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WINTER · TWENTY22

ALPINE DESIGN

BOSS.architecture principal Kevin Stephenson looks to the trees to design an unconventional mountain retreat full of stories for his family. P. 88

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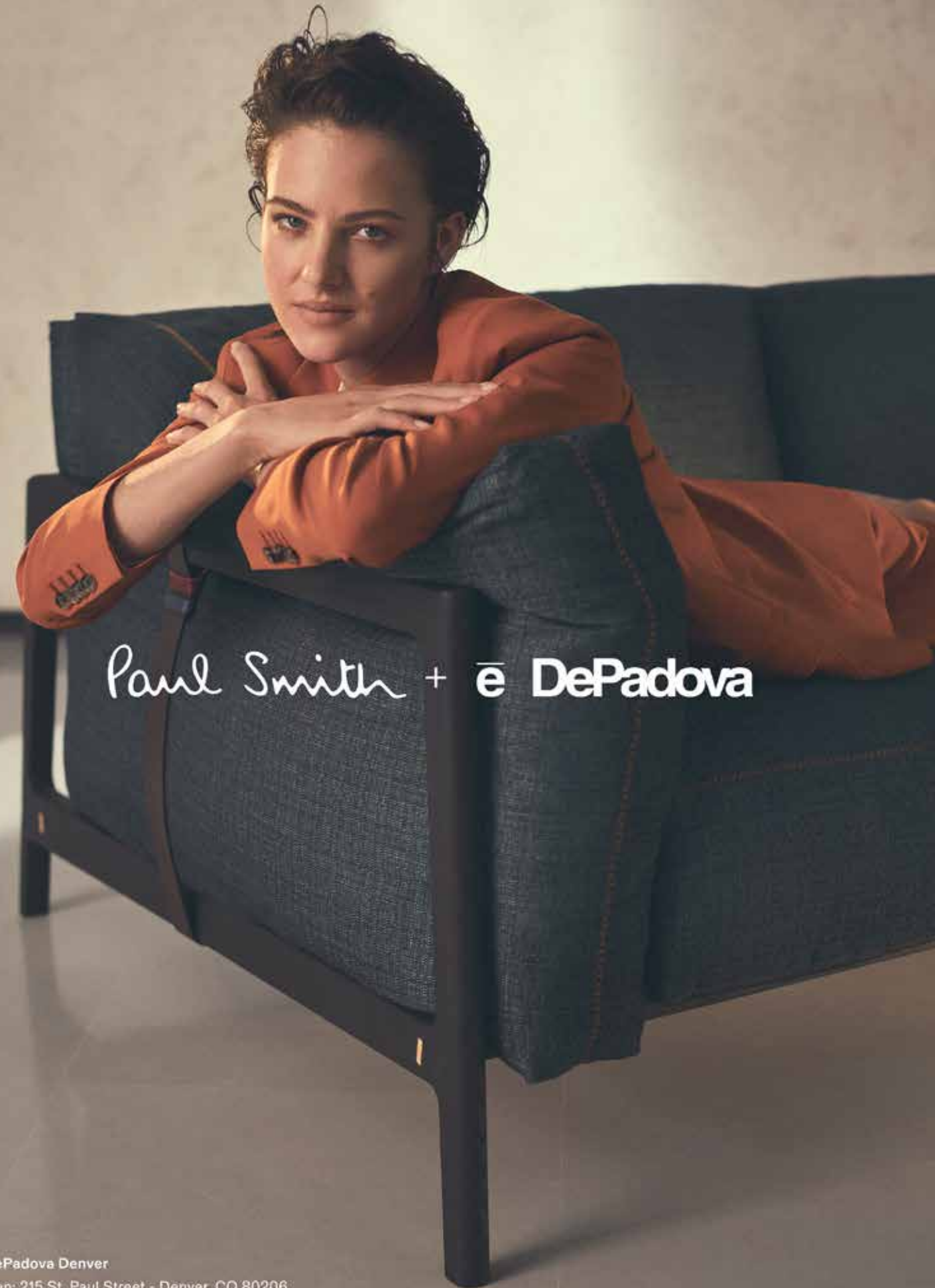
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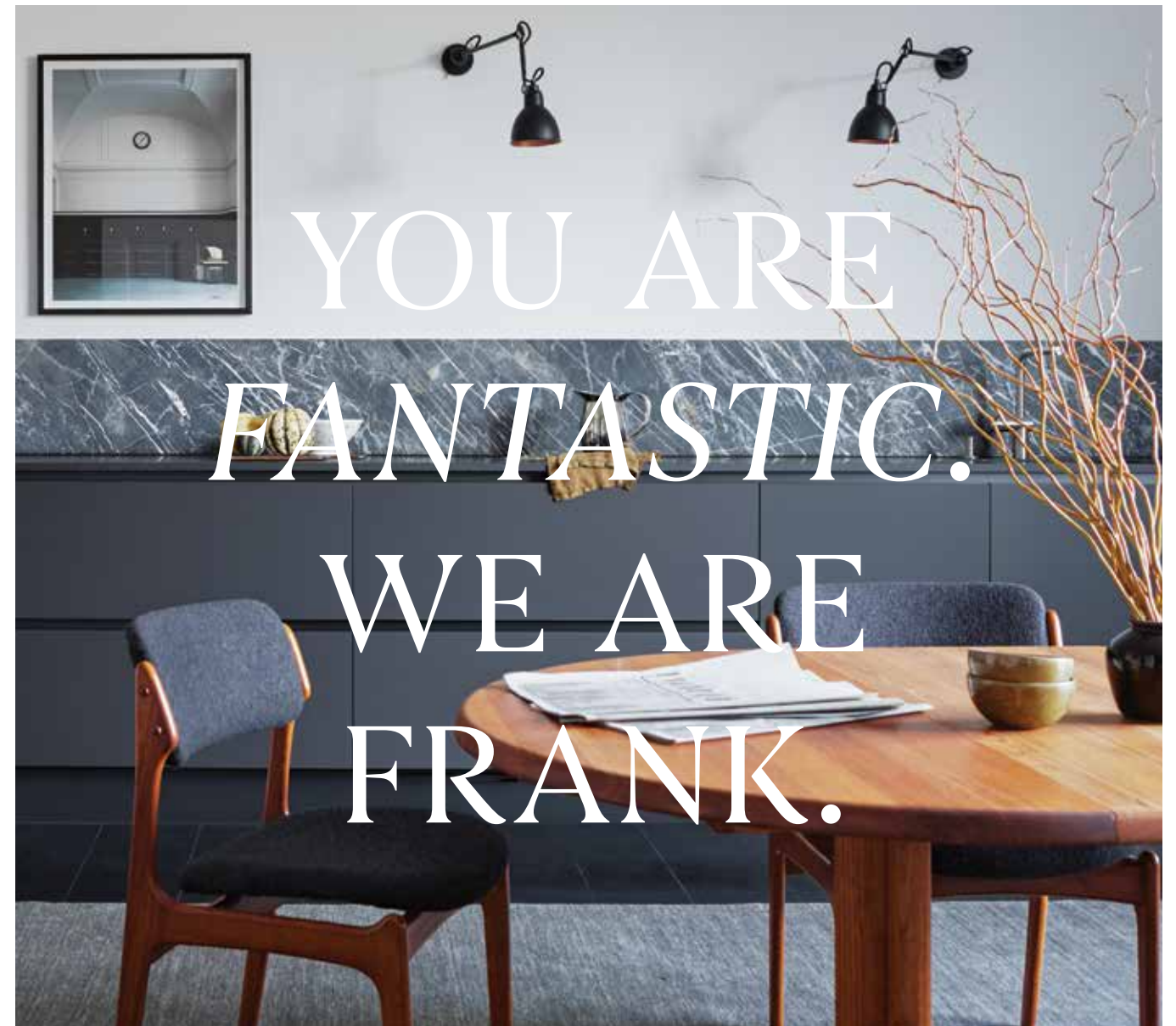
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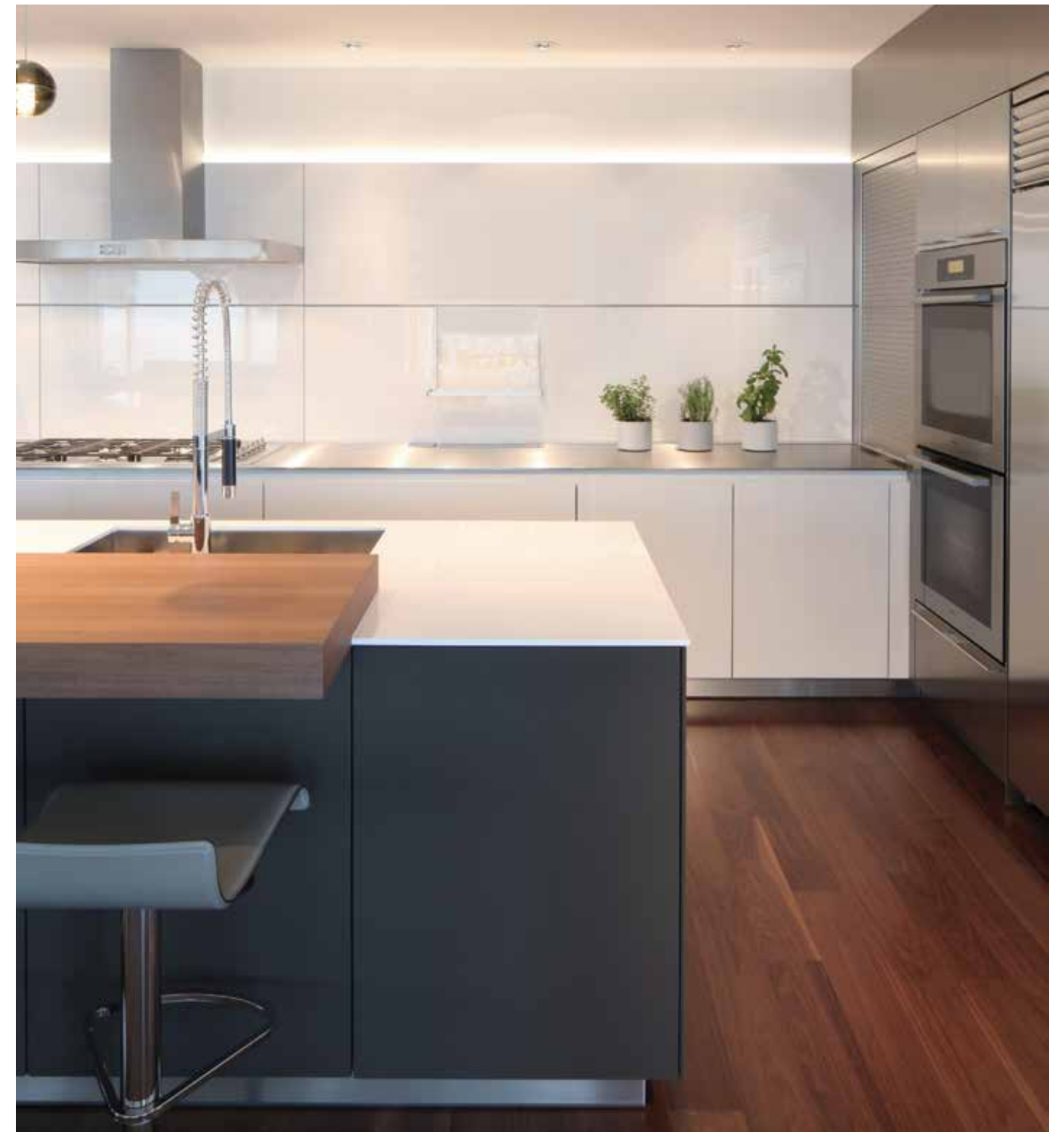
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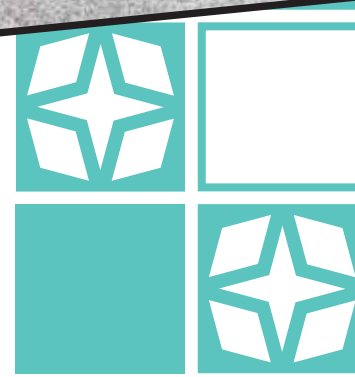


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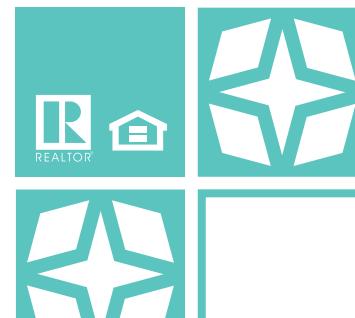


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- George Bernard Shaw

The tree. The amazing tree. Essential to all living things, trees clean the air and produce oxygen for us. They help cool the planet, provide habitats for animals, and are a source of medicine. They offer shade, fruit, and the raw materials for paper and construction products. Frank Lloyd Wright once said, "The best friend on earth of man is the tree. When we use the tree respectfully and economically, we have one of the greatest resources on earth."

The utility of trees is indispensable, but our relationship with them goes much deeper. For many, trees possess transcendental qualities that give meaning and direction. The "Tree of Life" is a common motif in many cultures that represents the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. We plant trees to commemorate the birth of a new child, or to honor the memory of a lost loved one. In mythology, trees illustrate an interconnectedness between earth and the heavens, with their roots growing down with grounding energy and their branches reaching ever upward toward the sky. Some say humans' deep relationship with trees can be attributed to our physical similarities. We both stand upright, have a crown, and limbs that extend off of a central core.

Two stories in our winter issue explore the essential and intimate connection we have with trees. In our cover story, we visit the mountain home Kevin Stephenson, principal of BOSS.architecture, designed as a peaceful getaway for his family. Just outside the small, forested town of Alma, Colorado, Stephenson designed a piece of architecture in response to the land's several hundred trees. Like his arboreal inspiration, Stephenson's design went vertical. Each of the home's four floors corresponds to its adjacent forest level, offering site-specific glimpses of the surrounding area's diverse flora and active fauna, and, on the top floor, expansive views of the sky. A commissioned mural by artists Jaime Molina and Pedro Barrios carries the concept throughout the interior. This story is on page 88.

THE COVER



Parrish Ruiz de Velasco photographed the mountain home Kevin Stephenson, principal at BOSS.architecture, designed for his family in Park County, Colorado. De Velasco says: "Capturing weather at the exact right moment isn't new to me. It's about being in the right place at the right time. For this shot, I wanted something very specific. We all know that feeling when you wake up to a thick blanket of

fresh snow and the sun is just starting to come out. I drove to Alma to meet Kevin the night before the big shoot, just as it was beginning to snow. We had a drink before bed and set our alarms for 5 a.m. sunrise shots—our one chance to get it right. Luckily, I woke up on time, got some coffee, and captured one of my favorite projects and images of my career." This story is on page 88.

The mass timber building method has been used in Europe and Canada for nearly thirty years, but has only recently been adopted for use in buildings across the United States. Utilizing cross-laminated timber technology that creates timber pieces strong enough to safely construct multistory buildings out of wood, mass timber is a game changer for construction, providing numerous improvements over traditional methods. Mass timber members are easy and fast to fabricate (reducing construction waste) and generate demonstrably less CO2 emissions than the concrete and steel used in most buildings today. While these benefits are undeniable and measurable when it comes to environmental sustainability, making buildings out of wood benefits us in another, intangible way: it restores our emotional connection with the natural environment. For our story on page 100, writer and editor Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly talks with several local experts who are helping mass timber gain momentum here in Colorado.

As publishers, we are particularly grateful to trees, as they allow us to share stories using a renewable resource. PrintReleaf, a Colorado-based company, tracks paper use from mill order through to print production, giving users an accurate count of the paper used for each print project. PrintReLeaf then provides their network of global forestry partners the funds needed to plant trees across the world, offsetting the industry's paper consumption. Modern In Denver has been part of the PrintReleaf program for over six years, and in that time, our paper use has planted over 3,860 trees.

Understanding, respecting, and connecting with trees is important for the health of our planet and it can nurture our souls. One of my favorite writers, Herman Hesse said it best: "Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth."

Enjoy this issue with its many facets, tree-lined and otherwise, and have a wonderful winter.

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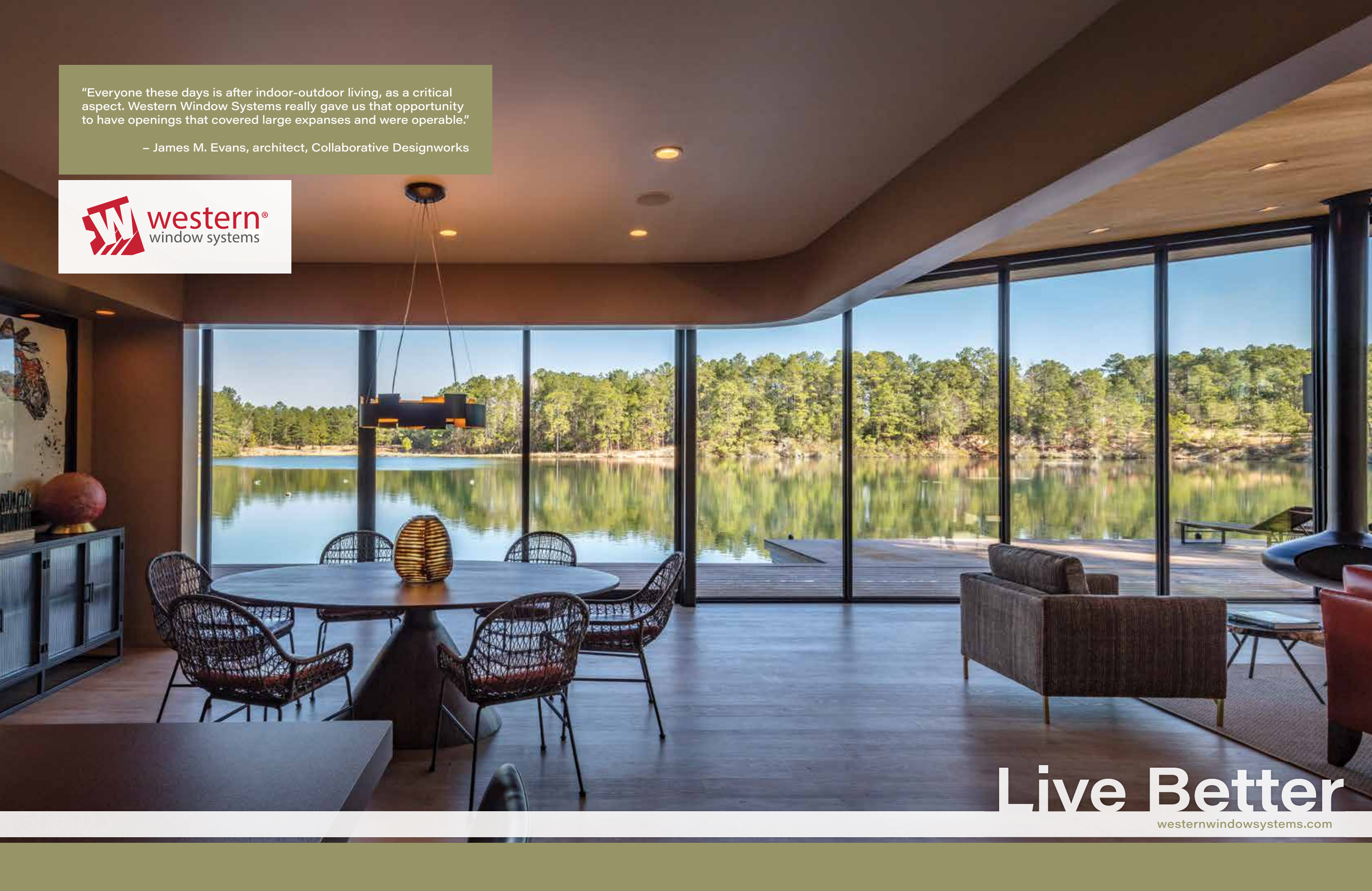
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— Martin Luther



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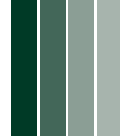
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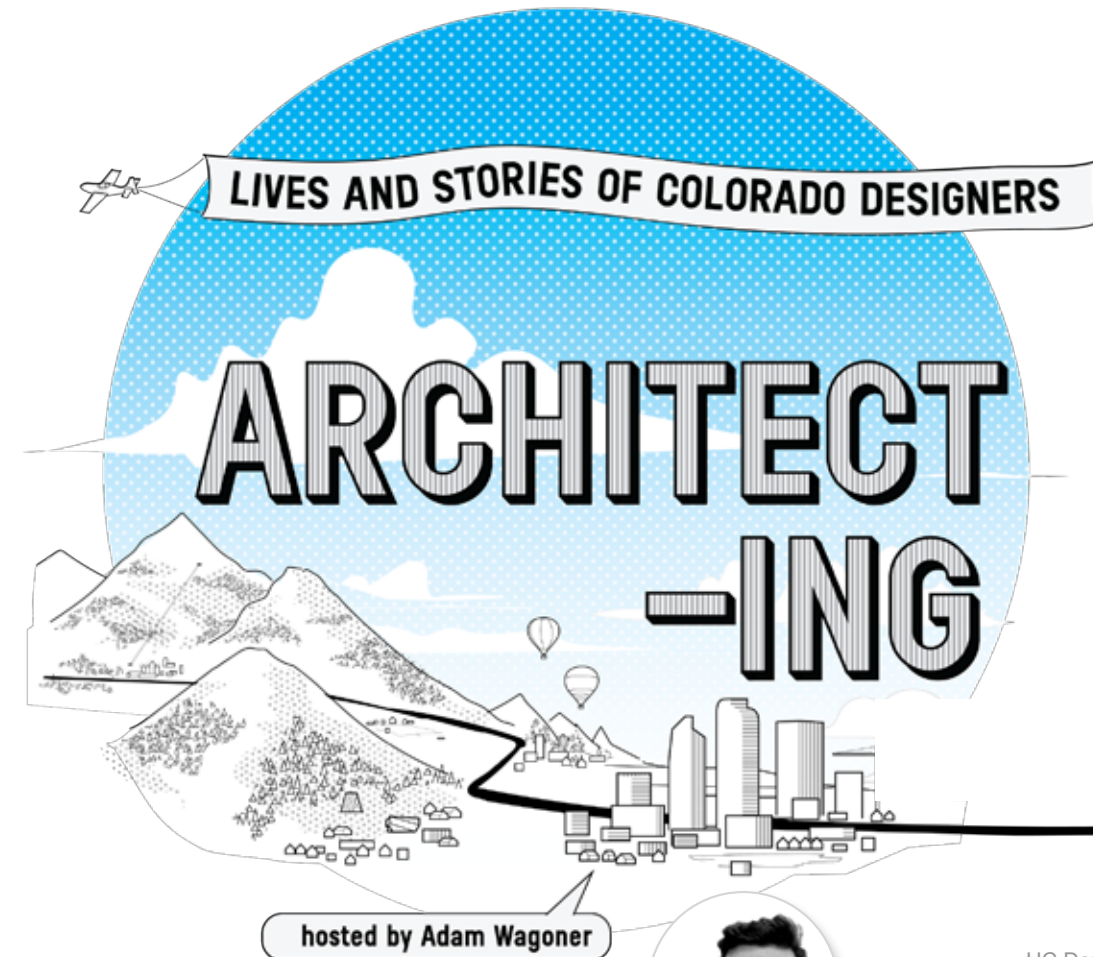
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INSTANT POP

The latest product from Polaroid has nothing to do with the brand's history in the instant camera business, but its P4 Music Player does give a nod to another retro product: the boombox. Once synced to your phone, the music is controlled right on the P4 so you can grab the handle and hit the road. P4 has a few other tricks, too, including syncing to another P4 speaker for stereo sound or providing standup tunes when attached to a speaker stand.

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



TABLE SETTING

Fernweh Woodworking reimagines the coffee table, or at least the four legs on which one typically stands. In this design, only two legs are fixed, with the third and fourth legs acting like kickstands. It's the strong joinery that keeps the table balanced, says Justin Nelson, standing on the table to prove his point. Unique yet minimal, Nelson calls the piece simply The Coffee Table.

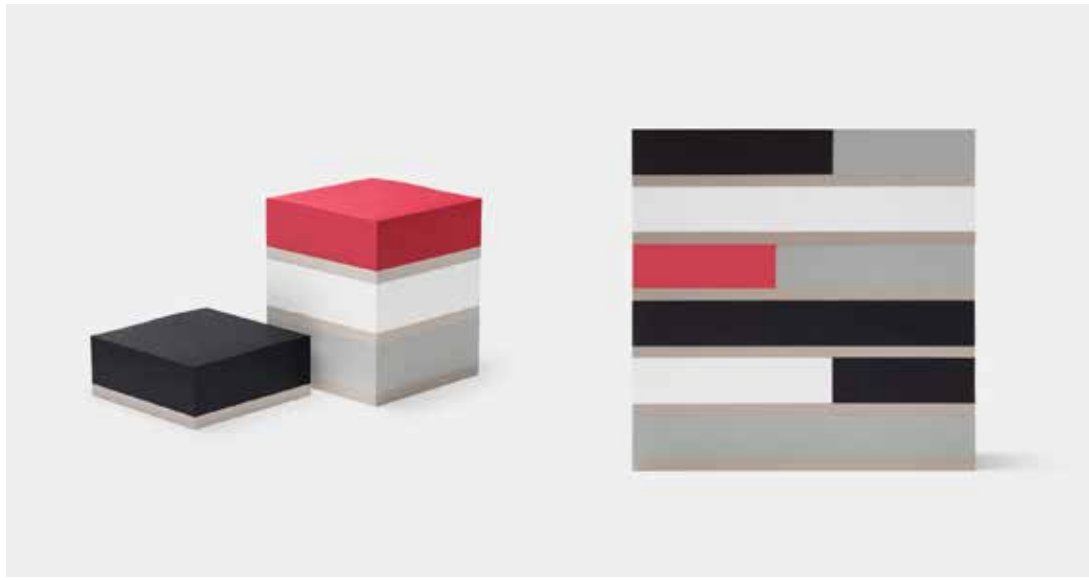
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ROCK BOTTOM

Designer Kelly Wearstler strips down seating to a bare minimum with Butt Stool, a chair that is sure to amuse all to no end. Known for furnishing luxury hotels and working with private clients, Wearstler and her eponymous studio mix the classiness of hand-carved natural stone into a sophisticated sculpture that is, excuse another pun, so cheeky.

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TAKE NOTE

Class up sticky notes with Memo Blocks, the stylish notepads with “precision cut edges” that can be arranged as simply or cleverly as inspiration strikes. And when it does, jot your ideas down on one of the 350 tear-off paper sheets. Made with recycled cardboard and bound with glue, these pads come in three sizes and are truly unique—they’re made one at a time by craftspeople at the Ito Bindery in Japan.

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TWIST & CUT

A request from a knife manufacturer for a rotating blade was turned into something much handier: the Rotating Nail Clipper. Yoshita Handi-Design Studio reimagined knives and nail clippers in a way that is about more than just aesthetics. The handle swivels around to make it easier on the wrist to get that perfect clip.

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FIELD STUDY

WE DESIGN EXPERIENCES



photography: parrish ruiz de velasco



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GLOW STICK

You may not even notice the Onu Pendant unless it's completely dark. Starting from a timber that is 36 millimeters thick, Onu splits into two directions using a bent lamination technique. Both legs are accompanied by light that beams down for just enough evening glow to keep the conversation going. Designed by Sabu Studio in Melbourne, the handmade Onu is available in five types of wood, including Tasmanian Blackwood and Black American Oak.



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VINTAGE STREAMS

Vinyl records are in the middle of a resurgence. So, too, are the devices to play them on. The latest from the iconic brand Victrola is the Stream Carbon, a wireless turntable with a carbon fiber arm. It's also built to work with Sonos, the iconic modern-day system that set the design standard for streamable speakers. If Sonos isn't your style, the two-speed record player includes RCA output for compatible systems.

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FIELD STUDY



POP ART ON WHEELS – BMW 8 SERIES GRAN COUPÉ GETS A JEFF KOONS MAKEOVER

What happens when a legendary artist designs an iconic automobile? You can see for yourself at Schomp BMW of Highlands Ranch.

World-renowned pop artist Jeff Koons turned his talent to work on a BMW 8 Series Gran Coupé, enveloping it in color, inside and out. And, in contrast to other BMW Art Cars – including a 2010 BMW M3 that Koons designed – this time, 99 of them have been produced. And Schomp BMW has one that you can see. As BMW CEO Oliver Zipse said, this BMW 8 X Jeff Koons edition will be “displayed as a coveted collector’s item in museums but will also be allowed to flourish on the road as a genuine BMW.” Previous BMW Art Cars by such art-world icons as Warhol, Calder, Lichtenstein, and Hockney, have been one-offs designed for display, not driving.

You won't want to miss seeing this rolling pop sculpture created especially for BMW by Jeff Koons. It will be on display in the Schomp BMW showroom starting in October.

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LOUNGE LIFE

The curved armchair from design firm Prostoria makes a loungy statement all on its own. But lift the arched back and flip it forward and its two parts ingeniously turn into a single bed. Called the Up-lift armchair for the way it converts from one form to another, the dual-purpose piece is a Prostoria signature also seen in designs for loveseats-turned-sofa beds.

+prostoria.eu



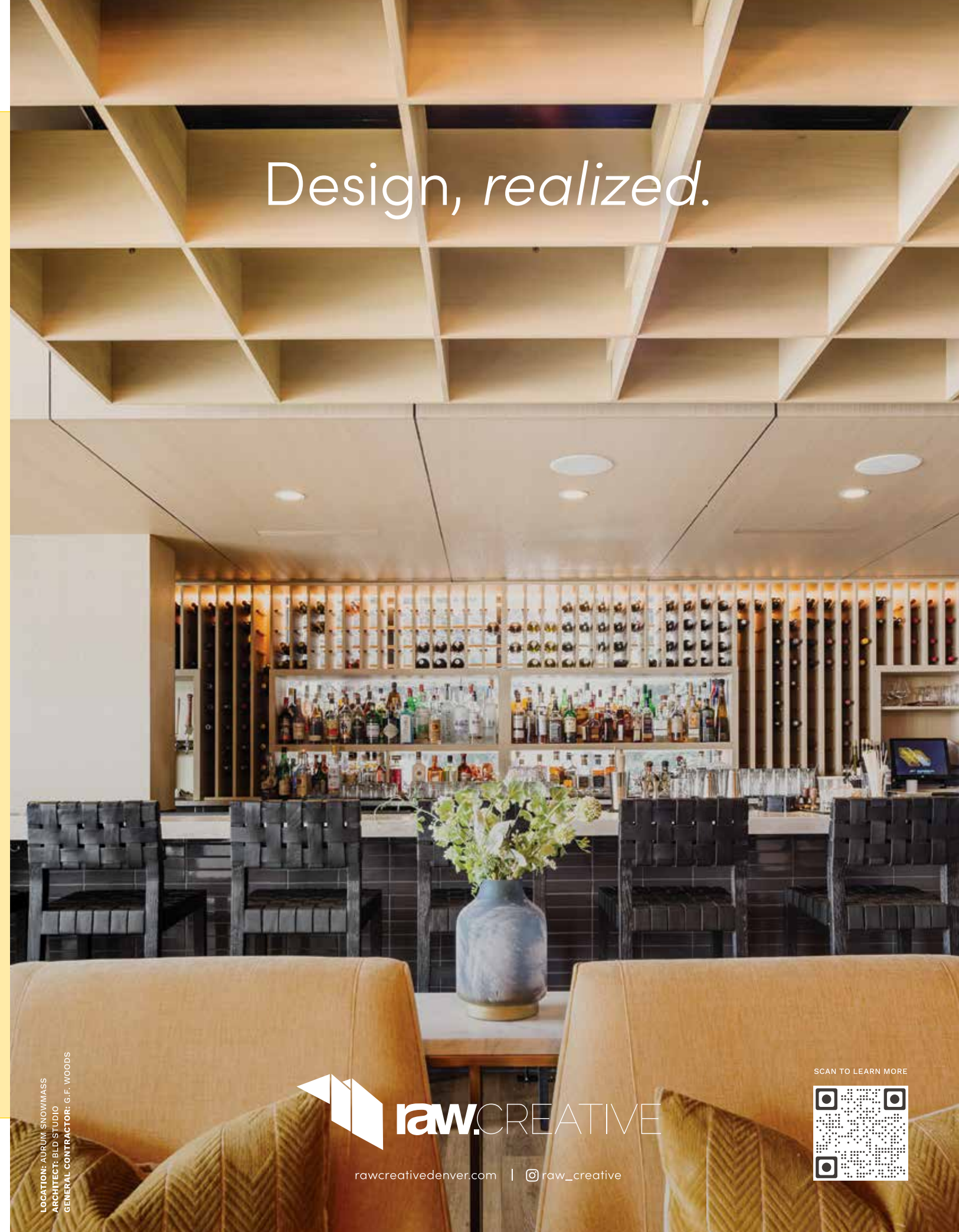
BOTTLED UP

Stanley Black & Decker has long supported the DIY community with its affordable power tools equipping small creators who want to build something out of nothing—or at least build something better out of something old, used, and unwanted. Now the company has taken sustainability up a notch by manufacturing its products from recycled materials. The new Reviva line includes a drill made from eight single-use plastic bottles, a sander made from 11, and a jigsaw from the equivalent of 18 bottles. Old plastic bottles and recycled materials make up 50% of Tritan Renew, the plastic used in the Reviva line. And when consumers are done with Reviva, Black & Decker will take the old tools back through its partnership with TerraCycle.

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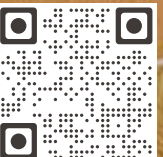


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The life and mind of architectural polymath Michael Sorkin lives on in the posthumous publication of *250 Things an Architect Should Know*—a practical and poetic guide for living and working in the built environment.

THE BIG ASSIGNMENT

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly



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.

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've worked through a handful of Sorkin's *250 Things* in each issue this year; this is our final installment. Thanks for following along as we've identified what we know, learned about what we don't, and pondered the unknowable.



118. THE CAPACITY OF WHITE PINE TREES TO SEQUESTER CARBON

Forests are some of the largest carbon dioxide sinks on the planet. Trees absorb CO₂ through photosynthesis, with variously aged and sized species playing a part in sequestering the pervasive emission responsible for driving the climate crisis. Western white pines, which are extremely long-lived, have huge capacities for carbon sequestration. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, a pine will absorb more than 50 pounds of carbon a year—or about 10,000 pounds by the time they reach their average age of 200 years. Read about how this potential for carbon capture is affecting how we think about building materials in our story on mass timber on page 100.

LIVING THE QUESTIONS

Sorkin knew that architects must contend with complex inquiries, the answers to which may only crystalize after a lifetime of attention and practice—if ever. Here are a few of our faves for you to ponder.

78. The quality of light passing through ice

99. Creation is a patient search

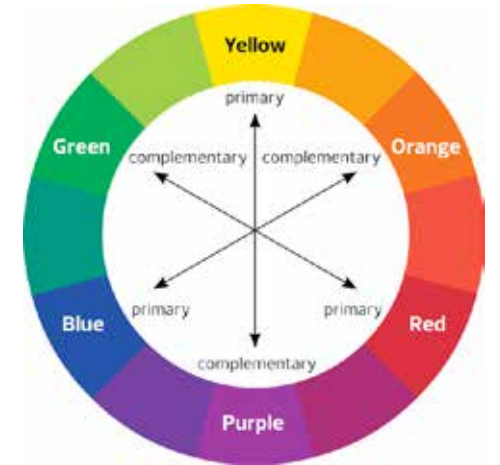
124. How to listen closely

198. Why you think architecture does any good

38.

THE COLOR WHEEL

Complementary, tertiary, analogous; some people have a knack for bringing our rods and cones together in a way that makes colors especially expressive. On page 128, interior designer Abigail Plonkey spins the wheel to create a colorful, fun, and functional headquarters for the irreverent and successful fashion brand Shinesty.



137. HOW TO CALCULATE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINTS

The Global Footprint Network (footprintnetwork.org) provides a user-friendly quiz that estimates an individual Earth Overshoot Day based on your eating, driving, and flying habits and your home's size and energy efficiency. An Earth Overshoot Day is a date on the calendar by which point you will have used as much energy as Earth can naturally renew in one year. The closer your date is to January 1, the larger your ecological footprint. The platform offers habit-shifting solutions to help push your date, like being a smarter grocery shopper and hopping on your bike more. BOSS.architecture principal Kevin Stephenson designed and fabricated massive screens for passive heating and cooling at his mountain home—read the story on page 88.



34. JANE JACOBS IN AND OUT

Jane Jacobs was a visionary New York City activist and writer who organized to represent the will of the people in the face of Robert Moses's redevelopment plan to raze Lower Manhattan in the 1960s. Jacobs wrote the foundational urban planning book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which argues for the value of old mixed-use neighborhoods, like her own Greenwich Village. Her theories on community-driven urban planning continue to be relevant as cities look to accommodate for high-density development. Apple TV is now streaming "Citizen Jane: Battle for the City" by director Matt Tyrnauer.



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BRIDGING A CITY

The Park Union Bridge in Colorado Springs does more than connect the United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum with America the Beautiful Park.

WORDS: Kristin Kirsch Feldkamp • IMAGES: Parrish Ruiz de Velasco



AT DAWN, EMPTY AND CLOAKED IN A DUSTING OF SNOW, THE PARK UNION BRIDGE IN COLORADO SPRINGS FLOATS ABOVE A WORKING RAILYARD BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC MUSEUM (USOPM) AND AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL PARK.

The 550-ton, 250-foot-long steel pedestrian bridge is formed by two interlocking loops inspired by the gravity-defying motion of athletes. “The bridge is an exercise in fitness—both in terms of material and geometry,” says lead designer Benjamin Gilmartin of Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R). “The hybrid steel structure system functions as an arch and a truss, elegantly preserving views from downtown to the majestic mountain ranges of Pikes Peak.” An oculus on either side of the bridge gives pedestrians and cyclists views of the city and mountains on clear days.

Made of painted structural steel, metal panels, and cable mesh, the Park Union Bridge was designed by New York-based DS+R, the same firm and even the same team that designed the USOPM, and the architect of record for both is Anderson Mason Dale Architects of Denver. The bridge, which in 2021 received an AIA Design Award of Excellence, was designed to complement the museum, a striking spiraling structure that rises off its base. → 58

“THE BRIDGE IS AN EXERCISE IN FITNESS—BOTH IN TERMS OF MATERIAL AND GEOMETRY. THE HYBRID STEEL STRUCTURE SYSTEM FUNCTIONS AS AN ARCH AND A TRUSS, ELEGANTLY PRESERVING VIEWS FROM DOWNTOWN TO THE MAJESTIC MOUNTAIN RANGES OF PIKES PEAK.” —Benjamin Gilmartin (DS+R)

DIMENSIONS

Length: 250 feet
Height: 25 feet above ground level
Height from deck to top of arch: 17 feet
Width: 16–23 feet
Weight: 550 tons
Sections: 6
Cost: \$26 million

MATERIALS

Shell: Painted structural steel
Liner: Painted metal panels
Deck: Concrete, stainless steel cable mesh
comfort rail with integrated lighting
Elevator: Glass



With the bridge, pedestrians and cyclists gain access to the museum and park, but also to downtown Colorado Springs. It's part of a long-term plan to reconnect, rejuvenate, and reinvest in the city's southwestern corner. America the Beautiful Park is a redevelopment of an industrial area, and beyond the park are pedestrian bicycle trails that now have a link to downtown. According to coloradosprings.gov, the 20-million-dollar bridge is one of two public infrastructure projects key to the redevelopment.

Installation of the bridge was intricate. Fabricated in Houston, the bridge was transported to Colorado Springs in pieces,

assembled on site, then, in October of 2020, hoisted into place during an eight-hour window while train traffic was paused. The superstructure was driven into place using self-propelled modular transporters. The installation was an awe-inspiring event that—like Olympic athletes—drew spectators.

Having captured popular imagination, the bridge not only connects the unconnected, but it is also a physical manifestation of what is humanly possible. Yes, it is a tactile, functional object, but it is more: a metaphor for intangibles such as achievement and possibility. And on a snowy day, captured in images as it is here, the bridge is utterly captivating. ■

Completed in 2020, the USOPM is a 60,000-square-foot building that houses 20,000 square feet of galleries and event space, a state-of-the-art theater, and cafe. The spiraling form allows guests to traverse the galleries in one continuous path. According to architects DS+R, "this main organization structure enables the museum to rank amongst the most accessible museums in the world, ensuring visitors with and without disabilities can smoothly share the same common experience."

PROJECT TEAM

DESIGN ARCHITECTS:

Diller Scofidio + Renfro

ARCHITECT OF RECORD:

Anderson Mason Dale Architects

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:

ARUP

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

(BRIDGE ABUTMENTS):

KL&A

RAILROAD CONSULTANTS:

Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, FUHueng

STEEL FABRICATOR:

King Fabrication

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:

Kiewit Corporation

LIGHTING:

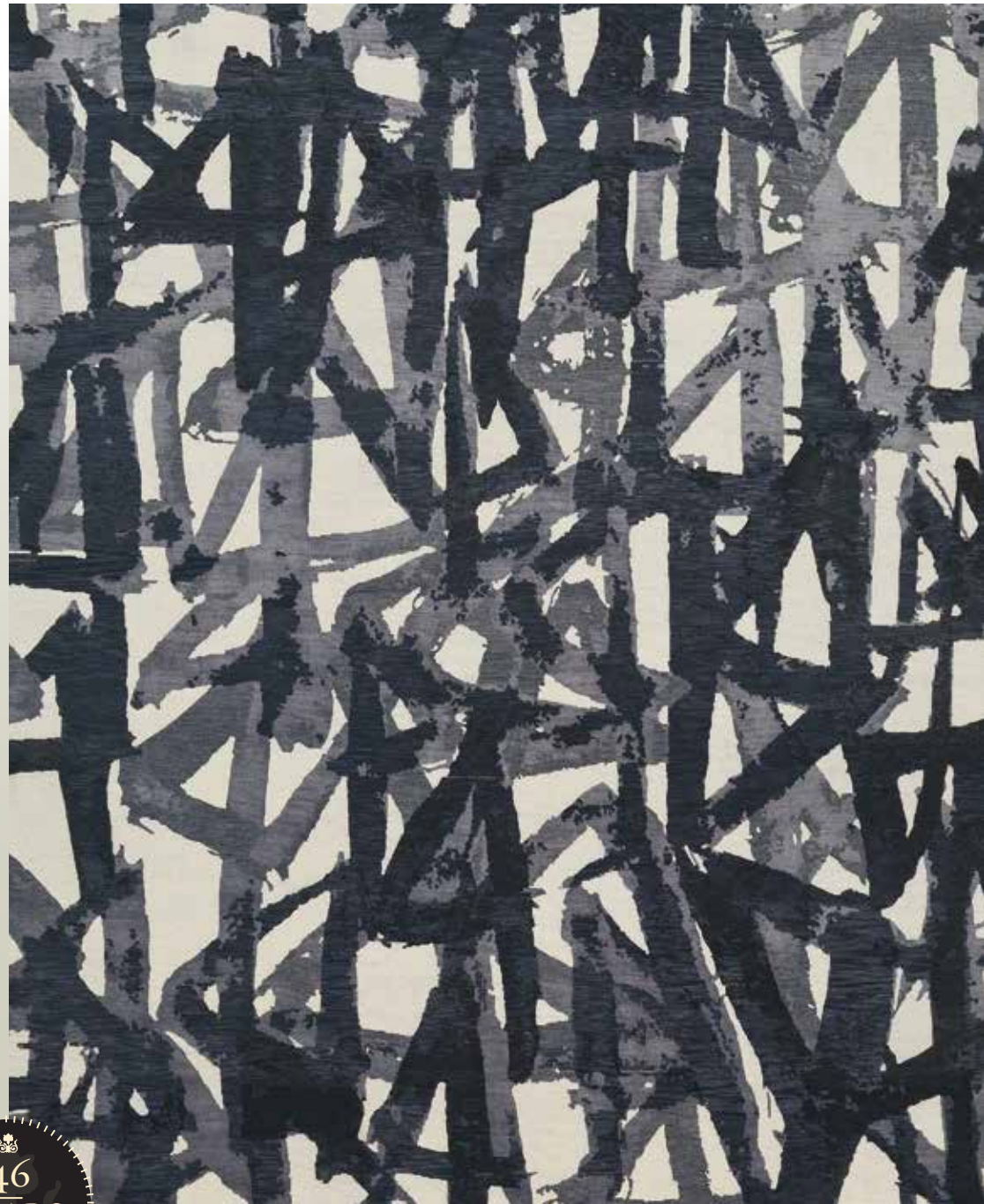
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spark and fire

In *When Eero Met His Match*, architectural writer and publicist Eva Hagberg sets the record straight on Aline B. Louchheim’s monumental effect on Eero Saarinen’s career—and writes herself in.

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly

a good love story is hard to turn away from, and writer Eva Hagberg analyzes one of the most compelling in American architecture in her new book, *When Eero Met His Match*. Extramarital romance? Yes. Twitterpating written correspondence? That too. The inspiring symbiosis of a famous architect and an esteemed critic? Definitely. This book encapsulates all the energy from when Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen first met *New York Times* associate art critic Aline Bernstein Louchheim in 1953 to when they married in 1954 and immediately after became professional partners. She as the Head of Information Services, a position and department

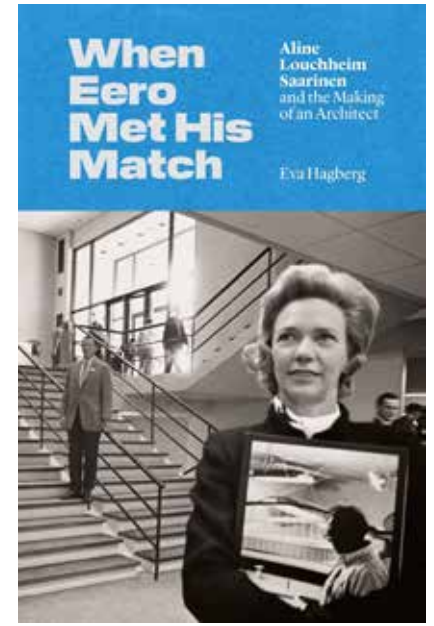
she created herself, at his eponymous firm. A match is both a natural complement and a fire-starting utensil, and *When Eero Met His Match* explains how Louchheim was both for Saarinen. As his devoted intellectual counterpart, not only was she his dream romantic partner (in an earlier letter to his psychologist, Saarinen describes his ideal wife as someone who would allow him to be an architect first as well as be an ardent fan of his work), she was also the person that sparked his career, lighting the fire by bringing narrative insight and strategic rigor to his work’s public perception. Hagberg notes

that in the 16 years prior to their meeting, Saarinen had 32 press hits, compared to 157 in the 11 years following.

At the time the two met in 1953, with Louchheim on assignment from the *Times* to write his profile, Saarinen’s architectural concern was still nascent. Up until his father Eliel’s death in 1950, Saarinen worked under him at Saarinen, Swanson and Associates. It was here he began his famous designs for the Gateway Arch in St. Louis and the GM Technical Center in Warren, Michigan. The firm’s transition after his father’s death is what drew the *Times*’ attention, sending Louchheim to visit the new Eero Saarinen and Associates in suburban Detroit for reporting. “Louchheim took this story as an opportunity to give narrative definition to Saarinen’s work,” writes Hagberg. “It was an act of creative naming, one that came to influence how his work was seen.” It also landed her a life partner.

In *When Eero Met His Match*, much of the couple’s early-days’ story is told straight from Louchheim’s own hands; dozens of photographic reproductions of her nearly daily letters to Saarinen (who was married to Lilian Swann at the time their romance began) accompany Hagberg’s analysis. But a good deal of the book’s thrust comes from Hagberg herself, who writes that it was Louchheim “using words to produce entire worlds that had such a profound influence on Eero’s career, and eventually mine.”

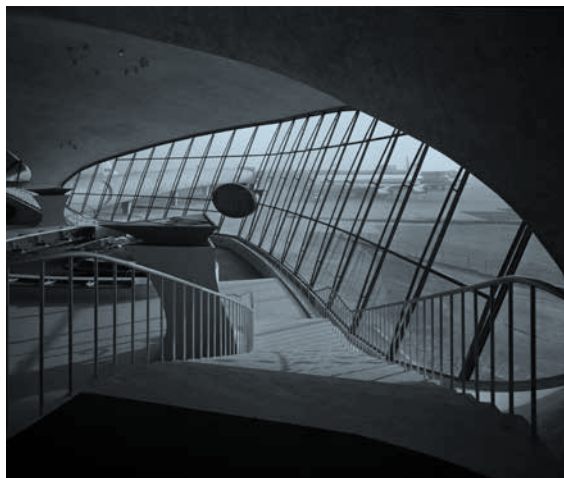
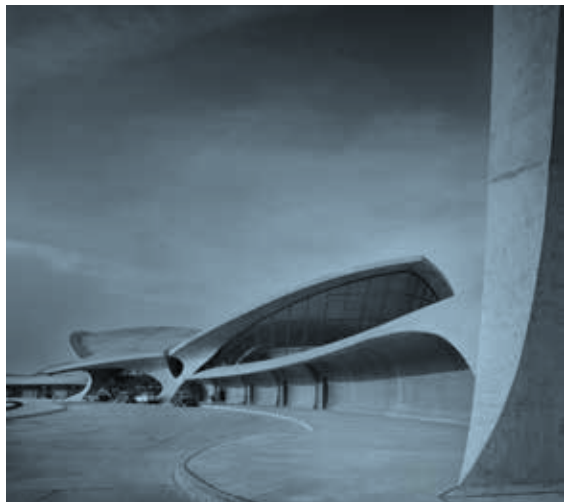
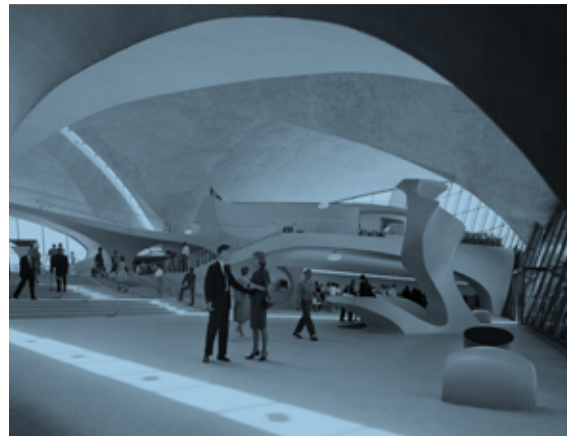
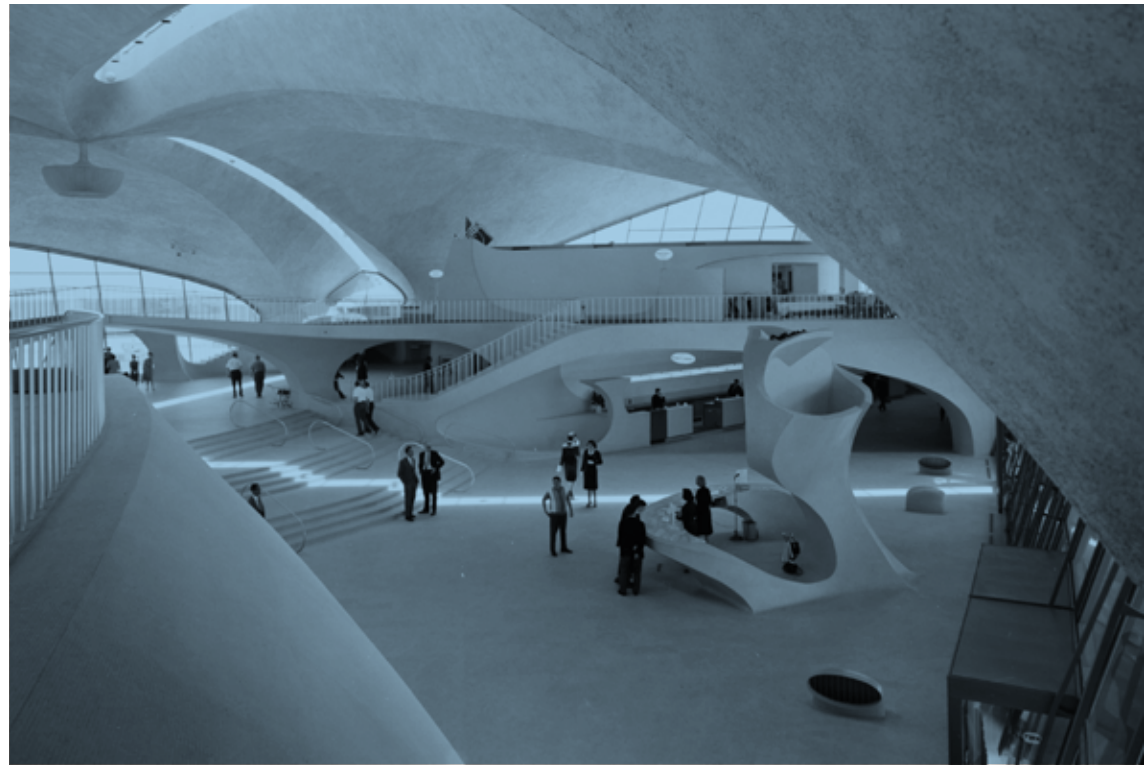
Like Louchheim became for Saarinen, Hagberg is a critic and an architectural publicist, and her voice is just as much a protagonist in the book as theirs. First-person accounts of her current-day work



Art critic Aline B. Louchheim [OPPOSITE and ABOVE, shown on the cover of Eva Hagberg’s new book] met architect Eero Saarinen in 1953 on assignment with *The New York Times*. Very quickly the two became simultaneously romantically and professionally involved, with Louchheim serving as publicist for Saarinen’s firm until long after his death in 1961.



All photos this page and opposite: Eero and Aline Saarinen Papers, 1906-1977, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Completed in 1961, the parabolic TWA Flight Center at JFK International Airport is one of Eero Saarinen's most important contributions to American architecture, but it was Louchheim's description of the structure as a bird in flight that sparked intrigue for the press and public.



© Wayne Andrews/Esto; © Ezra Stoller/Esto



© Wayne Andrews/Esto

Saarinen's design of the MIT chapel, a cylindrical form that sits alongside his Kresge Auditorium, and incorporates an altarpiece screen by Harry Bertioia that falls from a round skylight, was discussed in depth and often in Louchheim and Saarinen's early correspondence. The chapel continues to be used today, providing ecumenical services for the MIT community.

Hagberg is a critic and an architectural publicist, and her voice is just as much a protagonist in the book as the Saarinens'. First-person accounts of her current-day work for mostly undisclosed clients are interlaced with chapters focusing on the Saarinens' history. This is what makes the book, as Hagberg writes in her introduction, "not a book of architectural history."

for mostly undisclosed clients are interlaced with chapters focusing on the Saarinens' history. This is what makes the book, as Hagberg writes in her introduction, "not a book of architectural history" (and what makes it especially juicy). While nonetheless formulating a comprehensive historical record of how necessary Louchheim was to the success of Saarinen's career—an intentional corrective to the erasures and minimizations of many women in the field—Hagberg goes further and deeper, using the space of the book to make a case for how the press is not accessorial but integral to our understanding of architecture.

Hagberg writes that, besides being intrigued by Saarinen and Louchheim's story in particular

(the topic was the basis of her PhD dissertation), her career and doctoral studies were leading her to believe "words had the power to influence how I looked at a building," and that there is "an iterative relationship between the visual and the narrative."

It's a relationship she explores in depth in "Bones for a 'Bird': Publishing TWA," the book's longest chapter. Here, Hagberg focuses on how it was Louchheim's PR materials that described Saarinen's TWA Flight Center at New York's JFK International Airport as a bird in flight—"a metaphor of soaring wings" that sent writers aloft and ultimately became the building's primary descriptor, despite Saarinen disputing the image of a bird having anything to do with

how he initially conceived of its design (his approach started with a grapefruit).

It's one example of many that Hagberg uses to stoke the heat of her inquiry into how architectural forms and the photos and narratives surrounding them all work together to make meaning, and how language is "in fact a constitutive element of design." The book's hybrid format makes for a compelling read, providing intimate glimpses into Louchheim and Saarinen's complex relationship, as well as Hagberg and her clients', celebrating "how powerful a partnership between an architect and a writer can be—of how meaningful and creative and deep that connection can become." ■



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Ready for their Close-Up

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly
IMAGES: Parrish Ruiz de Velasco

European real estate brokerage Fantastic Frank creates intimacy in its property listings by focusing the lens on close-up moments. With the agency announcing its first U.S. franchise to open here in Denver, we talked to Swedish founder Sofie Ganeva about their design-centric approach to interior styling and photography.

Real estate shopping entails frank considerations—size and quality of space, neighborhood, price—but that doesn't mean there isn't room for the fantastic. Bringing these together is what Fantastic Frank, the European boutique residential real estate agency, does best. Founded twelve years ago in Stockholm, Sweden, by Tomas Backman, Mattias Kardell, and Sven Wallén, Fantastic Frank puts design at the center of the brokerage experience, offering curated listings that have been styled and photographed by an expert in-house team of aesthetes. And the approach is winning: the brokerage has a growing base across Europe, and in October they announced their first U.S. franchise to open this year in Denver in partnership with SLATE Real Estate Advisors.

Using the power of the image—what they call a “Property Portrait”—and editorial akin to what you might find in a design publication, Fantastic Frank operates with a signature less-is-more Scandinavian ease. Their listings look loved and lived-in in all the right ways, thanks to careful work the team puts in at the onset. To achieve their edge, Fantastic Frank spends significant time in each property, placing carefully-selected furniture and decor, and waiting for the light to hit just right. Their listings have a quiet sophistication, comprising a handful of small, intimate moments rather than optimized, wide-angled spans. Zeroing in on particular

pockets of each interior is what they believe unlocks the buyers' imaginations and evokes emotional bonds integral to the idea of home.

Fantastic Frank's attention to detail and devotion to design has been validated by repeat clientele in their offices in Germany, Denmark, Spain, Italy, and Portugal. They sought out Denver for their initial entry into the U.S. market due to parallels they identified between Scandinavia and the Front Range. In Denver, they see a growing demographic of architecture- and design-interested residents and a mainstay love of alpine living. Bringing this vision to bear within Colorado's contours are SLATE's Stan Kniss and Jorgen Jensen, who have significant experience appealing to aesthetically-minded buyers in the region.

To learn more about what makes Fantastic Frank's unique, design-savvy tack work, we spoke with Sofie Ganeva, founder and head of interiors at the company's Stockholm office.

FIRST OF ALL, WHO IS FRANK?

Our name you mean? There is no person called Frank. We like to say: “You are Fantastic. We are Frank.” It's our mentality that everyone is fantastic and should have a fantastic home.



Ready for their Close-Up



Sofie Ganeva, Fantastic Frank founder and head of interiors at the company's Stockholm office, and Brandon Lopez, director of marketing & photography, style and shoot a property in Denver, one of the first to be listed after their partnership with SLATE Real Estate Advisors was announced in October.

WHAT IS THE FANTASTIC FRANK APPROACH TO STYLING INTERIORS AND HOW WAS IT BORN?

Since we founded Fantastic Frank in Stockholm in 2010, we've been considered innovators and contrarians in the industry. We found a gap in our business sector and filled it by collaborating with talented photographers, interior stylists, architects, and designers who can represent each property's point of view. Then we bring it all together with high quality brokerage service. This has proved to be successful in each and every market we represent in Europe.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU CURRENTLY SEE IN REAL ESTATE PHOTOGRAPHY?

"Inspire to buy" is our motto. In general, traditional real estate photography is not very adept at using emotion to communicate with buyers. Establishing an emotional bond with a property can really frame a buyer's rationale. We know that for many the decision to buy happens on a much deeper level than simply the numbers. Our aim is to make people fall in love with a property—and then buy it.

YOUR TEAM USES IMAGERY TO CONVEY A STORY. HOW DO YOU DETERMINE EACH HOME'S STORY?

The editorial comes from looking at everything we have in a property: architecture, interior, neighborhood appeal, and profile of a prospective buyer. This all helps us make what we call our "Property Portrait." Then we follow a few simple photo and styling rules, and voilà!

WHAT ARE THE RULES?

Well, just as an example, we're not fans of wide angles or bright colors.

WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK FURNISHINGS AND CURATED OBJECTS PLAY IN THE STORY OF OUR LIVES?

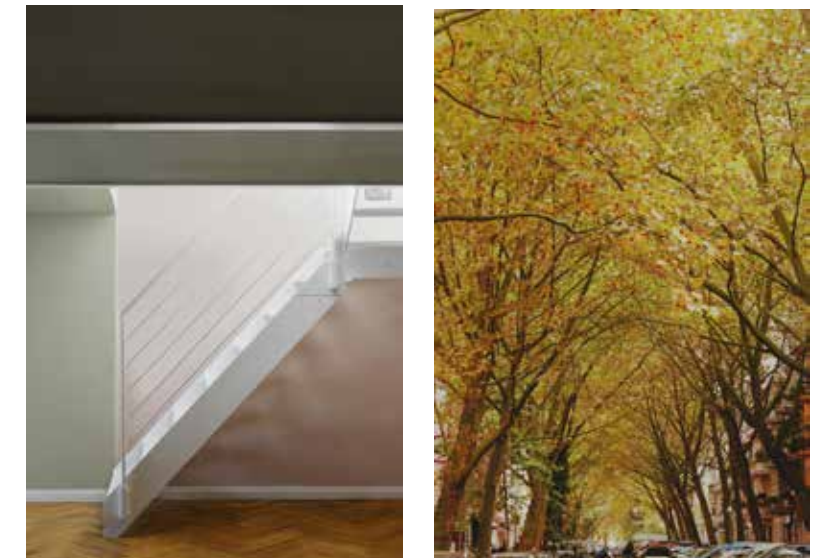
Your home says a lot about who you are. People love to show off their homes—it's become as common as posting to social media about your vacation or outfits. We call this our clients' "interior ego," and our job is to massage it. Sometimes you need to push a little harder to make everything look and feel great.

WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE AND WHY DO YOU THINK THIS APPROACH APPEALS TO THEM?

Our audience is universal, isn't it? I think everyone appreciates when you have the spine to say, "This works, and this doesn't." A lot of properties are sold using far too many images. We believe less can be more. Often, one great image can sell an entire property. Having the professionalism to explain this to a client—I think that's what many people appreciate about Fantastic Frank.



Property listing photos for a lofted two-level apartment in Berlin's Kreuzberg district illustrate Fantastic Frank's emphasis on detailed interior vignettes and neighborhood shots. This home's architectural character—including decorative molding, wooden doors and windows, and herringbone parquet flooring—shines alongside carefully selected furnishings and fixtures, including lighting by FLOS and Louis Poulsen. A white steel staircase descends to a vaulted basement with spa and sauna.



WHY DID FANTASTIC FRANK CHOOSE DENVER AND COLORADO AS ITS ENTRY POINT TO THE U.S.?

Because Denver, at least to us Europeans, has a very different vibe than other parts of the U.S. In Denver you get the cool factor of Austin and the sophistication of Boston, but it's a city that loves winter sports just like us Swedes. What could be a better place? Also, this is important: We are picky when choosing franchisees, but when we decided to establish Fantastic Frank in the States, we had to become picky on a whole new level. We needed to find a team of highly experienced real estate agents who were also successful in running a company. In SLATE Real Estate Advisors we found our next of kin.

FANTASTIC FRANK'S DIRECTION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN EUROPE. WHAT ADJUSTMENTS, IF ANY, DO YOU FORESEE MAKING TO FIT INTO THE AMERICAN MARKET AND CULTURAL CONTEXT?

This is the amazing part—we don't know! We couldn't be happier than to start the first U.S. office with SLATE's Stan Kniss and Jorgen Jensen. If adjustments need to be made in the U.S. market, they are the two people that we trust to make them. Fantastic Frank is very Scandinavian, both in how the business is run and also in its aesthetic expression, and Stan and Jorgen are our trusted American partners for this first office. ■



In a series of unassuming moves, bldg.collective finds a ranch style home's perfect axis by keeping a low profile on bucolic acreage in unincorporated Boulder County.

THE LOW DOWN

WORDS: Kristin Kirsch Feldkamp
IMAGES: Raul Garcia



THE LOW DOWN



“THERE WAS A DESIRE TO HAVE A DESIGN I CALL ‘LOW’ RATHER THAN A HOME WITH A BIG, PITCHED ROOF THAT SITS ON TOP OF THE RIDGELINE,”

says Steve Perce, principal architect at bldg.collective in Boulder. “We wanted more of this isolated, iconic ranch house.”

The house he’s speaking about sits on just under 40 sprawling, pastoral acres between Boulder and Longmont in unincorporated Boulder County, just off North 63rd Street on a popular cycling route. A cyclist, Perce has ridden past the home site often. The Ryssby church, a well-known historic stone building, sits across the street. Other neighbors are sparse unless you count nearby grazing goats. So, when Keenan Thompkins of Cornerstone Homes—the

home’s builder—referred the homeowner to bldg.collective, Perce was intrigued.

The site had never been built on. “Prior to this project the land had been used for horse jumping events,” recounts Perce. “It was unique with some interesting topography and a natural water element. There’s a subtleness to the topography with a ridge running east and west through the middle of the property.” Breathtaking mountain and meadow views abound.

One of the earliest moves they made was to place the home up

on the ridge and orient the main living space perpendicular to the ridgeline but parallel to the foothills. Positioning the home in a north-south direction in a just-right location allowed for a longer western façade that maximized expansive, unencumbered views from the Flatirons all the way to Long’s Peak.

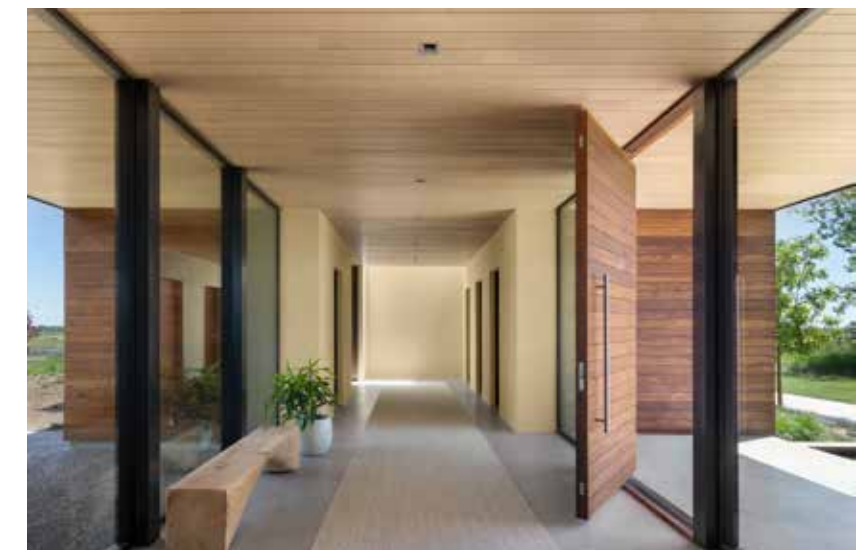
Connecting the home to the high desert landscape was important to the original homeowner, who grew up in the Southwest near Sante Fe, New Mexico. Every detail inside and out reflects that desire. “There are very few traditional windows in the home,” says Perce. “Almost all of the glass is operable.” Ten-foot floor-to-ceiling glass doors open to a perimeter walkway, with every room opening out with access to the outside. “It’s a unique component in terms of program and form.”

Originally designed for an architecture savvy individual living in Boulder, the over 6,000-square-foot home laid out over two floors is home to a family now. The main floor includes the entry, living space, office, and primary bedroom and bathroom. The lower level has a media room and two bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. A pool, spa, and patio extend the main level living space out into the vast surrounding acreage. Facing the house from beyond the pool, the lower level seems to grow out of the hillside, creating an unintentional though appropriate yin and yang visual effect. Oriented to interact with the natural grade of the ridgeline, the home appears interdependent with the land.

To meet the homeowners’ green aspirations and the county’s net-zero code, they used an intense insulation package, high-performance windows, and a heating and cooling system that uses a geothermal pump. The interior walls are surfaced in American clay, a material



The just-right location for the home is focused on maximizing western views. But how you approach the home from the street is just as thoughtful. “As you pull into the driveway, you enter a grove of cottonwoods, and when you come out, the house is there,” says Perce. “There’s a really unique threshold buffer between the street and the grove of trees that sets up the sequencing of how you approach this location on the property. And that gives it some spatial and visual separation from the neighborhood.”



THE LOW DOWN



“THERE ARE VERY FEW TRADITIONAL WINDOWS IN THE HOME. ALMOST ALL OF THE GLASS IS OPERABLE. IT’S A UNIQUE COMPONENT IN TERMS OF PROGRAM AND FORM.”

- Steve Perce

and application that nods to the Southwest and has no VOCs or off-gassing.

In addition to being a greener material, the clay is a huge design component. “There are no baseboards or reveal at the bottom of the wall. The clay plaster just comes straight down to the concrete floors,” says Perce. The effect is cleaner and less formal than trim and floor transitions. “Sometimes in homes that have a very high level

of detail, everything is so exact it feels a little tight. Even though this is a large home that has a high level of finish, it has a looseness to it that I think creates a nice balance.”

Earth Clay Works, a local Boulder company, applied the clay to every single wall in a hue that maintains a golden glow throughout the day. “We wanted it to be modern and clean but with warmth and approachability,” says Sara Shalls, principal of Shalls Design Studio,

who worked with the homeowner on interior design. “The wall color, texture, and character that the clay gives helped create that.”

Wide-plank white oak flooring used throughout on ceilings adds warmth while maintaining a clean, modern look. The flooring used on the ceilings adds a touch of playfulness by inverting expectations. Shalls’s overall goal with the home was to highlight the stunning views and make the



One of the project goals according to Perce was to keep the material palette as simple as possible. On the exterior, there are only two materials—steel and Arborwood. The interior uses only three primary materials: American clay walls, wood ceilings, and concrete floors.



architecture the artwork. “The architecture is set up so beautifully, so we kept the interior quieter, serene and textural.”

For furnishings, Shalls turned to Poliform through Studio Como. “They have a really nice neutral palette that felt appropriate to the home’s architecture.” In the kitchen, Miele appliances are set flush within custom-stained oak cabinetry and thinner, two-centimeter quartz countertops reduce bulk and create a clean, modern look. The stained concrete floors gave Shalls a few nerve-wracking moments. “Installing beautifully poured concrete floors without any cracking and being able to execute a beautiful stain

is a challenge the builder and his installers handled spectacularly.”

Perce has a few thoughts about what makes this home especially unique. “I think the uniqueness comes through the simple formal moves,” he says. These moves set up your experience from the moment you park your car, walk to the front door, and enter the home. “From the entry space, the view to the west is completely blocked. So, the home itself allows this subtle unfolding. The experience of what’s happening on the western side of the property isn’t revealed until you get into the house itself.” Like a route map being unfolded slowly, section by section, the home opens to you revealing the West. ■

The interior’s subdued, quiet material choices and color tones allow the architecture and stunning western views to shine. The lighting was also integral to creating an interior that was in balance with the exterior. Shalls says they used ILC Studios who made sure “the architectural lighting throughout the space and the very, very minimal decorative lighting was really in balance with keeping things simple and cluster free.”



The furniture and finishes reflect the homeowners’ desire for the space to be modern yet approachable. For furniture, Shalls looked to Studio Como. “We chose the Poliform brand because they have a nice neutral palette that felt appropriate to the architecture of the home,” says Shalls. They wanted subtle surprises to keep the home from reading too traditional, which is why they used flooring on the ceiling. Carlisle wide-plank white oak flooring covers the entire home’s ceiling and primary bath floor.



PROJECT LIST

ARCHITECT:
bldg.collective

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
Cornerstone Homes

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:
Ascent Group

INTERIOR DESIGN:
Shalls Design Studio

INTERIOR CLAY WALLS:
Earth Clay Works

WINDOW AND DOORS:
Fleetwood

LANDSCAPE, HARDSCAPE, POOL:
bldg.collective

LANDSCAPE PLANT/ TREE SELECTION:
Green Landscape Solutions





INTO THE TREES

BOSS.architecture principal Kevin Stephenson designs a perfectly square, four-story mountain house for his family with the forest as his guide.

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly
IMAGES: Parrish Ruiz de Velasco



Like a house, a forest is divided into stories. On the bottom, a floor. A dark and loamy foundation from which the understory—saplings and shrubs, branches and buds—takes root. Above the understory is the canopy, where mature trees absorb light, moisture, and air, filtering each down to sustain what grows below. At the very top is the overstory, the uppermost layer of foliage and vegetation accustomed to living in the wind, broadcasting seeds on the breeze to ensure the forest's longevity.

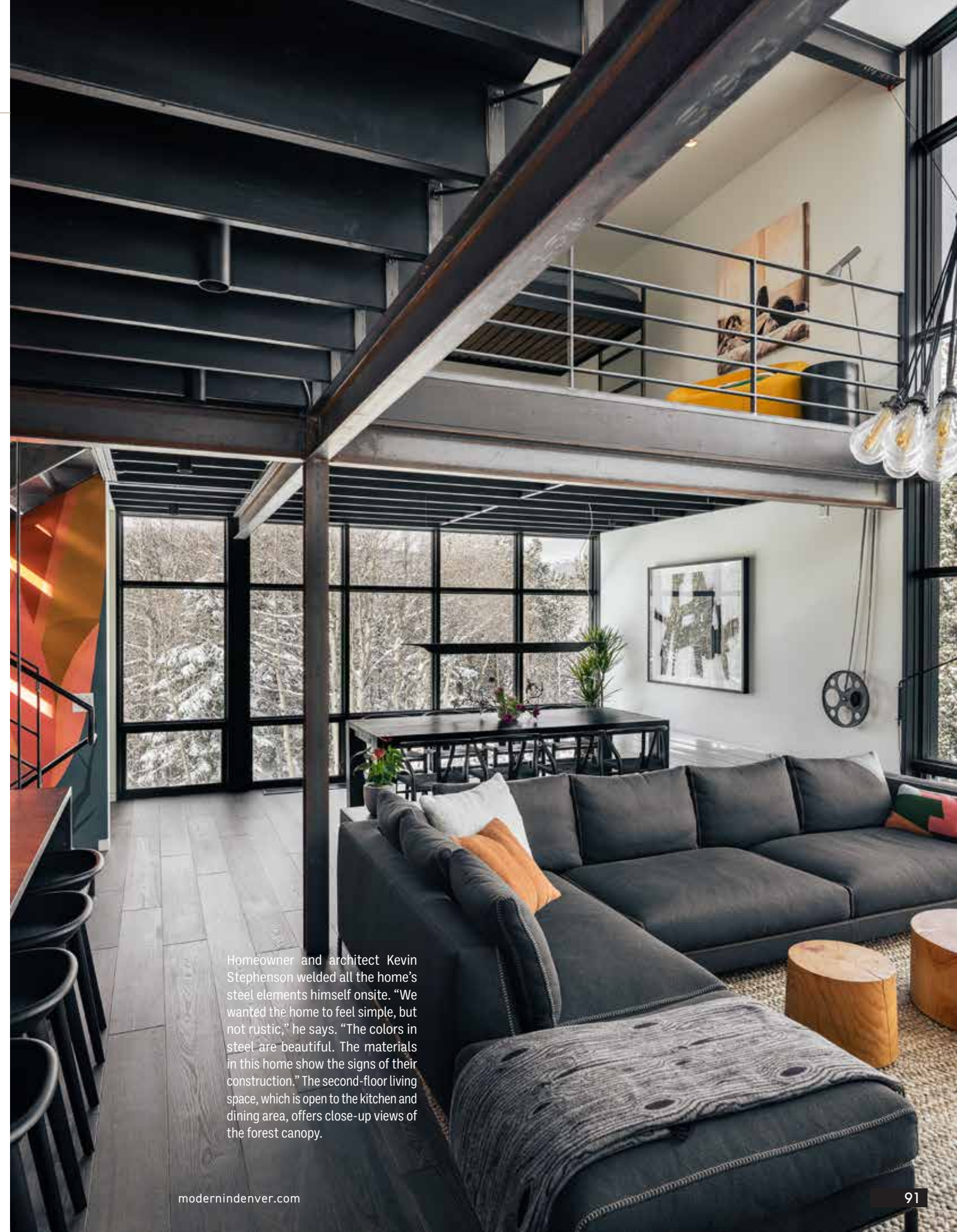
Houses and forests both contain a multitude of systems and cycles designed to support the ecologies within and around them. Maybe we think of these complex layers as stories because we humans love a good narrative, the telling of things to make sense of the whole. And so here's the tale of one home, where each of its four stories was purposefully designed to be a window into those being written by the forest.

Eight years ago, Kevin Stephenson, cofounding principal of BOSS.architecture since 2008, and his wife Trish

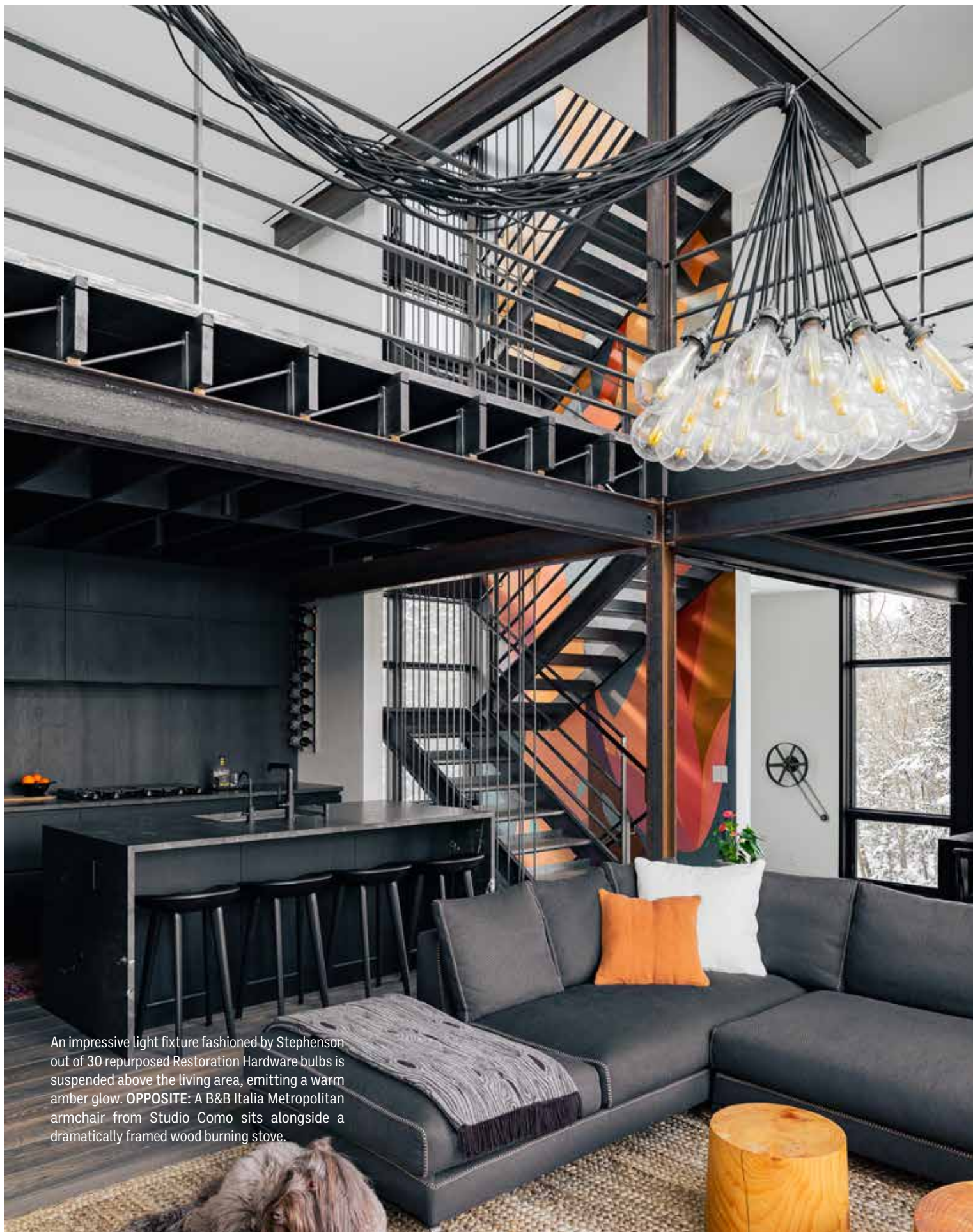
bought a mountain property. Stephenson grew up going on trail rides and hiking at his family's mountain home in the Black Hills of South Dakota, and was looking for a place where his own young family could get out of the city and experience "a different way to live."

Using aerial maps provided by their real estate brokerage, Stephenson virtually made his way down the I-70 corridor, tracing side roads in different directions and assessing available lots from above. Near Breckenridge and other areas close to ski lifts, the properties were essentially city lots in dense neighborhoods, which wasn't what the family was after. So, Stephenson continued to make his way across the map, following Highway 9 over Hoosier Pass until he landed on an 11-acre parcel between Alma and Fairplay: the site of their future home.

"What really appealed to me was the idea of having enough property that you felt far away, maybe even a little isolated," says Stephenson. "We have close to a thousand trees on this property, and a lot of our time here is spent tending to them and the land."



Homeowner and architect Kevin Stephenson welded all the home's steel elements himself onsite. "We wanted the home to feel simple, but not rustic," he says. "The colors in steel are beautiful. The materials in this home show the signs of their construction." The second-floor living space, which is open to the kitchen and dining area, offers close-up views of the forest canopy.



An impressive light fixture fashioned by Stephenson out of 30 repurposed Restoration Hardware bulbs is suspended above the living area, emitting a warm amber glow. OPPOSITE: A B&B Italia Metropolitan armchair from Studio Como sits alongside a dramatically framed wood burning stove.



“WHAT REALLY APPEALED TO ME WAS THE IDEA OF HAVING ENOUGH PROPERTY THAT YOU FELT FAR AWAY, MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE ISOLATED. WE HAVE CLOSE TO A THOUSAND TREES ON THIS PROPERTY, AND A LOT OF OUR TIME HERE IS SPENT TENDING TO THEM AND THE LAND.” - Kevin Stephenson

Stephenson soon began what would become the slow and steady process of designing and building the family’s mountain house, one step at a time. The steps were incremental, but each one was really big. “For the first few years, we would tackle one thing each year,” he says. “The building season is short in the mountains. The first year we built a driveway, and the next we put in a well and septic field. Then we poured the foundation. Each season we’d get a little closer, but it took longer than I could’ve ever imagined.”

In Stephenson’s telling, the slow crawl was fruitful, allowing him

time to iterate on the design. Stephenson has practiced architecture for decades, having now operated BOSS for close to two of them, and found himself with a deep well of design expressions to draw from. But he also wanted to experiment. “I find it can be really hard to design for myself, without the creative constraints of someone else’s desires,” he says. “While we were preparing the property, I was sketching on a constant basis, just working through various ways I could solve this puzzle.”

The puzzle he was looking to solve was for a format that would encourage a communal living

experience unencumbered by the usual trappings. “I wanted us to feel like we were in an episode of *The Waltons* when all the lights go out and you can hear everyone calling ‘Goodnight!’ to each other. The real estate market wants a certain amount of walls and closets for anything to count as a room,” he says. “I didn’t want any of that.”

The first sketches were horizontal, hugging low to the land. “For some reason,” Stephenson says, “I just couldn’t see making those drawings real, and I wasn’t sure why.” So, he looked to the trees. “I suddenly realized that when we’re at the property, I’m not really responding

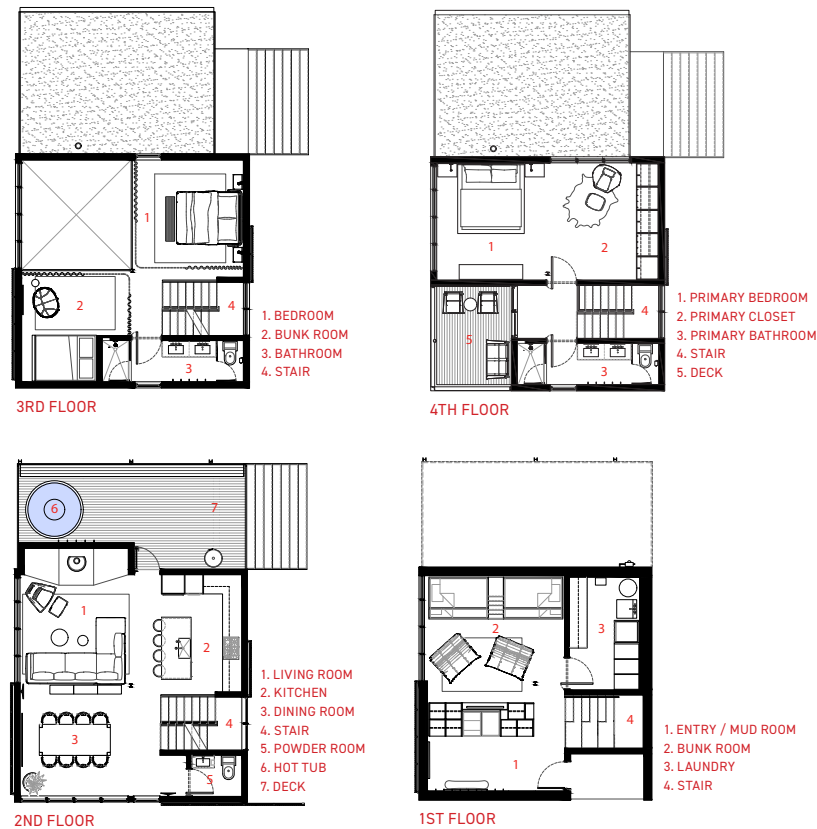


to the long views like you would expect to in the mountains. I'm responding to the intimate, close-up sections of the forest—the land right in front of me. At that point I saw everything differently.”

Stephenson started on vertical sketches, finally designing a perfectly-square, four-story home. “We wanted the home to be super efficient in the way it was constructed and performs,” Stephenson shares. “The perfect square allowed us a small footprint with a symmetrical framing pattern that runs all the way through it, creating simple spans and simple construction with a mix of steel and wood.”

Additionally, he designed each level to intersect with a corresponding

Stephenson’s long-held dream of having a black cabin in the woods extends into his choices for interior finishes. The sleek and spare kitchen features Shinnoki and Olon wood cabinetry with millwork by VonMod and leathered granite countertops from Colorado Stone.



forest story. The ground level is partially embedded in the hillside, sitting right up against the flora and fauna of the forest floor, and contains the entryway, mud room, gear storage, and bunk room. The next, main level is home to the kitchen, dining, living, and powder room, with mid-section views of the understory’s ever-changing foliage and the birds who frequent it. Above is an open, double-height canopy space with two bedroom areas, while the fourth, top floor has the primary bedroom, a detached bathroom, and a deck. “Up there,” says Stephenson, “you’re fully above the tree tops and can see out to a vast, mountain landscape.” That would be the overstory.

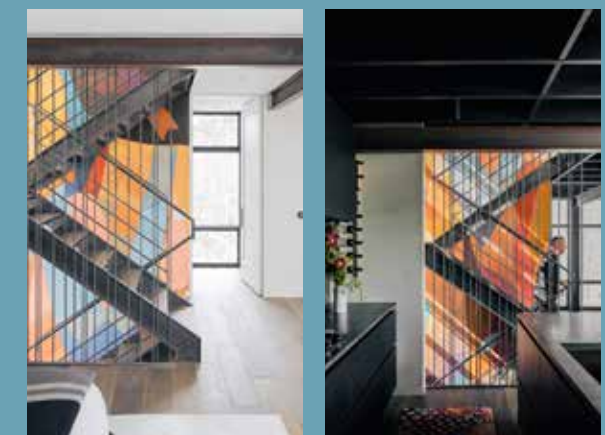
Stephenson, whose weekdays are spent running a business, took a hands-on approach to the building process. In an immense labor of love, he welded every bit of steel himself, including beams, railings, and the impressive four-story stair, and he engineered and fabricated massive, operable perforated-metal screens that can completely close the house up from the outside. The screens act as a passive heating and cooling system when the family is there and a security system when they’re not.

The home’s stark material palette is pared down to steel and wood, with exposed elements embodying the home’s spirit of openness. “I like things to be exposed,” Stephenson explains. “I think there’s something really beautiful in seeing the welds and their imperfections. Also, the colors in steel are beautiful. The materials in this home show the signs of their construction.”

To work alongside him, he hired local builders and carpenters Gary Duren and Rob Frey. “I was really



Denver-based artists and longtime collaborators Jaime Molina and Pedro Barrios were commissioned to create a multilevel mural to mimic the home’s conceptual premise, where at each level you can see and appreciate a different part of the forest. “We really played with that idea, mapping it onto the body of this figure,” Molina explains of the four-story mural that sits behind the home’s stair column and was among their trickier installations. “Each level represents a different phase or season of life.” At the bottom, the artists painted bugs and ground cover plants surrounding the feet. The colors there are dark and slowly brighten at each rising level—a literal enlightening. “When you get to the top, to the stars, it’s as though you’re in a later stage in life and have things a little more figured out,” says Molina. The palette was derived from hues natural to the Rocky Mountains, particularly in the shifting skyscapes. Little capsules of meaning, like the Stephensons’ kids’ and dog’s names—as well as the builders’—are hidden throughout. “We wanted to make the piece fun and special for the Stephensons since this place is their little getaway.”





The home accommodates the Stephenson family and their guests in its fourth-floor primary suite [TOP], two nonconforming bedrooms on the third floor [ABOVE], and first-floor bunk room [LEFT]. The open, communal concept supports their desire for “a different way to live” while in the mountains. [OPPOSITE] A four-story mural by artists Jaime Molina and Pedro Barrios is visible through the windows at twilight.



impressed by the creativity and imagination of the project,” says Duren, who’s been working with Frey in Park County for over 40 years. The two did a tremendous amount of manual labor due to the challenge of bringing machinery to such a remote site. “The plans showed a footprint that was basically the size of a two-car garage, but with four full stories. I’d never seen a house like it and it intrigued me. Kevin told me he’d always had a dream of having a black house in the middle of the woods, and this was a fulfillment of that vision. I’m always up for things like that.”

Other key contributors to the home were artists Jaime Molina and Pedro Barrios, who collaborated on a colorful interior mural for

the wall behind the stair column, reaching the home’s entire height. Featuring a crouching figure who cradles a handful of stars, the mural—like home and forest—offers a small slice of its full grandeur depending on which tread you’re standing on.

After close to five years of active building, Stephenson and his family moved into the home in January 2021. They try to visit every other weekend. “One of my kids is in college now!” Stephenson laughs, thinking about his family’s initial ambition to provide an early-childhood mountain respite. But the memories at the property are all there, every little story embedded in the ongoing narrative that is now a house. ■

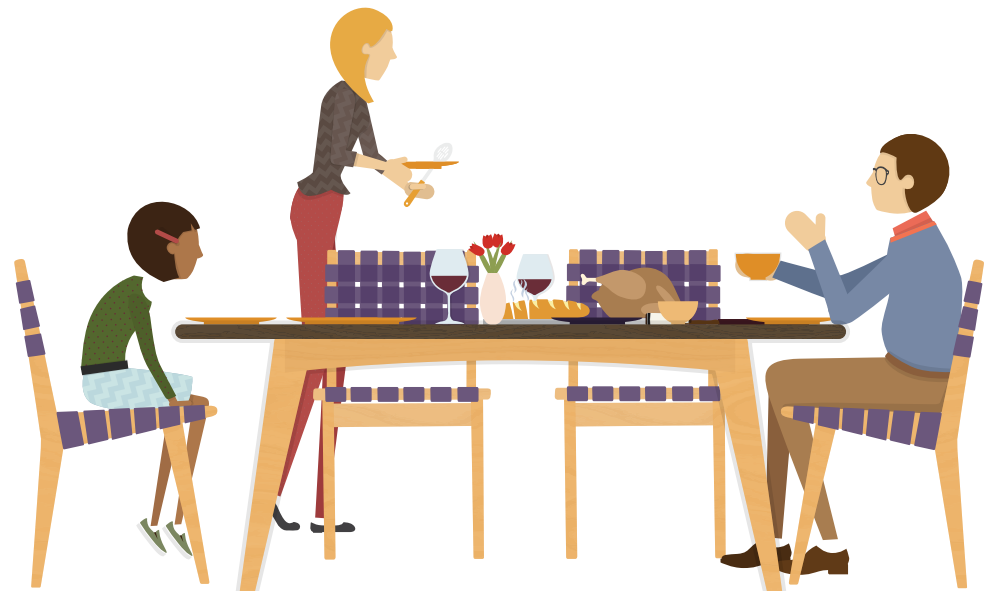
PROJECT LIST

- ARCHITECT: Kevin Stephenson, BOSS.architecture
- GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Kevin Stephenson
- BUILDERS / CARPENTERS: Gary Duren & Rob Frey
- MILLWORK: VonMod
- COUNTERTOPS: Colorado Stone, LTD
- WINDOWS: Mountain Window Specialties
- EXTERIOR SHUTTERS: Kevin Stephenson
- ENTRY DOOR: Castlewood Doors
- TILE: Mosa
- HARDWOOD FLOORING: Teka
- STEEL FABRICATION: Kevin Stephenson
- SIDING: Flatiron Steel
- SOLAR: Conundrum Technologies
- MURAL: Jaime Molina & Pedro Barrios
- FURNITURE: Studio Como

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CRITICAL MASS

The mass timber movement is gaining momentum in the Front Range thanks to the advocacy and expertise of local engineers, architects, and developers.

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly

TEN YEARS AGO, A NEW TYPE OF BUILDING STARTED TO CROP UP IN COLORADO.

First, at the student pavilion at CSU Fort Collins, and then, in 2014, at the Loading Dock in Boulder. Featuring substantial swaths of exposed wood, what these buildings have in common are structural systems composed of cross-laminated timber (CLT), the material behind the moniker mass timber.

Mass timber isn't new, but its momentum in the United States is. CLT technology—which perpendicularly compresses multiple layers of solid wood into massive, customizable panels—first came online in Germany and Austria in the 1990s. It was quickly adopted there and across Europe before moving into Canada.

Mass timber buildings utilize these extraordinarily strong engineered panels, or members, in place of load-bearing steel and concrete, as beams, stairs, floors, ceilings, or walls. Doing so significantly increases a building's aesthetic appeal and biophilic benefit (establishing a connection to nature within the built environment), and drastically reduces its carbon footprint.

But the mass timber movement has been slower to seed in the U.S. In 2013, there were only 26 buildings nationwide that were built using mass timber systems—several of them, unsurprisingly, in the lushly forested Pacific Northwest. But now mass timber's growing popularity is moving into the Front Range.

Behind much of the local groundswell is KL&A Engineers and Builders in Golden, the firm who's led the charge on several of the state's most prominent mass timber constructions. As structural engineers, they are motivated to literally build a better world—and in the forest of carbon neutrality they see mass timber as one of its most important trees.

SEE THE TREES

The built environment is responsible for close to 50% of annual global CO₂ emissions, with concrete, steel, and aluminum production accounting for above 23%. The amount of emissions generated through material sourcing, production, transportation, and construction is referred to as embodied or embedded carbon, and that figure is set at the time a building is complete.

“Embodied carbon is baked in on day one,” says KL&A CEO and president Dr. Gregory Kingsley. Kingsley has been at the fore of bringing mass timber into Colorado and is responsible for initiating changes to the International Building Code (IBC) that were previously roadblocking its movement. “You can offset a building's embodied carbon by choosing sustainable or renewable energy systems, but it takes 40 or 50 years. We're in a bigger hurry than that.”

By contrast, mass timber's embodied carbon is significantly reduced. CLT is fabricated easily, efficiently, and to spec, meaning material waste is low to nil. And, because the structural components in a mass timber building—wooden ceiling beams, columns, stairways, and casings—can and often are left exposed for aesthetic and biophilic benefit, fewer interior finishes like drywall, drop ceilings, and flooring are needed to make a space feel finished.

But the environmental impact is even more deeply rooted than that: Trees inherently sequester carbon in their process of photosynthesis, storing it from trunk to limb to leaf. Once a tree is cut down, the carbon it holds is trapped, retained until decomposition.

“In mass timber construction you're utilizing a naturally occurring phenomenon in your building products,” says KL&A structural engineer Alexis Feitel who directs Team Carbon, the firm's in-house consultancy focused on reducing or eliminating emissions. “Sequestering carbon in building materials is not the only strategy for reductions, but it's a significant one.”

HUG A TREE

Mass timber is a building system not an architectural style, though it does have defining aesthetic characteristics that make it easy to spot. Primarily, like its name suggests, a massive amount of exposed wood.

“When you use revealed timber systems, the architecture has an authenticity,” says Dan Craig, architect and senior associate at Shears Adkins Rockmore (SAR+). Craig worked on the 23,000-square-foot Burwell Center for Career Achievement at the University of Denver, which opened in 2020. The

“IN MASS TIMBER CONSTRUCTION YOU'RE UTILIZING A NATURALLY OCCURRING PHENOMENON IN YOUR BUILDING PRODUCTS. SEQUESTERING CARBON IN BUILDING MATERIALS IS NOT THE ONLY STRATEGY FOR REDUCTIONS, BUT IT'S A SIGNIFICANT ONE.” - Alexis Feitel, KL&A

GLOSSARY:

Mass Timber: A building construction method originating in Europe in the 1990s. Mass timber construction uses large and extremely sturdy manufactured wood products in place of traditional structural and load-bearing materials like concrete or steel.

Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT): Engineered panels made of several layers of perpendicularly stacked and glued softwood lumber. CLT is the primary product used in mass timber construction.

Embodied Carbon: The amount of CO₂ emissions created in the building construction process, from manufacturing, transportation, installation, maintenance, and disposal of materials.

Operational Carbon: The amount of CO₂ emissions produced by a building's operations after it's built.

Carbon Sequestration: The capture and longterm storage of atmospheric CO₂ by plants, soil, rock formations, and the ocean.

Biophilic Design: An approach to architecture and interior design that creates connection between building occupants and the natural world through lighting, ventilation, building materials, landscaping, and water features.

project's design stakeholders, a group including students, faculty, and administrative staff, came to mass timber quickly for its marriage of sustainability and authenticity.

"Timber has a high level of warmth and is welcoming. We joke that we've never seen anyone hug a concrete column, but we've seen numerous people reaching out to touch the Burwell Center's timber," says Craig. Hand-in-hand with the material's aesthetic appeal are its biophilic properties. Living, working, and learning in a space composed of natural materials, like a mass timber building, is shown to have measurable benefits in health and wellness—a boon in any setting, and particularly in an educational center.

Craig was also pleased by how flexible mass timber proved to be as a design material. "You can fabricate it in any shape, height, width, or length so it's perfectly tailored to your project. It's a bespoke approach to structure that concrete and steel systems cannot often afford."

"You're really able to push the boundaries with this product which is exciting from an architectural perspective," says Joseph Anastasi, associate principal at OZ Architecture. OZ designed The Loading Dock in Boulder and then the famed Platte Fifteen, the first commercial project using cross-laminated timber in Denver. "There are incredible opportunities for exposed spans—as well as challenges learning about tolerances and transitions."

Because of its degree of customization, and the method's newness in the U.S., choosing mass timber at a project's onset is critical. "You can't come at a project thinking 'how do we fit mass timber into this box?'" says Andrew Katz, president of Katz Development, who's developing Denver's first mass timber high-rise in the RiNo neighborhood. "Mass timber is the box."

"Choosing to work in mass timber informed a lot of our material and massing decisions," he says of the 84-unit residential high-rise called Return to Form, currently being designed by Tres Birds. "The



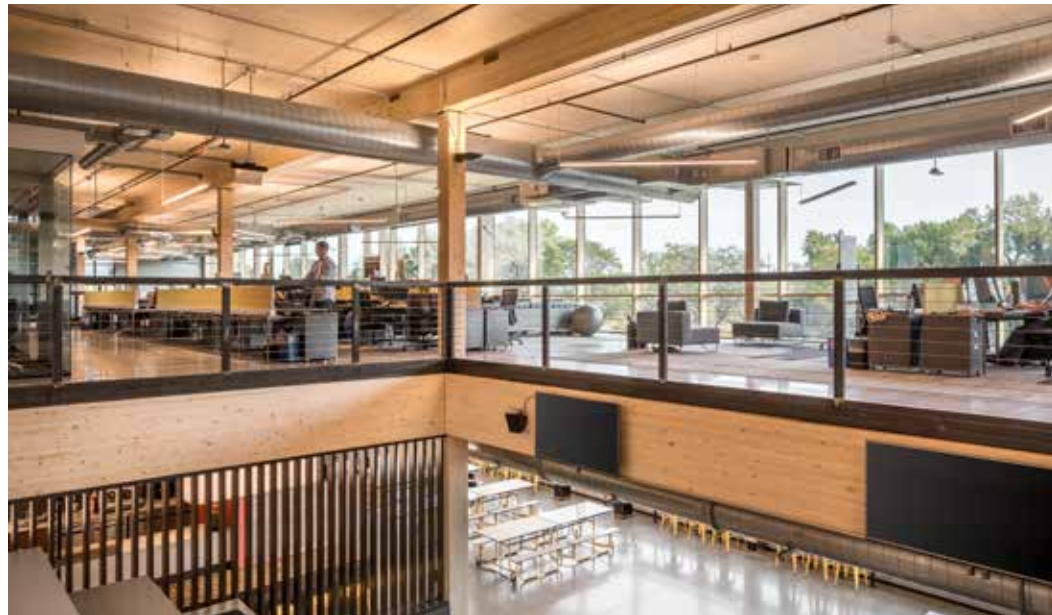
Renderings courtesy of Tres Birds

LEFT and OPPOSITE:

Return to Form is a 12-story mass timber building in Denver's RiNo neighborhood developed by the family-owned Katz Development and designed by architecture and design firm Tres Birds. Plans for the mixed-use residential building, which will be under construction in 2023, won the 2022 SLB Mass Timber Competition and the 2022 Wood Innovation Grant; developer Andrew Katz says funds from both awards will go toward continued testing and analysis to be shared industry wide.



CRITICAL MASS



Photos: JC Buck

TOP and **ABOVE:** Completed in 2017, The Loading Dock in Boulder was one of the state's first commercial mass timber buildings, and was, at the time, one of only a handful in the country to incorporate cross-laminated timber into walls, floors, roof, and structure. Developed by Crescent Real Estate and designed by OZ Architecture, this adaptive reuse project transformed an existing structure into a highly functional two-story office space. Its additional green amenities include photovoltaic roof panels and an elevated, wood-planked pedestrian boardwalk that bridges the office interior to the environment.



Photos: Frank Ooms Photography

Lake Flato Architects and Shears Adkins Rockmore designed The Burwell Center for Career Achievement on the University of Denver campus. Its mass timber construction is complemented by a brick, slate, and copper facade, materials that uphold the University's vision for authenticity and sustainability. The 23,000-square-foot center is home to classrooms, lecture and event spaces, meeting rooms, and offices, and provides services for DU students, faculty, alumni, and guests.

construction industry has advanced so much in the last thousand years, and in the process we've gotten very far away from living among natural materials," Katz says. "It affects our wellbeing."

SAVE A TREE

Katz's articulation, the idea of returning to a connectedness we once had, speaks to a certain emotionality surrounding mass timber. Mass timber brings up a lot of feelings relating to what we most want in our lives, as well as what we're most afraid of.

One common misconception is that widespread adoption of mass timber will deplete forests. But, as Feitel explains, the biggest threat to forests is land-use changes, like clear-cutting forests and turning them into parking lots, building developments, even farmland.

"That's what deforestation actually is," she says. "Ultimately, mass timber is a move against deforestation." Many Americans grew up in the era of "save a tree"

messaging, but Feitel, Kingsley, and other proponents of mass timber believe the best way to save trees is to sustainably and responsibly use and replant them. If you plant two trees for every one used, not only are you increasing forest growth, you're also doubling the carbon storage opportunity.

"We live in a society where capitalism pervades," says Feitel, "so if there's a market for wood products it encourages forests to exist and be well maintained, including forest floor management that mitigates wildfires."

Which leads to a second knee-jerk reaction to the idea of buildings made of timber: flammability. Isn't a building made almost entirely of wood bound to burn quickly? Extensive testing shows otherwise.

"Timber systems are actually safer when it comes to flammability," says Craig. He explains how timber forms a char layer on its exterior that preserves the integrity of the wood beneath, slowing the burn and also

BY THE NUMBERS:

50% of Greenhouse Gas Emissions
The built environment produces nearly 50% of annual global greenhouse gas emissions; of this total, the production of concrete, steel, and aluminum accounts for 23% (architecture2030.org)

Reduce CO2 by 15-20%
Replacing steel with mass timber would reduce CO2 emissions by 15-20% (thinkwood.com)

25% Faster
Mass timber projects are roughly 25% faster to build than steel or concrete buildings and require 90% less construction traffic (thinkwood.com)

1,571 Mass Timber Projects
1,571 mass timber projects have been constructed or are in design in the U.S., as of September 2022 (woodworks.org)

"WE DON'T LOOK AT MASS TIMBER AS SOME SECRET FORMULA THAT WE'RE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT AND GUARD. THE GOAL OF THIS TESTING IS TO MAKE THE PROCESS ACCESSIBLE AND REPLICABLE, SO ANYONE WHO WANTS TO WORK IN MASS TIMBER CAN DO SO. WE WANT TO MAKE A LASTING, POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT."

- Andrew Katz, Katz Development

“THE SPEED-TO-MARKET ASPECT OF MASS TIMBER IS MAKING PEOPLE REALIZE IT ISN’T JUST AN EMOTIONAL CHOICE, IT ALSO MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE. PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE AND WORK IN SPACES THAT ARE COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABILITY, AND MASS TIMBER IS JUST THAT. IT’S A VERY TACTICAL WAY TO APPROACH SOLVING FOR A CARBON-NEUTRAL PLANET.”

- Dan Craig, SAR+



Photo: JC Buck

providing hints when its structure is beginning to fail, unlike how steel or concrete systems behave.

This natural resistance is also enhanced through engineering. “We’ve known for decades how to calculate the inches of char needed so that we can make the timber members thick enough,” explains Kingsley. “We add a sacrificial layer to ensure there is enough volume to form a char and stop the burning.”

So, what’s the downside?

“The initial cost of mass timber can overwhelm comparable materials,” says Kingsley. “Often the premium can be a nonstarter.” But, KL&A proposes hybrid approaches where timber is used strategically, like on floors and roofs, in combination

with traditional steel and concrete construction methods.

Mass timber does afford an accelerated construction speed—about 25% faster than traditional framing—and its marketplace desirability is high, meaning the early outlay of cash can be offset by reduced labor costs and high leasing opportunities.

Platte Fifteen was 85% leased on the day it was completed, “probably three and a half months faster than it would’ve been in any other material,” says Kingsley, “and at the time of leasing, leases were offered and signed at the highest price-per-square-foot in all of Denver.” So, that biophilic benefit had a bottom-line benefit for the developers.

“A lot of things are converging right now, especially around climate consciousness,” says Craig. “The speed-to-market aspect of mass timber is making people realize it isn’t just an emotional choice, it also makes good business sense. People want to live and work in spaces that are committed to sustainability, and mass timber is just that. It’s a very tactical way to approach solving for a carbon-neutral planet.”

SPEAK FOR THE TREES

Part of the reason Denver is hitting its stride with mass timber is because of the significant bureaucratic work KL&A has done in collaboration with the Structural Engineers Association of Colorado to get Tall Wood provisions passed and adopted in the International Building Code.



Photo: JC Buck

OPPOSITE AND ABOVE:

OZ Architecture’s Platte Fifteen sits just west of downtown Denver’s Confluence Park. This five-story office building with ground floor retail was the first in the city to use cross-laminated timber, mass timber’s namesake material. The design takes stock of its context, emulating the historic neighborhood’s window patterns and masonry on the exterior but utilizing high-performance glazing optimized for views and thermal efficiency. The interior is replete with wood, amplifying the biophilic benefit for its occupants.

The IBC didn’t officially recognize laminated timber construction as a building type until just last year, when in 2021 it finally approved timber buildings up to 18 stories. Kingsley has since led a proposal for the City of Denver to adopt the forthcoming 2024 code early, which will permit 100% of timber used in 12-story buildings to be left exposed. It passed.

KL&A will work with Katz on a life cycle assessment of Return to Form, as they did for Platte Fifteen. Return to Form was one of six winners of the nationwide Mass Timber Competition: Building

to Net-Zero Carbon, and Katz Development will be putting a significant fraction of the awarded funds toward testing and analysis. “We don’t look at mass timber as some secret formula that we’re trying to figure out and guard,” says Katz. “The goal of this testing is to make the process accessible and replicable, so anyone who wants to work in mass timber can do so. We want to make a lasting, positive impact on the environment.”

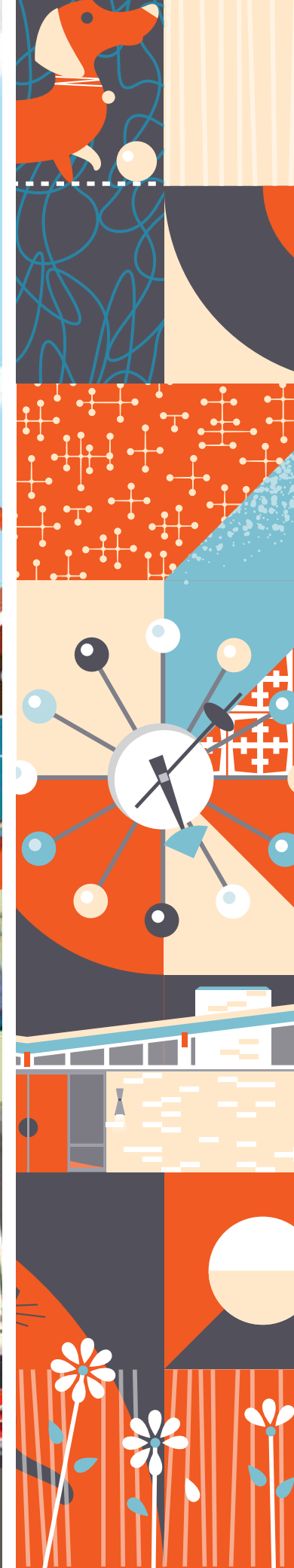
There are innumerable decisions to be made in the creation of a carbon-neutral world, and

sometimes two valid options—leaving forests untouched vs. reducing CO₂ production in the built environment by using wood products, for example—can seemingly stand in opposition. But, for as long as we live in cities, we will need to build and rebuild structures. How we do that is critical, and one alternative to the industry’s emissions-heavy history is by integrating timber into its bones. ■



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THE POTENTIAL FOR POETRY

Dynia Architects use constraint as a springboard for creativity in a family mountain home in Jackson, Wyoming.

WORDS: Sean O'Keefe
IMAGES: David Agnello



WORDS: Sean O'Keefe
IMAGES: David Agnello

AS in poetry, creative architecture is often born of constraint. Be it from city ordinances regarding setbacks and view planes or a homeowner association's design guidelines, almost all architecture throughout the world, public and private, is in some way shaped by structures and forces that inform what can and can't be built.

"For someone looking at beautiful pictures of a custom home in a place as spectacular as Jackson, Wyoming, it's probably difficult to imagine the struggle architecture can and should be," says architect Stephen Dynia. Since founding his namesake firm in Jackson 25 years ago, Dynia has delivered a world-renowned portfolio of modern custom homes that enjoy immersive views of the Tetons and western Wyoming. Among the latest, a new 4,500-square-foot home in Stone Creek is a sophisticated take on what it takes to make design happen.

"In all of our buildings, be it a single-family home in a mountain setting or a high-end hotel in an urban context, the mission is to create enduring design solutions, free from trend and in harmony with context and constraint, whatever either may be," he says.

Dynia was raised in New Haven, not far from the campus of Yale University, a community and upbringing he describes as architecturally conscious. He grew to admire the local works of modernist pioneers Eero Saarinen and Louis Kahn and was involved in a high school program that met at a local architecture firm for real-world instruction on community orientation, planning, and design. After graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design, he worked his way into the ranks of SOM, one of the largest and most prestigious design firms of all time. There, he learned to understand and account for situational influences and constraints of many sorts—public, private, political, and pragmatic. Sufficiently educated, informed, and influenced, by the early 90s Dynia was ready to start something of

his own when he visited Jackson during a vacation. "I opened my practice in Jackson in 1994 because I saw that no one was doing modernist houses there. At the time everything was log cabin, Arts and Crafts, or pioneer nostalgia," says Dynia of the decision to leave the East Coast and move west.

"I believe my work helped reshape Jackson's perception of architecture," he remarks. "It helped people understand that design is more than roof lines, window forms, and building materials, but also views, weather, circulation, sustainability, and the homeowner's lifestyle."

In commercial jobs, which make up a large percentage of Dynia's portfolio, constraints can be complex, but they are generally well defined. In the context of a custom home built on property purchased within a subdivision, boundaries become blurrier and leave more room for imaginative interpretation. It is here Dynia crafts architecture as an art form from the inside out. Embracing opportunities in the moment, his gift is in knowing how to articulate them despite design constraints.

"At this residence, we were confronted with a subdivision that had very strict regulations on building forms, sight lines, and fenestration," says Dynia of the Stone Creek home. "I don't even want my buildings to look like one another—much less like everyone else's. So, finding creative responses is where we return to rigor. We must insist that whatever we produce goes beyond the client's expectations, regardless of constraint."

In the case of the Stone Creek house, led by Dynia project manager Karen Parent, the subdivision had limits on the length of roof eaves, requirements that the roof have dormers and be shingled, and restrictions on diminishing views of adjacent properties. Among the possible guidelines, the latter is easily understood as the one to respect, while the one about the dormers is the one to circumvent.

"I DON'T EVEN WANT MY BUILDINGS TO LOOK LIKE ONE ANOTHER—MUCH LESS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE'S. SO, FINDING CREATIVE RESPONSES IS WHERE WE RETURN TO RIGOR. WE MUST INSIST THAT WHATEVER WE PRODUCE GOES BEYOND THE CLIENT'S EXPECTATIONS, REGARDLESS OF CONSTRAINT."

- Stephen Dynia



THE
POTENTIAL
FOR
POETRY

The Stone Creek residence is an excellent example of following rules and breaking them too. Though sloped and shingled, the roof line rejects conventional form by going askew. The natural warmth of the clear vertical grain cedar siding juxtaposes the cold contemplation of zinc cladding in Atazn Glacier Grey.





Designed to accommodate large gatherings and intimate moments alike, the home's kitchen, dining, and living areas occupy a wing of east-west orientation that guarantees great views. Expansive panoramas of the idyllic Grand Tetons fill floor-to-ceiling windows in the home's main lounge as sunlight cascades in from skylights straddling the double-sided concrete chimney.

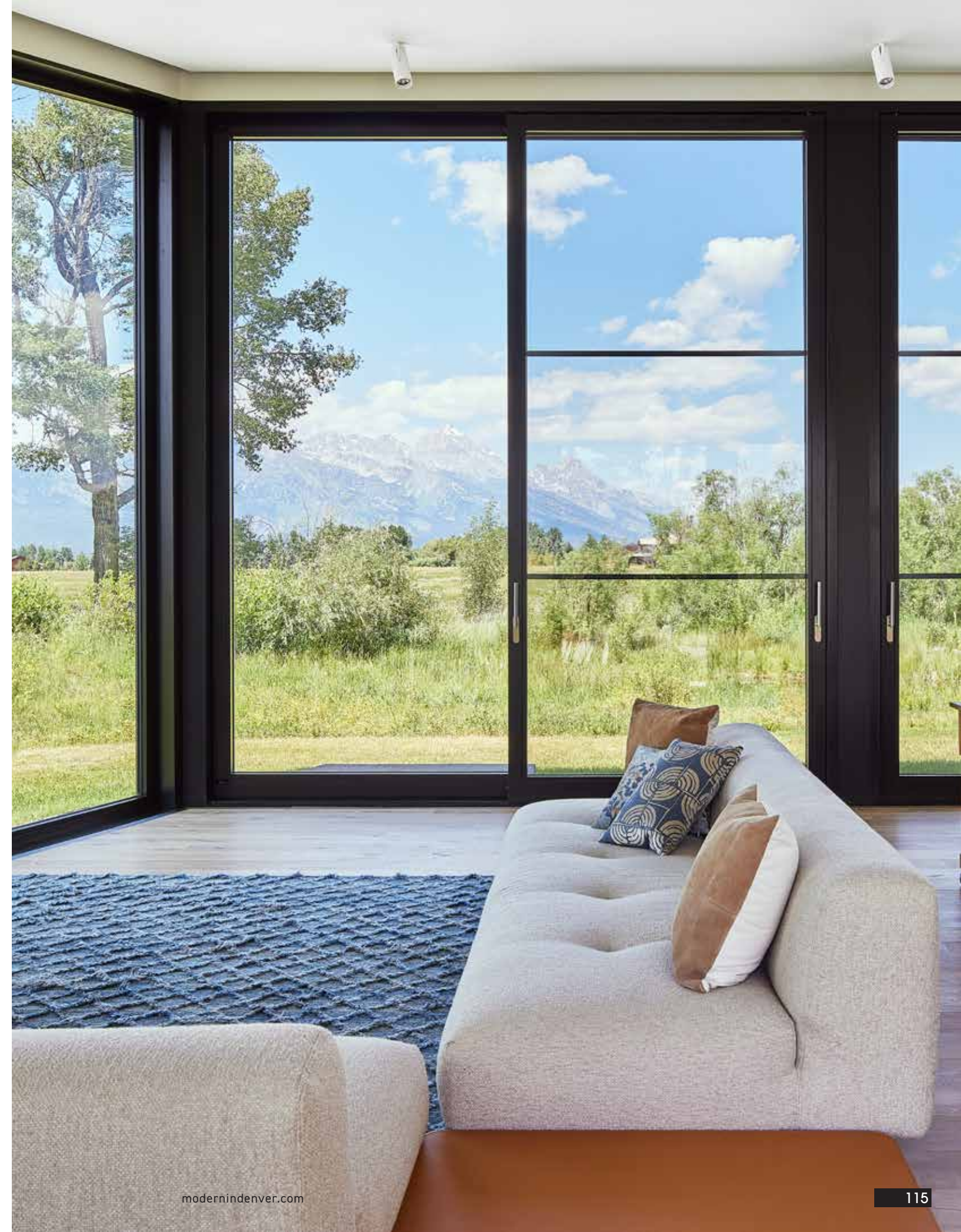
Drawing on his background in contextually integrated architecture, Dynia believes that in residential design, the experience of a home is best understood through the relationship between interior spaces and the landscape beyond. When the backdrop of everyday life is as magnificent as the Grand Tetons, you've got to be able to see it to soak it in, which means windows on every wall and open concepts within.

"The objective was to connect the home to the landscape in every way possible," shares Dynia. "We considered the natural elements first—views, sun, wind, water, and snow—and arranged the living spaces in a way that maximizes the home's relationship to the landscape."

Offering expansive views of the Teton Range from the kitchen, living, and dining room, the Stone Creek home was designed as a modern mountain retreat connected to nature through form, function, and an abundance of open space. Dynia's design solution situates the home's living spaces to take advantage of the magnificent north-west views of the Grand Tetons, and the eastward view of the pond abutting the home while gathering the natural light from the south.

"I walked through the home in my head, as we were designing, moving from space to space sequentially to feel the experience. In a perfect world, the sequence of interior spaces dictates the form of the building."

The owners of the Stone Creek residence came to Dynia the way many of his residential clients do: they knew someone who owns a home he designed and have experienced the multilayered quality of his work for themselves. They wanted this home designed to be a family compound that could comfortably accommodate large groups during holiday gatherings,



THE
POTENTIAL
FOR
POETRY



“IN ALL OF OUR BUILDINGS, BE IT A SINGLE-FAMILY HOME IN A MOUNTAIN SETTING OR A HIGH-END HOTEL IN AN URBAN CONTEXT, THE MISSION IS TO CREATE ENDURING DESIGN SOLUTIONS, FREE FROM TREND AND IN HARMONY WITH CONTEXT AND CONSTRAINT, WHATEVER EITHER MAY BE.” - Stephen Dynia

but not feel unoccupied absent the extras. Shared spaces within the home are linked to one another through flow and form, floor-to-ceiling windows, expressive lighting, and artwork.

“A routine challenge can be an owner’s changing program,” says Dynia. He explains that many clients reaching retirement age come to the table needing a program that is flexible, which itself can act as a constraint. Often, as the design unfolds, spatial expectations

expand, pushing the building envelope outward.

“From the inside, we embraced open concepts, sumptuous views, layered structure, and daylight,” Dynia says of the strategy to make the home inviting and spacious. “On the exterior, it’s about using thoughtful materials and forms that blend in with the natural surroundings”

Along the western façade, a base of stacked stone from Oakley Stone recalls the rugged, rocky terrain.

Clean lines and natural materials impart a soothing calm that keeps the day-to-day living focused on the home’s occupants. Layers of seating and dual pass-throughs between the kitchen and lounge allow the spaces to live large when extended family arrives.

A multi-purpose bunk room sleeps four and offers ample space for gathering, gaming, and relaxing when the home is fully occupied. When guests are gone, it doubles as a convenient second-floor respite down the hall from the primary suite.

PROJECT LIST

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIORS:
Dynia Architects

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING:
KL&A

CIVIL ENGINEERING:
Nelson Engineering

LIGHTING:
Helius Lighting Group

LANDSCAPE:
HDLA

CONSTRUCTION:
Peak Builders

MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL,
& PLUMBING:
JTEC Inc.

Locally sourced cedar siding, in line with the community regulations mandate, covers the majority of the exterior, feeling familiar to the wooded environs. To add individuality, a zinc clad living room roof and accenting offer a bold, modern point of contrast to the nearby pond and forest. Inside, living spaces are enlivened with daylight cascading in from skylights across a European white oak hardwood floor.

“Though we do have to respond to a subdivision’s design guidelines, our homes don’t compromise on their relationship to the landscape, the elements, or the weather,” says Dynia. “Design is a complex discussion that involves a lot of components. If you do it based on pure functionality or simply abide by subjective requirements without understanding the potential for poetry, then you are going to miss the boat.” ■

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STUDIOS



Photos: Connie Zhou

An iconic architecture firm with offices on both coasts, ZGF is setting up shop in Denver—but it's been working here for decades.

Here Here

WORDS: Scott Kirkwood

With its focus on unique urban workplaces, modern municipal buildings, and cutting-edge sustainable practices, ZGF seems like the kind of architecture firm that should've been in Denver for years—and in many ways, it has been.

Founded in Portland, Oregon, in 1942, the firm is deeply rooted in the Pacific Northwest, which explains some of its most well-known clients: The company designed 7 million square feet of office space for Microsoft in Redmond, Washington, and it's in the process of envisioning Amazon's Arlington, Virginia, headquarters, to be powered by 100% renewable energy by 2030. The firm's commitment to adaptive reuse is clear in office space designed for Expensify—filling a sky lit atrium in

Here Here

the old First National Bank with a three-story floating treehouse amid classic columns—and in offices for Google, which have taken over the hangar built for Howard Hughes’s “Spruce Goose” back in 1943.

Today the company has more than 750 employees, and its branches extend to Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Vancouver, and Washington, D.C. The new Denver office is the first location without an ocean in sight but, as ZGF knows, Denver has water, too: The firm created the master plan for the Central Platte Valley 30 years ago. More recently, they designed Children’s Hospital Colorado and the Denver outpost of the Environmental Protection Agency (which features the city’s first green roof) as well as Pearl Izumi’s headquarters in Louisville and RMI in Basalt.

Plans for a Rocky Mountain office heated up when the company was awarded the contract for the Anschutz Health Sciences Building at the University of Colorado, in Aurora, back in 2018; that work was completed at the end of 2021, and the last tenant moved in this summer. ZGFers Ryan Velasco and Sadie Cline both worked on the project after landing in Denver for personal reasons, so they were the perfect choice to lead the new office. For now, ZGF’s Denver team of six is working from home offices and sharing space in LoDo’s Dairy Block while looking for permanent digs they can grow into.

EASY BEING GREEN

These days, every corporation says it’s “green,” but ZGF has the receipts.

“We were working on LEED projects and Net-Zero Energy projects way before sustainability was a hot topic,” says Velasco. “ZGF was also one of the first firms to commit to AIA’s 2030 Challenge, to hit Net-Zero Energy on all of our projects by that date.” That commitment requires



Anschutz Health Sciences Building

Completed in 2021, the newest addition to the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus takes its cues from the surrounding mountains and canyons. The structure serves as a beacon of sorts—marking an entry point to the campus with an art walk that connects it to other buildings. Home to researchers, faculty and staff, students and patients, the Anschutz Health Sciences Building includes facilities for clinical trials, mental and behavioral health services, and amenities to be shared by staff and students from other parts of campus.



Photos: Connie Zhou



Photo: Parrish Ruiz de Velasco

Ryan Velasco and Sadie Cline have led several of ZGF’s Colorado projects in recent years, and they’ve just opened the firm’s new office in Denver.



Rendering: ZGF

benchmarking current projects to hit those lofty goals—no small matter, given that ZGF designs hospitals and laboratories that use a lot more energy than the typical office building.

There’s plenty of room to innovate in those office buildings, too: ZGF invested its own money in the creation of the PAE Living Building in downtown Portland (see page 125); rather than simply doing no harm, living buildings actually improve the environment through solar power and water-retention,

among other sustainability measures. ZGF even partnered with the University of Washington and Carbon Leadership Forum to create open-source software that helps architects and construction companies calculate how mass timber building methods can lower a project’s carbon footprint.

“Unlike steel and concrete, mass timber is a renewable material, so when it’s used in a building, you’re not only reducing the ‘embodied’ carbon that goes into making it, you’re actually sequestering

PDX Airport Main Terminal

ZGF designed the expansion of Portland International Airport’s main terminal, doubling its footprint so it can eventually accommodate 35 million passengers a year. The structure’s unique wood roof celebrates the state’s heritage with sustainable timber sourced from landowners and mills within 600 miles. The undulating mass plywood and glulam canopy is interrupted by skylights and 34 giant Y-shaped columns that hold the 18-million-pound roof in place.



Photos: Robert Canfield



EPA Region 8 Headquarters

ZGF’s design of office space for the Environmental Protection Agency used a wide variety of sustainable materials including corn-based fabric and wheatboard, recycled glass tile, cork floors, bamboo wall panels, and doors made with rice hull cores. The structure also boasts the first “green” roof in Denver used to manage stormwater, thanks to native drought-tolerant plants that cover its 20,000 square feet.

Here Here



Renderings: ZGF

Ball Arena

Kroenke Sports Entertainment hired ZGF to join the Ball Arena Masterplan team, which includes Shears Adkins Rockmore and Wenk Associates. This development will fill the gap between The River Mile development, Auraria Higher Education Campus, and lower downtown. The team envisions the new development to be a complete neighborhood with housing, office, retail, and easy access to transit.

“WHEN YOU HAVE 55 ACRES OF LAND UNDER ONE OWNER, YOU’VE GOT A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A HOLISTIC VIEW OF WHAT A NEW DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CAN BE. WE’RE NOT TRYING TO RECREATE CHICAGO OR NEW YORK.” - Sadie Cline

carbon in those grown plants,” says Velasco. Some developers hesitate to use mass timber because inch-for-inch it’s typically more expensive than steel or concrete. But that cost is almost always offset by the ease of construction: Mass timber structures can be quickly assembled by a small team of workers rather than the small army required to weld steel and pour concrete.

And the way ZGF does it, mass timber tells a story, too. “In our Portland Airport project, you can point to over 10,000 pieces of lattice and tell which forest in the

Northwest the wood came from, who owned the land, and how it was sustainably harvested,” says Velasco. “As jurisdictions continue to adopt safety codes that are friendlier towards mass timber, you’re going to see it more and more, including here in Denver.”

A NEW VISION FOR BALL ARENA

There’s a chance mass timber will find its way into one of the dozens of buildings set to replace acres of parking that surround Ball Arena. In fact, it’s difficult to imagine a bigger opportunity to leave an imprint on Denver than the swath

of asphalt that currently separates the River Development from the Auraria Higher Education Campus.

“When you have 55 acres of land under one owner, you’ve got a unique opportunity to create a holistic view of what a new downtown neighborhood can be,” says Cline. “We’re not trying to recreate Chicago or New York. We know that people move to Colorado because of the emphasis on family, work-life balance, and the incredible outdoor venues, but right now, very few families live downtown. We see Ball Arena as a



Photos: Benjamin Benschneider



Photo: Lara Swimmer

PAE Living Building

The PAE Living Building in Portland’s Old Town district is designed and engineered to last 500 years. Onsite and dedicated offsite solar generate 110% of the energy needed to run the building—and any additional capacity is shared with the city grid. The building uses rainwater capture, greywater treatment, nutrient recovery, and a five-story vacuum flush composting system to shrink its environmental footprint.





Photo: Charlie Schuck

Here Here



Microsoft

ZGF has designed office space for Microsoft for 25 years, including this 7-million-square-foot campus in Redmond, Washington, which has colorful rec-room vibes at every turn.



Photos: Benjamin Benschneider



Google, Spruce Goose

In Playa Vista, California, the hangar built for Howard Hughes's "Spruce Goose" back in 1943 is now home to Google employees. ZGF's goal was to create a four-level building-within-a-building at a more human scale—honoring the innovations of the past while celebrating Google's moonshot ethos.

Photos: Connie Zhou

complete neighborhood—one that provides housing for everyone, not just single people working at tech companies.”

Cline spent three months living downtown with her family until she realized childcare was almost impossible to find. That experience, combined with the changes wrought by the pandemic, have prompted her team to look at the ways multiple generations can live in the same community—if not the very same home—and how an urban core can accommodate those shifts.

In her years at ZGF, Cline has gotten used to talking to internal stakeholders looking to build one or two structures. But the Ball Arena redevelopment is much more than one building. To that

end, ZGF is looking at what popular suburban parks have to offer and getting a better understanding for the reasons some people have left the city.

“This is such a big project, we’re talking to everyone,” she says. “In the same way we’d interview dozens of employees to find out how a laboratory benefits an entire college campus, we want to understand how a single building can benefit an entire community—because today’s buildings are so costly, they need to serve a much wider audience.”

It’s a good thing the area around Ball Arena is already served by two light-rail transit stations that can offer quick and easy access to retail shops, businesses, luxury condos, affordable apartments, and more. The next step is to persuade the

city to rezone the land for those activities, which could happen as soon as next year.

AND THE NEXT STEP FOR ZGF?

“Historically, a third of our revenue has come from higher education projects, and another third from health care, so we’re really excited to do more of that work in Colorado, along with our private-sector work,” says Cline. A few months ago, ZGF started work on the Boulder Western City Campus—the site of a former hospital to be redesigned for affordable housing and a municipal building. Cline says the goal is to build it all to Net-Zero Energy standards, which presents the perfect opportunity for ZGF to leave its impression on Colorado, without leaving a mark. ■



Designer Abigail Plonkey of Maximalist Experience Design infuses Shinely's new Denver headquarters with colorful party-centric design elements that turn a playhouse into a workplace.

Shiny Happy Spaces!

WORDS: Kristin Kirsch Feldkamp
IMAGES: Jess Blackwell

While touring spaces for the fashion brand Shinely's new Denver headquarters, CEO Chris White saw a place whose design floored him. He had to know who designed it. "The interior design made the space seem less like an office and more like a fun place to hang out with your friends—like an awesome bar or retail space," says White. Shinely didn't move into that office space, but they did hire the designer, Abigail Plonkey, founder of Maximalist Experience Design.

Plonkey was immediately interested in the project. "When you look at Shinely, you see a fun, playful, irreverent fashion company that makes underwear, party clothes, and everything in between." Shinely's mission, she says, is to make the world take itself less seriously, something the world seems to want. In just a few years, Shinely has grown exponentially from a small startup in Boulder into a company with over two million customers.

The office space Shinely settled into is in LoHi, in the same building as the lauded local restaurant El Five that was designed by BOSS.architecture. They took the floor just below the restaurant, which they cheekily call El Four. Although one floor down, Shinely's headquarters shares the same sweeping, unobstructed city views El Five is so well known for.



Shiny
Happy
Spaces!

“EACH CONCEPT THAT WE CREATE IS COMPLETELY TAILORED TO EACH CLIENT, EACH STORY, AND EACH PROJECT. EVERY DETAIL IS UNIQUE. THE SENSE OF MAXIMALISM IS IN MAXIMIZING EACH SPACE AND THE STORY THAT WE CAN TELL WITHIN.” - Abigail Plonkey



TOP: To create a variety of work spaces, Plonkey used custom-made stations by Branch alongside Loop phone booths in the main area, a combination that allows for open desk seating and private video chats. The Loop phone booths have acoustic walls, seating, and power supply. ABOVE: “The goal was to create an environment where employees feel inspired to be creative, collaborative, and inventive,” says Plonkey. She included spaces in the design where products could be displayed and even photographed. The Work Room gives the product development team space to spread out and play with samples.

NBBJ who designed the Hana Bank headquarters in South Korea wrote an article entitled “Design an Office that People Want to Come Back To” earlier this year for the Harvard Business Review. The article shares a series of lessons learned and principles applied from the design project—and providing a variety of flexible workspace configurations was a key recommendation. Giving employees a “combination of experiences encourages worker agency while still providing structure.” Plonkey’s design for Shinely includes an abundance of working arrangements: lounge areas, worktables, phone booths, a boardroom, and smaller meeting rooms.

When you step off the elevator and enter the office, you walk under an awning of Shinely sunglasses. A perforated metal frame covered with hundreds of shades acts as a portal into the Shinely world. The sunglasses art installation is followed by a pool-party themed lounge area with cabanas and a large neon sign by the Denver-based artist Scott Young that says *Shine On*. “Whether you’re there day or night the neon glows. It literally shines on,” says Plonkey. There’s another neon sign by Young in the boardroom that says *Stay Weird*. It hangs in a window.

Both taglines *Shine On* and *Stay Weird* were key company phrases Shinely shared with Plonkey. The taglines echo the company’s →135

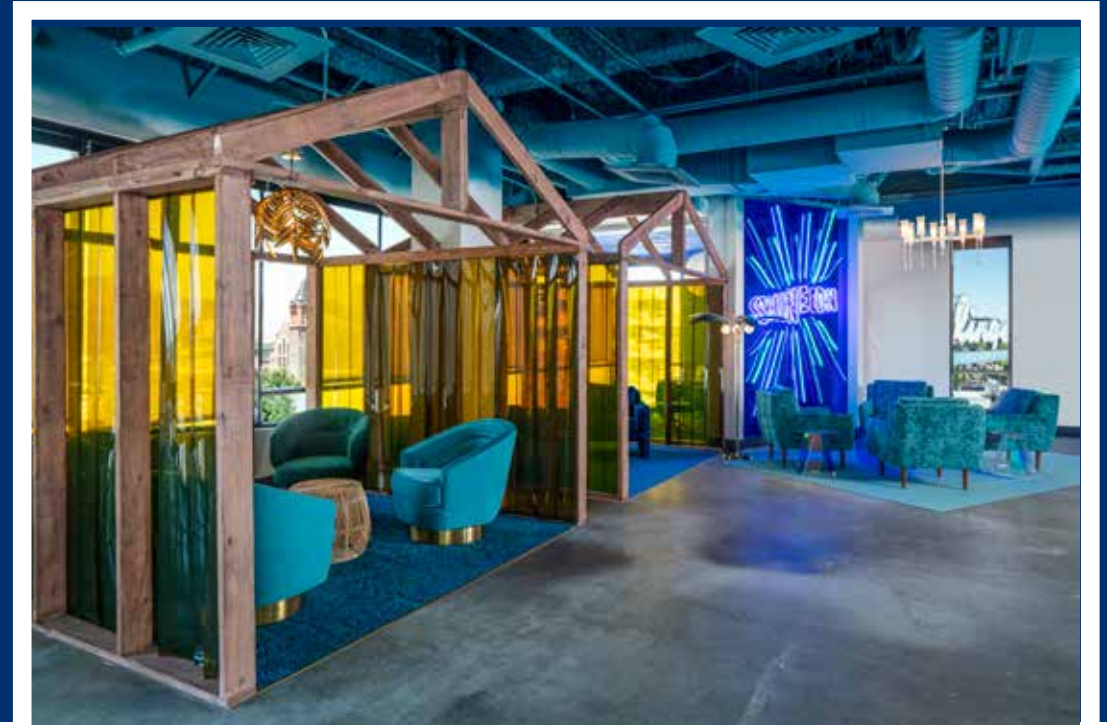
Thanks to Plonkey’s office glow up, the interior views are now as eye-catching as the views outside. But that isn’t surprising. Plonkey has worked as an interior designer for over fifteen years. She was the brand experience director at OZ Architecture before venturing out on her own to start her creative agency, Maximalist. Still, she thinks some might be surprised to find out about her work in interior design. She’s well known in Denver for her other company, Thrive Pop Up, which creates temporary immersive experiences for the food and beverage industry.

Inspired a bit by maximalist design, Plonkey doesn’t believe the credo that more is more. Maximalism for her is about maximizing the experience. “Each concept that we create is completely tailored to each client, each story, and each project. Every detail is unique. The sense of maximalism is in maximizing each space and the story that we can tell within.”

For Shinely’s headquarters, that meant drawing inspiration from the company’s mission, textile patterns, irreverent approach to design, and even sunglasses. That inspiration was then distilled into an atmosphere of serious fun, creating a place where work and play aren’t opposites but instead coexist productively. And you can see touches of the sort of maximalism that has origins in the Memphis Design Group, founded in Milan by architect Ettore Sottsass in 1980. Highly saturated colors and contrasted textures, along with an exuberant attitude, dominate the Shinely headquarters.

In addition to creating an atmosphere that inspires creativity and collaboration, White wanted to entice employees to come into work, especially after the pandemic necessitated working from home for such a long time. It’s a straightforward objective, although how to achieve it is less clear and certainly something many companies and design firms are focused on. The members of architecture firm

In the boardroom, Plonkey chose Interface carpet tiles for ease of replacement. Tom Dixon pendant lights hang over the long boardroom table. Artist Scott Young crafted a neon sign for the space that reads *Stay Weird*, one of Shinely’s mantras. It’s mounted in the window behind the bar and just above skyscraper line. For a playful riff on 70s wood-paneled walls, Plonkey designed a metallic wallpaper that was printed by Astek.



LEFT: Upon entering the office, you arrive in a lounge area with an impressive Scott Young neon artwork that reads *Shine On*. TOP: In front of the sign are Joybird lounge chairs which sit next to pool cabana conversation areas. ABOVE LEFT: The kitchen is bananas, literally. "Custom gold banana Maximalist wallcovering gives the kitchen pizzazz," says Plonkey. ABOVE RIGHT: In the photo studio a Blu Dot bar-height community table and stools encourage collaboration, flexibility, and work.



The overall design concept was 70s playhouse, which led Plonkey to a retro color palette. The Shine On conference room has custom Maximalist magenta and silver starburst wallpaper with magenta lounge chairs. The boardroom's Joybird sofa (RIGHT, TOP) is a spicy cinnamon brown that looks comfortable for a work chat or afterhours soiree. Purple Joybird swivel chairs in the Studio 54 room (RIGHT, BELOW) sit beneath a Tom Dixon disco ball light.

origins—the name Shinely comes from moonshine—and help create an afterhours party atmosphere. White told Plonkey he wanted the office to be a place where employees wanted to hang out after work and bring their friends, so there's a bar in the boardroom that doubles as a work counter. "Of course, I had to give them a bottle of moonshine," Plonkey says about the bar.

"The color we chose for the face of the bar is actually named Royal Liqueur," says Plonkey, who worked closely with general contractor Chris Jenkins of X-Colo Design Build on the project. Plonkey believes that more than anything, the bold color choices make this project thoroughly distinct. "A lot can be done with paint," she adds. "We painted the entire ceiling and that transformed the space. The fun was in bringing in the colors."

Each conference room has a different color palette and theme, as well as custom-designed and printed wallpaper from Plonkey's company Emporium Collection. The electric jungle conference room's wallpaper was inspired by a Shinely suit print. Another conference room is dressed up by a pink starburst wallpaper. "The custom wallpaper in the boardroom looks like wood paneling you would see in a 70s house," says Plonkey. "But it has a touch of glam."

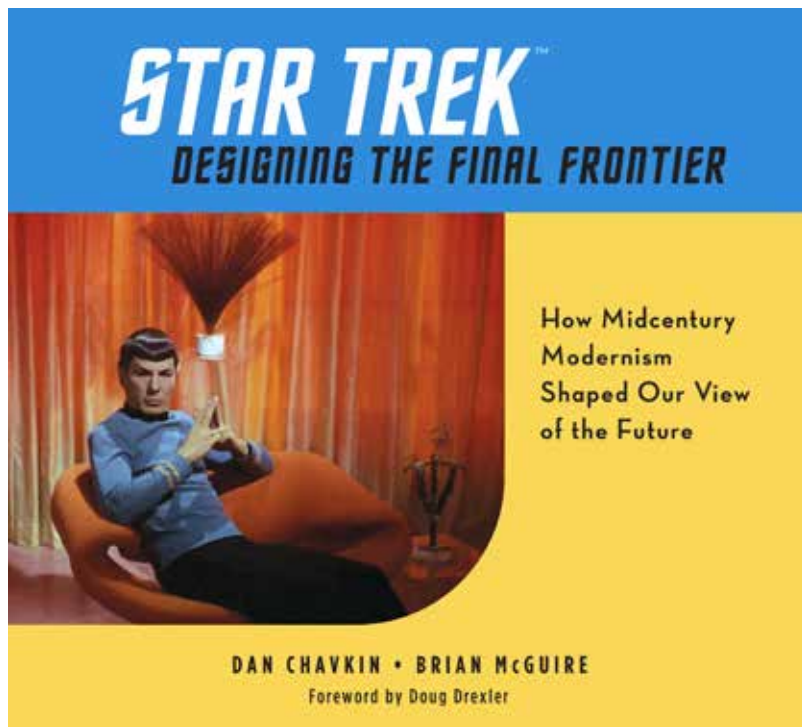
Having a vibrant, playful, entertaining place to work with various workspace configurations has helped encourage employees to come into the office. After the remodel, White asked Plonkey to add more workstations to accommodate the growth. "The team loves the space," says White. "The retro boardroom and the neon signs are favorite elements. And they provide an interesting, memorable experience for guests and partners when they visit."

Plonkey is excited that the new space inspired Shinely staff to shoot products onsite rather than at an offsite location they used before. When work and play boldly go hand-in-hand and encourage thinking outside of the office—well, we'll cheers to that. ■



Shiny
Happy
Spaces!





BEAM ME UP, SCOTTY—AND GRAB THE SALT SHAKERS!

A compendium of mid-century modern furnishings that boldly goes where no book has gone before!

WORDS: Vanessa Kauffman Zimmerly

Since *Star Trek*'s first U.S.S. Enterprise landed on American TV sets in 1966, Trekkies have been treated to a rotating cast of mid-century modern design greats. Now, nearly six decades since its inception, the furnishings that made the franchise are chronicled in Dan Chavkin and Brian McGuire's book, *Star Trek™: Designing the Final Frontier*, out this year from Simon & Schuster imprint Weldon Owen.

As the book explains, the choice to outfit Captain Kirk's interstellar odysseys with iconic pieces by

Paul McCobb, Milo Baughman, and Joe Colombo—to name but a few of the featured designers—was made by The Original Series art director Matt Jefferies. He selected these pieces after visiting the 1964–65 New York World's Fair, an event described by Doug Drexler in the book's foreword as “the nexus of Mid-century Modern sci-fi extrapolation.” These then-contemporary pieces were recognized by Jefferies as simultaneously relevant to the current era and representative of a bright collective future—or should we say, the next generation?

Organized by seasons, the book gives in-depth information on every aspect of the Starfleet aesthetic, from salt shakers to swivel chairs, stoneware to sofas. This Atomic Age deep-dive provides production notes on episodes from “The Man Trap” (featuring Wilhelm Wagenfeld's plot-driving shakers) to “Operation Annihilate,” detailing decisions made on interior design, furniture, accessories, and wardrobe.

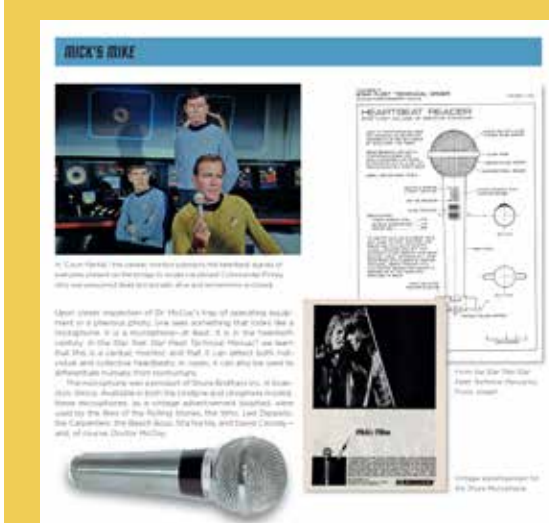
The narrative is accompanied by an annotated Catalog of Objects, an index of vintage mid-century advertisements, replications of rarely seen storyboards



“I CONCEIVED THE IDEA FOR THIS BOOK NOT AS A DEVOTED TREK FAN, BUT RATHER AS A MIDCENTURY MODERN ENTHUSIAST. AS I BEGAN TO WATCH MORE EPISODES OF THE SHOW, LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT THE THREE SEASONS OF *STAR TREK* WOULD BE HOST TO SO MANY EXAMPLES OF IMPORTANT MIDCENTURY MODERN DESIGN, PLACED THOUGHTFULLY AND CAREFULLY BY THE ART DIRECTOR AND SET DECORATORS.” - Dan Chavkin

and concept sketches, and chapters on the influence of Futurism and Brutalism—architectural styles that *Star Trek* creators rightly believed to have an interplanetary appeal.

“Hollywood production design distills who we are as a culture, defines who we are to become in the distant future, and where we have been in the far-flung past,” writes Drexler, explaining how Jefferies was smart to instill *Star Trek* with “the intrinsic futurism, boldness, and courageousness embodied by the mid-century design aesthetic.” While today the show harnesses a certain nostalgia, it continues to inspire a forward-looking spirit—in the same way mid-century modernism has proven perpetually relevant. Both are among the most impactful and longest-running cultural trends, and now you don't have to leave your living room, or even turn on your TV, to see them merge across space and time. 📺



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