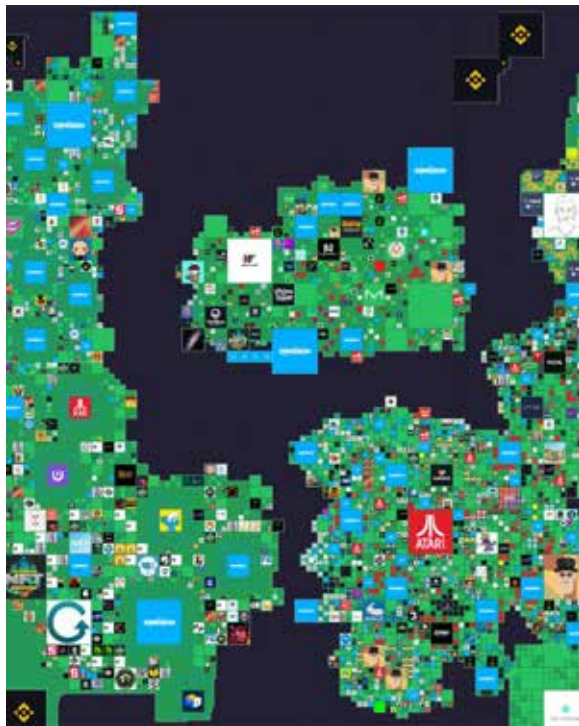
Photos courtesy of ZHA.

Yet having worked on net-zero projects, she's acutely aware of the difference between perception and reality. "I understand the complexity that goes into something that feels, on paper, like it's effortless. The metaverse, in a sense, seems like it should be effortless, and I think when we talk about the environmental impacts or even human labor relationships, nothing is effortless."

Echoes of designing for the metaverse exist throughout the history of architecture, Holbert says. Buckminster Fuller's work with ephemerization and maximization through minimization for one. International Style and Futurist architecture are two more. Moreover, she believes architects are already well versed in metaverse design tools. "Architects use VR and work in hypothetical worlds all the time."

At the forefront of metaverse furniture and home design is





LEFT: Map of Sandbox metaverse. ABOVE: BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group) design for Vice Media in Decentraland.

Argentinian designer Andrés Reisinger. His Hortensia chair—a large, modern, pink blossom that evokes Salvador Dalí or Gaetano Pesce—was posted on Instagram in 2018 as a 3D rendering and an ode to the hydrangea (hortensia). It went viral. Three years and thousands of fabric petals later, Hortensia became a chair in real life. Reisinger sold an NFT version of Hortensia along with several other of his furniture renderings in 2021 for \$450,000.

While the metaverse in its infancy anticipates a bright future, there are drawbacks. The predominant technology uses massive amounts of energy and has spurred activists to create groups like Change the Code Not the Climate. There are accessibility, equity, and mental health concerns too.

Despite concerns, critics and proponents remain hopeful. Like space exploration, the spark the metaverse ignites in human imagination is catching. “It’s human ingenuity to make things that don’t seem like they could exist,” muses Fuller. “And in the case of the metaverse, it might not be tactile, but it will transform the way we live.”

GLOSSARY

Liberland Metaverse — a virtual community and design collaboration between Zaha Hadid Architects, Free Republic of Liberland, Mytaverse, and ArchAgenda a.o. Patrik Schumacher of Zaha Hadid Architects says its focus is on the crypto ecosystem, urban and architectural design, and not entertainment.

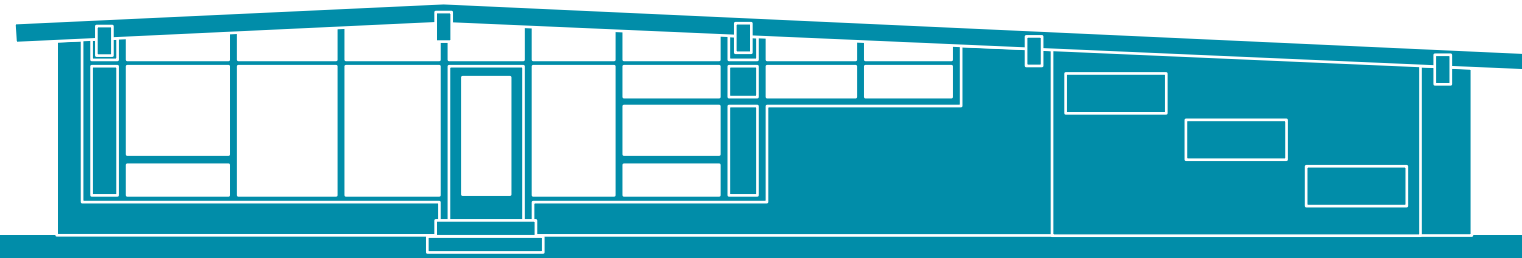
Moon Village — a moon habitat design and partnership between SOM (Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill), the European Space Agency (ESA), and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) professors.

NFT — an NFT (non-fungible token) is proof of ownership and authenticity of a digital asset created by recording a digital identifier in a blockchain.

SOM — Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM) is an American architecture, engineering, and urban planning firm founded in Chicago in 1936 that has offices worldwide. One of the most significant firms globally, SOM’s projects include the world’s tallest buildings, such as the Willis Tower and Burj Khalifa. At the forefront of modernism, SOM designed the Air Force Academy campus and iconic Cadet Chapel in Colorado Springs.

VR — virtual reality.

Vice Media — Vice Media is an American-Canadian digital media company with offices in 35 countries.



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THE BIG ASSIGNMENT

WORDS: Vanesa Kauffman Zimmerly

The life and mind of architectural polymath Michael Sorkin lives on in the posthumous publication of *250 Things an Architect Should Know*—a practical and poetic guide for living and working in the built environment.



Architect, planner, teacher, and critic Michael Sorkin, who died in March 2020 from complications of COVID-19, lived his work. To each and every one of his countless contributions to the field of architecture, Sorkin brought a deep well of formal and historical knowledge, as well as the ambition to initiate change.



Sorkin's activities and interests were vast, multifaceted, and usually interwoven. His belief in architecture as a conduit for engaging a wide range of contemporary concerns led him to make interludes in environmentalism, sustainability, pedestrianization, urban planning, and public policy. Varied and complex as the conversation may be, Sorkin's voice was unwavering and unequivocal. Like architecture, language was a tool he used to examine and elevate the built environment's social consciousness in myriad ways. It was, to say the least, the project of a lifetime.

30. THE MIGRATORY PATTERNS OF WARBLERS AND OTHER SEASONAL TRAVELERS

Colorado is home to 18 different species of warblers. The yellow-dressed perching birds (or *Passeriformes*) usually arrive in the Rocky Mountains by mid-May and are here to breed. Warblers migrate by night; city dwellers can aid their journeys by reducing their property's artificial light, which contributes to disorienting "sky glow."

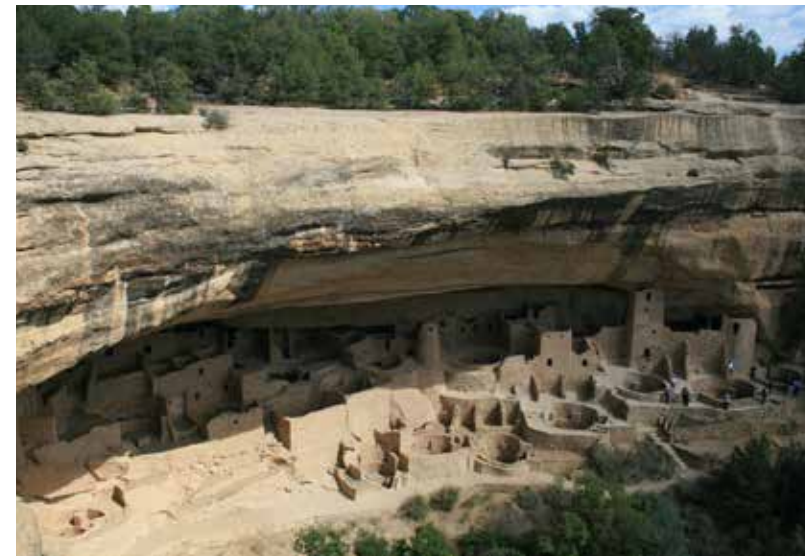


219. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GABIONS AND RIPRAP

Both human-placed accumulations of rocks and stones, gabions and riprap differ when it comes to containment. A gabion encloses its collection within a basket-like cage, whereas riprap, which is often used at water's edge to protect against erosion, is unbounded. (See how Tomecek Studio Architecture and Design Workshop used gabions in their Sunset Pavilion at Barefoot Lakes in our feature on page 111.)

In addition to a robust archive of architectural and critical works, Sorkin left a list he titled *250 Things an Architect Should Know* that has been posthumously published in book form by Princeton Architectural Press. *250 Things* is a plainly offered, kaleidoscopic look into the granular and immense responsibilities, possibilities, and pleasures of the practice of architecture. Its items range from the quotidian to the philosophical, and are at turns provocative, poetic, pragmatic, instructive, incisive, and generous—just like Sorkin himself.

We're working through a handful of Sorkin's *250 Things* in each issue this year. Follow along as we identify what we already know, learn about what we don't, and ponder the unknowable.



240. MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

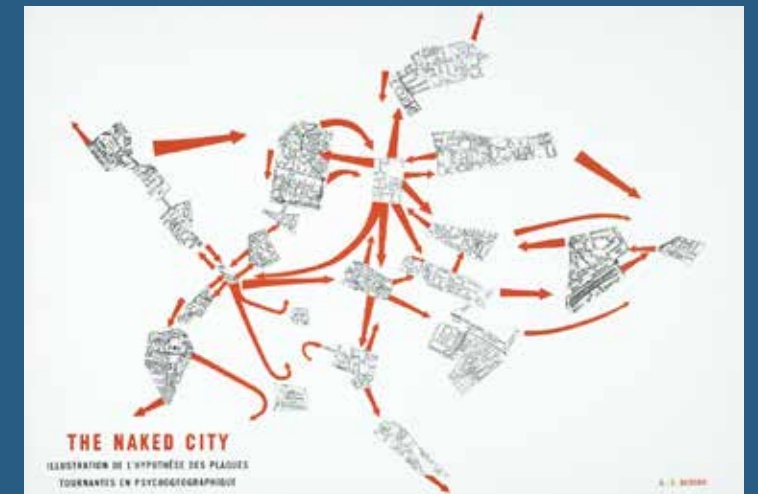
Located in southwestern Colorado, Mesa Verde National Park is one of the largest archaeological preserves in the U.S. The Ancestral Puebloans lived in community for over 700 years on this sacred land, building family pit houses, cliff dwellings, and ceremonial spaces called kivas. As well as a World Heritage Site, Mesa Verde is also an International Dark Sky Park—a designation reserved for places with spectacular starry skies.

DIGGING DEEPER

105. HOW TO DÉRIVE

You likely know how to walk or stroll, but do you know how to *dérive*? The *dérive* (or "drifting" in French) was a strategy developed in 1956 by Guy Debord, member at the time of the radical Paris-based collective known as Letterist International, an avant-garde group in the lineage of Dadaism and Surrealism. As Debord describes it, a *dérive* is when "one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."

Different from your average ambulation, to *dérive* is to engage in a revolutionary technique for dislodging the monotony and ennui of life under advanced capitalism, or what Debord famously named "the society of the spectacle." On a *dérive*, you follow your nose, traversing



the city as your senses lead you. The *dérive* was a critical aspect of a larger theory Debord called psychogeography: the theory that places, particularly urban places, are made up of emotions, beliefs, and behaviors as much or more than they are of physical components.

On a *dérive* participants gather data about how their inner ambiance changes in step with the environment. Though the practice sounds endlessly open, Debord makes many recommendations:

dérives should ideally be done in small groups; they should optimally last for the length of one day; inclement weather should be considered in the analysis of gathered data, but not avoided; and the spatial field "may be precisely delimited or vague, depending on whether the goal is to study a terrain or to emotionally disorient oneself."

Ultimately, Debord believed that *dérives* had the power to significantly change architecture and urbanism.

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GOOD IMPRESSIONS

Alfonso Verduzco's textured tiles marry centuries-old artisanship with a modern aesthetic to honor the Mexican roots of this Denver-based designer.

WORDS: Rachel Walker Youngblade • IMAGES: Alfonso Verduzco

A crumbling belltower erupting from an ancient lava field is the only indication a city once existed here, in a quiet town about an hour away from designer Alfonso Verduzco's hometown in Michoacán, Mexico. He remembers weekend trips with his family as a child, exploring the historic ruins and scrambling over jagged lava rock.

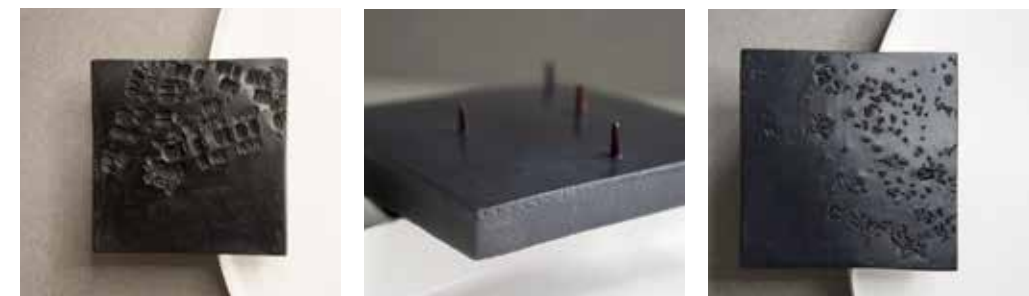
Now Verduzco is launching his first foray into handcrafted tile, the Raíces Black Collection, with the textures of Mexico that defined his childhood prominently featured—lava rock, corn, and agave spikes.

Drawn to Colorado for the respected architecture program at CU Boulder, Verduzco put roots down in the Denver area while traveling to inform his practice and hone his skills. He got his start designing custom kitchens for prominent Denver furniture showroom Studio Como. An appreciation for the clean lines and impeccable quality of Italian

brands led him to Milan to study the craft of furniture making at B&B Italia, Flexform, Minotti, and Poliform (he later worked as a designer at Poliform's American branch).

When COVID-19 hit, he took a pause to re-evaluate his trajectory. After nearly a decade in interior design, Verduzco felt limited by the options for wall coverings, yet saw the impact this design element could have. "For a space to feel inviting, peaceful and inspiring, the texture on the walls is as important as the pieces of furniture."

Looking to his native Mexico for inspiration, Verduzco felt *barro negro* (or black clay) pottery was the perfect medium to meld the ancestral craft of Mexican artisans with his own modern, minimalist aesthetic. "I need to do something with the people in Mexico," he remembers of the calling to pursue an artisan-made tile collection. "They have this craftsmanship and the world needs to see what they're doing."



LEFT: Plaster molds are filled by hand to make *barro negro* clay tiles. The artisan will wait for the clay to dry to the correct consistency before applying designs. ABOVE: The names of each pattern—Tsiri (corn cob), Xanamu (volcanic rock), Akamba (agave), Churi (darkness)—are in Purépecha, a dialect spoken by the Tarascan indigenous group where Verduzco is originally from in Mexico.



“WHAT YOU THINK IS IMPERFECTION, MEANS PERFECTION IN MY COLLECTION. THE MORE STRANGE AND IMPERFECT IT LOOKS, THAT’S ACTUALLY THE AESTHETIC I’M LOOKING FOR. ONCE YOU PUT THEM ALL TOGETHER IT WILL MAKE SENSE.”

–Alfonso Verduzco–

Verduzco with an artisan in his workshop and an array of clay molds. Passionate about supporting local talent, Verduzco also partnered with a Mexican photographer and website designer to bring his vision to life.



Practiced for hundreds of generations in the Oaxaca region, *barro negro* is recognizable for its rich black, almost-metallic sheen, produced by polishing pre-fired pottery with a quartz stone. Verduzco knew that collaborating with the right partners would be critical, so he began searching for someone who was willing to experiment alongside him.

The town of San Bartolo Coyotepec held the answer. Here he found a family of artisans as excited as he

was to explore his question: “How can I elevate [*barro negro*] in a way that’s innovative, sophisticated, and luxury, but maintains the soul of the Mexican roots?” Verduzco’s vision of tiles imprinted with elements central to Mexican culture was underway, but the path to the final product had a few bumps.

Used to fine detailing and careful replication, the father-and-son artisans Verduzco was working with needed some encouragement to let loose with the corn cob used to

The process of creating each tile is laborious. Lava rock must be crushed to the correct size and shape, corn cobs dried and prepared, agave spikes harvested and trimmed, and the smooth Churi tiles polished by hand with a quartz stone to reveal an almost reflective shimmer.



“NATURE HAS GIVEN ME THIS BEAUTIFUL MATERIAL. OVER MANY YEARS, A VOLCANO NEEDED TO ERUPT, THE LAVA HAD TO SOLIDIFY AND DRY, THEN SOMEONE IN THAT COMMUNITY HAD TO GO TO A SITE, DIG THROUGH THE GROUND, AND FIND THE LAVA ROCKS. THAT ALONE IS A BEAUTIFUL PROCESS.”

– Alfonso Verduzco –



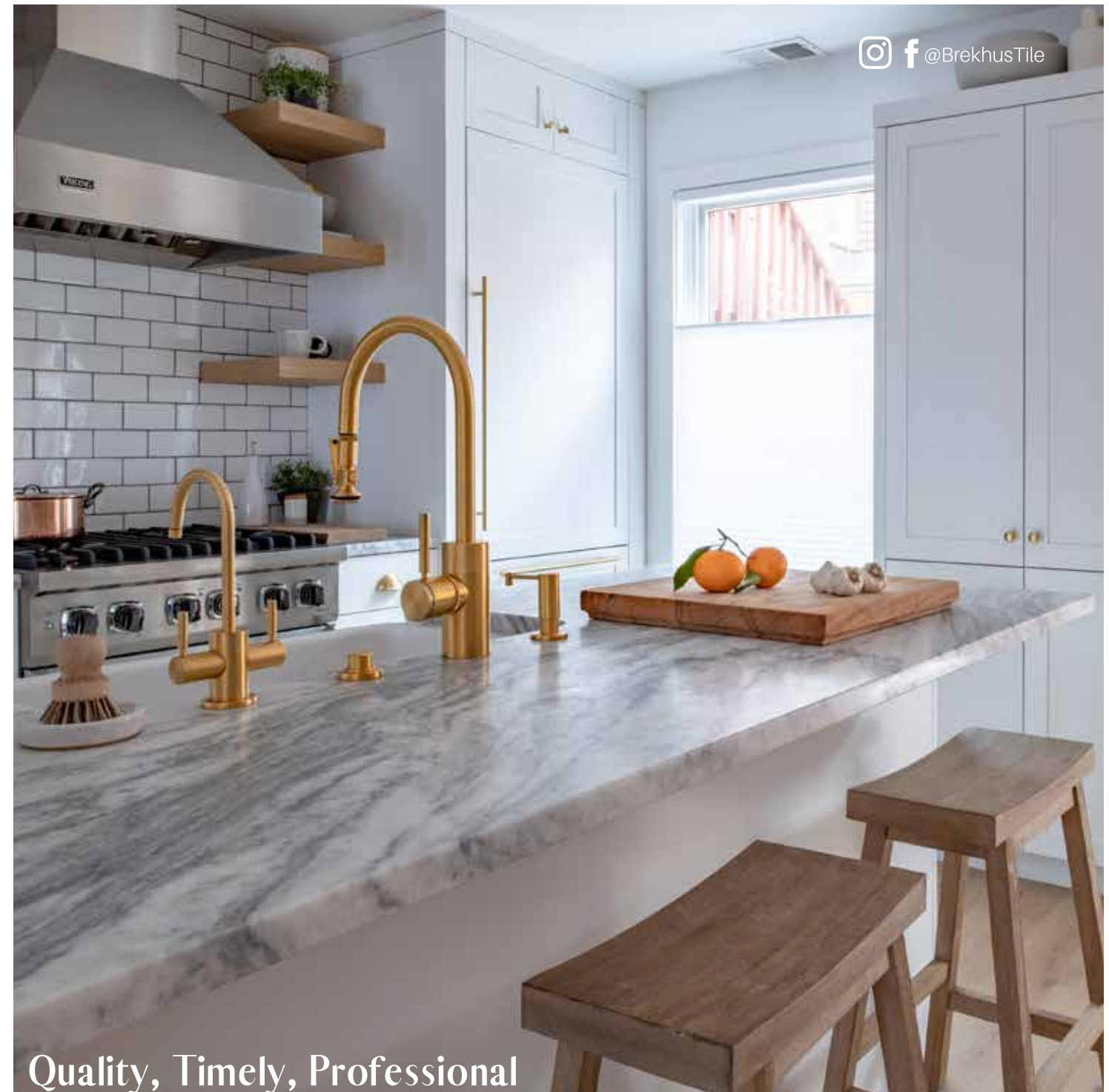
make the pattern on the Tsiri tiles, named for the Purépecha word for maize. “Without fear, you have to have fun hitting the clay,” Verduzco guided them. “Don’t pretend to hit it. Just have fun with it. Show me your emotions through the tile. I want to see what you were feeling that day.”

The same let-loose approach breathed life into the lava-rock-textured Xanamu design. A beautiful array of tiles, ranging from partially to fully textured, emerged from the kiln. “It’s a magic moment to see the reveal of the pattern of the rocks,” Verduzco shares. “Every single tile is one of a kind.”

The variation in texture on each tile and the ability to mix and match patterns gives designers free rein to create a unique installation tailored to the needs of a space. And the design world is taking note. The collection recently won a 2022 International Contemporary Furniture Fair Editors Award for best material. “Be playful with my collection,” Verduzco encourages. He envisions his collection bringing warmth and interest into luxury spaces: “It’s about being connected and feeling good in the space you’re in.” ■

Tiles are made to order and can be purchased by contacting Verduzco’s team at alfonsoverduzco.com

Verduzco chose the name Raíces, meaning “my roots” in the Purépecha dialect, to reflect the personal nature of the project and significance of the materials in Mexican culture. After many rounds of prototypes, the final product captures a sense of emotion and ruggedness paired with a sleek minimalism that brings this historic craft into modernity.



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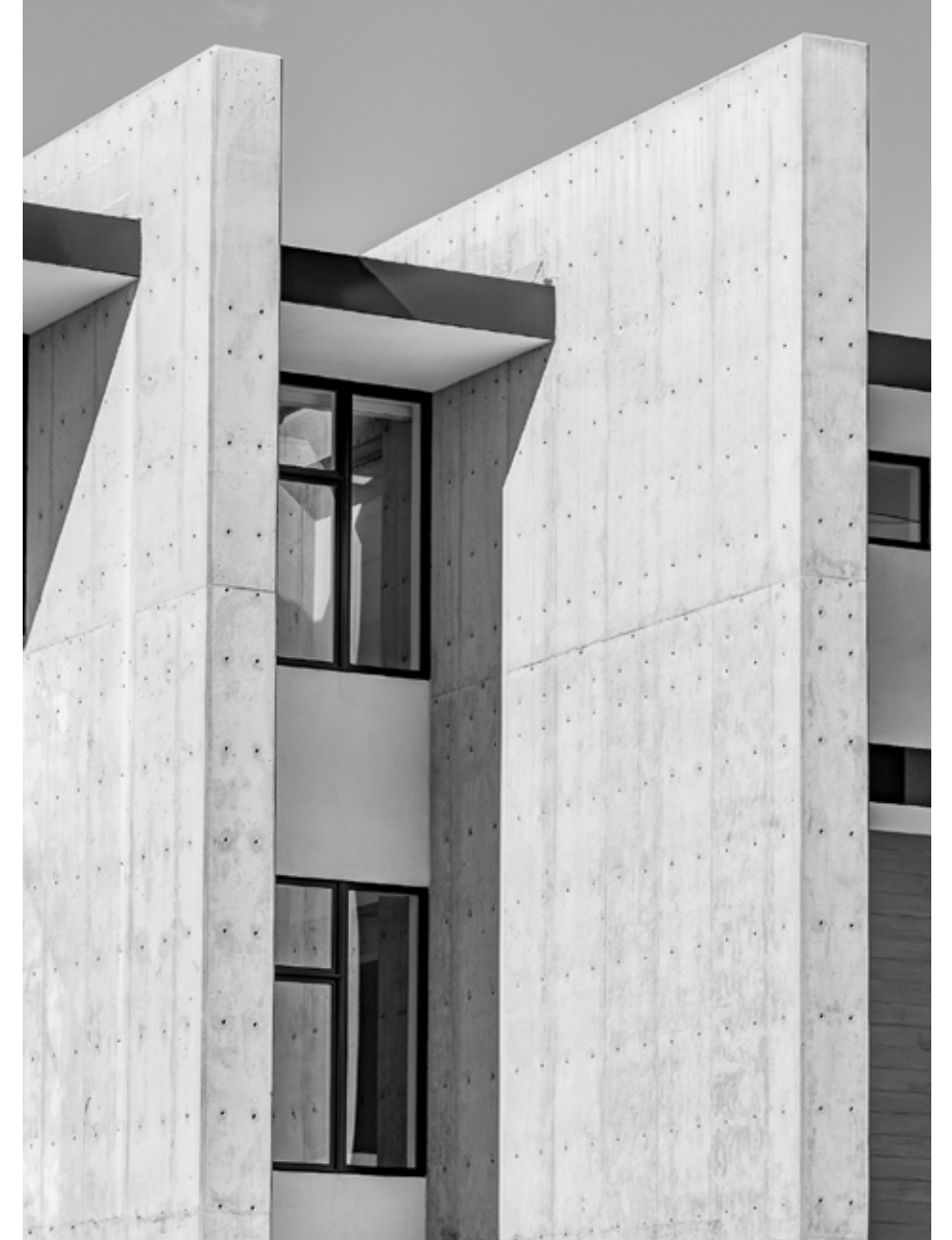
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– James M. Evans, architect, Collaborative Designworks



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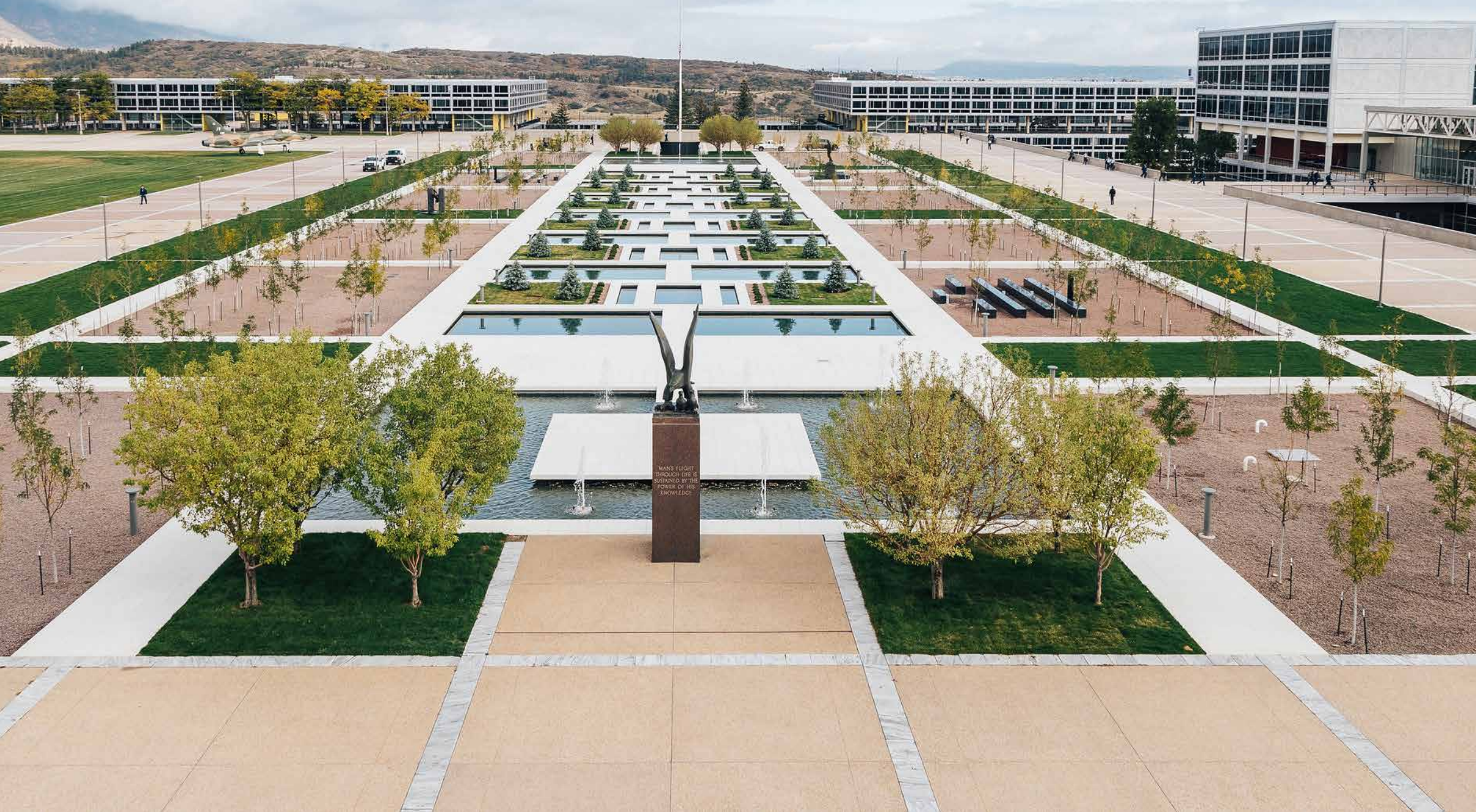
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HALLOWED GROUND

Designed at the height of modernism in 1954, the Air Force Academy's Air Garden has been decommissioned for decades. Now, the garden's thirteen pools and two large fountains have been restored in alignment with the Academy's core values.

WORDS: Sean O'Keefe • IMAGES: Courtesy of Colorado Hardscapes / USAFA



Architecture is an experience, one of time, place, purpose, and point of view. At the United States Air Force Academy, just outside of Colorado Springs, the architectural experience is one of exceptional order as the fundamental foothold on a path to excellence. Perhaps the finest collection of mid-century modern architecture anywhere in America, the Air Force Academy exudes a full-bodied presence derived from a signature aesthetic. The most hallowed ground on the campus is the 27-acre Cadet Area, home to the iconic cadet chapel and the equally magnificent, though less well-known, Air Garden, which was recently resurrected.

Designed by Walter Netsch of famed architectural practice Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM), the Academy's aesthetic takes root in Netsch's Field Theory. Using 7-foot increments and multiples thereof, the Academy is laid out on a 28-foot grid, which organizes every aspect of campus life from the building forms to the plazas, and everything in between.

"Netsch and the team at SOM approached the Academy's design with a holistic sense of perspective that wasn't just about the architecture or the site planning, but the landscape, the interiors, and the furnishings," says Duane Boyle, the Academy's current campus architect. Since 1983, when the Academy hired him to manage the realization of SOM's updated master plan, Boyle has devoted his entire career to preserving and protecting the campus' architectural legacy.

"Renowned landscape architect Dan Kiley designed the Air Garden as a horizontal counterpart to the soaring spires of the chapel," continues Boyle. Intended to be experienced as much from the air as from the ground, Kiley's composition for the Air Garden sought to reveal a sense of movement on the land, while embracing the organic order and balance in concert with the site's vertical elements. The Air Garden was an essential part of the site's organizational order



and central to the campus experience from 1954 until the early 1970s.

The Air Garden originally consisted of two large fountains connected by an orderly grid of 13 pools and 20 bridges stretching across the site. The interconnected pools were all filtered by a single chlorine-based unit, which meant that when maintenance was needed, all 600,000 gallons of water had to be drained. The structure was plagued by the constraints of concrete construction at the time it was built and, while operational, the Air Garden underwent many ad hoc rehabilitations of random piping, plumbing, and band-aid fixes.

“Unfortunately, though the Air Garden was a visually spectacular element on campus, from a maintenance standpoint, it was troublesome for the Academy,” says

Boyle. “Eventually, the decision was made to decommission the pools and fill them in with soil and grass.”

Though the concrete rims of the pools remained visibly distinct, for the better part of 50 years, the elegant Air Garden’s fluid purpose was obscured in the campus experience. In 2018, as part of a larger campus restoration plan, the Academy decided to unearth the long-entombed Air Garden and return it to glory. Under the purview of general contractor GE Johnson Construction Company, the architectural concrete expertise of Colorado Hardscapes was engaged to excavate and rehabilitate the Air Garden in a design-build delivery of many unknowable complexities.

“Working on the Air Garden was an incredible experience for everyone involved,” says Torrey DeMasters,

Derived from Walter Netsch’s signature aesthetic, Field Theory, the United States Air Force Academy campus in Colorado Springs is a mid-century modern masterpiece. The campus’ most sacred ground is the Cadet Area, which features the iconic cadet chapel and the magnificently restored Air Garden.

HALLOWED GROUND

president of Colorado Hardscapes. “Part architecture and part puzzle, the challenges of this site and building solution were immense.”

The first step was to reconfigure the Air Garden from a single body of water to 15 individually filtrated pools. The entire mechanical system was redesigned, and the below-grade vaults were expanded to create a storage system for filtered water. The original cast-iron piping and drains were abandoned, leaving only the fountain and pool shells salvageable.

The next step was to redesign the concrete walkway surrounding the pools. “The original 1950s design called for the walkways to be a white marble, but that proved to be cost-prohibitive,” explains Boyle.

Instead, using a blend of Wisconsin sand, Texas aggregate, and Utah glass, Colorado Hardscapes mocked up a sparkling white exposed concrete finish. The improved concrete construction practices resulted in a much higher psi (pounds per square inch) than the original concrete and now promises a long, low-maintenance lifespan.

Product innovations led to application innovations, compelling Colorado Hardscapes to devise a special system to efficiently mix and apply the topping slab across the complex configuration of pools and walkways.

“We combined a tow-behind mortar mixer and a fork-lift attachment to create a tool that mixes the materials away from the work,” says DeMasters. “This allowed us to boom the product out over the pools to be poured directly from above.”



Designed by renowned landscape architect Dan Kiley, the Air Garden is a horizontal counterpart to the campus’ vertical elements. The two fountain pools and thirteen concrete basins were all meticulously rehabilitated in a design-build effort. When the white marble specified in the original design proved to be cost-prohibitive, Colorado Hardscapes developed a unique blend of sand, aggregate, and glass from across the country to create a sparkling white, exposed concrete finish.



In addition to setting the topping slab on the 700-foot-long Air Garden's horizontal surfaces, the topping product also had to be vertically applied to 6,500 linear feet of edge facing ranging from 6" to 18" tall along the upright surfaces of every pool, bridge, and sunken landscape area. Facing these slow-setting surfaces required developing new techniques of both edge forming and topping placement.

Funded by donations made by the USAFA classes of 1972, 1975, and 1976, the Air Garden's return to glory is an essential step in

realizing the grand vision of the campus as intended. Modern materials, methodologies, and technologies were matched by craft in concrete pouring and finishing to reinvigorate this elaborate water feature as a vital touchstone of cadet life. After improving the structural integrity, realigning the layout, and reducing future maintenance requirements, the Air Garden has finally been restored as the inspirational landscape it was meant to be.

"The suggestion to use the specialty mix and Colorado Hardscapes'

ability to adapt to the complexities of our situation are where premium quality materials and exceptional artistry combine to become spectacular," finishes Boyle. "The Air Force realizes the importance of the Academy's architectural heritage and the value of our investments. We always have to keep in mind that we are building for the nation, now and well into the future." ■

Meant to be enjoyed both from the ground and the air, the Air Garden embraces the site's organizational order and balance while organically reflecting its natural beauty.

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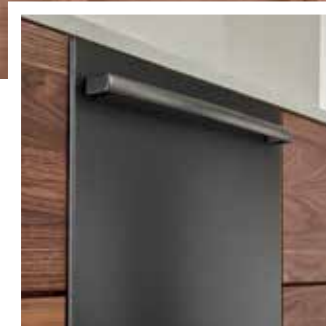
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bulthaup designer Jed MacKenzie tackles a kitchen renovation in a LoHi home for a very special client: **himself**.

TURNING THE TABLES

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly
IMAGES: Parrish Ruiz de Velasco

JED MACKENZIE KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND A KITCHEN.

Since 2004, he's worked as a project designer for bulthaup, the German company known for its state-of-the-art kitchen systems. Prior to becoming a certified designer through Kitchen Distributors, Jed was designing office interiors. When it was time to make a job change, he was drawn to the kitchen due to what he describes as the room's ability to extend a "personal expression of individual styles and tastes" within a highly functional environment.

Jed, who was raised by an architect and artist and has spent extensive time traveling in Europe, is a bulthaup enthusiast. The authenticity of the brand's materials and the precision with which spatial planes are considered, not only in individual products but also in their integration with the interior architecture, are an even match for his personal aesthetics. It wasn't a

question then when he and his wife Lara decided to renovate the kitchen of their LoHi home, which they've lived in with their daughter Avery (age 10) since it was built in 2013, that it would be done with bulthaup.

By many measures, the MacKenzie family's preexisting kitchen was serviceable and reasonably attractive. But for someone with Jed's level of familiarity, expertise, and personal interest in architecture and design, there was ample ground for improvement.

"That detail right there is why we remodeled the kitchen," Jed says, pointing to a coordinate on a photo of the former kitchen where the windowsill, countertop edge, cabinet panel, toe kick, and a raised power outlet inelegantly intersect. He's smiling, but serious. It's a level of minutiae many wouldn't notice,

but for Jed, whose work is steeped in the quintessence of minimalism, this convolution was symbolic of several superfluous and irritating elements he saw throughout the room. (Other examples included a highly textured backsplash that added a lot of visual noise and was impossible to clean, and a single overhead cabinet that jutted out from the others above the stove; Jed called this "the wart".)

Minimizing visual clutter, repurposing unusable and hard-to-reach areas, increasing storage, and updating lighting were high on the MacKenzies' list of wanted changes. Luckily, economizing space and streamlining aesthetics are what bulthaup does best, and Jed knew all the tricks for tucking utility under the cloak of the company's signature finishes. "We wanted the corner carousel for extra → 86

KITCHEN DESIGN: ADVICE FROM EXPERT DESIGNER JED MACKENZIE

ONE/ Context: Consider the architecture and scale of the house. How does the kitchen interact with the living, dining, and outdoor spaces?

TWO/ Priorities: Address the purpose of the kitchen and how you hope to use it. How do you live and cook, and what level of investment do you want to make?

THREE/ Design: Successful kitchen design should be balanced and have one or more focal points. It should also be functional, intuitive, and ergonomically equipped. How does the kitchen look from across the room? How do you feel when you're in it?

FOUR/ Finishes: Authentic, quality finishes that relate to and enhance the surroundings are an opportunity to express individuality, and a sound investment in durability.



BEFORE

When bulthaup kitchen designer Jed MacKenzie and his family moved into a new-construction home in 2014, it included a run-of-the-mill kitchen with stock finishes and oversized appliances. Though frustrating, living with the space provided Jed an opportunity to identify where the design failed and how he would address its shortcomings. The call-outs are Jed's notes on both the original kitchen and his new design.

Rough stone surface added nice texture, but was impossible to clean.

Handles on a fixed front. No, No, No!

Tiny workspace for prep and landing.

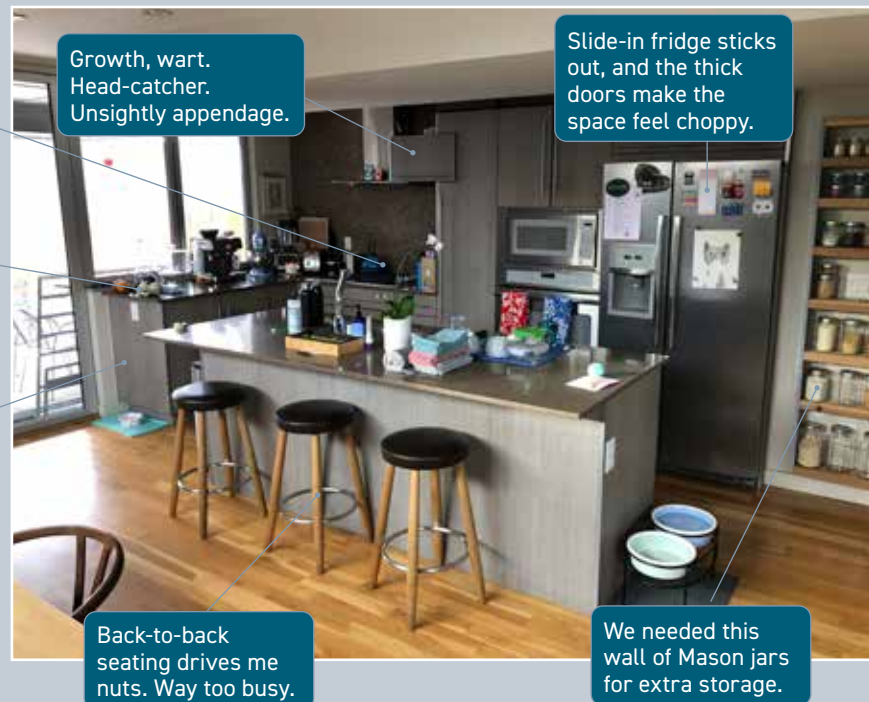
Outlets are at different heights and highly contrast with materials. No.



Gas cooktop is hot, inefficient, and difficult to clean.

No room for small appliances in the cabinets, so they were on display on the counter.

Exposed wall, baseboard, recessed toe kick. Could it get any busier?



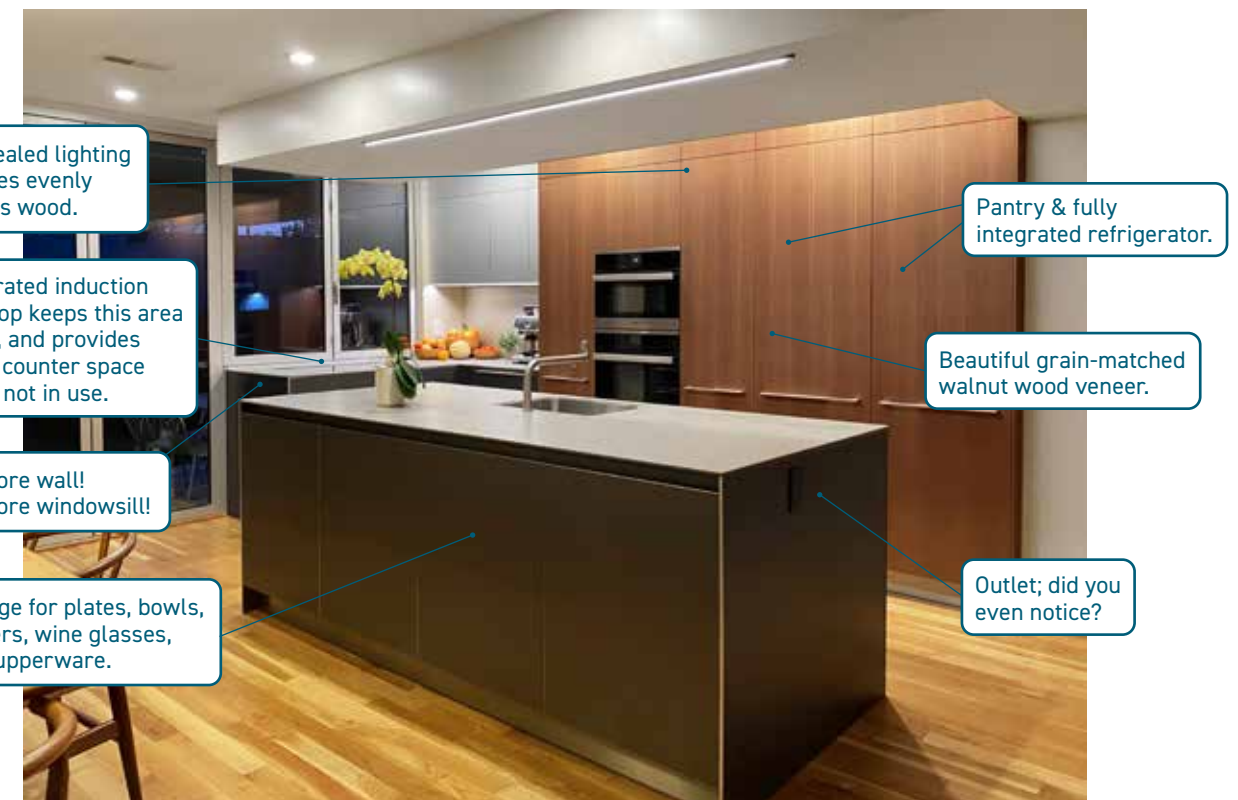
AFTER

Concealed lighting washes evenly across wood.

Integrated induction cooktop keeps this area clean, and provides extra counter space when not in use.

No more wall!
No more windowsill!

Storage for plates, bowls, platters, wine glasses, and tupperware.





“WE WANTED THE CORNER CAROUSEL FOR EXTRA STORAGE, INTERNAL DRAWERS FOR PANTRY ITEMS, SILVERWARE AND KNIFE BLOCKS, AND SPICE WEDGES—ALL THE HIDDEN THINGS THAT MAKE THESE KITCHENS REALLY USEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL.”

—Jed MacKenzie

storage, internal drawers for pantry items, silverware and knife blocks, and spice wedges—all the hidden things that make these kitchens really useful and beautiful,” he says.

Jed and Lara also opted to remove bar seating from their island in exchange for under-the-counter storage—a move that seemed to favor function, but also enhanced the space’s formal character. Now, where there was once a row of stools backing into adjacent dining chairs, which Jed always found redundant and messy, there’s a clean passageway as well as a clear gathering place.

Naturally, Jed and Lara were also excited about incorporating bulthaup’s iconic material finishes into their home. They selected walnut and anodized aluminum for the cabinetry and quartzite stone—which Jed likens to the feeling of just-wet beach sand—for the countertops.

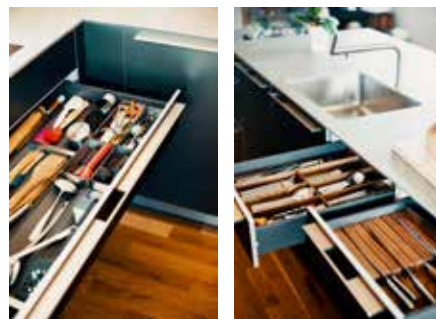
“There’s an honesty to these materials,” Jed explains of the company’s renowned wood veneers. “The craftspeople lay the wood out on an angled wall and make sure the pattern matches all the way across laterally, and all the way up vertically,” he says of the production processes he’s witnessed on trips to bulthaup HQ in Aich, Germany. “They take great care in

every detail—everything’s finished by hand. Their materials look and feel real because they are.”

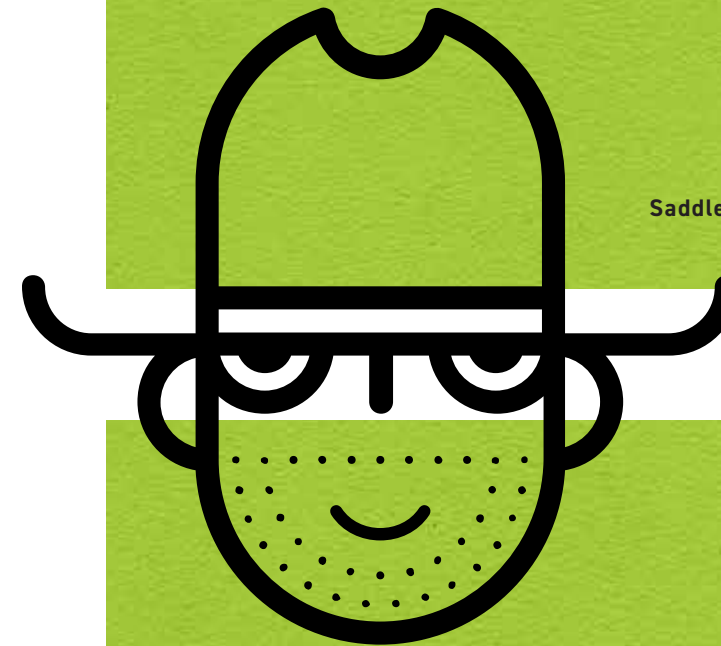
Many of the choices the MacKenzies made in their renovation—like shifting from a gas cooktop to induction, replacing a double-basin sink with a single, and exchanging a 30-inch oven for two stacked 24-inch units (all the appliances are by Miele)—have afforded more prep space and instilled a certain ease in cleaning and upkeep. Experientially, Jed loves the way the walnut cabinets and soft lighting artfully frame

whoever is wielding the chef’s knife. “There’s something subtle and quiet about it,” he says. “It’s simple, but really nice.”

Designing his family’s kitchen was not only satisfying for Jed, but it also strengthened his confidence on the job and bolstered his ability to make recommendations based on personal experience. “At the same time, every kitchen is different, unique to individual needs,” Jed says. And now, it’s clear he genuinely feels at home in his. ■



It’s a common misconception that minimalism leaves no room for stuff. One of Jed’s favorite things about bulthaup kitchens is their ability to conceal organizational systems, like silverware and knife blocks, internal drawers, and corner carousels.



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MORE THAN A MOMENT

Architectural modernism has been at home in the Rocky Mountain West for nearly a century. In his new book, *Rocky Mountain Modern*, author John Gendall explains the movement's influence on the region's most inspiring alpine residences.

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly



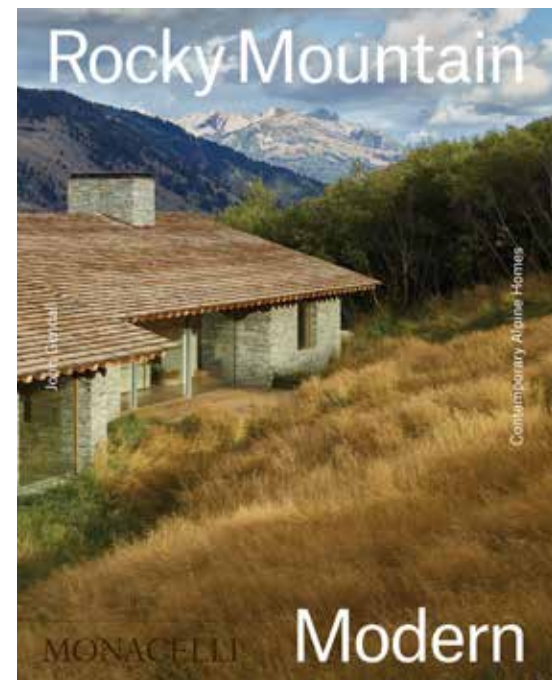
Photo: Bryce Duffy

MORE THAN
A MOMENT

Trace any movement back far enough and you're likely to find key moments responsible for its momentum. In his new book, *Rocky Mountain Modern*, author John Gendall chronicles the movement of architectural modernism in the alpine West back to one such pivot: a 1945 Aspen town hall meeting where Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius made an impactful cameo. As Gendall tells it, Gropius left the public forum with a few words that altered Aspen's architectural trajectory forever. "If you build," he said, "build modern." As anyone who's been to Aspen can tell you, the city took his advice.

This tale is one of several catalysts that happened concurrently to initiate modernism in the Rockies, and it draws readers into Gendall's lushly photographed and thoughtfully annotated anthology of contemporary homes designed in its tradition and adapted to fit regional contexts and constraints.

Published by Phaidon imprint Monacelli, *Rocky Mountain Modern* celebrates what came after the



Architectural writer John Gendall, who was born in Canada and spent several years in Colorado, returned to his Rocky Mountain roots when compiling the 18 projects featured in his new book, *Rocky Mountain Modern: Contemporary Alpine Homes*. Out this summer, the book illustrates 20th-century modernism's influence on 21st-century residential design.

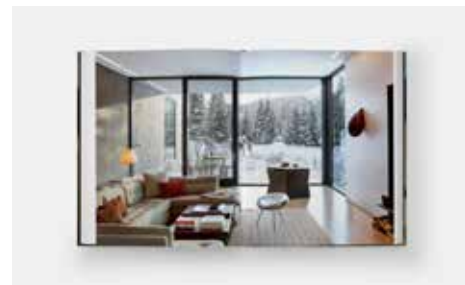


Photo: Brent René Synnevag

James Cutler of Cutler Anderson Architects designed this home in Canmore, Alberta to respond to the geographical thresholds of its site. Floor-to-ceiling glass walls are supported by exposed beams and naturally screened by surrounding rocks and trees.



Photo: Peter Cook

A custom nook dressed in Douglas fir and hemlock overlooks Jackson Hole's Elk Valley in this hillside home designed by London-based firm McLean Quinlan.

MORE THAN
A MOMENT



Photo: David Angello



Photo: James Florio

McLean Quinlan used locally sourced stone from the Snake River in their Jackson Hole residence. Timber rafters and natural plaster simplify the interior, allowing it to recede into the grandeur of the landscape.

moment of impact, illustrating modernism's legacy through a variety of residential projects designed across a 3,000-mile swath of land. The Rocky Mountains are often overlooked as a site for architectural modernism. However, as Gendall points out in his introduction, it's somewhat of a birthplace; Aspen, Colorado Springs, Jackson Hole, Banff, and Gallatin County, Montana are among the first places modern home design was seen in the U.S. and Canada.

In these places, leading architects including Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Richard Neutra, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Herbert Bayer left their mark and charted the way

for future designers by establishing diverse regional vernaculars. It's a history, Gendall writes in his introduction, "to be understood less as a single linear narrative and more as a global phenomenon with many nodes of activity."

Organized into 18 project-based chapters, *Rocky Mountain Modern* constellates these historical nodes and dots the map with contemporary residences along all parts of the highly nuanced range—from a cabin designed to perch above British Columbia's Christina Lake by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson to a high desert ranch house designed by Rick Joy along the Rockies' southern-most point in central New Mexico. In the book's

more than 200 pages, readers will find architectural expressions as powerful as the landscapes that surround them, with projects by acclaimed contemporary architecture studios like Olson Kundig, Selldorf Architects, and Allied Works.

As Gendall writes, and readers will quickly see, modernism in the Rockies looks different than it does in sun-kissed Southern California or forested New England enclaves. In addition to using materials and forms native to their locales, these designs impress with their ability to acclimate to life at elevation, where intense environmental conditions and land use regulations are known to oscillate.

"That the architects represented in this book have addressed such factors and that they have done so with such subtlety and poetic effect ought to be considered as one of the most impressive outcomes of what has been nearly a century of architectural modernism in the Rocky Mountains," Gendall writes.

Rocky Mountain Modern will be released in hardcover on June 28, 2022, and available through all major booksellers—just in time to accompany you for high country summer travel in both body and mind. ■

Studio B designed this Boulder residence in the flat-roofed, box-like lineage of Mies van der Rohe. Clad in concrete, zinc, and charred wood, the home includes several exterior spaces meant to connect it to its environment. Framed views at the rear extend the geometry, opening up to the garden and a pool.



WITH A TWIST

HMH Architecture + Interiors brings their expertise on European modernism to a Sloan's Lake home that embraces clean details and minimalism, but not without an unexpected twist.

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly

IMAGES: David Lauer

DAVID THURMAN HAD A PLAN FOR HIS DREAM HOUSE—A 30-PAGE BOOK, ACTUALLY. WHEN THE DENVER-BASED MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL BOUGHT A CORNER LOT FACING SLOAN'S LAKE, HE DECIDED TO LIVE IN THE EXISTING 1930S BUNGALOW FOR 18 MONTHS BEFORE BEGINNING TO REBUILD. DURING THIS TIME, HE METICULOUSLY RECORDED HIS OBSERVATIONS: HOW THE LIGHT MOVED ACROSS THE LOT, WHICH ASPECTS HAD THE BEST VIEWS, AND WHERE HE NATURALLY GRAVITATED TO SPEND HIS TIME. HIS FINDINGS WERE MIXED IN WITH NOTES ON HIS FAVORITE ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND HIS ART AND DESIGN INTERESTS.

“At one point, I was either going to be in medicine or be an architect,” Thurman shares. “This was my chance to explore the path I didn’t choose.”

After a thorough search, Thurman interviewed and hired principal Harvey Hine and project architect Neal Evers of HMH Architecture + Interiors for the job of creating what Thurman considered the project of his lifetime, the house he now calls Sloan's Vista. “Harvey and Neal understood all the intricacies of the design I had in mind,” Thurman says of his vision to build a modern home that was exceedingly minimal in appearance—creating breathing room for a rotating showcase of contemporary art—and maximized with technological and smart home enhancements that lay just under the skin.

HMH is known for architecture that follows the precedents of German modernism, which Hine, who grew up surrounded by its influence in Austria, explains came to the United States through Richard Neutra in the 1920s and '30s. There are a few defining characteristics of the style that Hine saw clearly in what Thurman described for Sloan's Vista. “New technologies at that time included structural systems that didn’t require as many load-bearing walls and allowed for larger panes of glass,” Hine says of homes that had powerful exterior architecture and sparse, neatly configured interiors. “Together, those really shaped the modernist principle of bringing the outside in and the inside out.”

Hine and Evers designed Sloan's Vista to have two-stories facing west toward the lake and mountain

The need for an interior stair that would connect all four levels of the Sloan's Lake residence became an opportunity to build a permanent piece of artwork right into the home's structure. The monolithic sculpture allows occupants to tread from rooftop to basement and draws natural light from a top-floor skylight.



views with a three-story volume rising up behind it. The main floor includes living, dining, and kitchen spaces with an adjacent office, while the second story is home to the primary suite and two additional bedrooms. The basement is outfitted for recreation and play, and the home's uppermost level has an exercise room and outdoor patio, complete with grill, hot tub, and fire pit. In total, the house has six distinct outdoor spaces throughout its four stories, not including the public-access park just beyond.

These choices speak to the style's historic reference. "This is in so many ways a Corbusian house," says Hine. The Swiss-

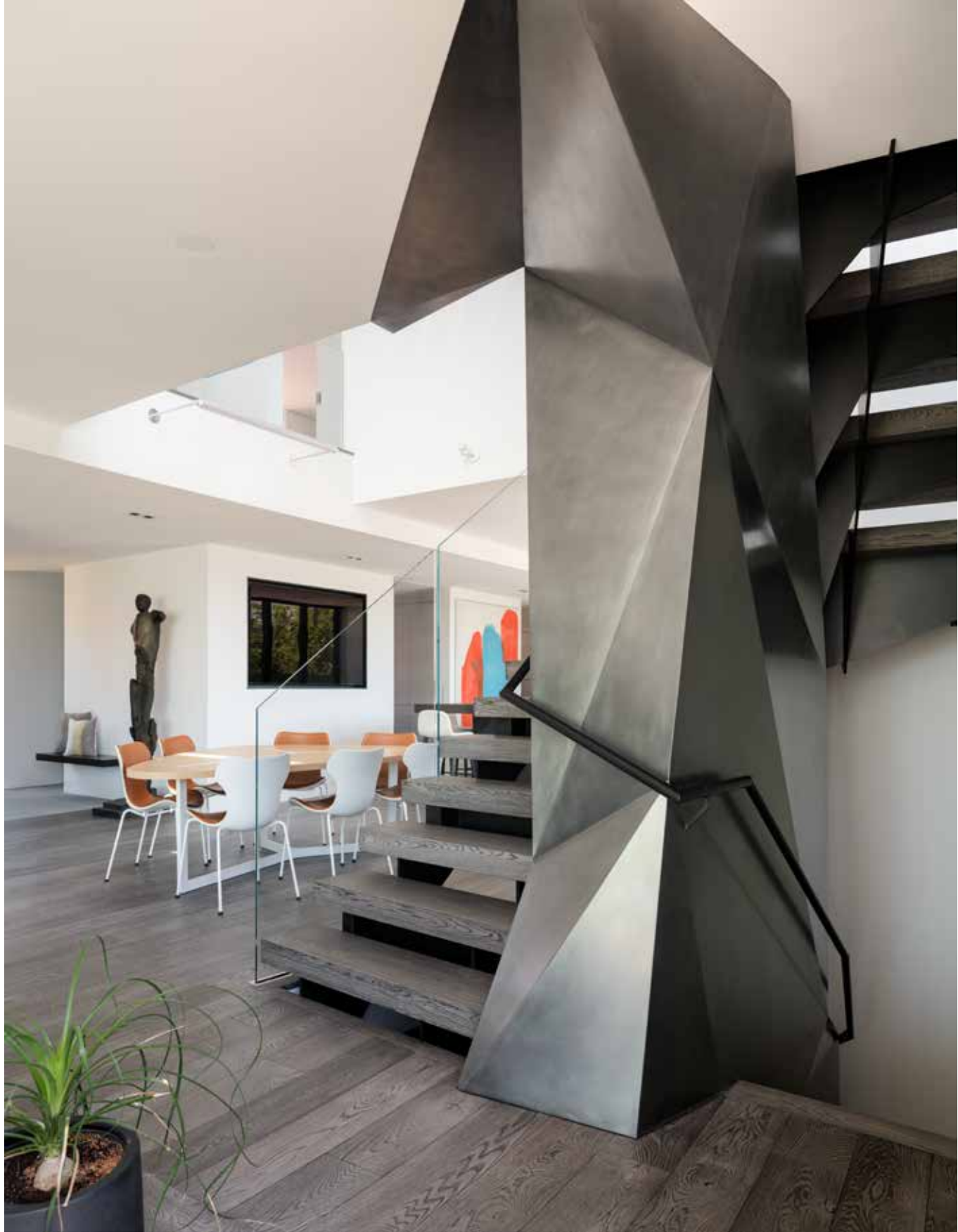
French architect and planner Le Corbusier, one of the vanguards of modernism, had five principles of design: that a building should utilize pilotis (pillars) in place of load-bearing walls, that it have an open interior floor plan, an exterior façade separate from structural components, expansive horizontal windows that run along the façade's entire length, and a rooftop garden. "Le Corbusier believed there had to be a rooftop garden for exercising in order to escape smog, which was heavy in European cities of that era," says Hine. "We took this principle literally, adding a yoga room on the top floor and a patio right off it." → 102

ABOVE: HMH Architecture + Interiors designed the home so that main floor living space and second floor primary suite capture mid-range views of Sloan's Lake and long views of the Rocky Mountains. **RIGHT:** Six distinct outdoor areas are incorporated in the home's four levels. A folded brick tower emerges to delineate the two volumes, matching the interior staircase in both visual appeal and structural ingenuity.

"THIS IS IN SO MANY WAYS A CORBUSIAN HOUSE. LE CORBUSIER BELIEVED THERE HAD TO BE A ROOFTOP GARDEN FOR EXERCISING IN ORDER TO ESCAPE SMOG, WHICH WAS HEAVY IN EUROPEAN CITIES OF THAT ERA. WE TOOK THIS PRINCIPLE LITERALLY, ADDING A YOGA ROOM ON THE TOP FLOOR AND A PATIO RIGHT OFF IT." - Harvey Hine



WITH A TWIST



"THE STAIRCASE AMAZES ME EVERY TIME I WALK UP AND DOWN IT. IT'S NOT ONLY THE OVERALL SHAPE, IT'S EVERY DETAIL, LIKE THE STAIR TREADS AND HANDRAIL. IT ROOTS DOWN INTO THE BASEMENT AND OPENS UP LIKE A TREE ON THE TOP LEVEL. IT'S SEVERAL SCULPTURES IN ONE." - David Thurman





The architects used many repeating materials throughout the home, including matching floor tiles with backsplashes and exterior brick with interior fireplace surrounds. The continuity was important to Thurman and was in step with the qualities of modernism HMH looks to incorporate into its contemporary designs. “It’s simple, clean, and bright,” Hine says.

Simple, clean, and bright—and not without a bonus round of show-

stopping complexity. From the outside, Sloan Vista’s two portions are separated by a sculptural brick tower that allures the artful eye and impresses those with any understanding of masonry. “Almost every brick on that wall has been cut in some way to conform to the horizontal movement while maintaining the vertical grout lines,” Hine shares, crediting extensive consultation with Bret Terry from Masonry Architectural Services and structural engineer

“We worked with the landscape architects [Elevate by Design] so that the kitchen would open out directly to an outside bar,” says architect Harvey Hine. The kitchen, living space, and an office nook flow seamlessly together on the main floor. Natural stone tile and summit brick are used throughout the home.



Petter Hagemark from PH Structure to achieve the effect.

The exterior brickwork’s faceted shape alludes to an equally monumental interior staircase. How to innovatively connect the home’s four stories became an open-ended question that transformed into a full-on art installation completed in collaboration with Rob Brindley from Modern Craftsman and the contractors at Old Greenwich Builders. It was also

an unexpected, and unexpectedly welcome, point of divergence from Thurman’s notebook. “I wanted to fill this house with art,” he says, “and this is a permanent, built-in piece.”

Evers came up with the original rendering of the staircase, which comprises several sheets of steel that come together at various joints, and took roughly two years from initial design to installation. “From the rendering it looked like a two-

One of homeowner David Thurman’s requests was that the home include a bulthaup kitchen. The neutral palette and sleek finishes provide a clean slate to offset Thurman’s bold and growing collection of contemporary art.



story sculpture that a staircase would wrap around,” says Brindley, a fine artist who now specializes in design and fabrication. “Of course, that was like catnip for me.”

After discussion on various surface treatments for the metal—whether it would be perforated or painted—the team and Thurman decided that it would be left raw in keeping with the home’s overall sleek and minimal aesthetic. The staircase nestles into walls that mimic the varying degrees of concavity and convexity on the exterior brick,

which further enhances the optics, as well as upped the ante for the craftspeople. “We had to frame everything on contoured, undulating surfaces,” Brindley says. “It requires an extra level of expertise when you’re dealing with walls that are not at right angles. There’s a huge amount of craft in that stair. And a really cool end result.”

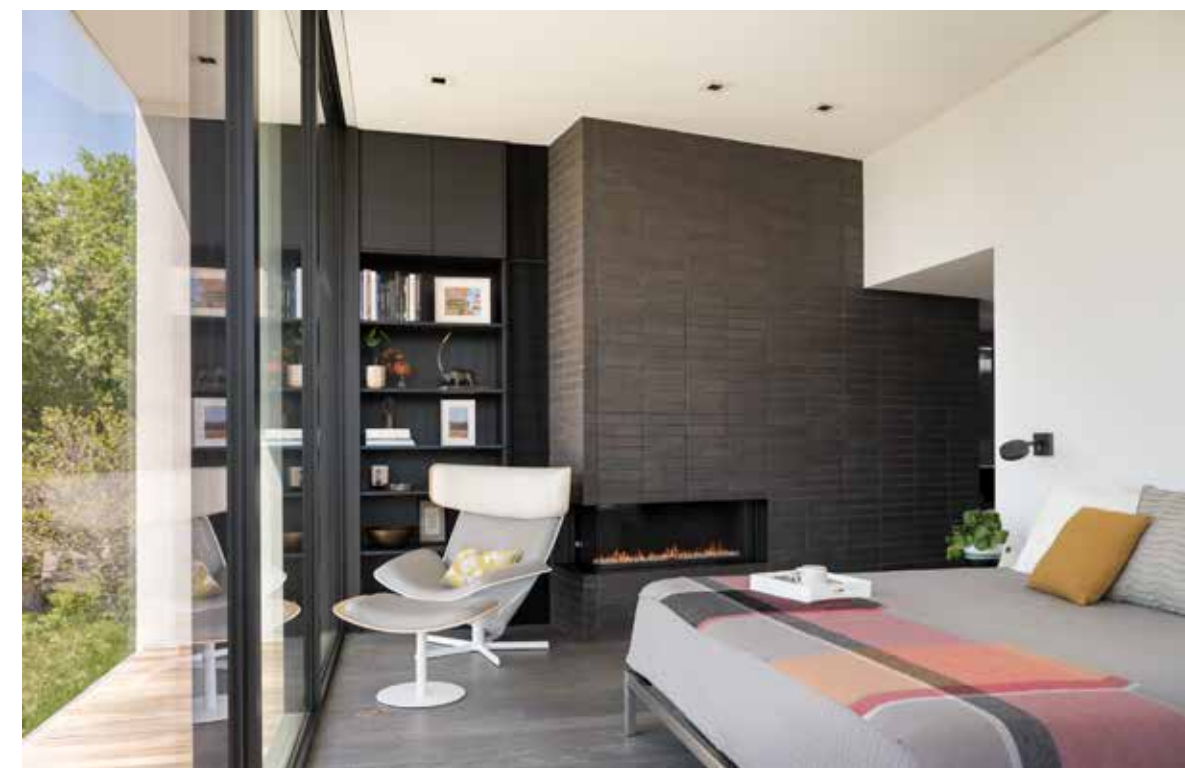
“The staircase amazes me every time I walk up and down it,” says Thurman. “It’s not only the overall shape, it’s every detail, like the stair

treads and handrail. It roots down into the basement and opens up like a tree on the top level. It’s several sculptures in one.”

Details really matter to Thurman, and his home synthesizes several, which Hine remarks is no easy feat. “Modern homes are forward-thinking and have to be able to conceal a lot. The things that you don’t see are almost as cool as the stuff you do.” Pleasantly, at Sloan’s Vista, there’s plenty of both. ■

The home is furnished with pieces representing the best of Italian design. A Alexander sofa and Blake-Soft armchair, both by Minotti, make an inviting place to lounge and people watch, while a Piccola Papilio armchair by B&B Italia outfits the office nook. Ortal fireplaces are inconspicuously tucked into the living room and primary suite (opposite, above).

WITH A TWIST



The primary bathroom is appointed with a Barcelona bathtub from Victoria + Albert, sinks and faucets from Kohler, and bulthaup cabinets. Uniquely, the bathroom opens up to a private walled patio.

PROJECT LIST

- ARCHITECT:
HMH Architecture + Interiors
- PROJECT MANAGER:
Neal Evers, HMH Architecture + Interiors
- INTERIOR DESIGN:
HMH Architecture + Interiors
Homeowner, David Thurman
- GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
Old Greenwich Builders
- STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:
PH Structure
- KITCHEN & MILLWORK:
bulthaup
- STAIR DESIGN:
Rob Brindley, Modern Craftsman
- FLOORING:
Rock Solid Hardwoods
- TILE:
Materials Marketing
- WINDOWS+SLIDERS:
Reynaers
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:
R Design



Photo: RLI Photography

GIMME SHELTER

Denver architect Brad Tomecek collaborates with Design Workshop to create eye-catching pavilions for several Front Range communities.

WORDS: David Hill



A pavilion is architecture at its most pure. Unlike, say, an office building or a house, there's generally no plumbing to worry about, no heating and cooling systems to consider, no insulation to factor in. Some pavilions are even designed as temporary structures, like an art installation. Others are meant to be permanent, but their functions can vary, from shelter to performance stage to sheer sculpture.

"Pavilions are very honest and raw," says Denver architect Brad Tomecek, founder and principal of Tomecek Studio Architecture. "The structure is expressed; the materials are expressed. What you see is what you get."

Tomecek, 49, is best known for his residential work. He and his seven-person firm work closely with clients to design unique, site-specific homes, often using innovative, sustainable materials such as structural insulated panels and shipping containers. One of Tomecek's most celebrated houses is a 1,500-square-foot stunner outside of Nederland made up of two insulated shipping containers with a two-story, wedge-shaped structure in between. The off-the-grid house sits on a rock outcropping at 9,000 feet above sea level.

Tomecek has also designed a handful of commercial projects, including the Denver showroom for Studio 2b, a contemporary furniture retailer, and a novel expansion of a small sign business located in a former motorcycle repair shop in Denver's Sunnyside neighborhood.

Meanwhile, Tomecek has carved out something of a niche designing pavilions in park settings along the Front Range.

Tomecek's interest in the building type began in 2010, when he led a group of CU Denver architecture students in the design and construction of two pavilions for the

nonprofits Feed Denver and Urban Farm. Working with virtually no budget, the students—part of the Colorado Building Workshop design-build program—used salvaged and donated materials to construct the pavilions, called the Learning Cube and the Dairy House.

The pavilions, which won several AIA Colorado awards, caught the attention of the Denver studio of Design Workshop, a large landscape architecture firm with offices around the country. When the firm was hired to do a master plan for a new outdoor-focused residential development north of Denver called Barefoot Lakes, Tomecek and his team were brought in to design a series of pavilions, shelters, and follies. In the end, only one, Sunset Pavilion, was completed (see page 111). But Tomecek's collaboration with Design Workshop has continued to flourish.

"Brad is not only a good architect, but he's a great person to work with," says Design Workshop's Jake Sippy, project manager on the Barefoot Lakes effort. "With Brad, it's always a true collaboration. It's always, 'Let's do something great together.'"

He adds: "Some architects might think designing a pavilion is beneath them." The scope isn't big enough, perhaps, or the fee is too small. "But architects like Brad understand that even a small building can be significant. It takes a special kind of person to recognize that."

Tomecek and Design Workshop have now collaborated on three completed pavilions, with a fourth currently under construction in Centennial. Tomecek is eager to do more.

"They're right up our alley," he says. "Pavilions show how buildings can be more than just a product. They can be an art form."



THE LANDING AND OVERLOOK PAVILIONS

Festival Park

Castle Rock, Colorado

Design Workshop and Tomecek Studio Architecture took an existing but underutilized park in downtown Castle Rock and transformed it into an amenity-filled gathering place called Festival Park. The two-acre park is anchored on the east end by the Landing Pavilion, a striking structure made of wood, steel, and concrete—materials that reflect the town’s railroad, ranching, and farming roots. (Think of water towers and train trestles.) There’s some bleacher-style seating, a built-in picnic table, and a dozen or so freestanding metal chairs and tables, perfect for brown bag lunches.

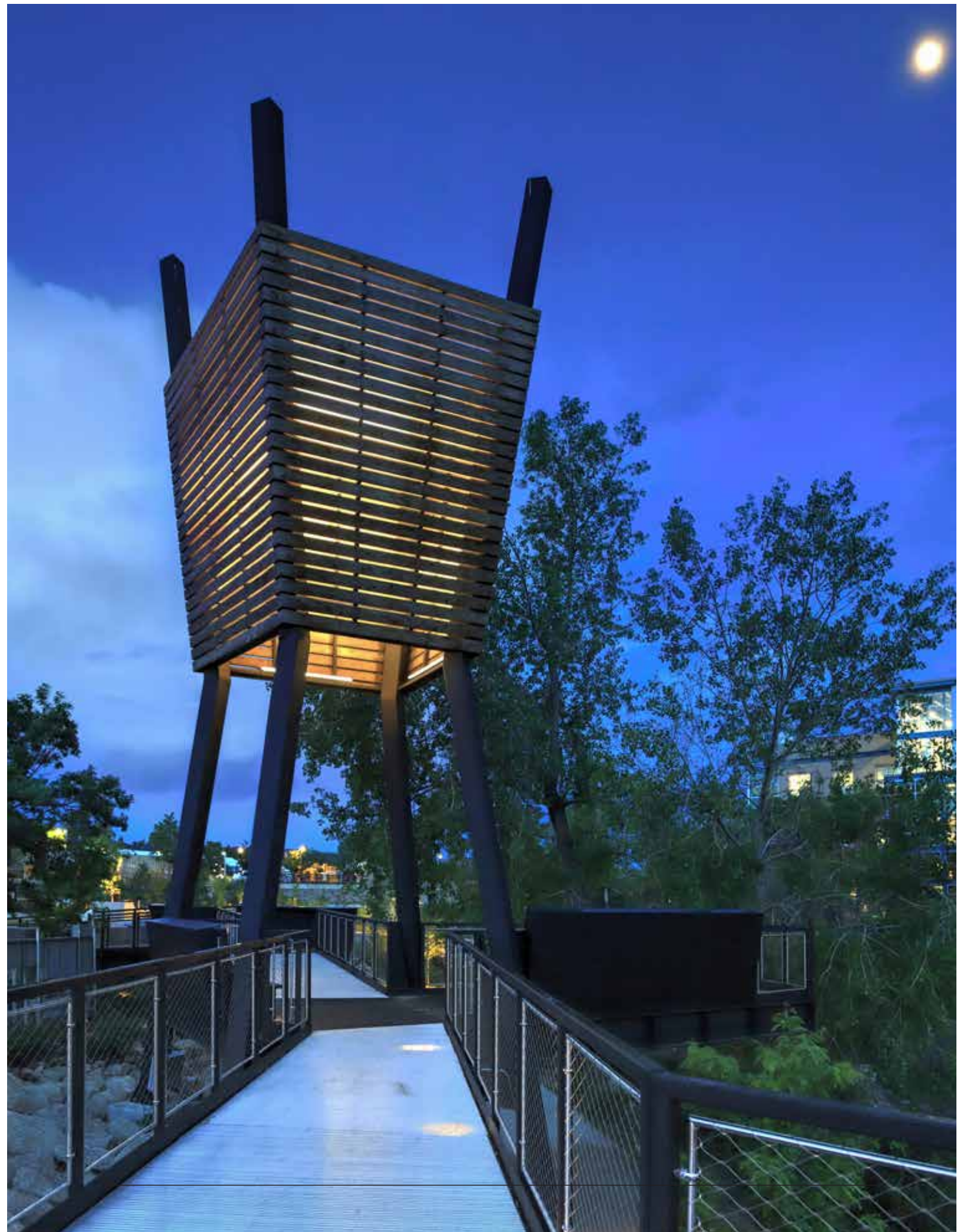
“At its most basic, the pavilion provides some much-needed shade,” says Design Workshop’s Jake Sippy.

Across a small grass lawn from the Landing Pavilion is another Tomecek creation, the Overlook Pavilion, essentially a small tower made of bent steel legs with a wood-slatted enclosure that glows like a lantern at night. The tower rises above a creek and can be accessed by a walkway that passes through the steel legs. In architectural terms, it’s a folly—an ornamental structure that has no practical purpose (though in this case, the tower does provide some shade for a small wooden bench). And yet, it’s already become something of an icon for the revitalized park.

Festival Park has won a number of design awards since it opened in 2018.



Photos: RLI Photography



GIMME SHELTER



Photos: Tomecek Studio

SUNSET PAVILION

Barefoot Lakes Community

Firestone, Colorado

Sunset Pavilion sits on a hill at the entrance to Barefoot Lakes, a housing subdivision about 30 miles north of Denver. It's a simple yet dramatic structure made of steel, concrete, and gabion walls. At first glance, the pavilion—with its tilted, cantilevered canopy—looks like a performance stage, but it's actually a shelter where residents can sit on a concrete bench and take in the surrounding lakes, fields, and mountains to the west.

The pavilion is deliberately unfussy, Tomecek says, with “humble” materials that blend in with the natural setting.

In 2017, the project won a prestigious Small Project Award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA Colorado).



“At the end of the day,” Tomecek says, “it’s a place just to relax and watch the sunset. The concrete bench is designed for sitting, lying down, slouching, whatever.” Perforations in the steel structure track the sun’s movement during the spring and fall equinoxes.



COMMUNITY PAVILION

Mercantile Park, Meadows Town Center

Castle Rock, Colorado

Mercantile Park is a small plot of open space in The Meadows, a housing development in Castle Rock. There’s a picnic area, a firepit, and a small play area for kids, but the main feature is a concrete-and-steel pavilion that looks more like a contemporary sculpture than a work of architecture. The design couldn’t be simpler: three board-formed concrete walls, each of which supports a delicately cantilevered concrete canopy and a single steel I-beam anchored to the ground with a metal rod. Visually, the three elements merge into one structure, which can be used as an amphitheater or simply a shelter for shade.

Rainwater drains from the canopies into concrete irrigation basins, which direct the water to the park’s Great Lawn.

Despite the pavilion’s weighty materials, it has a sense of lightness, especially when viewed head-on, from the west. “You kind of look right through it,” Tomecek says. “It’s almost transparent.”



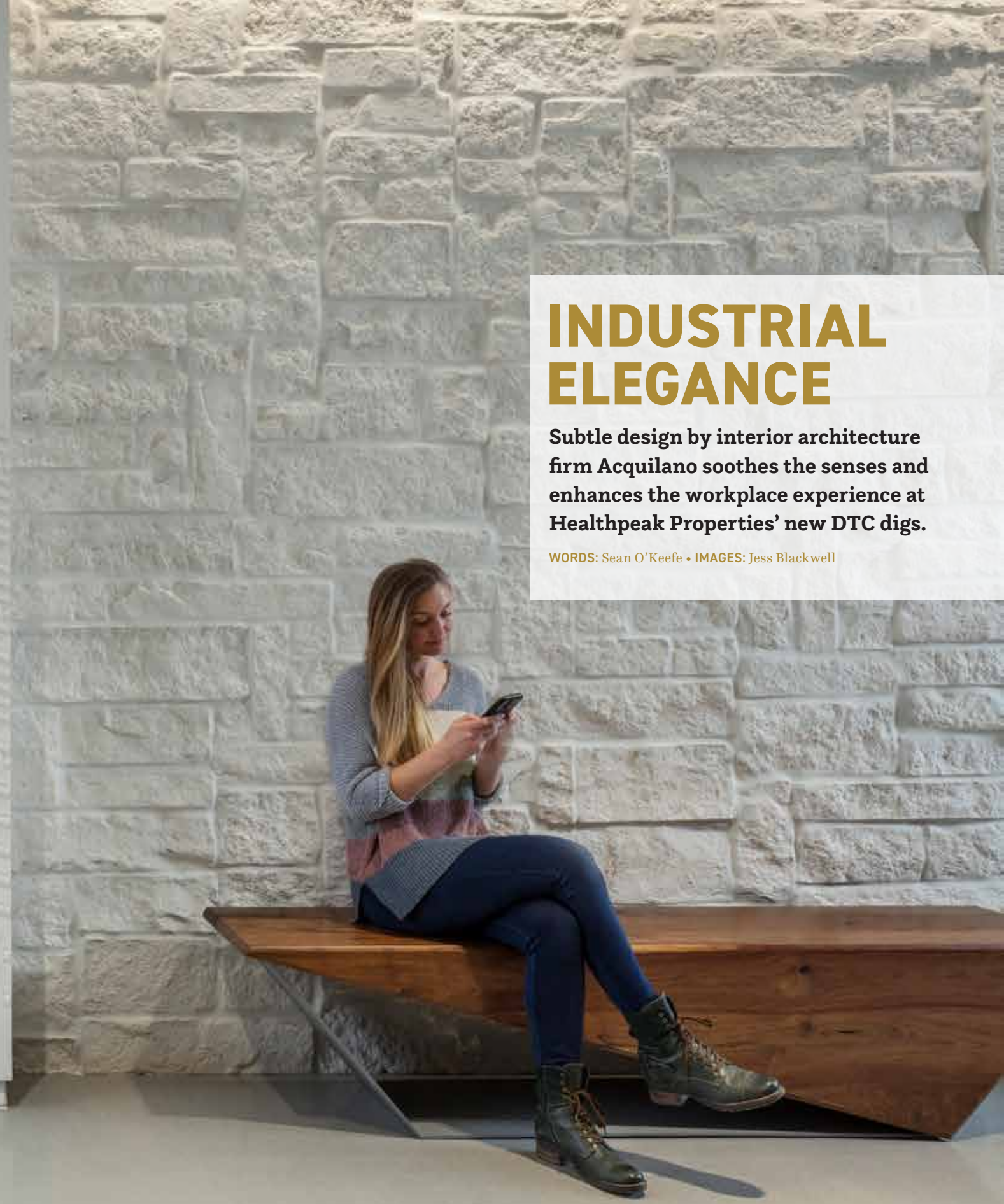
Photos: RLI Photography



GIMME SHELTER



Design is in the details. Acquilano commissioned Make West to design and install a custom Denver cityscape crafted from clear acrylic on drywall.



INDUSTRIAL ELEGANCE

Subtle design by interior architecture firm Acquilano soothes the senses and enhances the workplace experience at Healthpeak Properties' new DTC digs.

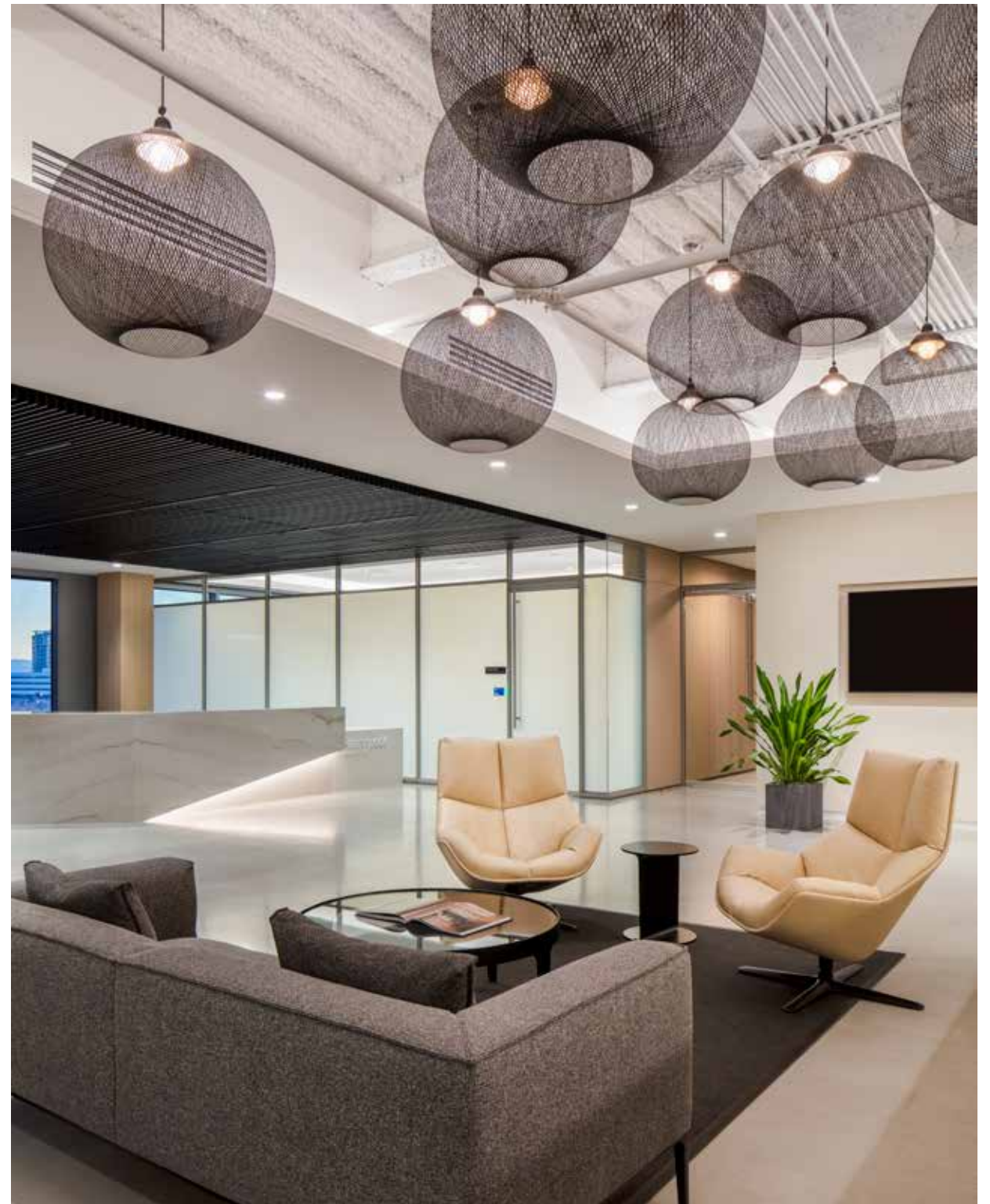
WORDS: Sean O'Keefe • IMAGES: Jess Blackwell



WHILE DESIGN IS A DESTINATION, ELEGANCE IS AN EXPERIENCE.

At the new DTC headquarters of Healthpeak Properties, architectural interiors firm Acquilano applied a deft understanding of materiality to the building's unique design to craft a workspace of bespoke expectations. Ashley Stinson, IIDA, LEED AP, a principal with Acquilano, takes a leadership role in developing the firm's design solutions. For Stinson, expanding the client's expectations of what a workspace can be is the best part of her job.

"Our motto is: we listen, then we create," says Stinson, who has been with Acquilano for more than 14 years, the last five as a principal. "We come to the table without preconceived notions. We are good listeners and work hard to ask all the right questions. From there, it is our responsibility to expand the client's view of what their office space can do for them."



OPPOSITE: Open and more than ample, the lobby features a Nucraft Tesano table, Andreu World Smile stools, Armstrong AcoustiBuilt acoustical drywall ceiling system, and a micro topped concrete floor by Colorado Hardscapes.

ABOVE: Moooi pendant lighting is joined by a wood veneer slat ceiling system by 9Woods to animate the overhead plane, while Davis Cova lounge chairs and an Allermuir Oran sofa in Maharam Kvadrat fabric relax the room.



“HEALTHPEAK’S EXPECTATIONS FOR THEIR SPACE WERE SOPHISTICATED AND CONTEMPORARY. MERGING THEIR BRAND AND VALUES WITH THE ARCHITECTURE, WE CAME UP WITH A DESIGN CONCEPT WE CALL INDUSTRIAL ELEGANCE. PROFESSIONAL AND TAILORED YET CASUALLY UNENCUMBERED.”



OPPOSITE: Designed to mimic the Healthpeak logo, the graphic on the rear wall combines custom-stained oak planks adhered to the back-painted gold glass. A Martin Brattrud wool area rug, handwoven in India, exude the elegant, industrial vibe Acquilano envisioned.

TOP: Keilhauer chairs and a Bernhardt sectional sit on a plush area rug from Shaw Contract. Beyond, a Roll & Hill glass and brass light pendant illuminates the island, countertops, and backsplash made from Italian Calacatta marble.

Healthpeak Properties is a diversified real estate investment trust that owns and develops health care real estate for Life Sciences, Medical Office, and Continuing Care Retirement Communities. Healthpeak has recently relocated its headquarters from Irvine, California to Denver, taking the eighth floor of one of DTC’s most innovative Class A office properties: the shimmering, 12-story 50 Fifty building located at I-25 and E. Bellevue.

With an unusual mixture of sparkling glass and speckled granite inspired by nautical nuances, 50 Fifty joined the DTC skyline in 2018. The building differentiates itself from contemporaries through the incorporation of an integrated

parking structure. While detached parking structures or surface lots support most suburban offices, 50 Fifty seamlessly integrates the parking within its frame. Merging the parking structure into the office profile meant extending the office width beyond the preferred 45-foot lease span to match the wider dimensions required by vehicular movements in the garage. In accounting for the larger floor plate widths on the garage levels, the designers of 50 Fifty put the extra space to good use.

“50 Fifty is a sleek, mid-rise glass office tower that has these incredible, full-height lightwells running through the center of the building,” says Stinson of the dual 20’ x 30’ open-air columns. The lightwells allow outside influences

to animate the building’s interstitial spaces deep within, daylighting restroom banks and core-facing spaces on every floor. Inside, the building’s office areas are column-free, and the glass exterior is open in every direction.

“Healthpeak’s expectations for their space were sophisticated and contemporary,” says Stinson of the discovery process. “Merging their brand and values with the architecture, we came up with a design concept we call Industrial Elegance. Professional and tailored yet casually unencumbered.”

A well-designed amalgam of home and away, the Healthpeak office experience includes a south-facing view framed by floor-to-ceiling glass, polished concrete floors, and



ABOVE: A book-matched walnut slab countertop is supported by blackened steel I-beams astride Large Format porcelain tile flooring. Height-adjustable workstations are faced in a custom Halcon wood veneer.

OPPOSITE: Pendant lights by Stickbulb, Bernhardt Cinema lounge chairs, and Fry Reglet minimalist door frames keep the look sleek and sophisticated.



an eclectic infusion of vegetation. The reception plan is uncluttered, the materials and furnishings vividly organic, soothing the senses in subdued earth tones. Many of the chosen finishes reveal their organic origins through raised, tactile expressions of self. Eleven-foot ceilings accommodate the layered use of design, whereby the overhead plane visually delineates the various functional opportunities in the spaces below.

Stinson reminds us that each company has its own workflows that factor into solution-building for achieving both a well-designed ethos and office space.

“Healthpeak’s work processes are often individualized. Many employees work independently in private offices,” she shares.

“We placed the executive offices along the lightwell walls to take advantage of that unique feature, allowing us to leave the building’s incredible views in every direction accessible to all.”

Since the executive team is relocating from California and many spend a lot of their time traveling, Healthpeak needed flexible workspaces for changing needs down the line. Privacy, in all forms, was also a driving factor.

“Custom-design architectural walls are used throughout the interior to account for visual openness and sound attenuation,” continues Stinson. “We incorporated DIRT glass walls with acoustically laminated glass, acoustical drywall, and selected insulation specifically to maximize sound

privacy. For future flexibility, the glass walls are demountable and easily reconfigured to accommodate growth or new work strategies.” Asked about changing workplace dynamics in response to the worldwide shake-up of employer expectations and employee needs caused by the pandemic, Stinson points to flexibility in all forms.

“Nobody has a crystal ball, but the consensus is that you need to provide a workplace people want to be in even when they could be working from home,” she says. “We believe this means premium-quality furnishings and finishes that are integrated into hospitality-like settings. Offices, collaboration areas, and lounge areas all require thoughtful design and material selection so that every space feels special.”

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TWICE LOVED

ARCH11 RESTORES A SOUTHEAST DENVER RANCH HOUSE DESIGNED BY WILLIAM MUCHOW FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF ITS LONG AND STORIED LIFE.



WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly • IMAGES: Justin Martin

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL FOR CITY DWELLERS TO FORM ATTACHMENTS TO HOMES THEY DON'T LIVE IN. FOR THOSE ATTUNED TO THEIR SURROUNDINGS, AN EVENING STROLL THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD CAN BE JUST AS FUN AS VISITING WITH CLOSE FRIENDS.

Such was the case for longtime Denver residents Amanda and Steve Gurr and an L-shaped 1958 ranch house just down the street from the one they'd lived and raised their family in for 18 years. They knew the home—which is about 100 yards from their former residence—had been designed by prominent local architect William Muchow and built by the equally notable engineer Al Cohen (who lived right next door), and was occupied by one family, the Dinners, for over 60 years. Michael Dinner, one of the children who grew up in the house, went on to become a Hollywood producer and director for a variety of television shows, including *The Wonder Years*.

"I already knew I loved this house," reflects Amanda. "I always thought it had such a great Denver architecture story."

Looking to right-size the nest after their two sons had grown and left it, and having an eye for design, the Gurrs were keen to enter into this home's lineage when they saw it listed in 2019. Amanda and Steve were fans of the home's mid-century character, and were especially smitten with its backyard, which abuts their good friends' property and the Wellshire Golf Course, offering views and quiet—a welcome reprieve from the busyness of East Dartmouth Avenue just outside the front door.

From the onset, the Gurrs knew that some level of renovation would be necessary to update the home to their tastes and needs. They met with Arch11 founding principal E.J. Meade at the suggestion of Amanda's mother, who worked for decades in the architecture and design fields in San Francisco and had intersected with Meade over the years. Meade had studied with Muchow's protégé George Hoover ("I guess that makes me Muchow's architectural grandchild," Meade remarks) and was



on board immediately. He brought Arch11 interior designer Kristin Wynne and project architects Linnaea Stuart and John Clarey in to complete the team.

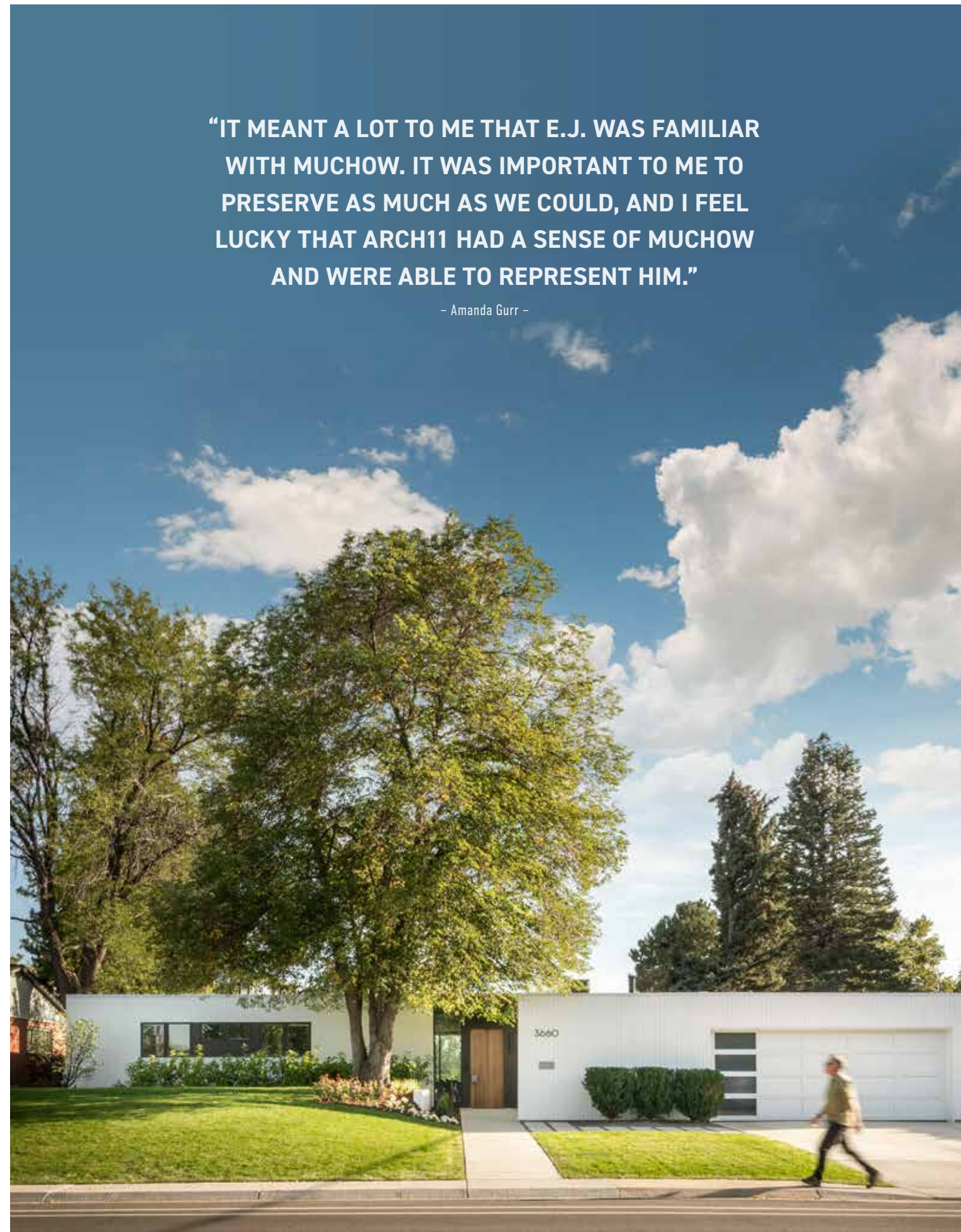
“It meant a lot to me that E.J. was familiar with Muchow,” Amanda shares. “It was important to me to preserve as much as we could, and I feel lucky that Arch11 had a sense of Muchow and were able to represent him.”

Initially, the renovation was focused on updating the kitchen, which was round, and the primary bathroom, which had a sunken tub and shower. “Both of these rooms were super cool, but very impractical,” Amanda explains. The Gurr and the architects tried for months to make the curvilinear kitchen design work, but found it a challenge to accommodate adequate counter space and contemporary appliances in the round. Ultimately, they chose to swap for right angles.

“We really wanted to speak to the original interior,” Wynne explains, “and we found a way to do that with a rectilinear interpretation. We chose finishes like walnut cabinetry paneling and stone countertops to bring in color, movement, and that mid-century modern feel.”

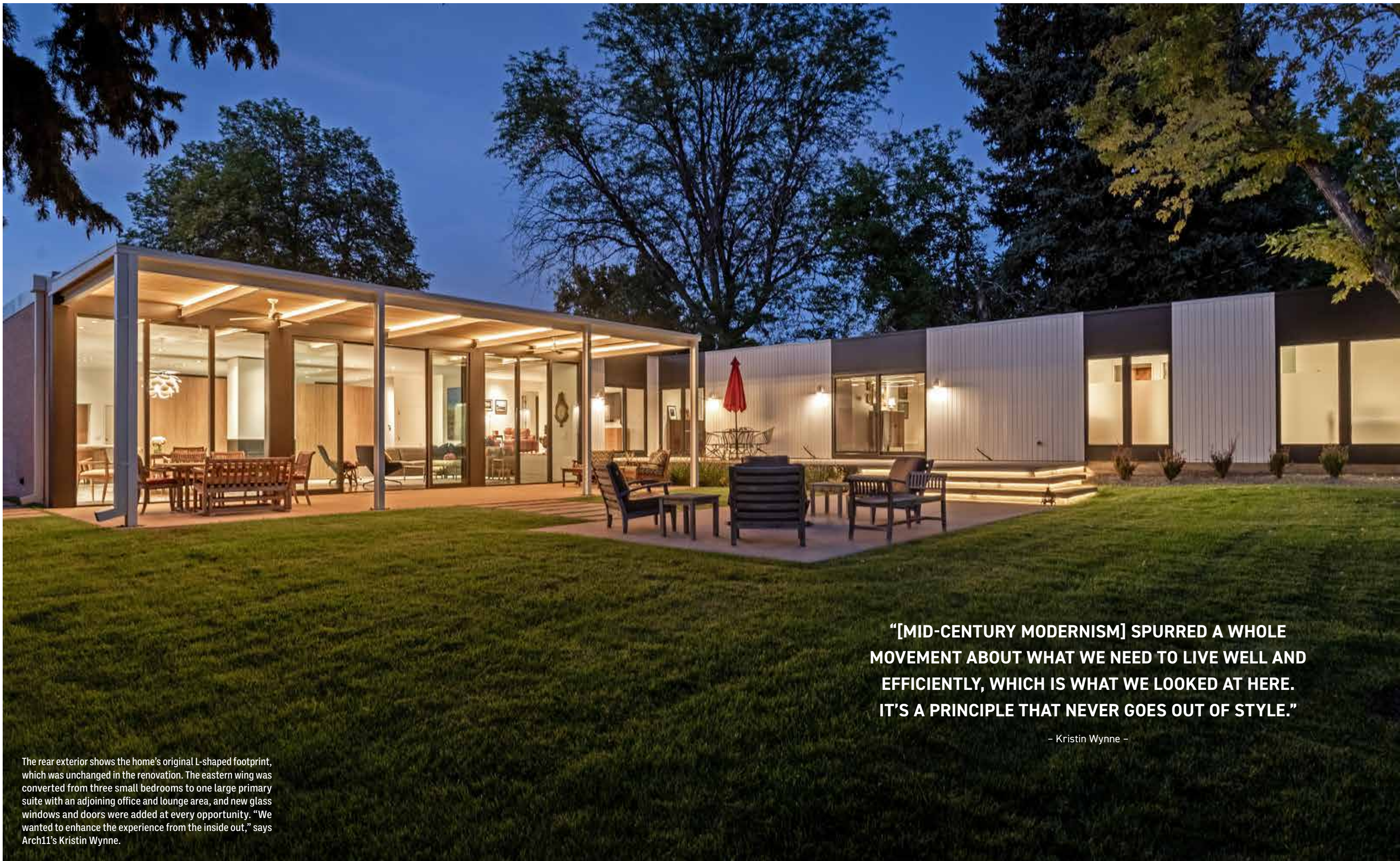
During the design phase, the renovation grew. “The house was stuck in a moment, but sited incredibly well,” Clarey says of his first impressions of the property. “It had a deep backyard with a foreground, middle, and long view. It’s hard to achieve that without having immense amounts of property, and here we had it naturally. However, inside, it felt like you had a baseball cap pulled over your eyes. It’s a very →128

Adapted from Muchow’s original curved design, the now rectilinear kitchen sits at the center of the Gurr’s residence and is a hub for entertaining. Custom walnut paneling and millwork was crafted by Denver-based Nine Thirteen Interiors. Polished concrete floors are used across the main living space.



“IT MEANT A LOT TO ME THAT E.J. WAS FAMILIAR WITH MUCHOW. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO ME TO PRESERVE AS MUCH AS WE COULD, AND I FEEL LUCKY THAT ARCH11 HAD A SENSE OF MUCHOW AND WERE ABLE TO REPRESENT HIM.”

- Amanda Gurr -



The rear exterior shows the home's original L-shaped footprint, which was unchanged in the renovation. The eastern wing was converted from three small bedrooms to one large primary suite with an adjoining office and lounge area, and new glass windows and doors were added at every opportunity. "We wanted to enhance the experience from the inside out," says Arch11's Kristin Wynne.

"[MID-CENTURY MODERNISM] SPURRED A WHOLE MOVEMENT ABOUT WHAT WE NEED TO LIVE WELL AND EFFICIENTLY, WHICH IS WHAT WE LOOKED AT HERE. IT'S A PRINCIPLE THAT NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE."

- Kristin Wynne -



Higher Ground Landscapes collaborated with Arch11 to remediate the backyard for heightened use and aesthetic continuity. The designers added significant hardscaping to enhance the functionality of the space and removed a row of evergreens and a chain-link fence to liberate views of Wellshire Golf Course.

common condition for mid-century homes to have small windows because designers and builders were often working with stock sizes and often approaching things from a pretty economical point of view. We wanted to transform the home into something that really flowed and felt connected to the site.”

The home’s footprint—two slab-on-grade wings flanking a raised middle section with a basement underneath—was left intact, but the interior was significantly reconfigured. Rooms didn’t move, but were opened up. The architects took the home’s four small bedrooms and redistributed the space to create a primary suite, guest room, and an office/lounge. They upped the size and number of windows throughout,

adding a dramatic glass wall in the living room; lightened interior finishes, including a uniform, polished-concrete floor; and completely redressed the backyard landscaping.

The middle portion of the home, what the Gurrs call “the stage,” is elevated from the main living area by four steps and was retained for its architectural character. It’s an element that connects the home’s past and future. Amanda explains how easy it is for her to imagine a 1960s family hosting and entertaining in this space, just like she and Steve do now when their sons and friends visit.

“Mid-century modern architecture gives you the opportunity to be flexible about how rooms are made

and how they connect to each other, then and now,” says Clarey, giving an indication of how Arch11 brought the effort to both preserve and renovate into alignment. “Those designers were really studying how people live, work, and engage,” Wynne continues. “It spurred a whole movement about what we need to live well and efficiently, which is what we looked at here. It’s a principle that never goes out of style.”

Eighteen months after moving in, the Gurrs have settled into their sensitively studied space effortlessly. “It’s already an eclectic, lived-in space featuring several pieces of period-specific furniture and Amanda and Steve’s art collection,” says Wynne. “There’s a lovely quality to their home—

Up four steps from the main floor is what the Gurr’s call “the stage”—an architectural nuance original to the 1958 design that was retained and now serves as an extension of the living space. Prior to the renovation, this area had a Dutch door that opened up to a hallway wet bar. The Gurrs opted to take advantage of the plumbing, swapping cocktails for easily accessed laundry appliances.

it’s very much their own.” While the Gurrs knew there was a lot to love about this house before it was theirs, they’re nonetheless delighted and surprised by how much they enjoy living there. For one, they spent last summer watching an owl family nest in their park-like backyard.

Their satisfaction is shared by Arch11; the project received the Mayor’s Design Award given by

Mayor Michael B. Hancock in 2021. Meade remarks that they were working on a remodel and addition of one of Muchow’s first efforts, a cabin on the Williams Fork outside of Granby, parallel to their renovation of the Gurr residence. “Most of our conversation with Muchow has been through working on these two original designs of his, attempting to discern his intent while restoring and adapting them for modern life. It’s been an honor.” ■

PROJECT LIST

- ARCHITECT:**
Arch11
- GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**
Character Built
- STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:**
Portis Structural Design
- KITCHEN & MILLWORK:**
Nine Thirteen Interiors
- WINDOWS+DOORS:**
Marvin-Signature Windows + Doors
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:**
Higher Ground Landscapes



Photo: Parrish Ruiz de Velasco

PRODUCT DESIGN

MAKING IT REAL

From motorcycles to medical devices, and everything in between, LINK Product Development has made a name for themselves as a boutique firm offering full-suite services that turn ideas into reality. Here's their formula for success.

WORDS: Cory Phare

Boulder-based OneClock had their big idea: A sleek, simple timepiece that uses a custom-composed soundtrack to gradually rouse and rise, providing a focused start to days often spent in states of partial attention.

“We’ve invited Alexa onto the nightstand and are confronted with 17 emails before even getting out of bed,” says Jamie Kripke, co-founder of the company previously profiled by *Modern In Denver*. “We wanted to give people an alternative to that by creating a disconnected bedroom environment.”

Bringing that concept to life—and market—in a way that would honor all elements of their vision proved a challenge, however. Kripke and his team embarked on prototyping, shopping the concept around to several designers. For one prototype, produced by a factory in China, they simply sent photos and drawings to an overseas product designer.

The resulting mock-up was decidedly lost in translation. It was at that point OneClock knew they needed a different kind of approach, so they turned to Denver-based LINK Product Development.

“They were the first ones we really connected with,” Kripke says. “We took that prototype to the meeting with Marc [Hanchak, president and founder of LINK] and he said, ‘This is horrible—we can do better.’”

“And so they did.”

Hanchak, who founded LINK in 2007, credits the boutique firm’s not-so-secret ingredient for success to the long-term, full-suite approach he and his six employees bring to each client. Their projects often involve complete product portfolios that span three to five years or more, with ongoing dialogue with the client to ensure viability.

“There’s a lot of engineering companies around town who will do prototypes, manufacturing, or marketing, but not really anyone who will take someone through the entire process,” Hanchak says. “I always thought it does a client an injustice to do one element of a project and then send them off to fend for themselves. I don’t know anyone who does the breadth of what we do.”

LINK’s breadth pulls from a diverse range of industries across B2B and B2C formats. They intentionally blur the often siloed approaches that separate designers from engineers, balancing practicality with blue-sky thinking, explains Schuyler Livingston, an industrial designer with the company. “The full-suite model we adopt depends on purposefully and effectively designing across lines, whether it’s a motorcycle, children’s toy, or medical device,” he says.

One such project involved work on a surgical retractor that had to open smoothly, akin to two rails on a drawer operating in tandem without getting stuck. This required dialogue with trauma surgeons, who Livingston notes were particular about tools and processes used.



“THERE’S A LOT OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES AROUND TOWN WHO WILL DO PROTOTYPES, MANUFACTURING, OR MARKETING, BUT NOT REALLY ANYONE WHO WILL TAKE SOMEONE THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROCESS. I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT DOES A CLIENT AN INJUSTICE TO DO ONE ELEMENT OF A PROJECT AND THEN SEND THEM OFF TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES. I DON’T KNOW ANYONE WHO DOES THE BREADTH OF WHAT WE DO.”

— Marc Hanchak —



“It’s this one big playground of ideas, you know?” Hanchak attributes the open-concept layout of LINK’s space—with organic conversation and fabrication tools only steps away—as a secret ingredient in collaborative problem solving.

“We’ve got ratchets and springs and all kinds of components in there, so getting it dialed to their specifics so they could be confident in its use was critical for its success,” he says. “You have to think about how it’s actually going to be deployed in order to engineer the best solution.”

LINK emphasizes these human-centered factors by building out customer personas focusing not only on the end-user experience, but also taking into consideration each set of hands a product passes through on the supply chain across its lifespan. Hanchak shares that in order to reach truly sustainable designs, they’re required to expand the definition of “customer” to include installers, technicians, and even the individual on the factory floor.

Spanning industries also provides a source of inspiration—ideation is often born from LINK’s cross-pollination. For example, some of the design solutions for an eco-friendly line for Fort Collins-based Sprig Toys, which are made without screws, have made their way into medical devices, where components can snap instead of screw together for improved manufacturability.

“A lot of people will say, ‘Oh, that’s a medical device; we’ll just put a thousand screws in it and call it a day, who cares?’” Hanchak says. “But people do care—and it affects the bottom line.”

“Ultimately, being industry agnostic makes us better designers.”



Recycled high-density polyethylene and woodchips make for surprisingly durable playthings, as LINK’s line for Sprig Toys proved. The runaway success of the initial product launched a wholly new line, now available on Amazon.



“How does the knob feel when you turn it? How does the grain of wood feel when you run your hand along it?” Hanchak believes OneClock’s appeal is directly tied to how it looks, inviting an interaction with the consumer.



While specific tactics differ for each client, arriving at the best possible solution follows a standardized formula. Before taking on a project, LINK scopes out the product landscape, identifies risks (both current and potential), and then goes on to assess technical elements, cost considerations, engineering needs, materials, and safety concerns.

It’s a rigorous battery of inquiry, but for Hanchak—who brings over two decades of creative product design experience together with infrastructural knowledge from his automotive industry mechanical engineering background—it’s a necessary part of roadmapping success for everyone involved.

“We often ask things like: ‘Is the market ready for this? Is this the right time to launch in this specific industry?’ It’s critical to get that right, right off the bat,” he explains. “And if it doesn’t pass the litmus test, we say, ‘Thanks but no—or at least not right now.’”

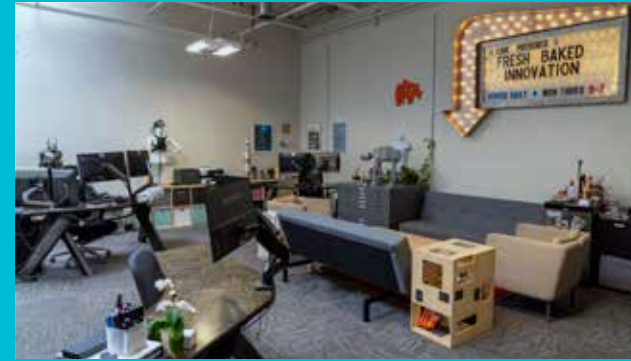
These screenings result in “a lot of free advice,” but upfront conversations are also great prototyping processes for startups, who by their nature are in the business of iterating. Similarly, incorporating how to fail fast—and creating the space to do that—is another critical part of LINK’s modus operandi, reflected in their open-office layout and the adjacent fabrication space that sits within arm’s length.

The importance of their studio setup can’t be understated. As soon as an idea moves out of the brainstorming phase, it’s prototyped. The prototype provides tangible insights into scale, weight, size, and function.

MAKING IT REAL



Function and form: Denver-based Vivoblu approached LINK with a need to create a filtration system specifically engineered for use in environments lacking access to safe, clean water. The solution was a cleanable, damage-resistant filter that protected the unit's membrane, housed within a durable, user-friendly interface that snaps together.



"WE OFTEN ASK THINGS LIKE: 'IS THE MARKET READY FOR THIS? IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME TO LAUNCH IN THIS SPECIFIC INDUSTRY?' IT'S CRITICAL TO GET THAT RIGHT, RIGHT OFF THE BAT, AND IF IT DOESN'T PASS THE LITMUS TEST, WE SAY, 'THANKS BUT NO—OR AT LEAST NOT RIGHT NOW.'"

- Marc Hanchak -

"Until you create something and have somebody physically put their hands on the product to experience the design, it isn't worth anything," Hanchak says. "It's all about finding the balance of practicality with a beautiful aesthetic. And instead of doing it overseas, we're able to do it all here in Colorado. It's ultimately less expensive due to logistics and efficiency."

All of these ingredients came together to engineer a successful solution for OneClock. Hanchak notes that one of the key differentiators between OneClock and other timepieces on the market is its visceral attention to detail—something they were only able to attain through prototyping and holding the object in their hands.

"It's the little things that matter," Hanchak says. "How does this tiny knob feel? What does the click it makes sound like? What does it feel like to run your fingers across the surface? How do those things affect your interaction with this device?"

Kripke directly attributes the product's success to its design that invites consumers to pick it up and touch it. "It's a beautiful, seamless form that looks different, and to make something simple like that is really hard," Kripke says. "The design is the message—and that's where LINK really knocked it out of the park."

That seamlessness is by design. "Design is emotional, and it's hard to infer that emotional transfer from the designer to user," says Hanchak. "That's why making it is so important: A picture is worth a thousand words, and a physical model is worth a thousand pictures." ■



The power of the prototype can't be understated. LINK's design approach is purposeful, with industrial designers speaking fluent engineer (and vice versa), but the true test of an idea's mettle is bringing it from concept to fingertips immediately in their well-stocked workspace.



LINK's work with Denver's Guerilla Gravity was an exercise in innovation meeting tradition. The switch from aluminum to carbon-fiber frames opened up new possibilities in manufacturing and geometry, retaining the company's signature aesthetic while optimizing factors such as standover height and shock clearance. The cutting-edge manufacturing process was done locally—and at about 30% of the comparable overseas cost.



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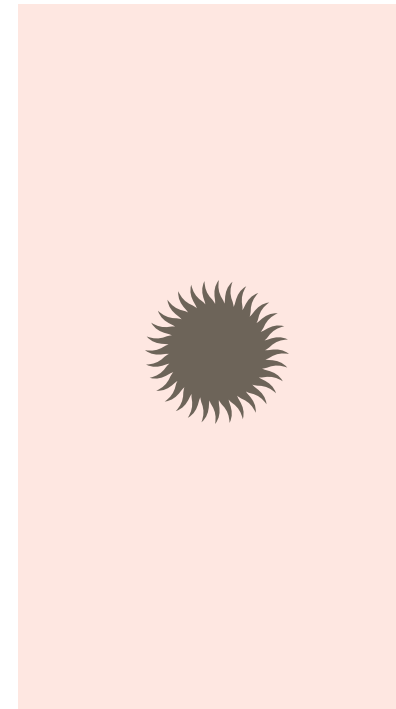
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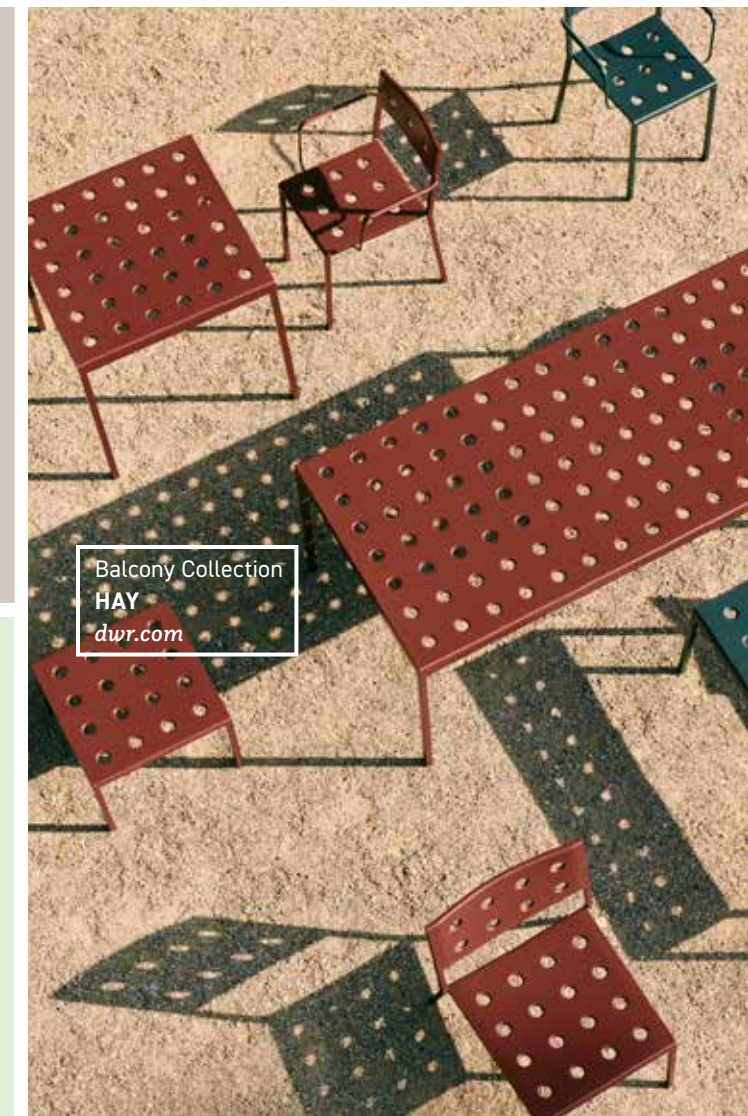
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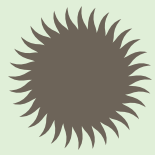


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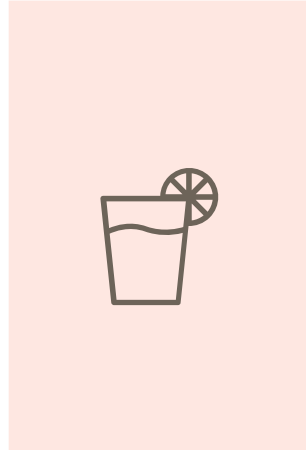
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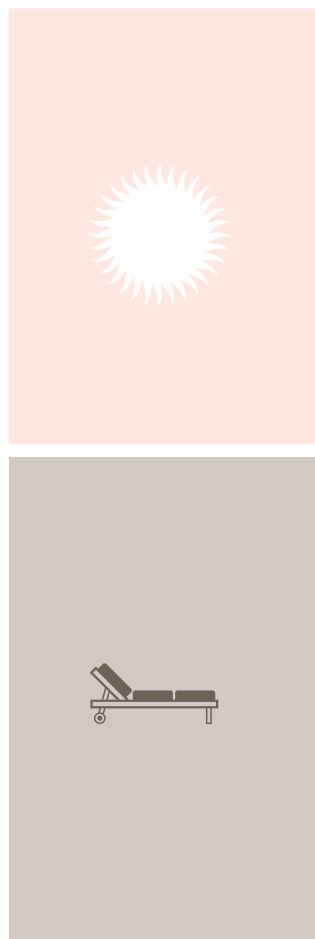
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ONE LAST THING
Person, place, or thing we LOVE

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly



KEEPING THE BEAT

The Technics SL-1200 direct drive turntable—a technology that defined entire musical genres—celebrates its 50th year with the release of a limited-edition anniversary model.

Turntablism, or the art of mixing and manipulating various beats and sounds—commonly known today as DJ-ing—has its roots in the invention of a piece of technology: the Technics SL-1200 direct drive turntable.

Designed in 1972 by a team of Japanese engineers led by Shuichi Obata for Matsushita Electric, the Technics 1200 series has become a living piece of hi-fi history in the last half-century, impacting the trajectory of entire music scenes from rap and hip hop to techno, house, and electronic music.

Initially marketed for the home, the streamlined design and technological capacity of the

SL-1200 quickly seduced music industry professionals, like influential 1970s hip hop DJs Grand Wizard Theodore and Afrika Bambaataa, who took it to the streets of New York and Los Angeles. The turntable had several components—high torque, a direct drive motor, and easily adjusted playback settings—that made it a must-have technology for recording studios, radio stations, and club DJs.

The manufacturers leaned into this new spin. “Radio stations use it. Discos abuse it.” and “We have the drive if you have the ambition!” are two proud proclamations from Technics’ vintage ad campaigns specifically marketed to the music scene.

Now celebrating its 50th year, Technics has announced the release of a limited-edition anniversary model, a remixed version of the original offered in seven street-culture-inspired colors. Increasing usability and sound, the SL-1200M7L features a new coreless motor, reverse play function, and a gold tonearm offering heightened precision. And if you know next to nothing about the intricacies of turntablism, don’t worry—there’s little more to do than press a button and lower the needle on your favorite vinyl to fill your airwaves with excellence. ■

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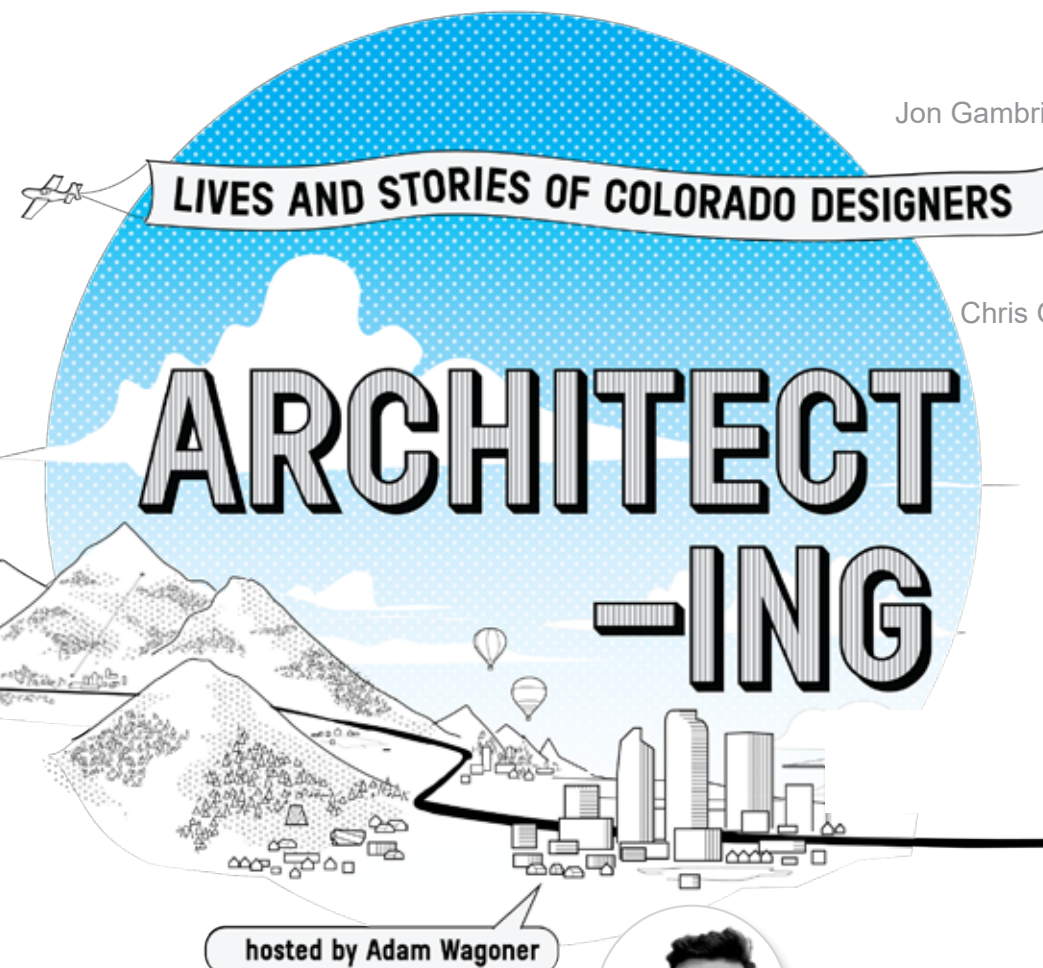
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