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On the cover: Catskills Guest House and Artist's Studio, designed by Cutler Anderson Architects. Photo by David Sundberg/Esto.

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UP FRONT



When Frank Lloyd Wright designed a house alongside the Millstone River in Somerset County, N.J., he couldn't have predicted that flooding would cause it to move 1,200 miles away. Neither did Lawrence and Sharon Tarantino, who bought the Bachman Wilson House in 1988. In 2012, after years of water intrusion, the Tarantinos—husband and wife architects and co-founders of Tarantino Studio, a Millstone, N.J.-based firm specializing in the restoration of Wright buildings—decided to put their house on the market. “We couldn’t mitigate it in any other way,” says Lawrence Tarantino, AIA. In January, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art acquired the Bachman Wilson House for its Bentonville, Ark., campus. “Obviously, in a perfect world, you would allow it to stay where it is, but clearly, if it does that, it won’t last much longer. One more Sandy and it’s gone,” says Arkansas architect Marlon Blackwell, FAIA. But the situation could be worse: Blackwell says that the works of architect E. Fay Jones, an Arkansas native and protégé of Wright, will provide context for the Usonian house. In turn, Wright’s Usonian house will serve as context for the University of Arkansas’s Fay Jones School of Architecture, which is working with Crystal Bridges to develop a year-long program that will provide research opportunities for students and information for visitors. —CAROLINE MASSIE

UP FRONT



Architect's Choice Elizabeth Whittaker



Textile. Well before FilzFelt helped bring felt to the commercial design market, Whittaker sought it out for its tactility, sound absorption abilities, and beauty. “It looks great as a contrasting material to smoother finishes, such as tile, concrete, and wood,” she says.



Artist. Toshiko Horiuchi MacAdam appeals to Whittaker’s maker side. The architect admires the artist’s license to handcraft “playful, fantastical,” and colorful built environments. “She’s doing the kind of projects that I’d like to do, but I can’t because I operate in the world of architecture.”

Like many firms, Merge Architects got its start on small-scale projects, such as storefronts. A decade later, the boundary between a project and the city—the streetscape—continues to fascinate the Boston firm’s founder and principal, Elizabeth Whittaker. “We’re always trying to find ways, materially and conceptually, to frame the public,” she says. “We’re interested in how people interact in our projects.”

Merge draws people to its work by using readily available materials, such as wooden dowels and cotton straps, to create “highly custom moments,” she says. “That’s how we define the reality of the budget and further our aspirations beyond the off-the-shelf.” When the one-off design elements are too complicated or expensive for a general contractor to construct, Merge’s staff takes on the task. “We are very hands-on in terms of making the project when we can or need to be,” she says. —WANDA LAU

Fixtures. The no-frills design behind Boffi’s faucets “cuts to the chase for me,” Whittaker says. Their “minimal, pared-down detailing... has a visual and physical weight that is lovely.”



Flooring. The pale hues and proportion of the planks’ width to wood grain draw Whittaker to dub Dinesen “the most beautiful oak flooring on the market,” she says.

↓ For Yak & Yeti, a restaurant in Somerville, Mass., Merge integrated nine chrome-dipped light bulbs into a woven wall of cotton straps to recall the nine eyes, or lives, of Buddha and the landscape of Mt. Everest.



ILLUSTRATION BY KELSEY DAKE; CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY FILZFELT; COURTESY DINESEN; COURTESY MERGE ARCHITECTS; COURTESY ABOUT WATER; ROBERTO BOCACINO (COURTESY ENEL CONTEMPORANEA)

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Residential Architect

UP FRONT

For Sale: Glass House

With projects such as the display-case museum design for the Corning Museum of Glass, New York-based Thomas Phifer and Partners have refined a reputation for working with glazing. The firm's house at the base of the Rocky Mountains in Boulder, Colo., is no exception—blurring the distinction between indoors and outdoors as natural light reigns. The 5,026-square-foot Boulder House, built in 2008, is sited on an incline adjacent to open outdoor space, with entrances on both the first and second levels. Steps lead from the raw steel doors of the detached two-car garage to the three-story, two-bedroom residence. (It originally featured four bedrooms.) The house, which also includes an art gallery, a pet shower, and a 1,000-bottle wine cellar. Goodacre & Company Real Estate is listing the home for \$4.25 million. —SARA JOHNSON



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Case Study Kitchen

Gallery House, Markham, Ontario, Canada, Reza Aliabadi [rzlbd]

- 1 Refrigerator, ovens, dishwasher, Miele 2 Black Galaxy granite countertops 3 Custom cabinets with a semi-gloss white paint finish, designed by Reza Aliabadi [rzlbd], fabricated by Elegant Kitchen
4 Marble Kolkata kitchen island countertops and backsplash



This kitchen was selected from RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECT's user-submitted Project Gallery. Find your perfect kitchen recipes and upload your own at residentialarchitect.com/projects/kitchen.

Design & Construction Week Data Dive

18.3%

Kicking off a year in which residential construction is forecasted to top 1 million new starts, industry leaders from land development to product design gathered in Las Vegas for the inaugural Design & Construction Week, held Feb. 4–6. Accompanying the chatter of a continued warm-up in the home construction market this year was a wealth of data to quantify the trend. Here's a by-the-numbers review of the housing stats worth noting. —HALLIE BUSTA

The Census Bureau reports that residential construction spending—led by multifamily housing—totaled \$352.6 billion at the end of last year, an 18.3 percent increase from 2012.

20%

By the end of 2015, housing starts for the top 20 percent of states with the strongest housing-market health will be back to normal production levels, reports David Crowe, the National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) chief economist. The bottom 20 percent of states will remain below 84 percent of normal production levels.

1.15 million

The NAHB forecasts that the housing market will surpass the long-awaited benchmark of 1 million housing starts in 2014, with 1.15 million total. This will be an increase of 24.5 percent over the 928,000 starts in 2013.

340,000

Multifamily housing starts grew fourfold to 340,000 in 2013 from the sector's 2009 trough of 82,000, according to NAHB data. Driving development are a lack of existing multifamily inventory; a need for housing by individuals born after 1980; and side effects of the recession, such as tighter mortgage lending, which is turning hopeful homeowners into renters. The rate of growth may slow soon, as the sector levels off to a more sustainable pace.

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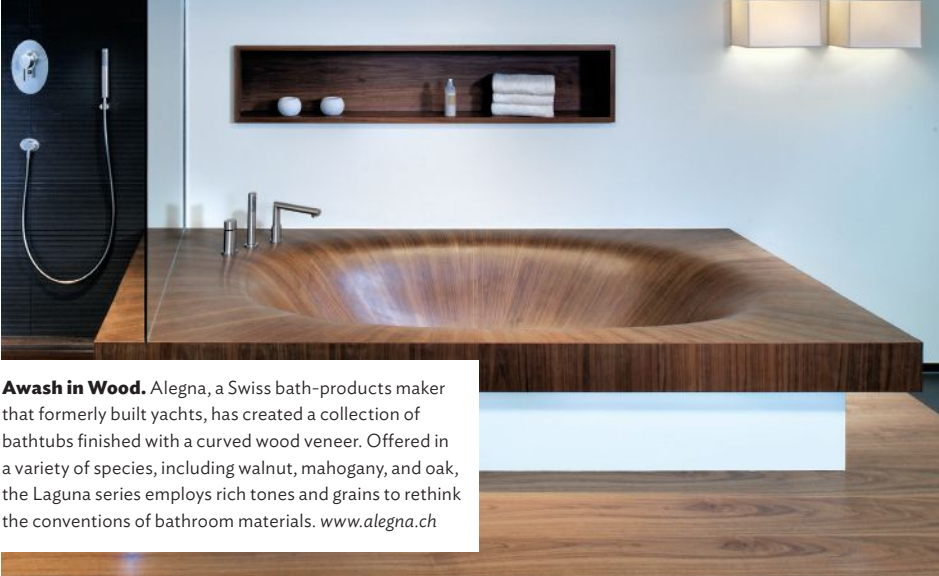
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UP FRONT



Awash in Wood. Alegna, a Swiss bath-products maker that formerly built yachts, has created a collection of bathtubs finished with a curved wood veneer. Offered in a variety of species, including walnut, mahogany, and oak, the Laguna series employs rich tones and grains to rethink the conventions of bathroom materials. www.alegna.ch

Hot Finds Form enhances function with this trio of new and re-issued designs.



Strong Form. The injection-molded, glass-reinforced nylon Y Chair from Tom Dixon Studio in London boasts an ergonomic form with lumbar support and indentations to fit a user's shoulders and spine. Available with a white or black shell and a variety of bases including stained oak legs (shown) with a copper-plated support. tomdixon.net

Bright Design. London-based studio Hulger is out to craft a high-end, energy-efficient CFL lamp with Plumen 002. Launched with the help of a successful Kickstarter campaign this year, the non-dimmable, 2500K lamp is meant to replace 30W incandescents and measures 6.29" tall, 2.55" wide, and 2.59" deep. plumen.com

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AIA VOICES

POWER HOURS | A PACT WORTH MAKING

In 2011, AIA San Francisco's Board of Directors approved the ARE Pact, an incentive-based program to help architects-to-be complete all seven parts of the Architect Registration Exam (ARE) in a calendar year. The program is in its second year and AIA SF plans to run the ARE Pact as long as there is a need amongst its emerging professionals. Under the leadership of Membership Manager Michelle Railsback and Executive Director Margie O'Driscoll (above, left and right), AIA SF is now working on a new program, IDP 500, to provide a path for interns to complete an additional 500 hours of Intern Development Program credit outside of the hours they receive through their internships.

IN CALIFORNIA, WE'VE ALL BEEN REALLY CONCERNED WITH the reality that more architects are retiring than are becoming licensed. That's going to create a net deficit over time, and our board approved the ARE Pact to try and make it easier for interns to complete all seven parts of their exams in a single year. Participants pay \$1,000 up front in exchange for an assigned study group, a group mentor, access to study materials, and a full battery of prep courses. If they sit for all seven parts of the exam, regardless of the outcome, they get that money back as well as a free one-year membership to AIA SF.

When we launched the program in 2012, we thought that maybe 25 to 30 people would sign up. But when 90 people signed

up within 12 hours of the opening of registration, we realized we had a lot of work to do to scale the program up. (For 2013, 75 people enrolled, but we expect that number to climb again next year.) In addition to the review courses, which are more academic, we also run a trivia night for ARE Pact members. It's informal, and it brings people together.

We have the support of so many of the firms in our chapter, and it feels great to create a sense of community around this initiative. Each study group is assigned a mentor—many of whom have also just completed the ARE process and have been recently licensed—and they want to pay it forward by helping folks behind them.

After the launch, we started getting calls from other chapters asking about the program, which was perfect because we intended to make the ARE Pact replicable. So it was a natural fit to apply for an AIA Innovation Fund grant, and in March 2014 we're going to take the general idea of the ARE Pact and start a new program called IDP 500. If you're an emerging professional with a structured role within your firm, it can be very difficult to earn core hours for IDP. The IDP 500 is an opportunity to earn those hours outside of a firm setting. —As told to William Richards **AIA**

➔ Learn more about AIA SF's ARE Pact at aia.org.



AIACOLLABORATION

TERMINAL CONDITION



ILLUSTRATION: MICHAEL GIBBS

Designing for our final days.

IN THE U.S., MORE THAN 10,000 PEOPLE TURN 65 EVERY DAY, and the senior citizen population, now over 40 million, will more than double in the next four decades. Life expectancy also continues to increase in the U.S., as it has each decade for the last century. These two trends have all sorts of implications—economic, social, political, and urban.

One thing remains unchanged, however—the cultural anathema of death. Even 40 years after psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’s groundbreaking book *On Death and Dying*, we still struggle with the inevitability of our own mortality, or a loved-one’s death, when all medical solutions have been exhausted. Design, however, can be useful in this difficult period of both certainty and uncertainty about the end.

“We are trying to move the cultural dial a little more towards accepting death by offering a public salon series,” says Dr. B.J. Miller, executive director of the Zen Hospice Project in San Francisco and a palliative care physician at the University of California, San Francisco. “The sheer volume of people who will be facing death, and the increasing number of people living with complex chronic illnesses, are tectonic forces that will bring this issue out of the margins.”

Informed by Buddhist teachings that encourage meeting the eventuality of death with equanimity and compassion, the nonprofit operates a six-bed hospice facility housed in a beautiful Victorian building, where there is nothing from the outside to distinguish it as a care facility, and where inside

and on the lush grounds, terminally ill people can face death in a comforting environment. “Of course, most people want to die in their own homes, but that’s simply not possible for everyone,” Miller says. “So we’ve tried to provide a home away from home.”

The ideal home, however, is relative.

“The idea of designing the optimal environment for end-of-life moments presupposes that all humans want the same thing, and I’m not sure that humans are as similar in this respect as we believe,” says Martin Siefering, AIA, a principal at Perkins Eastman and a member of AIA’s Design for Aging Knowledge Community advisory group.

“We have also seen that, as hospice services provide a great deal of end-of-life care in patients’ homes, patients who arrive at a hospice are more medically frail and functionally compromised than in the past,” Siefering says. “This has led to questions about whether the natural or man-made amenities remain as important.”

These and other considerations are likely to be explored methodically. In fact, Miller was involved in a recent four-year grant project funded by the Fetzer Institute that facilitated collaboration within a small group of academics in varied disciplines to foster integrated approaches to higher education. As its case in point, the Life Death Rebirth project chose to explore how design principles can stimulate life-affirming approaches toward death.



One of the project's initial reports quotes the writer and activist Ken Worpole's *Modern Hospice Design: The Architecture of Palliative Care*:

A hospice is a place where ordinary people face up to extraordinary challenges and, with the help of skilled and dedicated health care professionals, triumph in the face of progressive physical deterioration and sequential losses. People live until they die and it is the job of the hospice to support and enable each patient to live their life as fully as possible. It is a place for reflection and a place to search for meaning and purpose. For many, it is perhaps the first time that they have seriously addressed the fundamental issues of life and death. The hospice building must be sympathetic to, and supportive of, our best efforts. The building must be planned to the finest detail, because we cannot afford to get it wrong.

With this message as a cue, the grant recipients, per their report, would devise courses for their respective students to collaborate, "applying knowledge from architecture, medicine,

**"We still have a long way to go in
the U.S. in regard to designing places
that can enhance quality of life in
the face of death." —Ekaterini Vlahos**

and literary and writing studies, to develop real world approaches to the challenge of improving the experience of death in the American medical system."

One of the Fetzer project team members, Ekaterini Vlahos, chair of the Architecture Department at the University of Colorado Denver College of Architecture and Planning, involved her students in various related design projects, including the development of conceptual renovation plans for Zen House.

"The students who have chosen to work on this project are very mindful in how they design space, while making connections to a broader cultural and natural context," Vlahos says. "It's encouraging to see young architecture students exploring this subject, but we still have a long way to go in the U.S. in regard to designing places that can enhance quality of life in the face of death."

In fact, an original inspiration for Vlahos and her fellow grantees was Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres, most of which are located in the U.K., which represent some of the finest examples of the transcendent power of design. Established in 1993 by writer, theorist, and landscape designer Charles Jencks and his wife, Maggie Keswick Jencks (who died two years later from breast cancer), the centers have become a respected network of nonresidential drop-in facilities to serve anyone affected by cancer. A number of architects, including Frank Gehry, FAIA, Zaha Hadid, Hon. FAIA, and Richard Rogers, Hon. FAIA, have been involved in the designs, which offer respite—and even an uplifting atmosphere—created specifically for cancer patients and their loved ones.

"Above all," Maggie Jencks said during the planning phase of Maggie's Centres, "what matters is not to lose the joy of living in the fear of dying." —Ben Ikenson **AIA**

AIAPERPECTIVE

A SPECIAL CONNECTION



PHOTO: WILLIAM STEWART

RECENTLY, AS I WAS LISTENING TO A CD OF CHAMBER MUSIC, I busied myself skimming over the program notes. To my surprise, reading about Johann Sebastian Bach and an early client, Prince Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar, kicked off thoughts about the special relationship that exists between architects and their clients.

The program narrative said that when the prince returned from a shopping spree in Amsterdam to Weimar, where Bach was employed, he brought copies of the latest Italian music. The impact on Bach, who had access to the prince's library, was enormous, and the course of music was altered for centuries to come. That's the magic made possible by an enlightened patron.

As an architect, I'm always eager to see our profession celebrated for the often extraordinary work we do on all scales, from ambitious urban plans to modest single-family houses. I also know from the findings of the research that underpins the Institute's Repositioning Initiative that one of the highest priorities of AIA members is a desire to cultivate a greater appreciation and understanding of the value of our work.

This focus on the power of our own design thinking is all well and good, but do we give enough credit to the critical role played by those who commission us? Yes, there is the fee for our services. But far more important to the quality of our work is the nature of the relationship between us and the client, and nowhere is that relationship more intimate or more emotional than in residential design. As Washington, D.C., architect Hugh Newell Jacobsen once put it: "When I design a project for a client, my shoes are underneath their bed."

Who among us doesn't have a horror story wherein communication between client and architect broke down over a misunderstanding or, worse, over a stubborn demand to cut a corner? The experience is no better when working for a disengaged client whose interest stops at cost per square foot and schedule. We can't do our best work with clients who don't challenge us, or who don't demand excellence.

So while we applaud one another for work well done, let's not forget to add some praise for one of the most important members of the design team—the engaged and discerning client. It's their support that allows us to do more and better than we could do on our own. **AIA**

Helene Combs Dreiling, FAIA, 2014 President



CATSKILLS GUEST HOUSE AND ARTIST STUDIO

CATSKILL MOUNTAINS, N.Y.
CUTLER ANDERSON ARCHITECTS

TEXT BY KATIE GERFEN
PHOTOS BY DAVID SUNDBERG/ESTO

Throughout his architecture career, James Cutler, FAIA, of Bainbridge Island, Wash.-based Cutler Anderson Architects has pursued the idea of designing houses and structures that have a connection to the living landscape around them. So it is only fitting that, as he says of one of his latest completed projects, this new guest house and artist studio in the Catskill Mountains—in the southeastern part of New York State—“basically floats in the landscape.”

But Cutler’s quest to understand this particular plot of land near Lew Beach, N.Y., did not start with a guest house. It began in the late 1980s, when he completed the same family’s main vacation house located elsewhere on the property. That’s a more traditional home, but one in which Cutler expressed his growing fascination with ecosystems through more representational means. Having spent time working with Native Americans in southeast Alaska, he became fascinated by their “innate respect for living systems,” he says. “And I was groping for a way to note that I got it.”

In the first house, this notation took the form of decoration, with stair rails carved to look like swimming fish and light fixtures that look like dragonflies and butterflies. Over the intervening years, however, Cutler’s approach to designing for living systems has evolved. “It wasn’t what I did that mattered,” he says. “It’s what I choreograph, where I directed people’s eyes to the outside. That is more important than decorative vestiges of something that isn’t there anymore.”

You can see this refined ideology in the 838-square-foot floating jewel box of a guest house and artists studio that now sits in the shadow of his earlier house. In the new retreat, there are few decorative flourishes, and the minimal, modern structure is designed to maximize views of the wooded area. It was designed to serve primarily as an artist studio for the owner, a large-format photographer who focuses on natural themes, so light and view were paramount. And when the artist is in residence here, Cutler says, “he is totally connected to the place.”



↑ Seen from the northwest, the guest house and artist studio appears to float in the landscape; the structure is supported by steel columns on piers to accommodate the steeply sloping grade.

→ The entrance to the guest house and artist studio (a closeup of which appears on the previous spread) is sheltered by a pitched-roof canopy. Steel storage racks for firewood and bicycles separate the entry walkway from the adjacent parking space.



If there is anything resembling decoration in the guest house, it takes the form of relentless attention to architectural details. Visitors enter through a covered carport complete with bespoke racks for firewood and bicycles. Thin Cor-Ten columns anchored in concrete support the pitched, corrugated Cor-Ten roof. To prevent the concrete from staining over time, Cutler had part of the concrete routed out around each column base and the remaining space filled with molten lead to seal the joint. “Yes, I’m a compulsive jerk,” Cutler says, only half-joking, about how all those little details pile up. “Once you make one move, you go to make your next one.”

Inside, the house essentially comprises one long room. Wooden beams along the length of it, marking the transfer from the peaked ceiling to the vertical plane, are cross-braced with lengths of steel that slip into slots mid-way along the joists. Stainless steel rods in front of the view-capturing windows conceal flexible tubing, turning this design element into a custom radiator. Wooden cabinets by the front door contain a Murphy bed and kitchenette and conceal a bathroom.

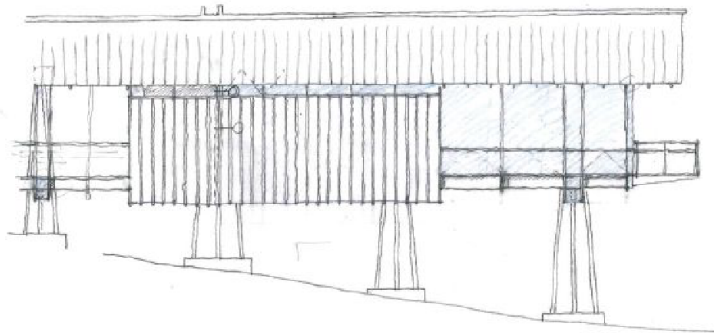
Despite the sheer number of details in play, “there’s nothing here that is willful,” Cutler says. “Each element comes from the natural world, and each building is designed so that it is a coherent and consistent whole.”

These details are the result of countless drawings, most done by hand and “drawn on airplanes,” Cutler says. The craftsman who realized many of them was Butch Alford from Alford Homes. A frequent collaborator of Cutler’s, Alford precut most of the materials in his Poulsbo, Wash., workshop and shipped them to the site in New York. Then, “he and his wife bought an Airstream and moved out there for two-and-a-half months to construct it,” Cutler says.

Ultimately, all of these elements converge to create a structure that is “so much a part of the landscape that it almost disappears,” Cutler says. He adds that the studio and guest house represent the distillation of his efforts to design in ways that “deal with the nature of the land in a thoughtful and empathetic way.”

As for the opportunity for the architect to revisit those ideals on the same plot where his efforts to design for living systems began? “We’re either growing or dying in this life, and I believe that I am still growing,” Cutler says. “Consequently, my view of what I do and what I feel strongly about, and how I can connect the two, has evolved to be—in many ways—simpler.”

Southeast Elevation Sketch



Floor Plan



- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Carport | 5. Murphy bed |
| 2. Wood storage | 6. Kitchenette |
| 3. Entrance | 7. Live/work area |
| 4. Bathroom | 8. Deck |







Project Credits

Project Catskills Guest House and Artist Studio, Catskill Mountains, N.Y.
Owner Withheld
Architect Cutler Anderson Architects, Bainbridge Island, Wash.—James Cutler, FAIA, Bruce Anderson (partners); Tom Cheney (project architect)
Contractor Alford Homes—Butch Alford
Structural Engineer Madden & Baughman Engineering—Jerome Madden
Excavation and Septic Barnhart Services
Surveyor Land Surveying
Size 838 square feet
Cost Withheld

Materials and Sources

Custom metal grilles Shoemaker Manufacturing shoemakermfg.com
Custom cabinets, doors, and bike rack Alford Homes alfordhomesinc.com
Custom shower enclosure and glazing Sullivan County Glassworks sullivancountyglassworks.com
Geothermal heat Deep Green Geothermal
Operable window frames Lindal Cedar Homes lindal.com
Cor-Ten steel roof Western States Decking rusticmetalroofing.com
Door and cabinet hardware Reveal Designs reveal-designs.com

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← The main living space is flooded with light from floor-to-ceiling windows, supplemented by glass-fronted light fixtures that run the length of the ceiling. Since heat loss is a concern in the mountain climate, radiant floors and a custom radiator system of stainless steel tubes that run in front of the glazing are supplemented by a wood stove.

↑ To facilitate the building's dual purpose as artist studio and guest house, Cutler incorporated two cabinets at the rear of the space—one pulls down into a bed and the other contains a kitchenette.

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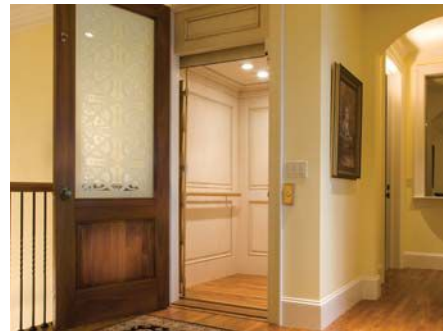
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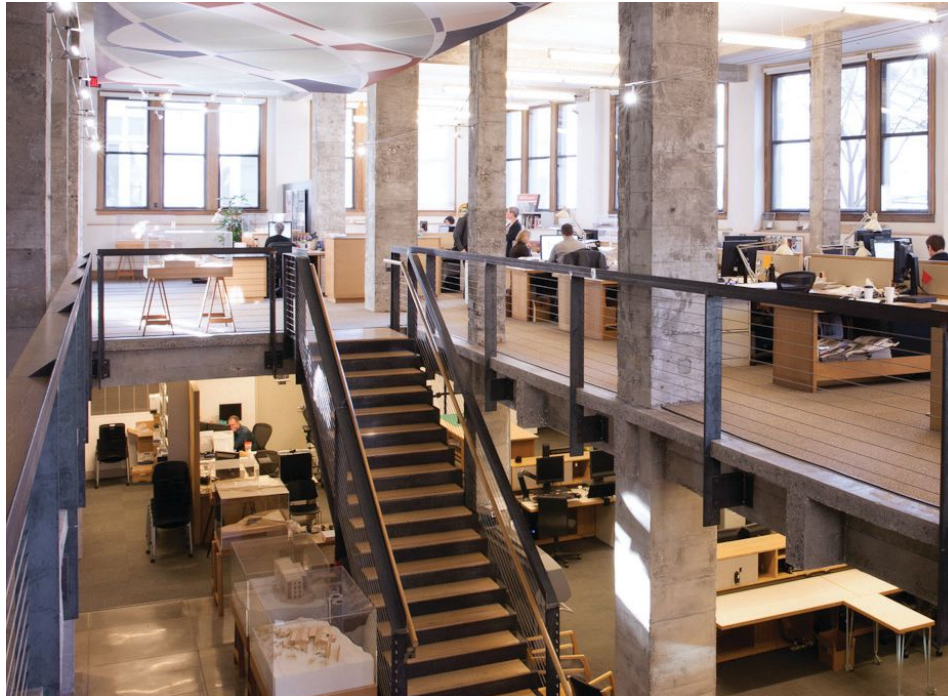
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WORKSPACE



THA Architecture PORTLAND

THA Architecture's office in the historic Balfour Guthrie building in Portland, Ore., stands at the intersection of the city's two, slightly skewed street grids. That explains the building's wedge-shaped footprint. It's also an apt metaphor for a firm that's all about finding the balance between dualities: history and sustainability, continuity and change, upstairs and downstairs.

Balfour, Guthrie & Co. was a San Francisco-based shipping firm that sustained major losses in that city's 1906 earthquake and fire. So when this building was constructed in 1913, THA principal Becca Cavell, FAIA, says, "one of the design drivers was that it be fireproof." In 2001, when THA's four senior partners bought the reinforced concrete building—then a rubber-stamp factory with ink-stained floors and painted-over windows—they took it in two directions at once, securing both LEED certification and a listing

on the National Register of Historic Places.

Behind the restored limestone façade, the firm's two-story space exposes the building's concrete bones, with a cutout in the ground-level slab that makes daylight available to the sub-grade level below. "It reflects the values we aspire to in our designs," says Jonah Cohen, AIA, also a principal at the 40-person firm. "Natural light, expression of structure, human scale, enduring materials."

Along with an open floor plan and workstations that are lined up "like a great big farm table," Cavell says, the bi-level configuration supports the firm's use of flexible project teams. "It reflects the way we operate," Cavell says. "No one has a permanent desk," and the imbalance between floors "really focuses us on moving people around." —BRUCE D. SNIDER

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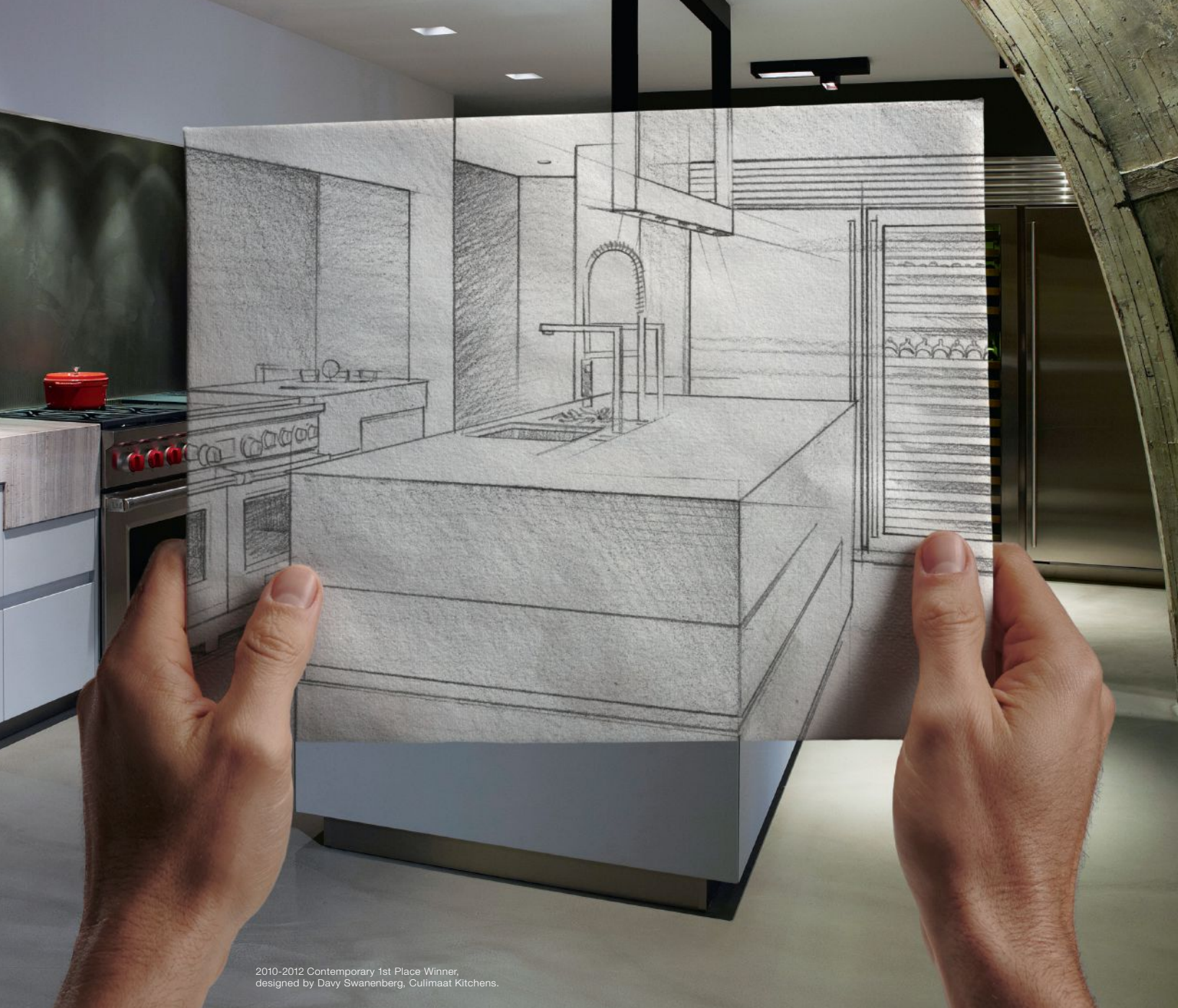
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