Constructs Yale Architecture
Spring 2011

Contents
2 Edward R. Bass Visiting Fellow
Vincent Lo in Conversation
3 KPF Discusses the China Studio
4 Makram el Kadi in Conversation
5 Discussion between Mario Carpo and Kurt W. Forster
6 Notes from the Archive: James Stirling, Architect and Teacher exhibition review by Kenneth Frampton
7 An Architect’s Legacy exhibition review by Robert Lister
8 “The Structure of Light: Richard Kelly and the Illumination of Modern Architecture” symposium review by Mark Loeffler
9 The Structure of Light: Richard Kelly and the illumination of Modern Architecture exhibition review by Stephen Harby
10 Paul Rudolph’s Lower Manhattan Expressway exhibition and panel discussion reviews by Timothy Rohan and Jacob Reidel
12 Scully on Tape interview and film review
13 Spring 2011 Events: Kevin Roche: Architecture as Environment “Middle Ground/Middle East” “Fugitive Geographies” symposium
16 In the Field: “It Happened at the World’s Fair” by Alan Plattus Small Scales, Big Change review by Kian Go
17 Measuring Sustainability: Interview with Umlal Mendis and Joyce Hsiang Cancun Summit by Michelle Addington
18 Book Reviews: Ike Kligerman Barkley: Houses review by George Knight Modern Architecture: Representation & Reality review by Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen A Landscape Manifesto review by Catherine Seavitt Terror and Wonder: Architecture in a Turbulent Age review by Deborah Gans
20 Fall 2010 Lectures
22 Fall 2010 Advanced Studios
Yale School of Architecture Books
24 Faculty News
Undergrad Architecture Studio in China
26 Alumni News
27 Vlock Building Project 2010 Maputo Modernism
Vincent Lo My first development project was in 1985, working on a private-sector participation scheme for the Hong Kong government to provide affordable housing that qualified residents of the city could purchase.

I learned most in the development of Xintiandi, as it was the first of its kind in Shanghai to combine preservation with a new food-and-entertainment hub in the city center. First I had to understand what the market needed and could accept, because the concept was new to China. Since the successful launch of this project, my company has been invited by many other provinces to undertake similar projects in different municipalities.

NR What was it like to be a developer in Shanghai in 1985, at the initial growth period of Chinese cities? How were you different in your approach to development?

Since Shanghai was in the beginning stage of its reform and just starting to open up. The property market wasn’t formed because the government allocated all housing, so there was little or no purchasing power. Therefore, my first project was to invest with the Communist Youth League in the development of a small three-star hotel in the center of Shanghai. The market wasn’t ready for development and a lot of the land was quite a few years before we ventured into property development projects there. Projects were done in cooperation with the government since the state had control of all land resources. With the reform policy taking effect and the Chinese economy growing at a consistently rapid rate, a huge demand for quality office, commercial, and residential land and buildings. Since the completion of Shanghai’s Xintiandi, Shui On Land has worked closely with the government in identifying opportunities to cater to the future needs of different cities. We undertook extensive research on the cities, studied and examined their economic infrastructures, histories, competitive strengths, resources, and opportunities and threats. Then, together with the government, we would propose the planning of a new landmark city-center redevelopment project.

NR How does one work with the government to coordinate projects? What is the process for acquiring development sites, and how do you organize contracts with them? Do you allow for change in a project? How do you think your approach can be applied to other markets? What do you hope to teach future architects before?

We did not hire a Chinese architect before. An architect’s viewpoint is the key in design and architecture. We also make use of the expertise of our partners. I also hope to help students see it from a property developer’s viewpoint.

NR What was your method for understanding and building flexibility into a project? Do you allow for change in a development?

We don’t build in too much flexibility into our development projects as we have undertaken very extensive and elaborate studies before coming up with our master plans and anticipating the needs and changes in the cities going forward. But should market conditions change dramatically, we don’t expect to have much trouble convincing the government to amend the master plan.

Before we took on the Chongqing project, we had carried out a lot of research on Chongqing and had a very clear idea as to which way the city would develop and grow and what kind of facilities would be required in the future. We have built that into our master plan and, we review the master plan on an annual basis. Thus, after six years, there hasn’t been any requirement to make an amendment to our original master plan.

NR Shanghai’s Xintiandi is your most well-known project. What led you to the concept of preserving the central core, developing new buildings, and creating the unique environment? And how was the preservation of scale an important issue? How did you work with architects and the government to incorporate the preservation of historic sites into your plans?

Xintiandi was an innovative development concept for Shanghai and China. We undertook the project because of the existence of the First Congress Hall of the Communist Party in the neighborhood. The government required us to preserve the street-scape and the ambience, and no tall buildings were to be allowed in the neighborhood. Therefore, we had to consider how to best make use of the historic stone-gate housing that is unique to Shanghai, how to preserve and make use of these buildings in the modern age. Since stone-gate architecture is not really suitable for today’s residential or commercial use, we had to adapt it for food and entertainment purposes. Nobody in China had been in this type of work at the time, so we invited Benjamin Wood, who was involved in the planning and design of Boston’s Faneuil Hall, to work with Shui On with the project. Wood spent a few months in Shanghai studying the stone-gate housing architecture and roaming the streets to get a feel for the local atmosphere so he could capture it in the design. We felt it was not advisable to just develop the project for tourists; our first target customers were the local people. So we also engaged the services of a Tongji University professor who was an expert on stone-gate housing to provide us with all the necessary-details about the design and architecture. We also made use of old building materials that we had taken from the demolished buildings we had to demolish to construct the new ones. This gave Xintiandi an authentic look.

NR Why did you not hire a Chinese architect before? What do you hope to teach future architects before?

We did not hire a Chinese architect before. What led you to the concept of preserving the central core, developing new buildings, and creating the unique environment? And how was the preservation of scale an important issue? How did you work with architects and the government to incorporate the preservation of historic sites into your plans?

NR Shanghai’s Xintiandi is your most well-known project. What led you to the concept of preserving the central core, developing new buildings, and creating the unique environment? And how was the preservation of scale an important issue? How did you work with architects and the government to incorporate the preservation of historic sites into your plans?

Xintiandi was an innovative development concept for Shanghai and China. We undertook the project because of the existence of the First Congress Hall of the Communist Party in the neighborhood. The government required us to preserve the street-scape and the ambience, and no tall buildings were to be allowed in the neighborhood. Therefore, we had to consider how to best make use of the historic stone-gate housing that is unique to Shanghai, how to preserve and make use of these buildings in the modern age. Since stone-gate architecture is not really suitable for today’s residential or commercial use, we had to adapt it for food and entertainment purposes. Nobody in China had been in this type of work at the time, so we invited Benjamin Wood, who was involved in the planning and design of Boston’s Faneuil Hall, to work with Shui On with the project. Wood spent a few months in Shanghai studying the stone-gate housing architecture and roaming the streets to get a feel for the local atmosphere so he could capture it in the design. We felt it was not advisable to just develop the project for tourists; our first target customers were the local people. So we also engaged the services of a Tongji University professor who was an expert on stone-gate housing to provide us with all the necessary-details about the design and architecture. We also made use of old building materials that we had taken from the demolished buildings we had to demolish to construct the new ones. This gave Xintiandi an authentic look.

NR Why did you not hire a Chinese architect before? What do you hope to teach future architects before?

We did not hire a Chinese architect before. What led you to the concept of preserving the central core, developing new buildings, and creating the unique environment? And how was the preservation of scale an important issue? How did you work with architects and the government to incorporate the preservation of historic sites into your plans?

NR Shanghai’s Xintiandi is your most well-known project. What led you to the concept of preserving the central core, developing new buildings, and creating the unique environment? And how was the preservation of scale an important issue? How did you work with architects and the government to incorporate the preservation of historic sites into your plans?
Nina Rappaport Kohn Pedersen Fox has worked on numerous large-scale projects that target developer-driven. How would you say this work in this has informed your practice in terms of working with a client who is not the use of the building? What is your role in terms of guiding a building project’s program and use? Jamie von Klemperer Developers have a broader purview than simply attaching a single function to a building; the better option would be a developer investing themselves into the functions. If the buildings contain retail, the developers get into the business of merchandising, and branding. Or if they are residential community, they invest in the apartment and furniture layouts. As architects, we have become experts in each of these areas. In many ways it is like a game, in which we might serve and initiate the idea, but they hit the ball back.

Paul Katz One of the most interesting things about working with developers is that almost all our clients are repeat clients. We don’t spend a lot of time looking for new work, and as a consequence of these great relationships, we are able to work on projects left off for their last project. It saves starting from scratch and ultimately leads to better, more sustainable projects.

NR The great client is often responsible for a daring design or new program type because they often have financial possibilities. When have you influenced a developer in changing the brief and helped them realize a new program type for new purposes, for example, in your projects in China? Do you direct your work in that way?

How did you start working with a developer called Hang Lung to re-skin a building that was already under construction? It was a very modest project, but we added value through design. Then they asked us to design Plaza 66, which was more significant. Our New York City office, along with a certain Italian exterior-wall company, or a curtain wall contractor, brought in an architect to create an upper level for the exterior wall and public spaces. This approach was different from other firms, and it allowed us to maintain a level of control over detailing and execution that was unique. Our New York City office, along with a certain group of engineers and contractors— an Italian exterior-wall company, or a curtain wall engineer from the Philippines—worked together to raise the level of construction. There is a long chain of international export projects working in China.

JK Absolutely, today the tables are beginning to turn. The biggest curtain-wall company in the world is now in the northern Chinese city of Shenyang. If we were to take a look at the project, it is not the architect like us and developers like Shui On Land working with the government to solve problems and provide solutions that the Chinese city has experienced an unprecedented economic expansion.

NR With the second wave of development in China following the Olympics, did you feel a drastic change in the way your work was considered and the types of projects you were invited to undertake? How did you become more known? How did you come to work with Hang Lung to re-skin a building that was already under construction?

JKL We had already been practicing in China. But in the 1990s, Chinese enterprises felt confident enough to hire us. Suddenly, Chinese companies commissioned us to do one-off headquarters projects. They looked at Plaza 66 and our Shanghail World Financial Center—which is now the tallest building in China and put us on the map in a way that no advertising ever could—and saw a proven track record. We never marketed in China. We did projects, talked to students, and gave lectures. Our books were bootlegged and translated into Chinese. We saw our work copied. At a certain point, we thought about building in China. When you have 30,000 people flowing in and out of those buildings, it’s part of our thinking in building on what he has achieved in Xintiandi. Vincent is very well connected in China, contributing to sustainability—something that has been talked about for years in terms of urban transit and preserving open space.

NR How do you maintain your control, and not just deliver drawings so that you see the project through construction? How have you contributed to the change in building-construction culture?

PK Architects believe in making buildings that are physically solid, interesting, and durable, and that was a tough thing to achieve in China in 1980s. If you built an average building, it stuck out. That is simply no longer true. When we started there we made a rule not to take projects with less than construction-document control for the exterior wall and public spaces. This approach was different from other firms, and it allowed us to maintain a level of control over detailing and execution that was unique. Our New York City office, along with a certain group of engineers and contractors—an Italian exterior-wall company, or a curtain wall engineer from the Philippines—worked together to raise the level of construction. There is a long chain of international export projects working in China.

NR How do you maintain your control, and not just deliver drawings so that you see the project through construction? How have you contributed to the change in building-construction culture?

PK Architects believe in making buildings that are physically solid, interesting, and durable, and that was a tough thing to achieve in China in 1980s. If you built an average building, it stuck out. That is simply no longer true. When we started there we made a rule not to take projects with less than construction-document control for the exterior wall and public spaces. This approach was different from other firms, and it allowed us to maintain a level of control over detailing and execution that was unique. Our New York City office, along with a certain group of engineers and contractors—an Italian exterior-wall company, or a curtain wall engineer from the Philippines—worked together to raise the level of construction. There is a long chain of international export projects working in China.

NR How do you maintain your control, and not just deliver drawings so that you see the project through construction? How have you contributed to the change in building-construction culture?

PK Architects believe in making buildings that are physically solid, interesting, and durable, and that was a tough thing to achieve in China in 1980s. If you built an average building, it stuck out. That is simply no longer true. When we started there we made a rule not to take projects with less than construction-document control for the exterior wall and public spaces. This approach was different from other firms, and it allowed us to maintain a level of control over detailing and execution that was unique. Our New York City office, along with a certain group of engineers and contractors—an Italian exterior-wall company, or a curtain wall engineer from the Philippines—worked together to raise the level of construction. There is a long chain of international export projects working in China.

NR How do you maintain your control, and not just deliver drawings so that you see the project through construction? How have you contributed to the change in building-construction culture?

PK Architects believe in making buildings that are physically solid, interesting, and durable, and that was a tough thing to achieve in China in 1980s. If you built an average building, it stuck out. That is simply no longer true. When we started there we made a rule not to take projects with less than construction-document control for the exterior wall and public spaces. This approach was different from other firms, and it allowed us to maintain a level of control over detailing and execution that was unique. Our New York City office, along with a certain group of engineers and contractors—an Italian exterior-wall company, or a curtain wall engineer from the Philippines—worked together to raise the level of construction. There is a long chain of international export projects working in China.

NR How do you maintain your control, and not just deliver drawings so that you see the project through construction? How have you contributed to the change in building-construction culture?

PK Architects believe in making buildings that are physically solid, interesting, and durable, and that was a tough thing to achieve in China in 1980s. If you built an average building, it stuck out. That is simply no longer true. When we started there we made a rule not to take projects with less than construction-document control for the exterior wall and public spaces. This approach was different from other firms, and it allowed us to maintain a level of control over detailing and execution that was unique. Our New York City office, along with a certain group of engineers and contractors—an Italian exterior-wall company, or a curtain wall engineer from the Philippines—worked together to raise the level of construction. There is a long chain of international export projects working in China.
Nina Ragranas: As new architectural practices emerge, it is crucial to bring together well-educated, foreign architects coming to the United States or Europe for graduate studies and students who are native to their home country, especially when there is a political or economic situation.

How have you been able to practice effectively in both Beirut and New York City?

Makram el Kadi: The fact that both Ziad Jamil Haidar and I studied as undergraduates at the American University of Beirut created a tie with the States. We were exposed to contemporary architectural thinking in the United States through our American teachers. So we wanted to continue this relationship by having our office based in New York City and looking at our home countries through the quasi-objective lens that distance gives us. Europe has closer ties to Lebanon through its past French colonial history, but we saw the States as an added layer that we needed to understand.

NR: How do you think of yourself as global architects?

MEK: We consider ourselves global, but you cannot go beyond your own identity and upbringing. In that sense we try to put ourselves on an equal plane of thought and action. Our name is an acronym. Our first office was a blank canvas and transforming it into a demarcation between two sports teams, taking it away from the militaries.

NR: How did your origins affect your architectural practice?

MEK: We understand architectural projects as a cultural negotiation between the political and the personal: how do you build actually connect the architectural details to the larger realm of the city and its political issues? We're trying to instigate. It's a third option. We're not taking a stance. We're trying to do as much work as possible in the Middle East, either you're politically engaged or you integrate and take a side. We're not afraid to address sensitive social issues in these politically contested sites.

NR: How do your origins affect your architectural practice?

MEK: We worked from a master plan which happened after the onset of the Arab monarchies undermined any leftist ambition for cooperation. We're trying to do as much work as possible in the Middle East, whether it's in Lebanon or the Arab world in general and is mainly a result of current events. There is no question that is dissociated from contextual considerations. We're trying to do as much work as possible in the Middle East, whether it's in Lebanon or the Arab world in general and is mainly a result of current events. There is no question that is dissociated from contextual considerations. We're trying to do as much work as possible in the Middle East, whether it's in Lebanon or the Arab world in general and is mainly a result of current events. There is no question that is dissociated from contextual considerations. We're trying to do as much work as possible in the Middle East, whether it's in Lebanon or the Arab world in general and is mainly a result of current events. There is no question that is dissociated from contextual considerations.
Mario Carpo & Kurt W. Forster

When pictures started to be printed people began to involve in such discussions in France and Italy—your own country. So how do you negotiate these differences, and what do you think they mean?

KWF Having keyed your own scholarly work to this phase of Post-Modernism, it seems that its closure, or loss, may have prompted you to turn to another imagined important moment in architecture and what we would call now, generically, the wholesale adoption of algebraic programs. MC This is again, if I can be autobiograpphical…

MC I was completely disconnected from contemporary architectural discourse when Deconstructivism emerged. I was writing my dissertation in complete isolation. I had a privilege only the University of Geneva (where at the time I was an assistant) could grant. But after working for ten years on the media-revolution of the Renaissance and the impact of print technologies on architectural theory, I noticed that something similar was happening again. Architectural schools were then starting to use computers. I had come to the conclusion that the adoption of print had been of dramatic importance for the history of Western architecture; it occurred to me that the demise of print may have similar consequences. This is when I started to work with architects again, after an intermission of almost ten years. I went back to architectural schools, even occasionally I am still called an art historian.

KWF Of course, by that time your sense of things was very much your grasp of historic change had been made far more perceptive and critical through the study of the rise and demise of print culture. It turned the table on the conventional perception of this relationship between architecture and media. One was always thinking about Renaissance architecture as having enjoyed a wide diffusion thanks to print media, whereas now…

MC Architects work with two categories of images: on the one hand, pictures of buildings as documentation, mimetic images that represent something that either exists or has existed; and on the other hand, technical images that represent the concept of a building and are used as instructions to have that building built. Images, as well as drawings, that is quite alien to the humanistic, Albertian paradigm, once and for all.

KWF But isn’t it astounding that precisely this idealized perception of a collectivity that sustains and enables the individual to create something remarkable suddenly releases names from captivity when we have documents: the plan of St. Gall was certainly drawn by someone who knew exactly what they were doing. Perhaps we just haven’t had the right probe to hit the spot:

MC Yes, some names do appear in the Middle Ages, but in writing—in contractual documents for example—but very few names are associated with the drawings! Project drawings, not survey drawings—that would be a different story. In fact, architectural drawings in general were never as accurate before the Renaissance. That is another interesting parallel: in the Middle Ages, images were not trusted because there were not many of them, and they were only randomly valuable. The reliability and the trustworthiness of images came with the printed image. When pictures started to be printed people started to trust and to use them because all mechanically reproduced copies were the same. They might contain mistakes, but even that was standardized, so everyone would be working with the same mistakes. Digital images are completely different animals. The ontology of digital images is so remote from that of printed images that we do not even realize to what extent the variability of digital imaging is peering those very ideas of trustworthiness and reliability we have conferred upon printed images in the last five centuries. A digital image is not an image, it’s a—sequence of numbers.

KWF There is possibly an even more fundamental division in that it’s very hard to imagine the origin of the digital image in the ontological sense that Renaissance printing conveyed immutable status upon what was reproduced, whereas now…

MC Not only images are changing all the time, they are changing often; changes are accelerated, whether accidental or intentional, and images drift, which is exactly the status that hand-reproduced images had for centuries and the reason why handmade images were not trusted. When all images you received were handmade copies—and you knew that you could not tell if the copyist was a good guy or a bad guy or sober or drunk or whatever—you tended not to trust images.

Today, oddly, digital images are again increasingly untrustworthy because there are too many of them, and they are permanently in flux—they change too fast.

MC How does that affect the architect, who can change drawings up to the last minute, but once they are printed, there are no more opportunities for changes.

KWF But it made you fit for a whole range of other activities. Instead of teaching only future architects, you began to teach future historians. When my generation started to teach, we found out that the audience to which we belonged was not there anymore. And indeed, my Ph.D. was not in architectural history but history; my doctoral dissertation barely touches on built architecture. It was about rhetoric and the construction of architectural discourse in the Renaissance.

KWF And perhaps this also helps to understand the absolute predominance of the image in the current manipulation of architectural ideas.

MC That is the recapitulation but also the capitulation of the humanistic paradigm, which is in many ways being dented by the digital turn. We have evidence that architecture could and did exist before these technological tools and cultural technologies came into being. Gothic cathedrals, after all, were built before Alberti and Brunelleschi came up with the idea that a single person—the architect, in Albert’s view—should be in charge of all aspects of design. Brunelleschi was the first who, in modern terms, to be seen as the one individual inventor and mastermind—not architect, “mastermind” is the term—of a building. The celebration of Brunelleschi as the inventor of the dome is exactly what Brunelleschi was striving to achieve. That was a revolution at the time, because there were very few recognizable names—if any—associated with all pre-Renaissance architecture. Most Medieval architecture, for example, is more or less anonymous. We do not know who designed the Cathedral of Chartres; we do not even know if it was designed at all!

MC When pictures started to be printed people started to trust and to use them because all mechanically reproduced copies were the same. They might contain mistakes, but even that was standardized, so everyone would be working with the same mistakes. Digital images are completely different animals. The ontology of digital images is so remote from that of printed images that we do not even realize to what extent the variability of digital imaging is peering those very ideas of trustworthiness and reliability we have conferred upon printed images in the last five centuries. A digital image is not an image, it’s a—a sequence of numbers. Digital images are again increasingly untrustworthy because there are too many of them, and they are permanently in flux—they change too fast.

MC But isn’t it astounding that precisely this idealized perception of a collectivity that sustains and enables the individual to create something remarkable suddenly releases names from captivity when we have documents: the plan of St. Gall was certainly drawn by someone who knew exactly what they were doing. Perhaps we just haven’t had the right probe to hit the spot.

MC Yes, some names do appear in the Middle Ages, but in writing—in contractual documents for example—but very few names are associated with the drawings! Project drawings, not survey drawings—that would be a different story. In fact, architectural drawings in general were never as accurate before the Renaissance. That is another interesting parallel: in the Middle Ages, images were not trusted because there were not many of them, and they were only randomly valuable. The reliability and the trustworthiness of images came with the printed image. When pictures started to be printed people started to trust and to use them because all mechanically reproduced copies were the same. They might contain mistakes, but even that was standardized, so everyone would be working with the same mistakes.
A work of architecture is invariably an adver-
tisement of a point of view. It is never pure for
reasons of pure form or pure function; nor can it
be simply a prescription of a point of view. It is never
pure "construction," nor is it ever "decoration." It is
always an index to state of mind, while always a
mixture of both; but always, either forcibly or
feebly, it involves an act of judgment. It is an
architecture that invariably appears either on the side or
in the form of an act of judgment. It is never pure
architecture, while always an index to state of mind,
and other matters quite extraneous to either
to state of mind, and other matters quite extraneous to either
taste or technique. Thus, a work of architec-
ture, while always an index to state of mind,
and other matters quite extraneous to either
taste or technique. Thus, a work of architec-
ture, while always an index to state of mind,
and other matters quite extraneous to either
taste or technique. Thus, a work of architec-
ture, while always an index to state of mind,
and other matters quite extraneous to either
taste or technique. Thus, a work of architec-
ture, while always an index to state of mind,
and other matters quite extraneous to either
taste or technique. Thus, a work of architec-
ture, while always an index to state of mind,
and other matters quite extraneous to either
taste or technique. Thus, a work of architec-
ture, while always an index to state of mind,
inverted axonometric so as to reveal the cubic portico and the central cylindrical courtyards, some of which were to be covered in the first instance, but open to the sky in the second. And it is this dyadic play between entrance and exit, that will work itself out in the ludic opposition between the central cylindrical void of the Staatsgalerie and the parallel cylindrical mass in the center of the music/theater school, which was projected to accompany the museum but was never realized. In the proposed school, the cylindrical void of the Staatsgalerie would have been answered by a cylindrical solid rising above the orthogonal mass of the building, “the cork in the bottle” as Stirling remarked to his partner Michael Wilford as they were in the process of refining the design.

While the quasi-neoclassical Staatsgalerie was destined to be the masterpiece of Stirling’s late career—synthesizing through a brilliant montage procedure all the diverse tectonic and typological themes of his syntactical trajectory to date—his equally neoclassical entrance for the Royal Irish Museum, in Cologne, seems in retrospect to be the one date with European cultural history that Stirling’s untimely death. There can surely be no doubt when we survey the syntactical diversity of Stirling’s work that the campus of the University of Warwick was never meant to be kept. Here it would have all come together in a single urban work that would not have been a cursory incursion onto a denser piece of urban fabric, as in Stuttgart or a late Post-Modern caricature, as in his Wissenschaftszentrum, Berlin, but instead would have allowed him to confront the two arthritic but related tectonic series of post-Classicist arcades and the institutional Gothic cathedral, belatedly completed in the nineteenth century, and the sweeping eighteenth-century arcades and virtually contemporary Cologne railway terminus. Here the apex of the cathedral would have opened onto a large, irregular square centered on the axis of the primary cubic block of Stirling’s projected museum, an axis flanked on one side by two orthogonal top-lit galleries, en serie, combining into a mass form of a slightly industrial character, and on the other a delicate line of cypresses establishing a belvedere plaza as a meander that would have terminated in the singular form of a cylindrical stepped tempietto.

Where it was not categorically urban, Stirling’s work invariably turned upon the mutual infection of building and landscape as in the neo-Baroque, all but Roman beamed confines of his 1958 competition entry for Churchill College, Cambridge. And it is an existing undulating landscape in an entirely different key that informed the last piece of Stirling’s late career—his neoclassical entry for Churchill College, Cambridge, and what he did and how he did it. Stirling taught at Yale for 24 years. His antics at Paul Rudolph’s house, at dinner parties, and with students are legendary. He was never malicious; he was just a boy. Time off in New Haven and, on the weekends, in New York City allowed him to explore and recharge.

Stirling had a great affection for the United States. He claimed to have been conceived in New York Harbor, but what he really liked was our small “o” democracy, pragmatism, frankness, and lack of an aristocracy. He was a bit ambivalent about our being Anglosophic. He liked the easy access but hated the obsequiousness of Americans.

Stirling has a bad rap as a Post-Modernist. It was only his badness that made him special. He was incapable of accepting anything unoriginally, and he struggled with what to do after heroic Modernism. That struggle played out in all of his work. The moment a position was accepted, he had to get on to another approach. The competitions for Düsseldorf and Cologne were lost because the Germans were expecting Leicester and the History Faculty. What was important about Stirling’s work was not the architectural bits that he used but the way he used them in relationship to one another, the context, and the program.

The exhibition An Architect’s Legacy. James Stirling’s Students at Yale, 1959–1983 is a huge undertaking and much credit is due to Emmanuel Petit and his team. There are over ninety drawings and models from seventy-five students, six videos, and a catalog, not to mention a timeline, drawings of projects from his office, and quotations to work on.

The original drawings, models, videos, and catalog are the best parts. The drawings are from the days when a draft was a design tool used to represent three-dimensional space in two dimensions. In addition, space and volume were represented precisely in axonometrics. The drawings were intensely time-consuming, but each line was expertly intended. Bad boy that he was, Stirling forced the students to do elevations. For many—some in their last year of the architecture program—it was the first elevation that they had ever drawn. The videos really tell the story. They do an excellent job of connecting the studio projects to the corresponding office work. To some, the continuity presented by the exhibition segments and their corresponding video titles may seem contrived. However, the recollections of former students reveals the strikingly consistent influence of Stirling on his classes. Equally important are the “autors,” who place Stirling within the history of architecture.

The small catalog is an excellent documentation of the exhibition and a history of the studio. It is noteworthy for its straightforward and understated quality, but while it is packed with information, color would have helped convey the extraordinary quality of the rendered drawings. The catalog is part of a series that connects the exhibition to thirty-plus other exhibitions of the discipline in exhibitions from the School of Architecture. Love or hate Rudolph Hall, the gallery is a monster in which to mount exhibitions. With few walls and a vast open space, it is difficult, for example, to display small drawings. Although one might rationalize the horizontal vitrines as displaying how the students saw the drawings on their desks, the reflection of the light on the Plexiglas surface and the long distance from front to back makes it hard to see them. These are student drawings, so they should be more accessible. And everyone knows about Stirling’s fat fingers and stubby pencil, a sensibility that gets lost in the skinny legs and big floor plates of the vitrines.

The exhibition’s designer, Dean Sakamoto, does well to introduce Stirling’s badness with the brightly colored timeline. However, there are several problems with it. First, it is too thin. Stirling liked to use color to project an antithetical element—say, the handrails or exhaust louvers at the Staatsgalerie’s brightly colored objects were always bubbly. Second, the variation of color on the front and back of the timeline to differentiate the student work from that of the office is very un-Stirling. He was subtle in many ways, but color was not one of them. Third, the path itself is too accommodating; it misses the strong geometric forms (cylinders, cubes, cones, and so on) of the office work and the playfulness of Stirling’s chicken-scratch routes on the plans of his projects. Finally, the photographic quality and scale of the student drawings on the timeline cannot compete with the real objects in the vitrines.

The exhibition is not a drawing show; it is just that drawing was the primary medium of Stirling’s studies. The best parts of the exhibition are the complete presentations of projects in which one gets a full understanding of the student’s design. Brian Healy’s Hood Museum, Phil Babb’s Tuscany Government Center, and Randall Mudge and David Spiker’s Tahan Museum are excellent examples of the rigor and development of the designs required in the studio. Reese Owen’s Foggy Addition and John Boecker’s Tale Addition are illustrated in spectacular cut-away axonometric drawings. The students labored for days to get the right view and correct angle, even if, in imitation of the master, some of the drawings were cheats. It would not be possible to review this exhibition without noting Marion Weiss’s work for the Cornell Performing Arts Center. The drawings are dark, foreboding, ethereal—and very un-Stirling. She worked hard to out-bad the bad boy.

Notwithstanding the drawings, it is the consistency of the student endeavors that holds the exhibition together. Government center or museum, the programs were always complex, with multiple circulation routes. The sites were always equally difficult, whether barren wasteland, crammed between existing buildings, or exposed to the world. The students always had to resolve the program with a particular set of drawing and model requirements. The purpose was to make sure the problem was not only solved, but to foster comparisons between student solutions. Stirling was a bad boy, but he taught good students. To study with him was the culmination of the students’ formal architectural education.

Robert Livsey
Livsey is a professor of architecture at the Knowlton School of Architecture at Ohio State University and often assisted Stirling at Yale. 
The symposium, “Structure of Light, Romanticism to Modern Architecture,” was held from April 15 to 17, in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, both organized by Diether Neumann.

For two very full days, architects, historians, and lighting designers gathered at Yale to explore the role and impact of lighting in architecture. The focal architectural lighting designer of the time, Kelly, collaborated with many of the most iconic architects of the mid-twentieth century, creating iconic visual environments. Widely acknowledged as the first lighting designer, he invented a design philosophy, approach, and vocabulary, which included the play of light and shadow, and the play of brilliants. His integration of light into buildings has been emulated by subsequent generations. As a celebration of lighting, the symposium was an opportunity for professionals to learn more about the enigmatic Kelly and his working relationships. For historians and academics, it was a segue away from the typical engineering inquiry of lighting design and technology in architectural theory and practice. The “Structure of Light” was organized in conjunction with the exhibition of Kelly’s work at the Rudolph Hall Gallery and an exhibition on American Modern Architecture at Yale University Press, Dietrich Neumann, Professor of History of Art and Architecture at Brown University, was the moderator of the event, made possible through the generosity of the Yale to Yale: Manuscripts and Archives by the designer’s daughter, Addison Kelly, also a lighting designer.

"To shape and define light as a building material was Kelly’s lasting contribution," commented the exhibition’s curator, Dietrich Neumann, who in his introduction emphasized how "light plays an important role in architectural discourse, and is an indicator of social stability and prosperity." Bergdoll, New York’s own "lighting designer," explored the first lighting designer: General Electric’s Walter D’Arcy Ryan. Bergdoll asserted that, because Kelly collaborated with some of the most iconoclastic architects of the mid-twentieth century, creating iconic visual environments marked by an integration of light and its environment, we can Modern architecture. Illustrating his three features of a building.” The questions and comments from the audience ranged from observations about Kelly's fluency with illumination engineering with the physiological effects of light on humans to musings about the timelessness of his work. Bergdoll also satirized the sometimes questionable role and perhaps whether lighting design is too complicated. Describing his own experiences with designers and managers, he concluded that Kelly's legacy is an enrichment of architectural language, the establishment of the role of the lighting designer, and a lesson in the need for communication and collaboration to produce effective lighting for great architecture.

The Case of the Yale Center for British Art

The second day of the symposium started at the Yale Center for British Art with a talk by Amyers drawing attention to the extraordinary architectural lighting developments of the early 1940s. When Brandston designed the lighting for the British Art, its environment, the Center for British Art. In the two approaches to integrating daylight into architectural form while addressing very different climates and programs, Kelly meticulously calculated the ways sunlight and skylight would interact with shading strategies to provide carefully modulated illumination. Continuing on this topic, Jules Prown, who has been central to the story—the music of the eye.’’ The session examined the representational role of the lighting designer, and the role of the lighting designer since Kelly’s time. Major asserted that his firm’s work is integrated with the architecture and art, and often adds, “major” offered—while Edler talked about his media architecture projects such as the Novagems, a lighting designer he uses which he calls “light as information carrier.” French light artist Yann Kersalé presented Light as Art, an evocative film survey of his international projects with architects Jean Nouvel and Helmut Jahn, in which he passionately integrated various lighting concepts into his designs and “sculpted” with color, form, and light. Tipton, who studied with Kelly, discussed how she saw attitudes toward lighting change radically as a result of his influence and the accomplishments of professional lighting designers in the ensuing decades. She agreed that the move toward sustainability, new light sources, and new attitudes about the role of buildings in culture will enable lighting strategies to evolve with architecture.

At the symposium’s close, Neumann demonstrated Kelly’s influence on the current generation of lighting designers, satirized in a raucous party scene.

Lighting in Modern Architecture

The opening session on Friday revolved around the question, “Who is the first lighting designer?” Bergdoll, the Philip Johnson Chair of Curator of Architecture and Design at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, introduced Martin Blessi (McGill University, Montreal). Blessi’s talk “‘Of Light and Shadow: Gaslight in mid-Nineteenth Century Paris’” thoroughly explored such lighting as an indicator of social stability and prosperity. The precursor to electric lighting, it was a technical advance enabling controllable dimming. Kelly’s poetic expression of lighting concepts and rigorous attention to creating a world of meaning for his collaborator with some of the most iconoclastic architects of the 1960s and 1970s. Bergdoll satirized the sometimes questionable role and perhaps whether Kelly understood the basic stage lighting premise that “light must have meaning.” Tipton admired Kelly’s work “for understanding the principles of time, purpose, goals, and story—the music of the eye.”

The session concluded with “Inversions of a Lighting Designer,” given by lighting designer Howard Brandston, whose career started at Century Lighting in New York City as assistant to Stanford Carpenter, the god of lighting. McCandless inspired Kelly to enroll at Yale in the early 1940s. When Brandston designed the Lighting in New York City, its vision was an innovation by another nominee for the role of the lighting designer. His goal was to "flatten a layer with green skin" and "to provide visual understanding." In this ses-
The Structure of Light: Richard Kelly and the Illumination of Modern Architecture

Richard Kelly’s lighting designs, as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story sought refuge at Yale as a student and left a legacy to be developed by teachers such as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story: Light in Architectural Design that allowed the viewer to “move around” the space, Neumann also made it possible for us to experience the hardware and details of the installations by tirelessly scouring the region for bulbs, moestats, light fixtures, and even the materials that they illuminated. One full-size mock-up presented the green marble (here replaced by polished green soapstone) that adorned the lobby of Mies’s American Radiator; the travertine that was used in the lobby of the Seagram Building. Another was a section of the actual metal-chain curtain from the Four Seasons Restaurant.

The structure of light represents an entirely different category of material—a material presence so fleeting and nuanced story of an elusive and fleeting subject: light. We are accustomed to encountering in both its natural and artificial manifestations and often relegated by designers to the realm of technical banalities—be vividly enshrined in both its natural and artificial manifestations. Neumann’s strategies for filling the gap in our experience has given the exhibition its rightful place as a landmark of the genre, especially a series of animated panoramic views of many of Kelly’s major projects using software to seamlessly knit together wide-angle photographs into a continuous panoramic “loop.” Four of these were shown on large, banner-like screens suspended above the exhibits; others were displayed on interactive computer monitors that allowed the viewer to “move around” the space.

Richard Kelly’s lighting designs, as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story sought refuge at Yale as a student and left a legacy to be developed by teachers such as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story: Light in Architectural Design that allowed the viewer to “move around” the space, Neumann also made it possible for us to experience the hardware and details of the installations by tirelessly scouring the region for bulbs, moestats, light fixtures, and even the materials that they illuminated. One full-size mock-up presented the green marble (here replaced by polished green soapstone) that adorned the lobby of Mies’s 900/910 Lake Shore Drive, in Chicago, and the travertine that was used in the lobby of the Seagram Building. Another was a section of the actual metal-chain curtain from the Four Seasons Restaurant.

The original was intricately tied up in a legal matter, but through the Internet Neumann found a Vietnamese artist who specializes in copying masterpieces and ordered a fake for less than the cost of insuring the original.

Perhaps the most notable achievement of the exhibition is that, by revealing so wholly in a complex theme, it avoids the common pitfall of being diagrammatic and oversimplified, ignoring the opportunity provided by the complexity of nature, human habitation, and daily needs—not least those imposed by the necessity and challenge of both natural and man made light. Yale’s long tradition of a pluralistic approach to design has been often celebrated and yet often at odds with academic fashion, a safe harbor for a range of diverse concerns and practitioners of which Kelly was just one. That he sought refuge at Yale as a student and left a legacy to be developed by teachers such as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story: Light in Architectural Design that allowed the viewer to “move around” the space, Neumann also made it possible for us to experience the hardware and details of the installations by tirelessly scouring the region for bulbs, moestats, light fixtures, and even the materials that they illuminated. One full-size mock-up presented the green marble (here replaced by polished green soapstone) that adorned the lobby of Mies’s 900/910 Lake Shore Drive, in Chicago, and the travertine that was used in the lobby of the Seagram Building. Another was a section of the actual metal-chain curtain from the Four Seasons Restaurant.

The original was intricately tied up in a legal matter, but through the Internet Neumann found a Vietnamese artist who specializes in copying masterpieces and ordered a fake for less than the cost of insuring the original.

Perhaps the most notable achievement of the exhibition is that, by revealing so wholly in a complex theme, it avoids the common pitfall of being diagrammatic and oversimplified, ignoring the opportunity provided by the complexity of nature, human habitation, and daily needs—not least those imposed by the necessity and challenge of both natural and man made light. Yale’s long tradition of a pluralistic approach to design has been often celebrated and yet often at odds with academic fashion, a safe harbor for a range of diverse concerns and practitioners of which Kelly was just one. That he sought refuge at Yale as a student and left a legacy to be developed by teachers such as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story: Light in Architectural Design that allowed the viewer to “move around” the space, Neumann also made it possible for us to experience the hardware and details of the installations by tirelessly scouring the region for bulbs, moestats, light fixtures, and even the materials that they illuminated. One full-size mock-up presented the green marble (here replaced by polished green soapstone) that adorned the lobby of Mies’s 900/910 Lake Shore Drive, in Chicago, and the travertine that was used in the lobby of the Seagram Building. Another was a section of the actual metal-chain curtain from the Four Seasons Restaurant.

The original was intricately tied up in a legal matter, but through the Internet Neumann found a Vietnamese artist who specializes in copying masterpieces and ordered a fake for less than the cost of insuring the original.

Perhaps the most notable achievement of the exhibition is that, by revealing so wholly in a complex theme, it avoids the common pitfall of being diagrammatic and oversimplified, ignoring the opportunity provided by the complexity of nature, human habitation, and daily needs—not least those imposed by the necessity and challenge of both natural and man made light. Yale’s long tradition of a pluralistic approach to design has been often celebrated and yet often at odds with academic fashion, a safe harbor for a range of diverse concerns and practitioners of which Kelly was just one. That he sought refuge at Yale as a student and left a legacy to be developed by teachers such as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story: Light in Architectural Design that allowed the viewer to “move around” the space, Neumann also made it possible for us to experience the hardware and details of the installations by tirelessly scouring the region for bulbs, moestats, light fixtures, and even the materials that they illuminated. One full-size mock-up presented the green marble (here replaced by polished green soapstone) that adorned the lobby of Mies’s 900/910 Lake Shore Drive, in Chicago, and the travertine that was used in the lobby of the Seagram Building. Another was a section of the actual metal-chain curtain from the Four Seasons Restaurant.

The original was intricately tied up in a legal matter, but through the Internet Neumann found a Vietnamese artist who specializes in copying masterpieces and ordered a fake for less than the cost of insuring the original.

Perhaps the most notable achievement of the exhibition is that, by revealing so wholly in a complex theme, it avoids the common pitfall of being diagrammatic and oversimplified, ignoring the opportunity provided by the complexity of nature, human habitation, and daily needs—not least those imposed by the necessity and challenge of both natural and man made light. Yale’s long tradition of a pluralistic approach to design has been often celebrated and yet often at odds with academic fashion, a safe harbor for a range of diverse concerns and practitioners of which Kelly was just one. That he sought refuge at Yale as a student and left a legacy to be developed by teachers such as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story: Light in Architectural Design that allowed the viewer to “move around” the space, Neumann also made it possible for us to experience the hardware and details of the installations by tirelessly scouring the region for bulbs, moestats, light fixtures, and even the materials that they illuminated. One full-size mock-up presented the green marble (here replaced by polished green soapstone) that adorned the lobby of Mies’s 900/910 Lake Shore Drive, in Chicago, and the travertine that was used in the lobby of the Seagram Building. Another was a section of the actual metal-chain curtain from the Four Seasons Restaurant.

The original was intricately tied up in a legal matter, but through the Internet Neumann found a Vietnamese artist who specializes in copying masterpieces and ordered a fake for less than the cost of insuring the original.

Perhaps the most notable achievement of the exhibition is that, by revealing so wholly in a complex theme, it avoids the common pitfall of being diagrammatic and oversimplified, ignoring the opportunity provided by the complexity of nature, human habitation, and daily needs—not least those imposed by the necessity and challenge of both natural and man made light. Yale’s long tradition of a pluralistic approach to design has been often celebrated and yet often at odds with academic fashion, a safe harbor for a range of diverse concerns and practitioners of which Kelly was just one. That he sought refuge at Yale as a student and left a legacy to be developed by teachers such as King Lui Wu is an important part of a story: Light in Architectural Design that allowed the viewer to “move around” the space, Neumann also made it possible for us to experience the hardware and details of the installations by tirelessly scouring the region for bulbs, moestats, light fixtures, and even the materials that they illuminated. One full-size mock-up presented the green marble (here replaced by polished green soapstone) that adorned the lobby of Mies’s 900/910 Lake Shore Drive, in Chicago, and the travertine that was used in the lobby of the Seagram Building. Another was a section of the actual metal-chain curtain from the Four Seasons Restaurant.

The original was intricately tied up in a legal matter, but through the Internet Neumann found a Vietnamese artist who specializes in copying masterpieces and ordered a fake for less than the cost of insuring the original.
Paul Rudolph's LOMEX Exhibited

One of Paul Rudolph's most memorable projects is his unrealized proposal (1967–72) for healing the rift caused by Robert Moses's proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway (LOMEX) which would have demolished much of SoHo and other neighborhoods as it cut across the island to link the Williamsburg and Manhattan bridges to the Holland Tunnel. Rudolph proposed covering the expressway with an extraordi

Paul Rudolph's LOMEX Discussed

Should architects think big today? Paul Rudolph's 1967–72 Lower Manhattan Expressway project certainly brings this question to mind. Commissioned by the Ford Foundation and worked out over the course of five years, Rudolph's ambitious LOMEX design begs another, more basic question as well: Why? At the panel discussion held on November 4 at the Cooper Union, panelists Ed Rawlings, Donald H. Elliot, and Alexander Gavin (M. Arch. and Master's of Urban Studies ’67) attempted to address this question. The fact that there was little consensus by the evening's end regarding the motives behind or impact of Rudolph's LOMEX highlights larger, more important issues concerning the efficacy of architects when attempting to operate at the scale of the city.

The evening’s discussion began with introductory remarks by Dean Anthony Vidler of the School of Architecture, and panel organizers Christopher Beardsley (’56, from the Forum for Urban Design, and Sean Khoros (’06) of the Paul Rudolph Foundation. Alexander Gavin and exhibition co-curator Ed Rawlings sketched a background of the history of the larger LOMEX project and Rudolph’s five-year Ford Foundation effort. Most interesting—and surpris

In any case, Rudolph knew LOMEX was the curator of the exhibition on Paul Rudolph, rather than one’s sense of the familiar order of Manhat

Moving from curatorial commentary, visitors might have thought it was Rudolph, rather than Moses, who proposed the expressway in a fit of megalomania. The catalog essay provides some context for LOMEX but at times grasps to find explanations for Rudolph’s choice of forms. For instance, Kuroz Tange’s megastructures for Tokyo and Boston (1956–61) are more likely sources for Rudolph’s A-structures than Disneyworld’s A-frame-shaped hotel. No mention is made of the many other vision

Acknowledging such shifts is especially pertinent here because the catalog essay concludes on an ambivalent note about Rudolph’s project, recognizing the damage its scale would have done to the city and yet admiring the ambitious vision that conceived it and the great public-works projects of its time. The exhibit is ready to access today’s yearnings for building big, new infrastructure—a desire that seems likely to th

As Garvin suggested that Rudolph’s LOMEX is perhaps best viewed as a hypothetical, if flawed, proposal. “Imagine,” he asked, “how a truck driver on his way from New Jersey to Long Island would have reacted if it had been built?” Nevertheless, Garvin acknowledged that LOMEX is invaluable as an embodiment of large-scale architectural ambition hopelessly lacking in New York City today. As Gavin cried out to those in attendance, “Why will no one think big today?”

But, as architects, should we? Judging by much of the urban-scale work of the last century—of which Rudolph’s LOMEX is at least representative in ambition, if not in detail—architects do not have a particularly strong voice and are often cast aside with the wholesale design of large urban areas. Examples in New York City ranging from the last century—of which Rudolph’s LOMEX is at least representative in ambition, if not in detail—architects do not have a particularly strong voice and are often cast aside with the wholesale design of large urban areas. Examples in New York City ranging from the last century—of which Rudolph’s LOMEX is at least representative in ambition, if not in detail—architects do not have a particularly strong voice and are often cast aside with the wholesale design of large urban areas. Examples in New York City ranging from the last century—of which Rudolph’s LOMEX is at least representative in ambition, if not in detail—architects do not have a particularly strong voice and are often cast aside with the wholesale design of large urban areas. Examples in New York City ranging from the last century—of which Rudolph’s LOMEX is at least representative in ambition, if not in detail—architects do not have a particularly strong voice and are often cast aside with the wholesale design of large urban areas. Examples in New York City ranging from the last century—of which Rudolph’s LOMEX is at least representative in ambition, if not in detail—architects do not have a particularly strong voice and are often cast aside with the wholesale design of large urban areas. Examples in New York City ranging from the last century—of which Rudolph’s LOMEX is at least representative in ambition, if not in detail—architects do not have a particularly strong voice and are often cast aside with the wholesale design of large urban areas. Examples in New York City ranging

Rudolph knew that LOMEX was dead—prompted by the motives behind or impact of Rudolph’s LOMEX highlights larger, more important issues concerning the efficacy of architects when attempting to operate at the scale of the city.

The evening’s discussion began with introductory remarks by Dean Anthony Vidler of the School of Architecture, and panel organizers Christopher Beardsley (’56, from the Forum for Urban Design, and Sean Khoros (’06) of the Paul Rudolph Foundation. Alexander Gavin and exhibition co-curator Ed Rawlings sketched a background of the history of the larger LOMEX project and Rudolph’s five-year Ford Foundation effort. Most interesting—and surpris

In any case, Rudolph knew LOMEX was the curator of the exhibition on Paul Rudolph, rather than one’s sense of the familiar order of Manhat

Moving from curatorial commentary, visitors might have thought it was Rudolph, rather than Moses, who proposed the expressway in a fit of megalomania. The catalog essay provides some context for LOMEX but at times grasps to find explanations for Rudolph’s choice of forms. For instance, Kuroz Tange’s megastructures for Tokyo and Boston (1956–61) are more likely sources for Rudolph’s A-structures than Disneyworld’s A-frame-shaped hotel. No mention is made of the many other vision

Acknowledging such shifts is especially pertinent here because the catalog essay concludes on an ambivalent note about Rudolph’s project, recognizing the damage its scale would have done to the city and yet admiring the ambitious vision that conceived it and the great public-works projects of its time. The exhibit is ready to access today’s yearnings for building big, new infrastructure—a desire that seems likely to th

In any case, Rudolph knew LOMEX was the curator of the exhibition on Paul Rudolph, rather than one’s sense of the familiar order of Manhat

Moving from curatorial commentary, visitors might have thought it was Rudolph, rather than Moses, who proposed the expressway in a fit of megalomania. The catalog essay provides some context for LOMEX but at times grasps to find explanations for Rudolph’s choice of forms. For instance, Kuroz Tange’s megastructures for Tokyo and Boston (1956–61) are more likely sources for Rudolph’s A-structures than Disneyworld’s A-frame-shaped hotel. No mention is made of the many other vision

Acknowledging such shifts is especially pertinent here because the catalog essay concludes on an ambivalent note about Rudolph’s project, recognizing the damage its scale would have done to the city and yet admiring the ambitious vision that conceived it and the great public-works projects of its time. The exhibit is ready to access today’s yearnings for building big, new infrastructure—a desire that seems likely to th

In any case, Rudolph knew LOMEX was the curator of the exhibition on Paul Rudolph, rather than one’s sense of the familiar order of Manhat

Moving from curatorial commentary, visitors might have thought it was Rudolph, rather than Moses, who proposed the expressway in a fit of megalomania. The catalog essay provides some context for LOMEX but at times grasps to find explanations for Rudolph’s choice of forms. For instance, Kuroz Tange’s megastructures for Tokyo and Boston (1956–61) are more likely sources for Rudolph’s A-structures than Disneyworld’s A-frame-shaped hotel. No mention is made of the many other vision

Acknowledging such shifts is especially pertinent here because the catalog essay concludes on an ambivalent note about Rudolph’s project, recognizing the damage its scale would have done to the city and yet admiring the ambitious vision that conceived it and the great public-works projects of its time. The exhibit is ready to access today’s yearnings for building big, new infrastructure—a desire that seems likely to th
An Art Historian Among Architects

A film about an art historian is a rare thing; rarer still is the one that ends quite literally with an on-screen bibliography. On October 28, to an overflow capacity of a maturity noticeably higher than that which typically graces Hastings Hall the School of Architecture presented the Checkerboard Film Foundation’s Vincent Scully: An Art Historian Among Architects, produced by Edgar Howard and included, curiously, in the series titled “Explorations in 21st-Century American Architecture.” The film’s protagonist sat in the third row, surrounded by several generations of the school’s leadership and his own students—two categories that have occasionally overlapped, as the audience was to learn from Dean Stern’s introduction.

Like the attempt to describe poetry in prose, it is difficult to do justice on celluloid to an individual whose influence has been defined so strongly by his personal presence in the classroom, the carefully rehearsed passion of his lectures and his ability to orchestrate a series of slide images into a fluid and compelling argument. Scully’s presence on the screen is less immediate; he is, after all, not as fully in command of the performance. So the documentary is valuable perhaps not so much as a record of his powers of persuasion but rather as a test-timony to his influence at Yale and beyond. This is above all a story about the impact of a teacher on his students, about the ability of an academic in a tweed jacket to exert an influence beyond the academy, beyond the quadrangles of Yale, beyond the city of New Haven, even beyond the profession of architecture.

Presenting Scully at moments as a figure of almost messianic significance and as a teacher whose sacred mission was to learn from Dean Stern’s introduction.

An Art Historian Among Architects

A film about an art historian is a rare thing; rarer still is the one that ends quite literally with an on-screen bibliography. On October 28, to an overflow capacity of a maturity noticeably higher than that which typically graces Hastings Hall the School of Architecture presented the Checkerboard Film Foundation’s Vincent Scully: An Art Historian Among Architects, produced by Edgar Howard and included, curiously, in the series titled “Explorations in 21st-Century American Architecture.” The film’s protagonist sat in the third row, surrounded by several generations of the school’s leadership and his own students—two categories that have occasionally overlapped, as the audience was to learn from Dean Stern’s introduction.

Like the attempt to describe poetry in prose, it is difficult to do justice on celluloid to an individual whose influence has been defined so strongly by his personal presence in the classroom, the carefully rehearsed passion of his lectures and his ability to orchestrate a series of slide images into a fluid and compelling argument. Scully’s presence on the screen is less immediate; he is, after all, not as fully in command of the performance. So the documentary is valuable perhaps not so much as a record of his powers of persuasion but rather as a testimony to his influence at Yale and beyond. This is above all a story about the impact of a teacher on his students, about the ability of an academic in a tweed jacket to exert an influence beyond the academy, beyond the quadrangles of Yale, beyond the city of New Haven, even beyond the profession of architecture.

Presenting Scully at moments as a figure of almost messianic significance and as a teacher whose sacred mission was to learn from Dean Stern’s introduction. —Kyle Dugdale Dugdale is a Ph.D. student at Yale School of Architecture.

A Conversation with Vincent Scully

Beginning last summer, I have had the privilege and pleasure to sit down with professor Vincent Scully for a series of conversations about the decades he spent at Yale. I have been conducting these interviews as research for a forthcoming book, I am developing with Dean Robert A. M. Stern about the history of the Yale School of Architecture, an outgrowth of the DeVane Lectures (2001) on Yale’s contribution to Modern architecture. Ambitious? Definitively. Fascinating? Extraordinarily. The School of Architecture’s unusual history, along with the diverse cast of characters that have shaped it, make for a story that is just beginning to be told. Professor Scully’s recollections, insights, intellect, and anecdotes prove invaluable in recounting this history. Over the course of our interviews it has become clear that he still has many lessons to teach, and it would be no surprise to his former students that his incredible passion for architecture continues to inspire. While our conversations have spanned decades of the school’s history, the following excerpt focuses in part on what arguably is the most controversial period of the school: the 1960s.

—Jimmy Stamp (MED ’11)

On James Stirling

Jimmy Stamp

One thing we haven’t talked about yet is the Davenport Chair, and the time when Robert Venturi and James Stirling started playing bigger roles at the school. Vincent Scully Stirling had been coming for a long time.

JS He seemed to offer an alternative perspective to the culture of late Modernism that dominated the school.

VS When he first came he was sort of like the English “Angry Young Man” type. He had one sweater, a black one with holes in it. And he was constantly getting arrested for having women in his room. He was arrested all over the country. Police burst in on him in Boston. Then, in Chicago, he once got into a taxi with seven or eight friends, and when the cops pulled them over he didn’t have any identification or anything. But then Jim changed—he got to be a real snob. At that wonderful kind of revolutionary stuff. And he hated Venturi, just hated him. You know, he lost the Sainsbury Wing competition to Venturi. He never got over it, and for the rest of his life he was redesigning his entry to make it better than Venturi’s. I was a close friend of his, we were buddies, and he just dropped me like a hot potato.

JS Because of your relationship with Venturi?

VS Yes. Jim told his biographer, “If he wants to be friends with Venturi, he can’t be friends with me.” It was childish. See, he thought he was changing Modernism fundamentally, and he wasn’t really. He was like Rudolph, just continuing the same formalism. But Venturi brought, especially at first, a totally different approach to architecture. So did Moore. It was much more ironic, much more realistic, and much more involved with the way things are—“Main Street is almost all right!”—and all those things that were very important and fundamental to what was going to happen later. None of that was in [the thinking of] those other people. People like John Johansen, who was a dear man, always felt they were on the cutting edge. It was hard for Jim’s whole career because he was making funny shapes, but they weren’t important. It didn’t matter. Now they’re fiddling with them again. Have you seen Neil Levine’s new book, Modern Architecture: Representation and Reality? He sort of gets it. It’s a pretty good analysis of Modernism.

JS Was Venturi having an effect on students at that point?

VS He did for a while but not for long. See, the great thing Modernism did for architects—not a good thing, but an important thing—to was to make them feel very important. They changed society and decided how people were going to live. Well, that turned out to be completely destructive. You didn’t get the full change until you got New Urbanism. And that is the climax of everything that has happened until now. It’s the culture of the Yale School. In my view, that’s the basic thing that has happened that’s real. That’s real. And that’s New Urbanism. And Levine’s new book, Modern Architecture: Representation and Reality?

On Charles Moore

VS He sort of gets it. He seemed to consider all art—well, any art—especially Modern Architecture: Representation and Reality? He sort of gets it. It’s a pretty good analysis of Modernism. But he also let students build experimental pieces; he let it all go.

VS Oh yeah, we were close. That’s how he didn’t like me too much.

JS In your lectures you speak not only about the history of buildings but also about the body in space and the interior, you still don’t think Moore’s interventions were appropriate?

VS His influence on the study of the building, the fighting against redevelopment—all of those things. It changed the language. It changed the intelligence, it changed the direction, and it changed the objective. Moore’s a part of it, and certainly Venturi’s a part of it. And I think it culminates with Duany and Plater-Zyberk in the 1970s.

On Charles Moore

VS Charles Moore seemed to consider all art historians as rivals. He offered an alternative historiography based more on images and ideas. It seems like you and Moore have some basic similarities.

JS Oh yeah, we were close. That’s why he didn’t like me too much.

VS In your lectures you speak not only about The history of buildings but also about the body in space and the experience of the building. Moore focused on those points from a slightly different perspective. I guess this is all the more reason for the rivalry.

VS On his part. My fault was that I had the introduction for Venturi’s book. He and Moore might say, seemed like allies at the time. It seemed like they were part of the same movement, at least people thought of them that way. In a sense they were, though they couldn’t have been more different. But I always thought Venturi was much more important than Moore. I wrote about him and did not write about Moore so much, that probably hurt Charlie a little bit. There is no question that I regarded Venturi as a much more important historical force in architecture and someone who did much better architecture as a whole. But Charlie can be really good, too. Sea Ranch, which I haven’t seen, is probably the best example of his work.

JS The use of supergraphics was important there, too. Moore brought that to Yale with the elevator projects that you said. You didn’t particularly like the School of Architecture, did you?

VS I didn’t hate it. It felt overdetermined. It was frightening with all the levels. You never knew where you were or where you were going to put your foot. Rudolph’s apartment in New York was also terrifying. He would change the level of a stair all of a sudden. And he’d sit there giggling with his friends when you’d missstep.

VS At the Venture symposium last year, Bob Venturi slipped and fell on a step, and people called it “Rudolph’s revenge.”

JS Bob Stern was one of Rudolph’s backers. Shortly after he left, Rudolph was on a committee, a jury to judge stuff for one of the islands, Welfare Island or some place. Stern had submitted a project, and it was a very Venturi project. So Rudolph thought it was a pretty good thing, and he felt that he was the one who was probably his only supporter in the room.

VS Despite the failures of the AIA interior, you still don’t think Moore’s interventions were appropriate?

VS Did you ever see them in the space? Rudolph had so ideally installed those old relics, these Greek casts. It was very touching, and Charlie just let all that stuff rot. He let the orange carpet get torn to pieces, he let it all go.

VS But he also let students build in the school. There’s something romantic about the notion of students accommodating themselves to the building.

VS That was part of the mystique of the period. Especially in the very late 1960s it was part of the revolutionary thing. You know, trashing the palace, moving into the garden of Versailles. That kind of thing happens in every revolution. It was the palace of the establishment.

VS But that’s when the building became really interesting. It became a figure-head or icon of the change from a heroic Modernism to a more socially conscious architecture. The meaning of the building changed with the time. It stood there as a relic of the past that students took over to mark this new movement.

VS In that way the restoration killed all that, or at least fossilized it.
Kevin Roche: Architecture as Environment

The exhibition Kevin Roche: Architecture as Environment on display at the School of Architecture Gallery from February 7 to May 6, 2011, grew out of a multiyear research project involving several graduate and undergraduate students. The catalog, published by Yale University Press, was written by associate professor Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen (MED ’94) and three of her former MED students, Kathleen John-Alder (MED ’08), Olga Pantelidou (MED ’09), and David Sagashid (Yale College ’07, MED ’10).

The exhibition is the first retrospective of the Pritzker Prize–winning principal of Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates (KRJDA), recognized for his designs of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York City; and the Union Carbide World Corporate Headquarters Building (1978–82), in New York City, bringing his 1971 master plan and extension of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, 1967. His office has been known for building lifelike models and full-scale mock-ups photographed with theatrical lighting. The exhibition includes two films directed by Eames, IBM at the Show and Aquarium, based on two collaborative projects, the IBM Pavilion at the 1964–65 New York World’s Fair and the National Fisheries and Aquarium Center, in Washington, D.C. (unbuilt, 1969).

Still vigorous, Roche maintains a staff of sixty and continues to work mostly on large-scale international projects that reflect his versatility and ability to adapt to the changing times. Major projects in the United States include several buildings for Lucent Technologies, the Zesiger Sports and Fitness Center for MIT (1997–2002), and the Layette Tower, in Washington, D.C. (2006–9). Major international projects include the Shiodome City Center, in Tokyo (1997–2003), the Cuadra Grupo Santander Headquarters, in Madrid (1995–2005), the Headquarters for Bouygues S.A. Holding Company, in Paris (2003–6), and the Dublin Convention Center, in Ireland (2005–9). Roche has also continued to work for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City, bringing his 1971 master plan to near completion under three different directors, completing a total of 46 different interventions to the building complex while revisiting earlier portions of the project, such as the American Wing, which reopened in 2011 and in which clients in the increasingly competitive world of global architecture is a tributary to his professed concern for the ancient, the religious, the sacred, and the spiritual.

Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen (MED ’94) Pelkonen is an associate professor at Yale. The Symposium was held at the School of Architecture March 24–25, 2011, and organized by MED class of 2011, Andreas Kalpakci, Eero Puuurnen, David Rinehart, and Jimmy Stamm—a is an investigation into this elusive and transitory condition in which both subject and context exist in a precarious unstable state, boundaries and borders are unclear, and the criminal takes new agency over the environment. The symposium aims to bring together the insights and ideas from the fields of architecture, art history, sociology, criminology, cartography, media studies, political science, and history. Papers will address the psychological implications of constant movement in the landscape, from transient spaces to the reshaping of political borders.

Fugitive Geographies will begin on March 24 with the Roth-Symonds Lecture, a keynote address by Thomas Y. Levin, an associate professor of German at Princeton University who curated the exhibition “Fugitive Geographies: From Bentham to Big Brother” at the OkM, in Karlsruhe, Germany; it was published as a catalog by the MIT Press in 2002.

Middle Ground/Middle East: Religious Sites in Urban Contexts

The Yale School of Architecture hosted the symposium “Middle Ground/Middle East: Religious Sites in Urban Contexts” on January 21–22, 2011. Organized by lecturer Karla Britton and jointly sponsored by the Yale Divinity School, the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and the Yale Center for Middle East Studies, the conference focused on the role of religious sites in relation to the Islamic and Western Arabic traditions in shaping contemporary urban environments in the Middle East.

One of the world where the intersection of religious traditions has for centuries been at the heart of both cultural identity and conflict, the importance of religious sites is critical. Recognizing that sacred buildings—mosques, churches, synagogues, and other holy sites—have often been regarded as representing patterns of social and cultural division, the symposium instead sought to emphasize their importance as an expression of a layering of various traditions, interfaith relationships, and long practices of learning and tolerance. In this vein, the symposium also focused on recent public interest in how large-scale urban projects are transforming parts of the Arab world. Hence, the title of this event implied both some form of shared ground and that which remains divided.

The symposium highlighted the contributions of architects who have been engaged in designing recent sacred sites, with respondents from the fields of theology, history, and Middle Eastern studies. These contributors focused on issues such as how the persistence of religious conviction forced us to broaden our understanding of urban space in relation to social identity, and how religious sites today engage contemporary concerns regarding urban regeneration, economic growth, and cultural heritage within the region.

It also continued discussion of two previous Yale School of Architecture symposia concerned with the Middle East: Sandy Lernstadt and Kishwar Rizvi’s 2006 Modernism and the Middle East, published by the University of Washington Press in 2008, and Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture, convened in 2007 by Karla Britton, published by the Yale School of Architecture, and distributed by Yale University Press in 2011. In addition, the conference extended several recent initiatives at Yale that address issues of faith and culture in the Middle East. These include the university’s ties to the Library of Alexandria and especially the recent “New Beginning” conference; the Yale alumni symposium at the American University in Beirut on the topic of the “Future of the Arab City” and the Yale Center for Faith and Culture’s focus on questions of “faith and globalization.”
Kevin Roche inserting a curtain wall into the Ford Foundation Headquarters model, c. 1964
“It Happened at the World’s Fair”

As World’s Fairs go, everything about the recent Shanghai Expo is decidedly X-L. Like so much of most World’s Fairs, the Shanghai Expo is more of a distraction than an attraction, and even the pavilions seem to be designed to home, Michael Maltzan’s Inner City Arts, to help build projects in his own country. Closer to home, Michael Maltzan’s Inner City Arts, to help build projects in his own country. Closer to home, Michael Maltzan’s Inner City Arts, to help build projects in his own country. Wherever you go to the Shanghai Expo, I would suggest that, first and foremost, you go to visit Shanghai as part of the joint Yale–Hong Kong–Tongji advanced studio since 2009. Of course, the area of the Expo—three times the size of the Huangpu River, in the Urban Best Practices Area, which was far less crowded and therefore possibly more enjoyable—and the fatigue of finding them in the actual place that has inspired it. “Better City, Better Life,” indeed. The icons could have done better to distribute the expo in significant fragments around the entire region—not unlike the strategy of the 1982 Los Angeles Olympics—selling visitors transit passes with embedded access chips for venues and food to encourage them to discover the real spectacle that is Shanghai.

—Alan J. Plattus

Plattus is a professor of architecture at Yale School of Architecture.

Small Scale, Big Change: New Architectures of Social Engagement

Museum of Modern Art


MoMA’s Small Scale, Big Change presented the work of architects engaged in socially conscious practice. Featuring eleven projects realized on five continents, curator Andres Lepik showcased a generation of architects who operate with a radical pragmatism that is in stark contrast to the utopianism of their Modernist forebears. These small-scale projects with large-scale ideals and hopes included an arts center for at-risk children, a public bus stop, and a museum memorializing the struggles of apartheid. A 40-foot-long wall map greeted visitors, locating each project via a set of factors pointing to the truly global scale of the endeavors and, perhaps more importantly, how we can understand them.

Many of the projects are innovative responses to local challenges. For a primary school in Gando, Burkina Faso, Binkinàbà architect Débèdo Francis Kéré invented a new way of making traditional mud bricks and founded a non-profit organization to help build projects in his own country. Closer to home, Michael Maltzan’s Inner City Arts, in Los Angeles, a 17-year project that has grown alongside his own practice, has paid off in a building that not only meets its social objectives but heaves closely to the designer’s aesthetic trademark. A breathtaking aerial photograph of the project in its downtown Los Angeles location alone was worth a visit to the exhibit. The Quinta Monroy housing project in Chile, by Elemental, is both delightful and brazen. By exposing unadorned concrete-block units in alternation with voids for future user development, the project is both a testament to raw material beauty and also the ability of people to control and change their environments.

The projects by Kéré and Elemental, which find new uses for vernacular materials and enable user input and change over time, bring to mind precedents like Hassan Fathy’s New Gourna, in West Luxor, Egypt, and the Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida.

It is unfortunate that the three web-based projects grouped as “Beyond” were given somewhat short shrift, relegated to a corner of the exhibition behind a wall. These projects—the 1% by Public Architecture; Urbanform by German architects Rainer Helbig and Jörg Stollmann; and the U.S.-based Open Architecture Network by Architecture for Humanity—offer glimpses into the intersection of social activism and global communications technologies. In the many areas of the world where such projects are happening, mobile media have mediated daily life in ways that those of us who grew up with landlines and desktop PCs may not appreciate. These projects are an opportunity to take hold on a scale and breadth that enables a big change, then it will be because the sentiments here—the yearning and urge for a better world—are paired with an equally passionate and widespread distribution of the information, skills, and technologies that make work like this possible.

—Kian Goh (’99)

Goh is principal of Brooklyn-based SUPER Interesting Architectors.
Indexing Urbanization

Bimal Mendis (‘02), assistant dean and Joyce Hsiang (‘03), critic in architecture, discuss their research from a Yale Hines Fund for Advanced Sustainability, which received a 2009 AIA Upjohn Research Initiative and is a finalist for the (AIA) 2011 Latrobe Prize.

Constructs In your new research, how do you view new definitions of sustainability and urbanism?

BM/JH Cities are grounds for competitive economic, social, and environmental demands, and as city populations around the world continue to grow—there’s that well-known statistic that 75 percent of the world’s 9.2 billion people will live in urban areas by 2050—we are pushing urban infrastructure and a limited supply of global resources into new breaking points. Under these circumstances, sustainability becomes increasingly important to urban development. The problem is, “sustainability” is complex and hard to define. Some scholars have even cynically labeled the definition pursuit “a favorite pastime for some academicians.” Sustainability has also become a part of our code of ethics. Therefore numerous organizations use the term sustainability, sometimes to promote their own agendas. So in our research, we sought to answer the question—how is sustainability an environment to be defined? How can it be measured? And how can an index change the way we design cities of the future?

Constructs Why are you developing another index of sustainability, and what purpose does it serve?

BM/JH An index can provide transparent way of benchmarking performance. If you look at the Dow Jones, for example, it indexes the trading activity of 30 specifically selected companies and their general value to represent the market average of the US economy and the collective health of the stock market. Indexing provides information for decision-making—an apparatus for directing potential, performance, and development. If every sustainability index is biased, then we need a manner of analyzing methods and measures to compare indexing standards and better understand the design of cities, including guidelines, codes, and policies as well as strategic leveraging and allocation of resources.

Constructs How did you go about analyzing indexes and the specific data they measured?

BM/JH We set out looking at the many different sustainability indexes that already exist. We found that currently, there are three scales of indexes. Those at the national scale tend to measure the “what” and not the “how,” because they highlight areas in which countries need to focus their public initiatives, but do not provide an explicit road map for action. These metrics, such as emissions per capita or percentage of electrical energy from renewable resources, are useful for comparing national and city-level progress, but are not quantitative measures for local government performance according to their relative measures, which privilege equity, economy, development, and environment, respectively. Courtesy of Bimal Mendis and Joyce Hsiang.

Notes on Cancun

The sixteenth meeting of the “Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” commonly referred to as COP 16, convened in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2010. The conference took place in Berlin in 1995, and the third, the most well known, resulted in the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Participants are classified either as “parties,” “negotiators,” or “observers,” members of Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO). The role of observers is not only to watch over the negotiations but to ensure that points of view being heard are representative of regions worldwide. A super-index can negotiate and unify the vast and conflicting agendas confronting the definition of sustainability. Comparing multiple national indexes will provide the opportunity to analyze the relationship between equity, economy, development, and environment, highlighting regional disparities and fluctuations in performance relatively. For example, while South America scores high in environmental performance relative to its modest means, the Middle East and Europe underperform in spite of their wealth. Agendas and biases of each index can help to target improvement where there is this under-performance. A super-index can bridge multiple agendas, disciplines, and scales, allowing users to strategically leverage limited resources and most efficiently and effectively divert and disperse energy.

Constructs What are your plans for spatial indexing and how will it be used mapping for future decision-making?

BM/JH In the second strategy of our research, we proposed a spatial index that will allow for a finer-grained geospatial understanding of the numbers to assist designers. Our research project is for the indexing of development, and environment, respectively. Courtesy of Bimal Mendis and Joyce Hsiang.

The significant contribution of building energy use stress that the strategies run in parallel with the negotiations. The question now is how to strategically leverage policies and procedures that are already in place while steering them toward a more effective target.

The collateral event sponsored by Yale, together with the Energy and Resources Institute of India (TERI) and the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment New Directions, New Priorities. The Wuppertal Institute is developing a very comprehensive and integrated framework to show the benefits of advanced technologies. TERI is focusing on non-technical aspects of sustainable urban development and infrastructure needs in cities; the two have been caught in a difficult bind—they cannot afford the premium green strategies, such as highly efficent building metrics and incorrect calculations for benchmarks. Attempts to peel back the analyses to better understand why physics are being quickly overshadowed by the push to implement. The question now is how to strategically leverage policies and procedures that are already in place while steering them toward a more effective target.

Indexing: A comparison across multiple national indexes such as the Gini Coeffi- cient (Gini), Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), the Human Development Index (HDI), and the high-performance envelopes, preferred by developed countries, but their energy use is rising as their economies grow and their building stock expands.

My intention in bringing these two organizations together was not just to share a range of approaches, it hinged on a fundamental premise that a reassessment of building energy use would not only yield different objectives but it also might bring developing and developed countries closer together in terms of policies and priorities. As a show of support for this approach, Rajen- dra Pachauri, Nobel prize recipient and chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Lykke Friis, Danish minister of the environment and president of COP 16; Sylvie Lemmet, director of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP); and Ajay Mathur, director general of the Indian Bureau of Energy Efficiency requested to participate in our session. In our limited hour-and-a-half we barely had time to deliver opening comments, much less find common ground, but the stage was set for future conversations. Most importantly, attention is being returned to buildings and their important role in climate change.
A Landscape Manifesto
By Diana Balmori
Yale University Press, 2010
272 pp.

Diana Balmori’s new book, A Landscape Manifesto, challenges us to reflect on the relationship between nature and the contemporary city. Although it delivers directives through the author’s twenty-five-point manifesto, the book also offers contemplative thoughts on ecological relationships across the broad expanse of geological time. Structured as both a strategic plan and portfolio of Balmori’s projects, the book argues for a reinterpretation of nature in manifesto principles.

Balmori, Bishop visiting professor, acknowledges that a manifesto is historically delivered with a stern and authoritarian voice. She instead takes a gentler tack, describing her manifesto points as realignments rather than proclamations. Many of Balmori’s ideas speak to the continual change, fluidity, and lack of fixity that characterizes nature. This way of thinking has always belonged to the domain of landscape, but the question is how can we extend it across disciplines and apply it to architecture and our cities?

Perhaps the greatest challenge of Balmori’s manifesto is found in her last point: “We must put the twenty-first-century city into nature rather than put nature in the city.” She evokes depths and crevasses, places of opportunity within the earth through which a new city might emerge, noting that: “Every now and then we may perceive something pushing through that speaks of a new beginning. Barely visible unless we look hard, hardly distinguishable in the ruins, in danger of being trampled, small protrusions emerge here and there. This text is an attempt to uncover them and to decipher their message about our time.”

—Embedding the City in Nature

“Thus we must search for protrusions, investigate the holes and fissures and disruptions of our city patterns. Nature loves to hide.”

—Heraclitus, Fragment 125

Balmori’s work in 2005 for the realization of Robert Smithson’s Floating Island to Travel Around Manhattan Island, a planted barge towed around the city by tugboat might be one of these protrusions.

The project was a conceptual disruption and extraction of Central Park, earth placed into a hole in the water. Balmori inspired me to reread Smithson’s 1973 essay, “Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape.” His observations on the notion of interface (architecture and landscape, city and nature, park and city), landscape and culture inspired me to understand the relationship between architecture and nature, and how they are connected. Balmori’s essay begins by acknowledging the magnitude of geological time, reflecting on the era of glaciers that scraped the ridges and valleys of New York City’s bedrock.

The text is an attempt to uncover them and to decipher their message about our time. This is Balmori’s voice, a stern and authoritarian voice. She instead takes a gentler tack, describing her manifesto points as realignments rather than proclamations. Many of Balmori’s ideas speak to the continual change, fluidity, and lack of fixity that characterizes nature. This way of thinking has always belonged to the domain of landscape, but the question is how can we extend it across disciplines and apply it to architecture and our cities?

While Kamin’s narrative of Chicago architecture in a tumultuous age is a major daily who accompanies structural engineers up the construction elevators, meets with architects to discuss yet unapproved projects, champions local emerging talents, and, best of all, presents the streets of the city as his true beat—in fact, his heartbeat. From the column he has made into a bully pulp, Blair Kamin (MED ’84) has managed to shape new design guidelines and zoning policies, and a decade of scholastic development, influence the design of several monumental towers, and boost the careers of young designers. We know he has had this influence because he tells us so—in the short “postscripts” that follow many of the essays. He writes, for example, that, “In 2002, responding to concern raised by the [Kamin’s] critique, Adrian Smith made public a dramatically revised version of the Trump skyscraper, which achieved a far better balance between form and function.” And I believe him, because his arguments are built with care and detail and also because his voice is convincing evidence—alternating between booster and watchdog, outraged citizen, slightly remote cultural commentator, and balanced educator—he plays whatever part is needed to accomplish the task at hand.

While Kamin’s narrative of Chicago is grand, the conceit of the book is an even grander global cultural history seen through the lens of architecture. The introductions to each section divide the argument under such headings as “Disaster,” “Security,” “Wretched Excess,” “Cathedrals of Culture,” and “The Blooming of Green Architecture.” The global coverage in the pieces he has selected is actually a bit spotty, represented by the American forays of just a few players (such as Santiago Calatrava and Renzo Piano), rather than direct reporting from Europe or China, and a single essay on the Burj Khalifa, designed by aforementioned American Adrian Smith. These essays on “architects” define the core of “wonder,” while a handful of essays on New York City, Washington, and New Orleans define “the terror.” In fact, the conflicting directions of the epoch between 9/11 and 2010 come to life less through these intended exemplary pieces than through Kamin’s description of Chicago and the region. The Chicago that emerges from his pen is the lens itself, a microcosm of a larger American, if not global, situation. It is a city that can claim to have two towers vying for the world’s tallest— with Dubai—portfolio of works by world-class architects, and a provincial building culture and a crumbling infrastructure. It is a city that constructs the peoples’ Millennium Park and yet struggles with the security of its public spaces. Once the tumultuous edge of westward expansion and center of American ingenuity, Chicago again appears to be at a critical moment in its concentration of infrastructural and architectural experiment amid Midwestern sprawl.

Chicago’s history looms as equally profound a context for Kamin’s observation as the global scene. It is the original moment for his subjects: the phenomenon of the tower in its existential glory, the grids of the city and of steel and glass, the water-front, and the still-prairie landscape and our movement across it. Kamin takes time to reiterate the principles of the Burnham Plan, Wright’s individualism, and the misunderstood urbanism of Mies van der Rohe. Cognoscenti might desire a more critical presentation of the Columbus (or a more restrained use of Mies’s “God is in the details” (which seems misapplied to the fifty-floor misdirection of the Aon tower), but they will certainly allow for the occasional populist bent of a critic so committed to the production of great cities and their most fundamental component, the educated citizen.

—Deborah Gans
Gans is the Principal of Studio Gans, profes- sor at Pratt Institute, and often a Critic in Architecture at Yale.

Terror and Wonder Architecture in a Tumultuous Age
By Blair Kamin
University of Chicago Press, 2010
304 pp.

Chicago is lucky to have an architecture critic at a major daily who accompanies structural engineers up the construction elevators, meets with architects to discuss yet unapproved projects, champions local emerging talents, and, best of all, presents the streets of the city as his true beat—in fact, his heartbeat. From the column he has made into a bully pulp, Blair Kamin (MED ’84) has managed to shape new design guidelines and zoning policies, and a decade of scholastic development, influence the design of several monumental towers, and boost the careers of young designers. We know he has had this influence because he tells us so—in the short “postscripts” that follow many of the essays. He writes, for example, that, “In 2002, responding to concern raised by the [Kamin’s] critique, Adrian Smith made public a dramatically revised version of the Trump skyscraper, which achieved a far better balance between form and function.” And I believe him, because his arguments are built with care and detail and also because his voice is convincing evidence—alternating between booster and watchdog, outraged citizen, slightly remote cultural commentator, and balanced educator—he plays whatever part is needed to accomplish the task at hand.

While Kamin’s narrative of Chicago is grand, the conceit of the book is an even grander global cultural history seen through the lens of architecture. The introductions to each section divide the argument under such headings as “Disaster,” “Security,” “Wretched Excess,” “Cathedrals of Culture,” and “The Blooming of Green Architecture.” The global coverage in the pieces he has selected is actually a bit spotty, represented by the American forays of just a few players (such as Santiago Calatrava and Renzo Piano), rather than direct reporting from Europe or China, and a single essay on the Burj Khalifa, designed by aforementioned American Adrian Smith. These essays on “architects” define the core of “wonder,” while a handful of essays on New York City, Washington, and New Orleans define “the terror.” In fact, the conflicting directions of the epoch between 9/11 and 2010 come to life less through these intended exemplary pieces than through Kamin’s description of Chicago and the region. The Chicago that emerges from his pen is the lens itself, a microcosm of a larger American, if not global, situation. It is a city that can claim to have two towers vying for the world’s tallest—with Dubai—portfolio of works by world-class architects, and a provincial building culture and a crumbling infrastructure. It is a city that constructs the peoples’ Millennium Park and yet struggles with the security of its public spaces. Once the tumultuous edge of westward expansion and center of American ingenuity, Chicago again appears to be at a critical moment in its concentration of infrastructural and architectural experiment amid Midwestern sprawl.

Chicago’s history looms as equally profound a context for Kamin’s observation as the global scene. It is the original moment for his subjects: the phenomenon of the tower in its existential glory, the grids of the city and of steel and glass, the water-front, and the still-prairie landscape and our movement across it. Kamin takes time to reiterate the principles of the Burnham Plan, Wright’s individualism, and the misunderstood urbanism of Mies van der Rohe. Cognoscenti might desire a more critical presentation of the Columbus (or a more restrained use of Mies’s “God is in the details” (which seems misapplied to the fifty-floor misdirection of the Aon tower), but they will certainly allow for the occasional populist bent of a critic so committed to the production of great cities and their most fundamental component, the educated citizen.

—Deborah Gans
Gans is the Principal of Studio Gans, profes- sor at Pratt Institute, and often a Critic in Architecture at Yale.
Ike Kligerman Barkley Houses

By Ike Kligerman Barkley
The Monacelli Press, New Haven, 2010
256 pp.

More than any other project type, the design of the single-family home has offered architects the greatest opportunity for artistic expression, particularly in the United States. One need only consider the houses of such luminaries as Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, and Robert Venturi to measure the impact residential design can have within a practitioner's oeuvre or as part of a movement. While the twenty-six projects featured in the book Ike Kligerman Barkley Houses are not positioned to be as revolutionary as the examples cited above, they illustrate one of the most salient trends in the past quarter-century of house design: the critical reappraisal of traditional and vernacular residential idioms previously discredited by the Modern movement. Undertaken in what could be characterized as the quieter corner of the architectural playpen, such work is nonetheless worthy of recognition, particularly when carried out as adroitly by the practice of John ike, John Kligerman ('82), and Joel Barkley ('82).

The projects illustrated in this handsome volume, ranging from a Virginia farmhouse and a Colorado lodge to a sleekly modern Manhattan loft and a Hawaiian long house, exemplify the firm's philosophical embrace of "contextualism" as the "primary consideration" of the practice. Refusing the constraints and presumed comfort of working within a single familiar language, Ike Kligerman Barkley Architects has the impressive ability to work artfully and imaginatively within a number of different idioms. As the firm's principal notes in the volume's introduction, "Just as novelists and filmmakers gravitate toward genres that suit the themes they choose to explore, we look for the historical style that represents the best vehicle for the architectural story we wish to tell." Throughout the book one is struck not simply by the variety of the work but also by its quality and thorough resolution: "Synthesizing... details and ideas into a unified whole remains one of the hallmarks of the firm's work—and, we believe, marks the difference between superficial pastiche and a fully realized work of architecture." The projects are all scrupulously presented in the book and in no danger of being categorized as superficial pastiche. The reader will no doubt appreciate the inclusion of a scaled drawing for each project and the insight gained into the process of each project's conceptual genesis, citing influences as diverse as John Naka- shima and Vincent Scully, as well as a succinct description of each project's conceptual genesis, citing influences as diverse as John Nakashima and Vincent Scully, as well as a succinct description of each project's conceptual genesis, citing influences as diverse as John Nakashima and Vincent Scully, as well as a succinct description of each project's conceptual genesis, citing influences as diverse as John Nakashima and Vincent Scully, as well as a succinct description of each project's conceptual genesis, citing influences as diverse as John Nakashima and Vincent Scully.

The case-study approach pays off: while there are many surveys of Modern architecture, only a few of them combine breadth of scope with depth of knowledge with regard to individual buildings, let alone hold the reader's attention. While Levine discusses some key theoretical texts in great detail, what shines through is his attention to the architectural object, its genesis, and its experiential impact. At times he echoes his former teacher Vincent Scully in his forceful psycho-aesthetic readings of buildings: "The buttresses [of St. Giles] exhibit the forces coursing through their short, stocky forms, just as the capping stones tell us how they were designed to shed the rain," writes Levine. Since contemporary scholarship rarely seems to discuss buildings in those terms, Levine's book is a delightful reminder that the core craft of an architectural historian is to engage and appreciate the architectural artifact.

Modern Architecture: Representation & Reality

By Neil Levine
Yale University Press, New Haven, and London, 2010
376 pp.

Neil Levine's book Modern Architecture: Representation & Reality, based on the Slade Lectures on Fine Arts given at Cambridge University in 1994–95, is no ordinary history. Unlike most surveys, Levine's account does not rely on stylistic categories or historical periodization. There is rarely a reference to a historical event as an explanation for stylistic change. Instead, Levine argues convincingly that all great buildings of the Modern (i.e. post-Enlightenment) period have wrestled with the problem of representation inherited from Abbé Laugier. Since Laugier's notion of the "primitive hut," architecture has been understood as a direct outcome of a structural and material logic on the one hand and as a historical model passed down to us from antiquity on the other.

What follows are case studies of canonical buildings that demonstrate how various architects at different times have struggled with the distance between imitation and model laid bare by Laugier's proposition. Levine's choices need little justification; all the buildings discussed are worthy of close study because they engaged the past as well as set the stage for future development. He manages to shed new light on many well-known masterpieces, such as John Soane's Bank of England, Karl Schinkel's Altes Museum, and Henri Labrouste's Bibliotheque St. Genevieve, by offering new visual material to support his original thesis. Even buildings covered by Levine in previous books and essays gain new dimension in juxtaposition with seemingly unlikely doubles. For example, the Bibliothèque St. Genevieve is paired with Augustus Welby Pugin St. Giles. Such comparisons support Levine's argument that stylistic accounts fall short in acknowledging the fundamental questions shared by architects across such categorical divides—in this case, Pugin and Labrouste—who both aimed for a more "realistic" approach to architecture than Neo-classicism had to offer. This reader was also delighted to see rarely published material such as the full documentation of Viollet-le-Duc's Concert Hall project. Excluded from the book, however, are later examples, such as Le Corbusier, and one wonders where he would fit in Levine's narrative.

Without falling into the trap of overly criticalicism, the book sheds light on some of the central debates surrounding Modern architecture, namely the relationship between productive function and form and between structure and decoration. Thus Levine, who is the Emmet Blakeney Gleason Professor of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University, has written a highly relevant account, not only for the discussion of the architectural history and theory but also for contemporary architectural practice.

—Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen (MED '94)
Pelkonen is an associate professor at Yale.
The most important plane for all of us. I want to say that heavy buildings are good build-ings. I also want to say that on a campus the most important plane is...[that] of discourse. It is the plane that the facts live and build-together. And as you move up or down from that you are always moving away from the most important plane in order. It is easy to go down or up a level but not so easy to go up ten levels. The final theme is evolution. Our work accepts where it came from, and it's always interested in where it goes. The only way we are able to grow effectively is to critique our work.

Mario Carpo
Vincent Scully Visiting Professor of Architectural History
“Do I Look Like I Have a Plan?”
September 30

In less than twenty years the digital turn has already reversed many of the human-istic and modern principles that inspired Western architecture for five centuries, from Renaissance Classicism to twentieth-century Modernism. Since the early 1990s computer-based design and fabrication have almost completely eliminated the geometric constructs that were once considered sacred. Finally, digitality—particularly in the recent Web 2.0 participatory climate—goes counter to most humanistic and modern notions of authorship and intellectual ownership. Unlike a building, which is a physical object, archi-tectural design in our virtual atmospheres at least we now know full well—all digital information is inherently variable and permanently drifting: inevitably destined to be edited, copied, morphed, and transmogrified by unpredict-able actors and networks, often without the author’s consent.

Tod Williams
Billie Tsien and Tod Williams
Lectures on Environment and Architecture
October 7

In that way he established a vocabulary that was a hybrid of handmade and machine-made. Buildings remain to this day produced in the same way as typewriters or automobiles. Buildings remain to this day not be at the larger scale of building and construction. With few exceptions, buildings have always been individual items: each building is one of a series that can be made quickly—in fact, almost inevitably—to invite users to participate in the design process and “customize” individual items for purchase or consumption. Not all users may be interested.

Hernan Diaz-Alonso
Louis I. Kahn Visiting Assistant Professor
“Do I Look Like I Have a Plan?”
September 30

What may be true at the small scale of industrial fabrication, however, need not be at the larger scale of building and construction. With few exceptions, buildings have always been individual items: each building is one of a kind, a one-off, and in most cases buildings are special or even unique objects of design, made to measure for a specific site or client or program. This is one reason why, in spite of one century of architectural Modernism, mechanical mass production was never entirely successful in standardizing the end product of Modern architecture—namely, the individual building. Almost one century later we can safely conclude that in this at least, Corbusier was wrong: most buildings cannot be mass-produced in the same way as typewriters or automobiles. Buildings remain to this day a hybrid of handmade and machine-made parts and operations, partly ready-made and partly customized, partly custom-made and made on demand, or mechanically prefabri-cated but manually assembled on site.

Hernan Diaz-Alonso
Louis I. Kahn Visiting Assistant Professor
“Do I Look Like I Have a Plan?”
September 30

Hernan was always concerned with the way humans moved through that space. The horrific is something that can be choreographed, and it can produce a different logical sequence, where ultimately the relation between the horrific and the grotesque became interesting vehicles through which to start to think about the problem of the grotesque. This is not necessarily about beauty and beautiful...I think the beautiful is a much more temporar-y and temporary problem; it has a limit. It isn’t eternal; it will change over time. It goes back to this idea of the species and a permanent state of evolution.

Winnie the Pooh. He goes down the stairs, “bump, bump, bump, bump.” He realizes, a third trait is a desire to surrender to a site and to a program. In order to really go deep, you have to let go. That is the way of getting to know a site.

Roger van der Heide
“Making Something Out of Nothing”
October 1

The envelope is the subject of this lecture, which was concerned with politics that think affects not only me but many practitioners of my time. We have a great opportunity today that conventional politi-cal discourse is losing cachet and most of the people that we are trying to swing to shifting to swing electorate, which means people who are not loyal to a certain ideological —as examples that indicate certain aspects of certain political movements. I think the situation in architecture is great potential in that direction, which is working with producing concrete things. So rather than try to replicate on nimic political discourse, we need to develop a discourse within the discipline to address politi-cal subjects more effectively and retrieve a certain level of political agency for the discipline.

So the envelope is important today because we are all increasingly conscious that there is an absolute limit to the planet’s natural resources, which crashes head-on with the idea of a system based on perma-nent growth. My attempt to expand on the idea of surface...is not about its construction; it is about the whole surface and a series of spatial attachments to it. We cannot reduce the problem of how to build the limit: we need to elucidate how the limit of the building relates to the more spatial problem of shaping the envelope as a whole. The aspect ratio of the envelope is probably the most efficient way of classifying envelopes as typologies, I’ve identified four categories of envelope—flat horizontal, spherical, flat vertical, and vertical—each represents a certain aspect of a problem and political potential in relation to the formulation of material strategies and political opportunities or processes that we can address in these categories.
Anthony Vidler  
“James Frazer-Stirling: Notes from the Archive”  
October 13

Stirling caught it from both sides, from early Modernist critics...scornful of his break with Modernism...and traditionalists...who...refused his Modernism. Writting with bitter irony in 1976, critic Reyner Banham stated, “Anyone will know who keeps up with the English high-brow weeklies, professional, intellectual, or satirical, the only approvable attitude to James Stirling is one of sustained execrations and open or veiled accusations of incompetence.”

Stirling also seemed to defy any art-historical pigeonholing. Some have seen his work work through a series of brilliantly eccentric modern styles. Others have insisted that Stirling was a steadfast Modernist, freely utilizing the diverse vocabularies of the Modern movement as appropriate to each commission. Others have noted his allegiance to the tradition of British functionalism. Still others have proposed a fundamental break with Modernism at some time in the mid-1960s. Others, such as Peter Eisenman in his canonical 1974 essay, “Real and English,” concluded that the Leicester Engineering building was iconic...because it suggested that “the theoretical implications of Modern architecture and the abstract implications of the abstract logic inherent in space and form must yet again be the subject of investigation provoked by this building.”

Finally, critics like Robert Maxwell have tried to embrace all of these in one position, holding that Stirling was “a crypto classicist,” referring at once to abstract Modernism and historical precedent through the use of fragmentation.

The archive soundly refutes what many have thought to be a significant weakness in comparison to Stirling’s general contemporaries: an apparent lack of interest in theory and a single-minded focus on design. But in is in the archive that we get a glimpse of a different kind of theory, that special thought process that we call somewhat mechanically “design process.” For it is in this process—exemplified by thousands of drawings, models, and photographs—that we can identify what is theoretical about Stirling’s architecture and, what we might take away from it today, both for a deeper understanding of it and for its potential interest for our own practice. And it is the resistance of this archive to commonplace views that I am attempting to extract a working understanding of what I’ve called Stirling’s theory of design, which is entirely enmeshed in drawing—in the iteration of drawing after drawing—and the building volumetrically of an architecture that has deeply thought through the process of drawing and design.
Alejandro Zaera-Polo

Alejandro Zaera-Polo, the inaugural Norman Foster Visiting Professor, with Laucano Markiewicz and Junah Rowen, Peter Eisenman taught an advanced studio that was centered around an ongoing e-co-tectons research and the regeneration of Papio do Parli, at the site of a former railway São Paulo, Brazil. On a visit to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the students engaged in workshops with local stakeholders and saw Modernist buildings by Vilanova Artigas, Lina Bo Bardi, and Oscar Niemeyer. Then they returned to Yale producing two scales of work—urban master plans and building envelope prototypes, to optimize the environmental performance and reclaim the energy-scarce urban environment as an ecosystem populated by a series of new energy-efficient species. Throughout the semester the students met with environmental consultants to inform their understanding of materials and climate.

The students focused their high-density projects on ecological concerns (wind, solar radiation, daylighting), and flow (pedestrian, infrastructure, etc.). The designs were developed using a variety of software, including Processing, Grasshopper, and Galapagos. Students conducted parametric studies on envelope ratio, floor-to-wall ratio, and porosity, among other factors. These projects mediated between top-down and bottom-up parametric design, enabling the students to increase the degree of differentiation and division under the umbrella of consistency of their own methodologies—in essence, creating a new ecosystem. The computational methodology and design modeling allowed for a range of outcomes and quick analysis to isolate particular parameters. Building envelopes were presented to a jury of Michelle Addington, Mario Carpo, Mark Collins, Hernan Diaz-Alonso, Louis I. Kahn Visiting Assistant Professor, with Eric Carcamo, Hanif Kara, Larry Richards (MED ’75), Billie Tsien, Marion Weiss (’82), Mason White, and Tod Williams.

The students were divided into teams: some projects used the Venice Hospital diagram imposed on the city, looking at the boundary between modern form and context. Others inserted the repetitive modules of the hospital project as a linear organization, while the last project proposed an inhabitable plinth to form a megastucture as separate space. Students presented projects to a jury of Lucia Alats, Pier Vittorio Aureli, Harry Cobb, Emmanuel Pettit, Ingeborg Rucker, Francesca Trivelato, Sarah Whiting, Mark Wigley, Anthony Vider, Stanley Tigerman (’60), and Guido Zuliani.

Massimo Scolari

Massimo Scolari, Davenport Visiting Professor, with Timothy Newton (’07) also led a studio in Venice this semester at the medieval town of Chioggia. The town’s unique regular plan was the result of rectilinear salt pans and evaporative basins that transformed the lagoon island into a center for trade and defense. Over time, the transition from war to commerce focused the community on fishing and tourism, but it suffered from lack of an identifiable entrance to the sea.

Scolari asked the students to create an aperture to the town via the sea within the area of the last salt pans. They envisioned how a new gateway would open the town to increased activity, and become a symbolic attractor. The gateway program included a naval club for the Harbor Master’s office, a boat dock, restaurants, and other commercial and cultural activities.

The students were required to draw in freehand until mid-term and as in previous Studio courses, they studied and built a prototype for a chair, in order to understand the relationship between the design and construction of an object at 1:1 scale. The chair designs and materials varied, from detailed wood construction and joinery, to carbon fiber with wood veneer, and stacked felt.

Students addressed issues contextually in terms of program and design elements. One created a series of folies extending into the lagoon, including an iconic sail processing plant with an apparatus to protect the salt pans. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront.

Students addressed issues contextually in terms of program and design elements. One created a series of folies extending into the lagoon, including an iconic sail processing plant with an apparatus to protect the salt pans. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront.

A student project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occupiable breaker walls extending from the gateway to the lagoon; another created a semi-circular “head” that protected the harbor. One project was a wall that became a bridge; and a movable pizza that would expand to close off the waterfront. Other students examined ways to close the canal during flooding periods: one created a series of occ...
to the historic Bund and the western end of Nanjing Road, which is adjacent to several significant urban nodes, including Lujiazui Park, and the newly emerging financial-cultural area around the 1933 Shanghai Slaughterhouse.

The students traveled to Hong Kong to meet University of Hong Kong students and faculty, and together went to Shanghai, where they explored the site and its urban context, analyzed various models of urban development, including the Expo, and worked with Tongi students in their studios. The students’ projects ranged from innovative interpretations of the conventional podium with towers to an extensive new campus for a community college aimed at training recent immigrants in emergent eco-friendly industries, to a network of local pedestrian links structuring a multilevel market district. Once again, the final review included students from Tongji University and students and faculty from the University of Hong Kong, who presented alongside the Yale students to a jury that included Deborah Berke, Bu Bing (’00) Naomi Darling (’36), Alex Deval, Deborah Gans, Roger Hawkins, Ralph Lerner, Arina Lourie Harrison, Sandro Marfipiero, Jonathan Solomon, Dai Sangwen, and Michael Wilford.

Fred Koeter and Ed Mitchell

The post-professional studio turns its attention for a second time to southern Massachusetts to examine the impact of the extensive development of the state’s commuter rail system for the towns of Raynham, Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River. By highlighting the partnerships between DOT, the South Coast Rail, and the Economic Development group in each town, the students emphasized the idea of a regional community network. As the students developed new programs to jumpstart growth, they were confronted by major planning issues such as the problem of place-appropriate program design, and the challenge of creating a functional destination that encouraged regular foot traffic.

Students worked in teams after visiting each town, and with local officials. The main inventions included such programs as a linked series of classroom spaces for UMass, and restoration of the local shoreline ecology. Others such as a large-scale agricultural production facility in Raynham was to act as a regional distribution hub and experimental farm for the region and has the capacity to serve the school for the culinary arts proposed by another team. One project such as a mixed-use rail station and for a proposal for a high-tech and bio-tech research and development park seemed to combine the arts and vocational education. Essays by Kenneth Frampton, Billie Tsien and Tod Williams/Life.

Yale School of Architecture Books Spring 2011

The following books were published recently by the School of Architecture:

- Composites, Surfaces, and Software: High-Performance Architecture edited by Greg Lynn and Mark Foster Gage (’01), with Stephen Nielson (’09) and Nina Rappaport. Designed by Jeff Ramsey and distributed by W. W. Norton.

By showcasing the intersection between technology, aesthetics, and function, this book offers a multidisciplinary approach to cutting-edge performative technology. In a recent Yale studio led by Lynn and Gage, students designed a building that uses intelligence gleaned from the competitive sailing industry. These projects—along with work and essays by Gage and Lynn, Frank Gehry, Lise Anne Couture, Chris Bané, and others—demonstrate how shared materials, tools, and techniques strengthen the fields of automotive and aeronautic design, boatbuilding and architecture, ultimately exhibiting the high-tech cross-pollination of form and material across industries.

- Learning in Las Vegas edited by Nina Rappaport, Brook Denison (’07), and Nicholas Hanna (’09). Designed by MGMT Design and distributed by W. W. Norton.

Featuring the Blass Distinguished Architecture Fellowship studio led by developer Charles Atwood and Washington, D.C.,-based architect David M. Schwarz (’74), this book brings together students who studied college precedents and then traveled to India to familiarize themselves with the site and its environs. They also visited traditional and contemporary Indian architecture in places such as Ahmedabad and Fatehpur Sikri for inspiration.

Students were encouraged to combine the best aspects of East and West to create a new campus hybrid adapted to the cultural and environmental context of India. Vernacular architectural elements such as shading devices, decorative textiles, patterns, and stepwells provided inspiration. Many students used the traditional courtyard arrangement, while others focused on the roof as habitable space. Designs focused on large-scale public and intimate private spaces, open and closed forms, and earth and structure, and in ways to circulate through the site protected from the elements and connect to the classrooms. The students presented their projects to a jury of Sunil Bald, Ari Daman, Nicholas de Monchaux, Kenneth Frampton, Roger Hawkins, David Hays, Catherine Seavitt, Brigitte Shim, Marc Tsuchimi, and Marion Weiss (’82).

The students' projects ranged from urban interventions along the riverbanks to an extensive new building on its campus, which is located halfway between New Delhi and Jaipur. The project intended to support the foundation’s mission to empower Indian girls by offering free, job-oriented education to underprivileged girls.

The client’s brief combined dormitory, cafeteria, lecture halls, classrooms, and labs within a mixed-use residential college similar to those that can be found at American universities like Yale. The students studied college precedents and then traveled to India to familiarize themselves with the site and its environs. They also visited traditional and contemporary Indian architecture in places such as Ahmedabad and Fatehpur Sikri for inspiration.

Students were encouraged to combine the best aspects of East and West to create a new campus hybrid adapted to the cultural and environmental context of India. Vernacular architectural elements such as shading devices, decorative textiles, patterns, and stepwells provided inspiration. Many students used the traditional courtyard arrangement, while others focused on the roof as habitable space. Designs focused on large-scale public and intimate private spaces, open and closed forms, and earth and structure, and in ways to circulate through the site protected from the elements and connect to the classrooms. The students presented their projects to a jury of Sunil Bald, Ari Daman, Nicholas de Monchaux, Kenneth Frampton, Roger Hawkins, David Hays, Catherine Seavitt, Brigitte Shim, Marc Tsuchimi, and Marion Weiss (’82).

- Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Architecture, edited by Kerla Cavanar Britton. Designed by Think Studio and distributed by Yale University Press.

This book features analyses of sacred buildings by their architects, placing them in dialogue with scholars from the fields of theology, philosophy, and history and raising issues on the nature and role of sacred space today. Essays by Kenneth Frampton, Vincent Scully, Miroslav Volf, Jaime Lara, and others call attention to modern architecture’s history of engagement and experimentation with religious space and address expressions of sacred space in landscapes, museums, and beyond.
Michelle Addington, Gerald D. Hines Professor of Sustainable Architectural Design, organized and chaired a session on building sector research at the fall 2010 UN Climate negotiations in Cancun, Mexico. The session was derived from her research on non-legis- lative actions for reducing the energy use of buildings. After returning from Mexico, she shared her reflections with the reader and on the current state of understanding of the building sector on the NPR program “Where We’re What.” In related above, she received a grant in conjunction with the Yale Departments of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science to develop a new method for calculating building energy use. In addition, she is a member of the research team that Yale will use to develop the West Campus Arts Facilities, and, in particular, she is working to develop research into developing innovative approaches to the thermal and light management of materials. She also visited the University of North Carolina and Brown University, and spoke at symposia at the University of Michigan, Harvard University, and Yale’s Richard Kelly symposium as well as authoring one of the chapters for the Kelly exhibition catalog. She also lectured on sustainable design for two workshops that Yale University held for Chinese leaders. She was interviewed in Volume: Contemporary No. 24, which she solicuted on the future of intelligent environments. In December, she completed her third year as a faculty member of the Boston Society of Architects research awards.

Brennan Buck, critic in architecture, published The Smithsonian “The City, Building as Set,” in Log 18. With Kirsty ballet, he co-edited the video Catalog: Greg Lynn’s Studio at the University Applied Arts Vienna (Springer Publishers, 2010). He was named a Harvard GSD Alumni Medalist in 2010. He is working on his book of his office, Freeland Buck, was published this fall, Frame, and the Architects Newsletter. In December, he gave a talk in Barcelona. The Autodesk Foundation, including GSA, the National Institute of Building Sciences, and the American Institute of Architects, in Berlin, completed a campus master plan for the University of Yale, received the AIA Connecticut Trust Award. It was featured in ARCHIST-.org’s “Lectures in Architecture.”


Martin Fring, critic in architecture, designed a Garment House project that received a 2010 American Architecture Award. It was featured in Architecture Record (October 2010) as the magazine’s “House of the Month.” He was recently a juror for the Western Red Cedar Lumber Association awards and will participate in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s biennial studio review, “SUPERjury.”

Mark Foster Gage (’01), associate professor, with his New York City-based firm Gage/Clemenceau Architects, was one of the founders of the studio. His talk “I Have Seen the Future: Selling and quotidian activities of daily life.” The book was published in Autumn 2010. Leung was awarded a MacDowell Colony Fellowship for May 2011. She also received a commission for a loft that will a 1,200-square-foot unit between two adjoining spaces in DUMBO, Brooklyn, and is working with the non-profit Neighborhoods Allied for Good Growth on a study to have Williamsburg, Brooklyn, considered as a second phase of the NYC Solar Empowerment Zones initiative.

Annie Louise Harrison, lecturer, with her firm, Harrison Atelier (HAt), created the visual design and dramaturgy for ARCHINES, a collaboration with choreographer Jonah Bokar on the theme of aging. It debuted at New York City’s Henry Street Settlement’s Abrons Art Center in November. Her firm is also designing an educational facility for the National Park Service, on Tsalis, Fire Island, New York.

Edward Mitchell, associate professor, gave lectures at symposiums last fall including “Burz Ills University’s ‘After Urbanism,’ and ‘The Grand Domestic Interior’ in Washington, D.C.”

Alan Organschi (’88), critic in architecture, with his partner, Elizabeth Gray (’87), of Gray Organschi Architecture, was honored by the fall Connecticut AIA with six 2010 Annual Design Awards. He gave the inaugural lecture “Detritus” in the Catholic University of America’s 2010 Summer Architecture Lecture Series at the National Academy of Sciences, D.C.

This fall, with associate Kyle Bradley (’02), he is guest studio professor at the Roger Williams University School of Architecture, Art, and Historic Preservation, as a Teaching Firm in Residence. An exhibition of Gray Organschi’s work, “Building for a Radical Architecture: Material, Process, and Strategy, the Formation of Architecture, opened with a lecture at the University Art Gallery on September 28. Two houses were included in the Maine Modern exhibition, at the Maine Storefront for Architecture, in Portland. In September the firm was featured in Dwell magazine for its design and construction management of the Kelley Cottage. Its Art Studios at the Calvin Hill School, in New Haven, was published in The Power of Pro Bono (Metropolis Books, 2010). Ben Peil, critic in architecture, with his New York practice, PellOver-ton, recently completed construction of the Blue School, an early education center founded by members of the Blue Man Group in Lower Manhattan. His office also designed a new house on Virginia’s Eastern Shore and is completing construction for an advertising agency in Manhattan. In November, Pell gave the regularly scheduled lecture on site for Artists (Issue 29, 2010). Her essay “Heraldry, Camouflage, and Ecotage” was published in Rice School of Architecture’s journal P|LAT in summer 2010. Leung was awarded a MacDowell Colony Fellowship for May 2011. She also received a commission for a loft that will a 1,200-square-foot unit between two adjoining spaces in DUMBO, Brooklyn, and is working with the non-profit Neighborhoods Allied for Good Growth on a study to have Williamsburg, Brooklyn, considered as a second phase of the NYC Solar Empowerment Zones initiative.

Eva-Lisa Pelkonen (MED ’94), associate professor, was awarded a medal of Honor of the Order of the White Rose of Finland (Knight, first class) based on civilian merit by the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, in 2010. Pelkonen is a partner in Pelkonen-Allas Architects in Helsinki, with 30 years of experience in Finnish architecture, in Toronto, to mark the 50th anniversary of Vivi Reij’s Toronto City Hall in September. In November she lectured on Aalto Avario’s National Pensions Institute Building in the seminar “Twelve International Masters” in Rotterdam. She was appointed to the international refereee committee of the newly founded Aalto University, in Helsinki, which combines the Helsinki Technical University, Helsinki School of Business, and the School of Applied Arts.


Yale Architecture Spring 2011

CONSTRUCTS


Deborah Bierke & Partners, site plan for European College of Liberal Arts, Berlin 2010.

Living Concrete/Carrot City

In the era of growing public awareness and urban food production, Living Concrete/Carrot City was an inspired exhibition highlighting the junction between design and urban agricultural systems. Featured in the Sheila C. Johnson Center at Parsons The New School for Design in New York City, in collaboration with Ryaner University in Toronto, the exhibition was a dialogue between the two institutions.

Carrot City: Designing for Urban Agriculture, curated by Yale graduate June Komisar ('89), Mark Gogolewski, and Joe Naor of RYerson, is a travelling exhibition featuring projects that address design transformations in urban agriculture—from the scale of an edible landscape to that of a transportable polypolyrene planter. Living Concrete, a parallel exhibition, curated by assistant professors Radhika Subramaniam and Nehin Cohen, was a response to Carrot City, resulting in design interventions by Parsons, Eugene Lang College, and the School of graduate faculty and students.

Balancing between the existing and the unrealized, the project-based exhibition included guidebooks, maps, installations, websites, models, and videos. The exhibit’s rustic design contrasted the urban setting, wooden frames like those which surround garden plots supported by illustrated projects, while books and objects of interest were placed on wooden benches. There was an inclusive project, focused on rooftop enterprises and architecture, and an installation that examined urban beekeeping. The BroccoliSpace project was an innovative way to explore an engaging and recreational space designed by Parsons students for 45 young adults leaving the foster care system. Strength of the exhibit was to show us that local urban agriculture can use new technology and make direct connections to design and food production, which is how they were traditionally used, how they are used now, and will be used in the future. It is taught collaboratively, by Wang Guan and Amy Lelyveld of Yale.

But the collaboration at the core of the joint studio was the pairing of three graduate students in Tsinghua’s five-year undergraduate architecture program—come out of a focused and intensive professional program. Their Yale counterparts are just as capable but represent a different conversation of undergraduate studies that typically has a much broader view of what might be considered architecture. Together, these trials and tribulations, as well as the opportunity for a transitional studio held at Tsinghua national exam as well as in the university’s highly competitive architecture program—come out of a focused and intensive professional program. Their Yale counterparts are just as capable but represent a different conversation of undergraduate studies that typically has a much broader view of what might be considered architecture. Together, these trials and tribulations, as well as their desire to develop a deep understanding of the “house” in China, are foundational to the design and the significance and form of the “house” in today’s China.

In Beijing this last summer, the eighteen undergraduate students of the first Yale–Tsinghua Joint Studio wrestled with these problems—among a host of others—as they worked in teams to develop a concept for a Center for the Chinese Diaspora on a transitional site near the city’s center. For seven weeks, from mid-May through the beginning of July, they worked around language barriers to collect and come to grips with the many synchronous layers related to the country’s housing. The aim of their studio projects was to define both the mission and form of an institution devoted to the exploration of the single family house—its past, present, and its possible and uncertain future in an era of Chinese mass urbanization.

The concept and focus of the joint studio was the invention of key faculty members of the School of Architecture at Tsinghua and the Tsinghua School of Architecture’s Department of History and Theory, the strongest of which is a project that developed the top-ranked Chinese architecture program. The latter group is concerned with not only architecture, but also with keeping the thousands of years of developed architecture in China’s traditional built environment, but also, through its many associated design institutes, to find the effective focus and point of agreement between this tradition and the China of today. They are as involved in the building of the past as they are in constructing the present, a hallmark of the school since its founding by Liang Siqcheng, the father of modern Chinese architecture. They are used now, and will be used in the future.

Chinese traditional built environment, but also, through its many associated design institutes, to find the effective focus and point of agreement between this tradition and the China of today. They are as involved in the building of the past as they are in constructing the present, a hallmark of the school since its founding by Liang Siqcheng, the father of modern Chinese architecture. They are used now, and will be used in the future.

The faculty collaborated with, by Wang Guan and Amy Lelyveld of Yale, on a transitional site near the city’s center. The studio was a dialogue between the existing and the unrealized, the project-based exhibition included guidebooks, maps, installations, websites, models, and videos. The exhibit’s rustic design contrasted the urban setting, wooden frames like those which surround garden plots supported by illustrated projects, while books and objects of interest were placed on wooden benches. There was an inclusive project, focused on rooftop enterprises and architecture, and an installation that examined urban beekeeping. The BroccoliSpace project was an innovative way to explore an engaging and recreational space designed by Parsons students for 45 young adults leaving the foster care system. Strength of the exhibit was to show us that local urban agriculture can use new technology and make direct connections to design and food production, which is how they were traditionally used, how they are used now, and will be used in the future. It is taught collaboratively, by Wang Guan and Amy Lelyveld of Yale.

But the collaboration at the core of the joint studio was the pairing of three graduate students in Tsinghua’s five-year undergraduate architecture program—come out of a focused and intensive professional program. Their Yale counterparts are just as capable but represent a different conversation of undergraduate studies that typically has a much broader view of what might be considered architecture. Together, these trials and tribulations, as well as the opportunity for a transitional studio held at Tsinghua national exam as well as in the university’s highly competitive architecture program—come out of a focused and intensive professional program. Their Yale counterparts are just as capable but represent a different conversation of undergraduate studies that typically has a much broader view of what might be considered architecture.
**Alumni News**

---

**1950s**

George Hinds (B Arch ‘49, MCP ’53) has published a book, Growing Up and Older (Booksurge, 2009), a journal with sketches from his early years, active service in World War II, and travel and work in the United States, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Indonesia. The production of more than 200 sketches were the result of a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and twenty of the drawings are in the permanent collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

---

**1990s**

Don Watson (62, MED ’69) has written Design for Flooding, with Michele Adams and published by John Wiley. With the subtitle, “Resilience to Climate Change,” it presents a science-based review of architecture/urban design strategies in preparation for increasingly severe weather events and the possibility of sea-level rise.

Charles Leider (MCP ’64) was selected as the Michigan State University Landscape Architecture Outstanding Alumnus of the Year 2011, and will be recognized at Michigan’s annual Sigma Lambda Alpha Awards ceremony. He continues to work at Oakland State University as professor and director of the Los Angeles program.

---

**2010s**

Claudio Ningrea (’79) won the Merit Award from the Board of the AIA of Florida and the Award for Excellence in Architecture from the Florida AIA for the former Nations Bank, in Florida’s Broward County. Ningrea is a professor in architecture and architecture program manager at Broward College and an adjunct professor in architecture at Florida International University.

---

June Komsar (’80) curated the exhibit Concrete/Carrot City, at Parsons The New School, in fall 2010 (see page 25). She is co-authoring a book about design for urban agriculture, to be published by Monacelli Press this year. Komsar teaches full time at Ryerson University, where she was faculty advisor for the first-prize winner of the 2009 “Cities Alive Architectural Competition.”

Joseph Piecz (MED ’80) and Beverly Field Pred (MCP ’80) have completed more than 227 universal design projects as part of the Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Program, the aim of which is to create settings that facilitate daily activities for people with disabilities in the home or work environment as an alternative to being placed in public institutions. The Piecz Associates Code Compliance Team has also provided plan review and consulting services exceeding two billion dollars in construction interpretation and application of building and fire-safety codes and handicap accessibility requirements.

Brian Healy (’81), with his Boston-based firm BruHie Architects, has an exhibition on display, Continuities, Drawings and Models 2000–2010, at the Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture of City College, in New York City, through April 29, 2011.

Paul Rosenblatt (’84), with his firm SPIRINBOARD, recently completed the $18 million expansion of the National Aviary in Pittsburgh. He presented a lecture on the building at The Center for Architecture in New York City on February 2, 2011. In addition, his home was featured on the season premiere of HGTV’s “Bang for Your Buck” and won first prize. The television show tours high-end renovations and chooses the best design, with the main criterion being maximum return on investment. Rosenblatt is also an adjunct associate professor at Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture.

---

Paul Weisz (’89), with his firm Weisz/Manfredi, won the 2010 Chicago Museum International Architecture Award for the project “Wandering Ecologies.” The design team included Justin Kwok (’94) and Lee Lim (’95). In 2010 the firm won the AIA Best in New York State Award, the AIA Award of Excellence, and the Tau Sigma Delta Gold Medal from the Honor Society in Architecture and Allied Arts and was a finalist in the ULI Amannda Burden Urban Open Space Award, for the Olympic Sculpture Park, in Seattle.


Richard Hayes (’86) presented talks at Cambridge University, the London Architecture Foundation, the University of Plymouth, and the University of Sheffield during his appointment as a 2010 Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge. He received his third fellowship at the MacDowell Colony and was selected as a specialist in the field of architecture by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. His essay “Activism in Appalachia: Yale Architecture Students and the Award for Excellence in Architecture from the Florida AIA for the former Nations Bank, in Florida’s Broward County. Ningrea is a professor in architecture and architecture program manager at Broward College and an adjunct professor in architecture at Florida International University.

---


---

Dylan Sklar and Joe Smith, Northern Ontario School of Architecture, announced their first crop of projects, including the new Quinnipiac University Medical School, which was featured on the cover of Connecticut Architect, October 2010. Among them were the Cullman-Heyman Tennis Center at Yale, the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, the Heyman Tennis Center at Yale, the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, the Heyman Tennis Center at Yale, and Models 2000–2010, at the New College of Art in London.

---

Joe Smith, Dylan Sklar, and Thomas Shine (’00), with their firm Choi+Shine, recently completed the 2010 Boston Society of Architects Unbuilt Architecture award for the project “Land of Giants.” The project originated as a submission for the icelandic pylon competition, in which it received an honorable mention, and has featured in the Daily Telegraph and Elle, on Sky News and CNET, and in interviews on the BBC, CNN, and China Radio International. Its high-end hospitality and spa design throughout New Orleans. The house meets current AIA guidelines and is lifted seven feet above grade in case of future flooding.
Vlock Building Project 2010

Each year the Vlock Building Project engages both the conceptual and the practical realities of building. It allows students to design, build, and test the limits of their design ideas. For the 2010 iteration, the design team aimed to push the boundaries of traditional architectural thinking and explore innovative strategies for sustainable and efficient design.

Maputo Modern

In 1975, the southern African nation Mozambique gained independence from Portugal, and almost overnight its colonial capital, Lourenço Marques—more recently renamed Maputo—was reborn as an African city. Most of the Portuguese population fled, and Mozambicans inhabited the formerly restricted city. During the nearly twenty-year civil war that followed, much of the country’s infrastructure was destroyed, isolating the capital, and the city largely slipped from the view of the West. A trove of Modernist colonial buildings—making up almost the entirety of the Maputo’s built environment—remained, weathered but largely intact.

In November and December 2009, my collaborator, Liz McNicoll, a Columbia-trained preservationist, and I traveled to Maputo to begin a documentation and interpretation project, gathering material for an exhibition and book on the history of the city. With the support of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, we combed the national and municipal archives and the city’s building records, interviewed architects, and, most importantly, walked the city from one end to the other, locating and photographing nearly 300 key buildings.

Art Deco and rationalist civic buildings, mid-century Pop-Modern hotels, slab apartment buildings, a thrilling expressionist church, climate-sensitive schools, and scores of Modern suburban villas comprise this eclectic city. It is a city that has been both frozen in time—little has been built since the mid-1970s—and poised on the brink of change, with influences of capital from China and the Middle East. The majority of the city was built from the 1930s through the 1970s, beginning with Imperial Modernism imported from Europe, but it quickly evolved to include tropical Modernism and, in the waning moments of colonial rule, buildings with explicit African motifs and symbols. While most of the city’s architecture has survived due to benign neglect, its urbanism is thoroughly transformed.

The city we found is one bristling with energy and friction, staving in part from its physical and cultural heritage. Lourenço Marques was planned and built with lush manicured gardens and wide, planted boulevards, and even its most Modern buildings addressed the fairly traditional urban plan of gracious streets lined with sidewalk cafes. While the buildings and public spaces remain, many have been repurposed, and a new order has emerged, with impromptu markets springing up on the boulevard’s medians and plazas. Vendors sell goods on the sidewalks directly to cafe patrons, and an atmosphere of boisterous, constant commerce reigns. Minibuses clog the streets, bringing workers in from the informal settlements on the outskirts into the formerly restricted city center.

As interest in African urbanism grows and the West redisCOVERs Maputo, we hope this study will contribute to the broader history of Modern architecture on the Continent as well as to the conversation about how Mozambicans will shape the future of their capital.

—Alan G. Brake (MED ’08)

Brake is the Midwest editor of the Architect’s Newspaper.

Jugaad Urbanism Exhibition in NYC

Kanu Agrawal (MED ’02) is the curator of the exhibition “Jugaad Urbanism: Resourceful Strategies for Indian Cities at the Center for Architecture, New York City, from February 10 through May 14, 2011.

Indian cities hold two-thirds of their residents in slums and the rest in stiflingly inflexible, inflexible structures. Yet the nimble improvisational energy of its urban citizens, especially those at the fringes of society, often leads to interesting projects and urban spaces. Set in the radically uneven urban landscapes of cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Ahmedabad, Jugaad Urbanism will explore how the energy of citizens “making do” is translated by architects, urban planners, and governmental entities into efficient and inventive strategies for sustainable urban growth.

The exhibition features resettlement projects in Delhi to infrastructure projects like the newly implemented “skywalks” of Mumbai, the exhibition highlights how “jugaad” (a term in Hindi used to describe an innovative, resourceful approach) interventions are challenging traditional spatial hierarchies and mechanistic planning principles. The exhibition includes a range of scales, from smokeless stoves and water filters to community toilets and stepwells.

The work of young Indian architects and artists, including Raqs Media Collective and Bharat Sikka, are also included in the exhibition, offering insights into the complex and oft-cited “messy” urbanism of India.